



Turkey

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Principles and general objectives of education

In accordance with the Fundamental Principles of National Education of 1973, the general aims of education in Turkey are:

- to instill in all individuals of the Turkish nation a consciousness of their duty to their country, and to foster in them the spirit of Atatürk's nationalism, implicit in his principles, values, and reforms;
- to encourage creativity, constructiveness, individuality, entrepreneurship and productivity in all individuals; to help them develop a wide perspective of the world, a respect for human rights, a sense of social responsibility, a sound and balanced character, and a capacity to reason independently and rationally;
- to prepare citizens for life through the development of their interests, abilities and capabilities, and to ensure that they gain knowledge and skills necessary for a profession which would contribute both to their own welfare and to the welfare of society.

In order to achieve these aims, the following basic principles should be respected (see also Öney, 1995):

- equality in education: educational institutions are open to all regardless of race, sex, or religion;
- meeting individual and social needs;
- orientation (individuals are oriented toward educational programmes on the basis of their interests, talents, and abilities);
- continuity (the state takes measures to ensure adults continuing education);
- Atatürk's reforms (Atatürk's reforms and principles are the basis of the curriculum at all educational levels);
- secularism and scientific norms in education;
- co-education;
- planning (national education is planned on the basis of economic, social, and cultural development);
- co-operation between school and family;



- widespread education.

Current educational priorities and concerns

Educational targets are defined in National Development Plans and Programmes, and take into consideration the needs of the individuals, the requirements of the industry, and the outcomes of the National Census. According to the results of the 1990 Census, only 5.2% of the labour force had a higher education degree, 9.7% had a high-school diploma, and 7% had a junior high-school diploma. The remaining 78.1% consisted of primary school graduates or individuals with lower levels of education.

In recent years, financial resources allocated to education from the general budget have increased, and private education institutions have expanded due to liberal policies. The purpose of Law No. 4306 of 1997, issued within the framework of the Seventh Five-year Development Plan (VII FYDP, 1996-2000), was to increase existing resources and to create additional ones.

The VII FYDP set the goal that by the year 2000, the pre-school enrolment ratio would reach 16%; the enrolment ratio for primary education would reach 100%; the secondary school enrolment ratio would reach 75%; and higher education enrolment would reach 31%, 19% of which would represent formal education. In 1996/97, schooling ratios reached 8.9% for pre-school education (age group 4-6 years old); 99.8% in primary schools; 69.6% in junior high schools (which constitute the last three years of compulsory primary education since 1997/98); 54.7% in secondary education, including general and vocational technical high schools; and 22.4% in higher education. In 2000/01, the primary school gross enrolment ratio reached 100.57%, but in 1999/2000 the secondary school gross enrolment ratio fell short of the goal at 57.73%.

In order to rebuild the education system in conformity with the social, scientific and technological developments of the twenty-first century, the National Council of Education has focused its work on the following five issues: primary education and its orientation; the reconstruction of the secondary education system; the transition to higher education; meeting the educational needs of the society; and improving the financing of education.

In line with the recommendations of the Council and the goals of the VII FYDP concerning the transition from five-year to eight-year compulsory education, the Law No. 4306 was issued on 16 August 1997. This law stipulates that primary education should last eight years and be compulsory for all children between the ages 6-14. The implementation of the project "Globalization in Education 2000" has been an important step in line with Law No. 4306.

In the implementation of the eight-year compulsory basic education, the following objectives have been adopted:

- to eliminate double shifts currently applied in some parts of large cities;
- to gradually decrease the number of students per class to 30 by the year 2000;



- to provide free transportation to central schools for those students living in small settlements in order to ensure their access to quality education;
- to gradually remove integrated classrooms by expanding Regional Basic Education Boarding Schools (YIBO) or Basic Education Schools (PIO) along with the bussing system;
- to provide uniforms, school bags, textbooks and notebooks to children in need;
- to support formal education through distance education;
- to install computer laboratories in basic education institutions and provide access for all students to computer aided instruction;
- to start the teaching of at least one foreign language at the basic education level;
- to equip schools with modern technologies;
- to fulfil the most important principle of a learning society by educating “individuals to question and learn the methods of learning,” applying scientific and rationalist approaches;
- to ensure the physical development of children, along with their mental development, through the provision of appropriate infrastructure;
- to provide opportunities for five-year primary education graduates who are beyond the age limit of compulsory education, to complete their eight-year basic education through open education.

Planned and on-going activities implemented by the Ministry of National Education (MONE) aim at achieving these objectives regarding quality and progressive expansion of eight-year compulsory basic education.

In order to improve the quality of education, additional resources have been allocated for the construction of school buildings and sports facilities, for the installation of computer laboratories in all primary schools that have at least 1,000 students (and the development of the relevant software), for the establishment of a network which will include all basic education schools, and for the establishment of new school libraries.

Furthermore, the learner-centred model requires a school which renews itself continuously through the participation of all stakeholders. In order to establish such a school structure the Regulation on Education Regions and Educational Boards has been issued and is being implemented. Among other goals, this regulation aims to ensure that: educational institutions complement each other; individuals, voluntary organizations, the private sector and the local administration participate in the



educational decision-making process; and educational institutions offer 'information centres' accessible to all.

Boards of Students have been established so that students can participate in school management. These boards shall help students to adapt to the school environment; support efforts to increase the quality of education and training; help students solve their problems; and establish social activities in cooperation with the heads of the Educational Branch Activities in the schools.

In the framework of the eight-year compulsory education programme, a 'citizenship and human rights education' course has been added to the curriculum of the pupils attending Grades VII and VIII in primary schools.

The Ministry pays special attention to the use of new technologies in education and provides in-service training opportunities for teachers in the field of computer education. It has been envisaged to provide all teachers with these opportunities, starting with teachers working at the primary level. The MONE is also carrying out activities aimed at raising the standards of vocational and technical education at the formal and non-formal levels, improving the certification system, developing relationships between schools and the labour market, and expanding in-service training opportunities for teachers. Other MONE goals include improving the effectiveness of the education system, revising and updating the curricula, and providing equipment and educational materials in order to meet the manpower requirements of the industry. In conformity with these goals, the following has been emphasized:

The Medium-Term Programme of State Planning Organization 2006-2008, considers education as a priority investment field within the framework of the public investment policy. In terms of educational policies, the Programme stipulates the following aims: generalization of pre-school education; development of new curricula for primary and secondary education; restructuring secondary education to promote vertical and horizontal transitions; increasing the administrative, financial and scientific autonomy of tertiary education institutions and undertaking competitive structuring; ensuring higher rates of contribution from students for financing tertiary education; ensuring higher contributions from the private sector for all levels of education.

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

The basic responsibilities of the State concerning education and training have been outlined in articles 10, 24, 42, 62, 130, 131 and 132 of the **Constitution** of the Republic of Turkey (1982).

The **Primary Education and Training Law No. 222** regulates primary education as a complete system. The **Basic Law of National Education No. 1739** of 1973, as amended by the **Law No. 2842** of 18 June 1989 and by the **Law No. 4306** of 16 August 1997, covers the following aspects of the education system: general and specific objectives; basic principles; general structure; institutions and establishments of all types and levels; teaching staff; school buildings and facilities; educational



materials and equipment; and duties and responsibilities in the field of education and training.

The **Apprenticeship and Vocational Training Law No. 3308** of 5 June 1986 was introduced in order to improve the vocational and technical training system.

The **Private Education Law No. 625** of 6 August 1995 regulates the establishment and operation of private education institutions.

The **Law on Children Who Need Special Education No. 2916** of 1983 and a new **Government order** equivalent to law (**No. 573** of 1997) regulate educational services in this field.

The **Higher Education Law No. 2547** of 6 November 1981 reformed the higher education system. A notable feature of this Law was that it incorporated such higher education institutions as teacher-training schools and institutes of education into the same system, along with universities. A **Regulation for Academic Assessment and Quality Improvement** at higher education institutions was adopted on 20 September 2005.

The **Law 4702** adopted in 2001 amended some existing laws. It stipulates the creation of Vocational and Technical Education Zones comprising vocational and technical upper secondary education institutions. The law also entitles graduates of vocational and technical secondary schools to have access to two-year tertiary-level education institutions to pursue further education in their fields of study without taking the university entrance exam.

According to the Law No. 4306 of 1997, the duration of compulsory education is eight years for children in the age group 6-14.

Administration and management of the education system

The **Ministry of National Education** (MONE) is responsible for all educational services in the country, in conformity with the provisions of the Basic Law of National Education. The MONE consists of central, provincial, overseas organizations and affiliated establishments. The central level includes the **Minister's Office**, the **Board of Education**, main service units, consultancy and inspection units, auxiliary units and permanent committees. At the provincial level, there are **Provincial** and **District Directorates** of National Education. Different powers can be vested with these Directorates, depending on the social and economic developments of the province, its population and the number of students. Overseas organizations consist of Education Consultancies, Education Attachés and Turkish Cultural Centres. Establishments affiliated to the MONE include the National Education Academy, the General Directorate of Tertiary Education, Loans and Dormitories, and the General Directorate of Education Technologies.

The **National Council of Education** and the **Board of Education** are the two main advisory bodies to the MONE. The **National Council of Education** is the highest consultative and decision making body of the MONE. It was established in



1933 by Law no. 2287 in order to develop the Turkish National Education system and improve its quality. The National Council of Education convenes once every four years. Decisions taken by the representatives of different society sections are implemented after the approval of the authorities.

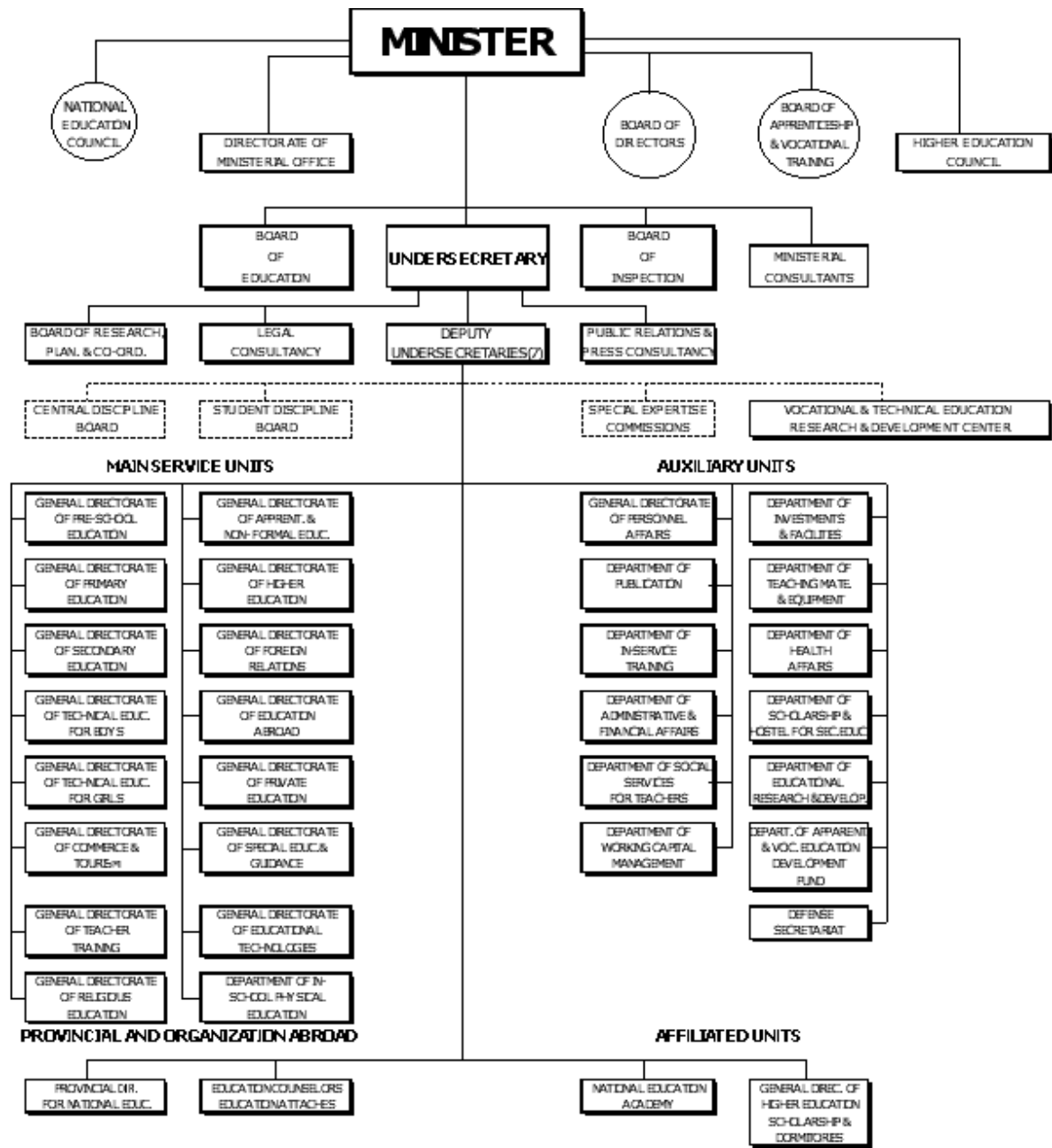
Decisions on the planning, development and evaluation of formal and non-formal vocational-technical education including apprenticeship training, and training at work places are taken by the **Vocational Education Council** established at the Ministry of National Education. It consists of representatives from relevant ministries, trade and employers' unions, non-governmental organizations, higher education institutions, and trade chambers. Similarly, Provincial Vocational Education Councils take decisions and make recommendations on the planning, development and evaluation of vocational training programmes.

There are two subsidiary organizations affiliated to the Ministry: the General Directorate of Student Loans and Dormitories for Higher Education, and the National Education Academy.

According to a Directive of the MONE published in November 1999, provinces and districts with a population (within the borders of the municipality) of less than 30,000 are considered as an **Education Zone**. It is possible to form more than one education zone in any district. **School Regions** can also be formed in the education zones. **Vocational and Technical Education Regions** were established as of 2002 to implement the provisions of Law 4702.

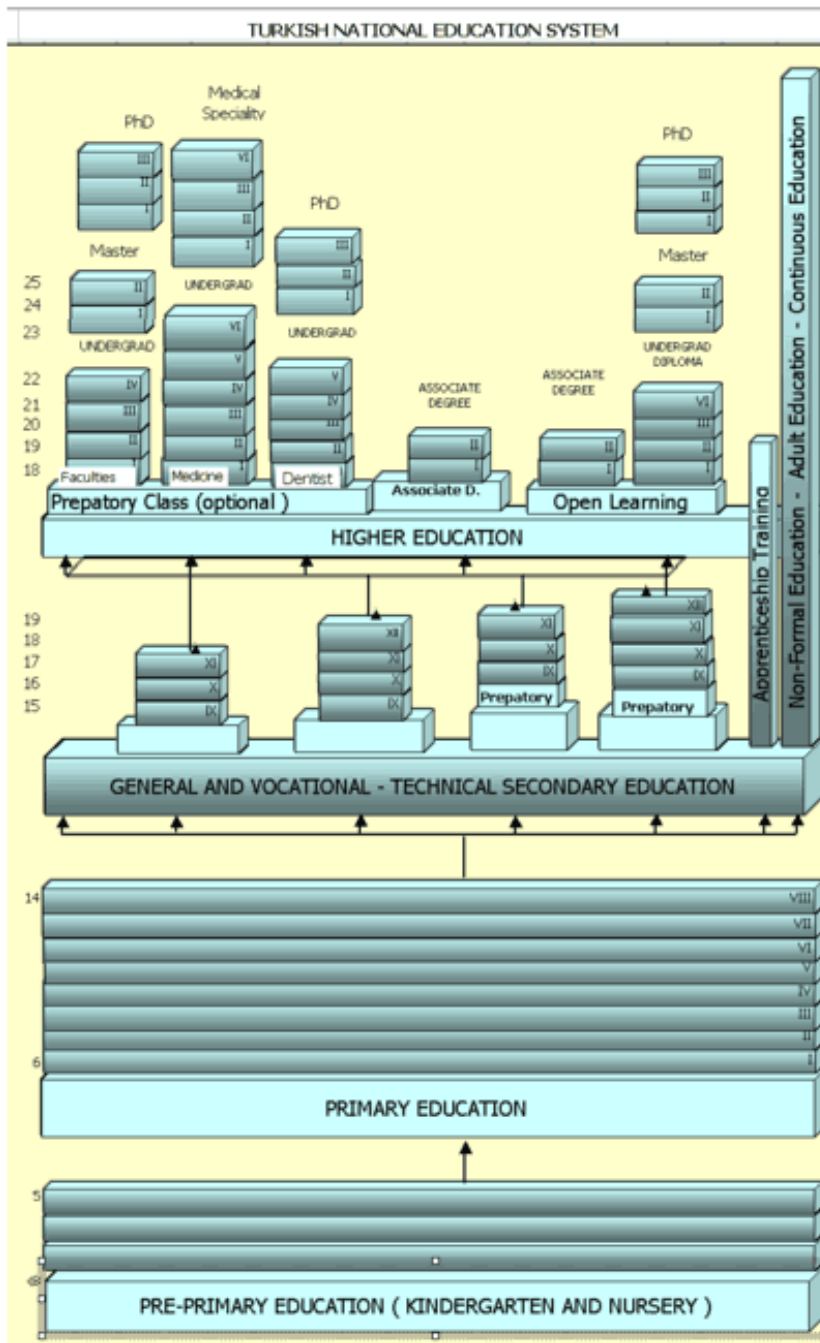
In accordance with the Law No. 2547 of 1981, the **Council of Higher Education** (YÖK) is the planning, co-ordinating and policy-making body for higher education in the country. The President of the Council is elected and appointed by the President of the Republic for a term of four years. On behalf of the Council, the **Higher Education Supervisory Board** supervises and controls the universities, the units attached to them, and the teaching staff and their activities. The **Student Selection and Placement Centre** (ÖSYM), established in 1974 and affiliated to the Council of Higher Education in 1981, is primarily concerned with the selection and placement of students in higher education programmes. The ÖSYM also offers services to higher education institutions for the administering of examinations, which are either inter-university in nature or are being held on a large scale.

Organizational chart of the Ministry of National Education (1998)



Structure and organization of the education system

Turkey: structure of the education system



Pre-school education

Pre-school education is not compulsory. Institutions offering pre-school education programmes include crèches (age group 0-3 years), kindergartens (age group 3-5 years) and primary schools with pre-school classes (age group 5-6 years).



Primary education

Primary education is compulsory, co-educational and provided free in state schools to children in the age group 6-14. The transition from five-year primary schools and three-year junior high schools into eight-year primary (basic) schools has been effective from the school year 1997/98. The last three years of primary education (Grades VI-VIII) were not compulsory or considered as part of secondary education until 1997/98. Upon successful completion of primary education, pupils receive a diploma.

Secondary education

Secondary education, free but not compulsory in state schools, is provided in general, vocational and technical high schools offering three- and four-year programmes to graduates from primary education.

Higher education is defined as any postsecondary programme lasting a minimum of two years. The higher education system consists of universities (fifty-three “state”, twenty-four “foundation” universities) and non-university institutions (police and military academies, colleges). Each university is comprised of faculties and four-year schools (the latter with a vocational emphasis) offering bachelor’s degree programmes, and two-year vocational higher schools offering pre-bachelor’s (associate’s) level programmes of a strictly vocational nature. Graduate-level programmes are coordinated by institutes for graduate studies. Master’s degree programmes take two years of study; doctoral and equivalent programmes take four years to complete. Courses in the faculties of medicine are six years’ long, and those in the faculties of veterinary sciences and dentistry are five years’ long. Medical specialization programmes equivalent to doctoral-level programmes are offered by faculties of medicine and training hospitals administered by the Ministry of Health and the Social Insurance Organization.

The school year at the primary and secondary levels consists of 180 working days. The academic year begins on the second week of September and ends by the second week of June.

The financing of education

Resources allocated to education consist of funds from the General Budget and the budget of the provinces. In addition, the private sector and other bodies such as Schools’ Support Associations, Parent-Teacher Associations, and foundations are encouraged to contribute to the construction of school buildings and the production of educational materials.

Despite the fact that the share of education in the General Budget has increased in recent years, the need for more buildings, facilities and teachers, and the growing number of students have made it difficult to meet all needs. Proper measures are taken to increase contributions from private enterprises, persons and local administrations, and utmost care is employed to use existing resources more rationally. Starting from January 2007, state funds are allocated to public universities

according to the performance-based budget system and taking into account the annual strategic plans of the universities, which include the strategic targets, vision and goals, their performance assessed by predetermined indicators, and the monitoring and evaluation of this overall process.

Budget of the Ministry of National Education as percentage of GNP (Turkish lira)

Year	MNE Budget	% of GNP
2000	3,350,330,000	2.72
2002	7,460,991,000	2.66
2003	10,179,997,000	2.85
2004	12,854,642,000	3.00
2005	14,882,259,500	3.07
2006	16,568,145,500	3.07

Source: MONE, 2007.

Board of Higher Education Council budget as percentage of GNP (Turkish lira)

Year	BHEC Budget	% of GNP
2000	1,054,610,700	0.84
2002	2,495,967,700	0.89
2003	3,346,669,000	0.94
2004	3,689,754,700	0.86
2005	5,218,465,000	1.08
2006	5,846,822,700	1.08

The educational process

Curriculum development is a continuous process, which is based on institutional cooperation and the participation of many different stakeholders. The process consists of making decisions on learning objectives, selecting the learning content and teaching methods, developing or improving the teaching materials and as a final step, evaluating the curriculum.

The programmes aim to meet the needs of the individual and of society, to integrate theory and practice, to provide learner-centred education, to emphasize interdisciplinary subjects, and to provide settings rich in learning opportunities.

In order to prepare and develop educational programmes, Programme Development Commissions, consisting of scientists, programme development professionals, and other educationists, consider educational and scientific research



results, the opinions of students, teachers, parents, trainers, as well as the educational standards of the European Union. Their programme drafts are approved and finalized by the Board of Education, after which they are submitted for the approval of the Ministry. After the Ministry's approval, these education programmes are piloted and put into practice.

Pre-primary education

The pre-school education programme has been prepared to support the mental, emotional, social and psycho-motor development of children aged 0-6 years. This programme takes into account the developmental needs of three age groups: 0-3 years (crèches), 3-5 year (kindergartens), and 5-6 years (pre-school classes in primary schools). There are also 'practical' nursery classes, so called because they were originally established within vocational schools, and students at vocational schools for young women get their practical training in them. Apart a parental contribution for meals and cleaning materials, all public pre-primary institutions are free of charge, regardless of the type of setting.

The programme is as flexible as possible to allow various modalities of implementation; it also includes activities that families can carry out at home. Programmes offered in day-nurseries aim at contributing to the physical and moral development of the children. Programmes offered in kindergartens do not include subject teaching. However, they include Turkish language practice, preparation for reading and writing, environment and hygiene, drama, etc., so as to provide a sound base for further education. In primary schools where infrastructure is suitable, pre-school classes are established in order to encourage and facilitate the participation of 5-6-year-olds, at least during one year before compulsory education.

The pre-school education and non-formal early childhood programme are components of the World Bank-supported Basic Education Programme, Second phase. Its main aim is to develop preschool education to improve children's performance in basic education. Priority is given to parents and children in provinces with low schooling and high migration rates. The formal part includes facilities construction and furnishing, provision of educational materials and pre-school teacher training. The MONE, in co-operation with UNICEF and with the support of Gazi University Faculty of Vocational Training, has been working since 1993 to expand pre-school participation through the Mother and Child Education Programme. Since 2003, the programme has been transformed into the Mother and Child Education Programme focused on families with children aged 0 to 6. The project is currently implemented in 59 provinces.

In 1997/98, the gross enrolment ratio for the age group 49-72 months was 9.3% (8.9% in 1996/97). The average pupil-teacher ratio was 24:1. In 1999, the pupil-teacher ratio for pre-primary education was 16:1. In 2005/06 there were 18,539 pre-schools with 550,146 children enrolled and 20,910 teachers. (MONE, 2007). In 2004/05, the gross enrolment ratio was estimated at 16.1% (age group 3-5).

Primary (basic) education

The main objectives of primary education are to provide all children with the basic knowledge, skills, behaviours and habits necessary to become a good citizen, and to prepare them both for life and further education, taking into account their interests, talents and abilities.

All subjects in primary schools are compulsory. The weekly lesson timetable is shown in the table below:

Primary (basic) education: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade							
	First cycle					Second cycle		
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Turkish language	12	12	12	6	6	5	5	5
Mathematics	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Social studies	5	5	5	–	–	–	–	–
Science	–	–	–	3	3	3	3	3
Social sciences	–	–	–	3	3	3	3	–
Citizenship and human rights education	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
History of the Turkish Republic	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
Foreign language	–	–	–	2	2	4	4	4
Religious culture and ethics	–	–	–	2	2	2	2	2
Drawing-handwork	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
Music	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
Physical education	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
Work training	–	–	–	3	3	3	3	3
Traffic and first aid education	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	1
Individual and group activities	3	3	3	–	–	–	–	–
Elective courses	–	–	–	3	3	2	2	2
Total weekly periods	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30

Note: Each teaching period lasts 40 minutes.

Pupils' achievement in the first three grades of primary education is evaluated through classroom performances. A maximum of two tests or written examinations can be applied in Grades IV and V for evaluation purposes. In the second stage of basic education (Grades VI-VIII) a minimum of two written examinations and one oral examination are applied for each subject. Upon successful completion of basic education, pupils receive a diploma.

In 1996/97, the net enrolment ratio was 99.8% in primary schools (Grades I-V) and 69.6% in junior high schools (Grades VI-VIII). In the same year, the average number of pupils per class was 43 in primary schools and the average pupil/teacher ratio was 28:1. In 2000/01, the gross enrolment ratio for primary education was 100.9% (95.6% in the school year 2005/06). In 2005/06 there were 34,990 primary education schools with 10,673,935 pupils enrolled and 389,859 teachers (including nursery school teachers within primary schools). (MONE, 2007).



Secondary education

Secondary education follows basic education and lasts three or four years. It is provided in general, vocational and technical high schools (lycées). The aim of secondary education is to prepare students for tertiary education and vocational fields in accordance with their interests and talents, and to provide them with general culture.

According to national statistics, in 2005/06 the overall schooling ratio at the secondary level was 85.2%. The total number of students enrolled in secondary education (public and private) was 3,258,255, and the total number of teachers was 185,317. In the same school year, there were 7,435 secondary education institutions (all sectors), including 3,406 general high schools (of which 628 in the private sector) and 4,029 vocational and technical high schools (of which 22 were private). (MONE, 2007).

Vocational and technical education has been restructured according to the following guidelines: secondary schools must function more democratically; the great divergence in quality among vocational-technical institutions must be avoided; students must be selected according to the required characteristics of the profession; the educational programmes of vocational-technical education must be reviewed in accordance with recent developments in information technology; the programme approach that isolates general education from the technological environment must be eliminated; technology education must be included in the general system from primary to tertiary education; and the transfer to tertiary education must be reorganized.

General high schools do not prepare students for a specific profession but for higher education. The following institutions are considered within general secondary education: high schools; high schools with intensive foreign language teaching; Anatolian high schools (schools where a foreign language—English, French or German—is taught in the preparatory year and where certain subjects are taught in that language in upper grades); science high schools; teacher training high schools, Anatolian fine arts high schools; multi-curricula high schools; evening high schools; and private high schools.

In general high schools, the average number of weekly periods of teaching in each grade varies from a minimum of 33 to a maximum of 40 (each period lasts 40 minutes). In their second year, students in high schools where the general programme is taught, have a choice of attending natural sciences, literature and mathematics, social sciences, foreign languages, art or sports branches.

Vocational and technical high schools provide three-year secondary education to train individuals for various professions and prepare them for higher education. These schools include technical education schools for boys, technical education schools for girls, commerce and tourism education schools, and religious education schools. In vocational high schools, the average number of weekly periods in each grade is 41.



Technical high schools offer a four-year secondary education programme. Subjects offered in the first year are the same as in vocational high schools. The average number of weekly periods of teaching in each grade is forty-one.

Teaching subjects in secondary education are grouped as follows: (a) common culture subjects, compulsory for all students; (b) specialized compulsory subjects which vary according to the branch considered; and (c) elective subjects, which also vary according to the branch considered. In the first year of secondary education common culture subjects include: Turkish language and literature; Religious culture and ethics; History; Geography; Mathematics; Biology; Physics; Chemistry; Hygiene; Foreign language; and Physical education. The table below shows the weekly lesson timetables for the high school, social sciences field.

General secondary education (high school, social sciences field): weekly lesson timetable (2001)

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each form		
	I	II	III
Common general culture courses:			
Turkish language and literature	4	4	4
Religious culture and ethics	1	1	1
History	2	2	–
History of the Republic of Turkey	–	–	2
National security	–	1	–
Geography	2	–	–
Mathematics	5	–	–
Biology	2	–	–
Physics	2	–	–
Chemistry	2	–	–
Hygiene	2	–	–
Foreign language	4	–	–
Philosophy	–	–	2
Physical education	2	–	–
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>
Field courses:			
Literary texts	–	3	3
General history of Turkey	–	3	–
History of Ottomans	–	–	3
Physical geography of Turkey	–	3	–
Anthropology and economical geography of Turkey	–	–	3
Geography of other countries	–	3	–
Psychology	–	2	–
Logic	–	–	2
Sociology	–	–	2
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>–</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>13</i>
Field elective courses (prescribed number of weekly periods)(*)	–	6	6
Elective courses (prescribed number of weekly periods) (**)	4	4	4
Total weekly periods	32	32	32
Counselling	1	1	1

(Each teaching period lasts 40 minutes).

Notes:

(*) Field elective courses offered in Form II: history of art (two weekly periods); history of Turkish literature (2); history of Islam (2); mathematics (4); geometry (2); foreign language (4); computer studies (2); language science (2). Field elective courses offered in Form III: history of Turkey (2); tourism (2); history of philosophy (2); history of art (2); history of Turkish literature (2); foreign language (4); computer studies (2); language science (2); mathematics (4); geometry (2).

(**) Elective courses offered in Form I: drawing (2); music (2); man and the environment (2); traffic education (1); human relations (1); standardization and quality [sic] (1); second foreign



At the secondary level, there cannot be less than three examinations in a term for the subjects taught for three or more teaching periods per week, and there cannot be less than two examinations in the subjects taught for one or two teaching periods per week. In addition to the examinations, students' achievement is also evaluated through: projects, assignments, on-the-job training, classroom performances, and extracurricular activities. At the end of secondary education, successful students are awarded a diploma.

While the evaluation of the academic achievement of students depends on examinations, the evaluation of the students' behaviours and attitudes relies on the teachers' observations. The school guidance services cooperate with families to make these evaluations, which are reflected in the students' reports as the "Behaviour Grade".

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

No national programmes for assessing and monitoring pupils' and students' learning achievement nationwide are reported.

Higher education

Starting from 1981, new provisions were made for higher education in Turkey. The most important changes were the establishment of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) to steer the planning, organization, governance, instruction and research of higher education institutions and the provision that enables non-profit foundations to establish institutions for higher education. The new Higher Education Law went into effect in 1981, and institutions were radically reorganized.

The Council of Higher Education is a twenty-two-member corporate public body responsible for the planning, coordination and supervision of higher education within the provisions set forth in the Higher Education Law. Seven of its members are academics elected by the Inter-university Council; seven are appointed directly by the President of the Republic giving priority to former rectors; and eight are appointed by the Government, mostly from among senior civil servants, each for a renewable term of four years. The president of the Council is a former Council member directly appointed by the President of the Republic. The day-to-day functions of the Council are carried out by a nine-member executive committee, elected by and from the Council members.

There are two other main administrative bodies in the field of higher education. These are the Inter-university Council, which consists of the rectors of all universities and one member elected by the senate of each university, and the Turkish University Rectors Committee, which is made up of all university rectors and five ex-rectors.

The Minister of National Education represents higher education in the Parliament and can chair the meetings of the Council but has no vote. Neither the decisions of the Council nor those of the universities are subject to ratification by the Ministry.



As mentioned, higher education is defined as any postsecondary programme lasting a minimum of two years. The system consists of universities (fifty-three “state”, and twenty-four “foundation” universities) and non-university institutions of higher education (police and military academies, colleges). Each university is comprised of faculties and four-year schools (the latter with a vocational emphasis) offering bachelor’s degree programmes, and two-year vocational higher schools offering pre-bachelor’s (associate’s) level programmes of a strictly vocational nature. The Anadolu University in Eskisehir offers two- and four-year programmes through distance education.

Graduate level programmes are coordinated by institutes for graduate studies. Master’s degree programmes last two years; doctoral and equivalent programmes take four years to complete. Course programmes in the faculties of medicine are six years’ long, and those in the faculties of veterinary sciences and dentistry are five years’ long. Medical specialization programmes, equivalent to doctorate level programmes, are offered by faculties of medicine and training hospitals administered by the Ministry of Health and the Social Insurance Organization.

Universities, faculties, institutes and four-year schools are founded by law, while two-year vocational high schools and departments are established by the Council of Higher Education. The opening of a degree programme must be ratified by the Council.

Admission to higher education institutions is centralized and based on a nationwide two-stage examination administered by the Student Selection and Placement Centre (ÖSYM) every year. The Centre was established in 1974 and affiliated with the Council of Higher Education in 1981. The first stage of the examination, the Student Selection Examination (ÖSS), consists of two sections—verbal and quantitative. Candidates with scores between 105 and 120 points are offered a restricted choice of higher education programmes. Those with a minimum score of 120 qualify for the second stage of the examination, the Student Placement Examination (ÖYS), which consists of five parts: natural sciences, mathematics, Turkish language, social sciences and foreign language. The placement of candidates is made according to their composite scores. In order to calculate these, are taken into account the scores obtained in the two stages of the entrance examination, and the high school grade-point averages.

The Higher Education Law of 1981 has undergone a number of relatively minor changes since its enactment. A major change was introduced in 1992, when new procedures for the nomination and appointment of rectors were implemented. According to the new procedures, six candidates from among full professors of that, or any other university, are elected by the assembly of faculty members, which includes all full, associate and assistant professors in that university. From among these six, the Council of Higher Education elects three nominees by secret ballot, and submits their names to the President of the Republic, who appoints one of them as the rector for a period of four years, renewable only once.

Deans are appointed by the Council from among three full professors nominated by the rector, while institute and school directors are directly appointed by the rector. Each department within a faculty is made up of sections. Section heads are



elected by faculty members in that section who, in turn, advise the dean regarding the appointment of the department chairperson.

Academic and administrative staff in state universities have civil servant status and tenure. Research assistants and assistant professors only enjoy civil status, but do not have tenure. The number of academic and administrative staff posts allocated to each state university is determined by acts of the Parliament; staff appointments at all levels are, however, made exclusively by the universities themselves, and are not subject to ratification by any outside authority. The law only sets forth the minimum requirements for academic promotions and the procedures to be followed in making appointments.

The annual budget of each state university is negotiated jointly by the Council of Higher Education and the university concerned with the Ministry of Finance and in the case of the investment budget, with the State Planning Organization. The Council transmits these budgets, together with its own budget, to the Ministry of National Education, and the Minister defends them in the Parliament. The president of the Council is also given the floor at the beginning and the end of the discussion in the parliamentary commission. The result is a line-item budget with very specific earmarked budget figures.

In addition to the annual budget, provided by the State, each university has three additional sources of income. First, income from the services provided by the university—such as patient care in university hospitals and contract research—is collected in a revolving fund. Second, student contributions for highly subsidized services are collected in a separate fund. Third, each university has a research fund made up of a lump-sum grant from the state-provided budget, plus a portion of the income from the revolving fund and from earmarked projects given by the State Planning Organization.

The three, above-mentioned funds are also subject to laws, rules and regulations similar to those concerning the state-provided budget, which leave little room for flexibility. The major difference between these three funds and the budget provided by the State is that any money left in the former is carried over to the next fiscal year, while in the case of the state-provided budget unspent money reverts back to the Treasury.

The Scientific and Technical Research Council (TUBITAK) of Turkey also supports research projects after evaluating proposals submitted by faculty members. However, such grants are given directly to faculty members and are not included in university income.

In 2004/05 there were 1,969,086 students enrolled in higher education; the total number of teaching staff was 82,096. (MONE, 2007).



Special education

Law No. 2916 of 1983 has made considerable contributions to the field of special education. It has aimed at providing education and training for pupils between the ages of 0 and 18 years who cannot benefit or can only partially benefit from the regular education system due to their physical, mental, psychological, emotional, social, and health conditions.

In order to improve the situation of those with special education needs, a new government order equivalent to law (No. 573 of 1997) has been issued. In this order, lower and upper age limits have been eliminated in order to ensure lifelong education. In addition, early childhood education, family training and guidance, integration practices, development and implementation of individualized education programmes have been strongly emphasized. Types and levels of schools have been diversified and pre-school education for children with special needs has been included as a part of compulsory education.

Special education services are provided through schools for the visually, hearing, and physically impaired; vocational schools for trainable mentally disabled children; training and application schools for trainable mentally disabled children; and vocational training centres for mentally disabled adults.

One of the basic principles of special education contained in the new legislation is to plan and carry out the services without isolating individuals with special education needs from their social and physical environment. Therefore, measures are taken to offer education for children with special needs in ordinary classes and/or special education classes in ordinary schools, and make use of the educational and social opportunities provided in an integrated environment with their peers.

Special education. Number of institutions, students and teaching staff (1997/98)

Types of institution	No. of institutions	No. of students	No. of teachers
Schools for the visually impaired	10	954	195
Schools for children with hearing impairments	52	6,618	916
Schools for the orthopaedically disabled	6	271	49
Training and application schools (for trainable mentally disabled)	54	2,432	478
Vocational schools (for educable mentally disabled)	39	1,982	342
Vocational training centres (for mentally disabled adults)	3	228	27
Hospital primary schools	21	(*)	58
Independent kindergartens	1	20	2
Science and arts centres for the gifted and talented	2	52	9
Special education classes	713	7,924	666
Integrated education	(**)	10,516	(**)
Guidance and research centres	99	-	606
Total	1,005	30,997	3,348

(*) included in primary schools; (**) included in general education.

In 2003/04, a total of 62,922 students (19,892 students enrolled in 440 special education schools and institutions; 7,405 students in 1,167 special education classes of 776 schools; and 35,625 students in 20,334 classes at 5,749 primary schools through inclusive education) have benefited from special education services. (MONE, 2004).

Private education

Private education institutions consist of schools at all levels and types, intensive study courses and other courses under Law No. 625. All private institutions are under the control and supervision of the Ministry of National Education.

The establishment and operation of private education institutions is arranged according to the Private Education Law No. 625 of 1995. Institutions prepare their curricula pursuant to regulations issued under this Law. Private schools which follow the national curriculum start to operate upon obtaining the required approval from the Ministry. Private schools and courses which apply a particular curriculum, prepare a weekly course hours schedule for the programme to be applied, which is submitted to the Ministry of National Education.

Private education is provided by different types of institutions: (a) private schools opened by Turkish individuals and legal persons; (b) private schools opened by foreign individuals or legal persons; (c) private schools opened by non-Muslim communities (Greek, Armenian, Jewish); (d) international private education institutions opened either solely by individuals and legal persons with foreign nationality or jointly with Turkish nationals through partnership or by Turkish nationals or legal persons. In addition to these schools, there are private intensive study courses, other courses, and student study centres in operation.

Private education institutions at the different education levels, 1997/98

Level of education	Number of schools	Number of students			Number of teachers
		Total	Male	Female	
Pre-school	514	13,430	7,264	6,166	1,013
Primary education	777	157,098	87,302	69,796	6,052
Secondary education	441	59,495	32,595	26,900	10,761
*General	418	56,530	30,576	25,954	10,570
*Voc.-Tech.	23	2,965	2,019	946	191
Total (formal education)	1,732	230,023	127,161	102,862	17,826
Private Courses*	1,659	387,366	221,682	165,684	14,165
Private Courses**	2,296	395,693	296,922	98,771	17,882 (***)
Total (non-formal ed)	3,955	783,059	518,604	264,455	32,047
Grand Total	5,687	1,013,082	645,765	367,317	49,873

(*) private courses in support of formal education; (**) private courses with a nature of non-formal education; (***) specialists and master instructors are included.

Means of instruction, equipment and infrastructure

Double shifts are currently applied in order to accommodate all students. In order to reduce the gap between the number of students and the number of classrooms, the Ministry is attempting to accelerate the construction of school buildings. Private enterprises have also been encouraged to contribute to this effort. As a result, the physical capacity of the education system has been increased by over 80% in recent years.

Architectural projects for school buildings have been developed by collaborating with architecture faculties of the universities. With this framework, it is projected that: schools will be open to the entire community as centres of social, cultural and sportive activities; schools will be available for the use of physically disabled children; and there will be a maximum of 30 students per classroom.



The production of textbooks used in primary and secondary schools is carried out within the framework of the Regulation on Textbooks of 3 July 1995. Some of the textbooks used at these levels are prepared and published by the Ministry of National Education. Other textbooks are produced and published by private publication houses. A very limited quantity of textbooks, used in schools where education is carried out in a foreign language, are imported.

Textbooks, considered the most important among educational materials, are prepared and evaluated according to the following principles and objectives: specialists in various disciplines work cooperatively to develop educational materials, focusing on scientific content, language and wording, visual design, and measurement. In line with the learner-centred theory, student exercise-books and teachers' guides are also developed. In addition, in-service training on the evaluation of textbooks is provided for the teachers. The Ministry also ensures that textbooks and educational materials used in various regions conform to national regulations.

Concerning non-formal education institutions, some of the education materials are prepared and published by the institutions themselves, while other books are translated into Turkish as an asset for students.

As of 1999/2000, free textbooks have been distributed to students from rural areas and low-income families attending primary school. In 2002/03 a total of 12.47 million primary school textbooks published by the MONE were distributed free of charge throughout the country. In 2003/04 for the first time textbooks (81.83 million copies) were distributed free of charge to all of the students attending primary education.

There is a significant imbalance between the existing needs and the availability of materials, such as laboratory equipment, computers, videos, etc. Laboratory equipment meets 70% of the existing requirements, and equipment such as computers, videos, etc., meets only 40% of the existing needs. Measures have been taken to solve this problem.

Adult and non-formal education

Non-formal education covers education, training, guidance and application activities arranged outside the formal education system for those individuals who have never been within the formal system, who are currently at a certain stage of their education or have left their studies at any stage.

Non-formal education includes general and vocational and technical education programmes aiming at teaching adults how to read and write, providing basic knowledge, further developing knowledge and skills already acquired, and creating new opportunities for improving their standard of living. New programmes are being prepared especially for women.

An important part of non-formal education activities is carried out in 917 Public Training Centres (922 centres with 995,347 students in 2003) which offer

literacy, vocational, social and cultural courses. The table below shows the number of enrolments and teachers according to the different types of institutions in 1997/98.

Number of students and teachers by type of non-formal education institutions, 1997/98

Type of institution	No. of institutions	No. of students	No. of teachers and instructors
Public training centres	917	940,852	25,000
Apprenticeship training centres	319	249,772	4,037
Vocational courses (opened according to Law No. 3308)	-	19,164	-
Total	1,236	1,209,788	29,037

Note: data concerning the number of students in public training centres refer to 1996/97.

Street children and other disadvantaged children are provided with education to the highest level and benefit from free boarding, scholarships, student loans, shelter with families, etc. Training and complementary courses are being offered by real and legal persons, local administrations, municipalities and by the State. Curricula and regulations of such courses are prepared by the General Directorate of Primary Education, relevant departments of the General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education, the Ministry of Village Affairs, and in collaboration with the Ministries of Agriculture, Industry, Health and Social Assistance, under the co-ordination of the Ministry of National Education.

Apprenticeship training covers the training of children who cannot attend secondary education after completing primary school or who remained out of formal education for various reasons. Children under the age of 15 years who have completed their primary education can be accepted as candidate apprentices. During their training, which can be considered as a guidance period, they become familiar with various professions. Youngsters aged 15-18 years who have completed their basic education, may receive vocational training through apprenticeship training. In this case, they cannot work at any workplace without an apprenticeship contract.

Candidate apprentices and apprentice students take theoretical, general and vocational training at least eight to ten hours per week during working hours, depending on the characteristics of the work. Candidate apprentices and apprentices take their theoretical education in apprenticeship training centres or training units established in suitable workplaces. Trained master instructors are responsible for their training.

The apprenticeship period lasts three or four years according to the characteristics of the profession. Those who have completed this period are entitled to sit the assistant mastery examination and those who pass such examinations are awarded the assistant mastery certificate.

In 2002/03, some 293,000 students have been trained in 346 vocational training centres. (MONE, 2004).



Distance education services are offered in order to provide equal learning opportunities for all and to support the education provided in primary, secondary and tertiary education institutions. Open primary school (OPE), open high school (OHS) and vocational and technical open school are included in distance education services. In 2003/04, a total of 1,854,998 students (308,184 at the primary, 894,544 at the secondary, and 652,270 at the higher education level) benefited from distance education services. (MONE, 2004).

Teaching staff

Article 43 of the Basic Law on National Education defines teaching as a profession that requires special expertise, and specifies the duties related to education and training and the relevant administrative duties of the State. Article 45 of the same Law indicates that the training of teachers comprises knowledge and skills on general culture subjects, special field education, and pedagogical formation. Every candidate follows a school practicum. After graduation, candidates work as trainees for one or two years according to their success. In addition, they can follow in-service training courses organized by the National Education Department of In-service Training. The MONE determines the number of teachers who will be employed every year; teachers are selected both from national and foreign institutions of teacher training.

Teachers were trained in higher education schools under the Ministry of National Education and in faculties of education until the responsibility for teacher training was completely transferred to universities in accordance with the 1981 Higher Education Law.

All teachers are required to possess higher education degrees (graduate degrees) regardless of the education level at which they teach. Anatolian Teacher Training High Schools, with intensive foreign language courses during a four-year period, have been opened at the secondary level with the objective to provide more qualified students for teacher training institutions. Graduates of these schools are entitled to benefit from additional points on the Student Selection and Placement Examination, if they choose to attend teacher training faculties. This work has shown positive effects in the short term, and it is observed that the entrance points (points achieved on the Student Selection and Placement Examination) required to be admitted into faculties for classroom and subject teachers have increased.

Candidate teachers who have applied for appointment in schools under the Ministry of National Education are to take basic education, preparatory education and practical training programmes, the duration of which varies between three and ten months. During their practical training, candidates teach under the guidance of a senior teacher. On the completion of applied training, achievement is evaluated by the guiding teacher and the administration. After this training period, those who have been successful are appointed as permanent teachers. Those who were not successful are entitled to repeat the same training.

Teachers assigned as classroom teachers in the first five grades of primary schools are required to teach thirty hours per week. In addition, they have to participate in seminars organized in the school at the beginning and end of the



academic year. Teachers working in Grades VI-VIII teach twenty-four hours per week, of which eighteen hours are within their normal salaries and six hours are paid extra and compulsory in case of need.

In general high schools, teachers work fifteen hours per week within their normal salaries and six hours on paid basis if needed. In vocational/technical high schools, they work twenty hours per week and they are required to teach between fifteen and twenty hours (depending on the type of schools) within their normal salaries, and twenty-four to twenty-seven hours on paid basis if needed.

In addition, teachers at all levels perform duties as class teachers for a total of three hours per week, of which two hours are for educational activities and one hour for guidance activities. They also carry out educational activities within the framework of extracurricular social and cultural activities promoted by schools' associations. Furthermore, they are obliged to attend meetings of the board of teachers convened under the chairmanship of the school principal, and to participate in the activities arranged at school on national days and other special celebration days and weeks.

In-service training is arranged in accordance with the Regulations of In-Service Training and In-Service Training Centres. These Regulations determine the principles, objectives, planning, application, evaluation and management of training activities to be performed. In-service training activities were centrally planned by the Ministry of National Education until 1995, when the provincial administrations were also authorized to organize such activities locally. Provincial Directorates plan in-service training activities in conformity with the local requirements and apply them accordingly. The duration of in-service training programmes varies between three and ninety days, according to the content of the programmes.

Teachers participating in in-service training activities are selected by the Ministry from among those who have submitted their applications. In 2003, a total of 272,862 teachers and other educational staff were offered in-service training opportunities through 7,520 training activities, of which 400 were organized at the central level and the remaining at the local level.

In line with the importance attached to computer-assisted education, the number of courses provided in the use of computers has increased considerably during the last decade. In 2002, some 25% of the in-service training courses were on the use of computers. In 2003, the Ministry launched a new project on "Computer Training" in order to offer in-service training on the use of computers and the Internet for the staff at all levels of central and local organizations, especially teachers who have not been able to participate in this kind of training activities.

For teachers graduated from two- and three-year higher education institutions, completion programmes to obtain graduate degrees through distance education are organized in collaboration with universities. Teachers graduated from Teacher Training High Schools are offered opportunities to continue their education to obtain associate degrees, and holders of associate degrees can obtain graduate and post-graduate degrees in the same way.



Measures are taken to provide a balanced distribution of teachers at national, local and institutional levels through the Regulation on School Teachers' Appointments and Transfers Attached to the Ministry of National Education, issued in 1990. However, in certain regions and provinces there are still some imbalances, and work to solve this problem is underway.

Educational research and information

In Turkey, research is essentially linked to higher education institutions. Research on higher education is undertaken primarily by the Higher Education Council (YÖK), the Student Selection and Placement Centre (ÖSYM), and the faculties of education. The YÖK is essentially concerned with research on evaluation and appraisal of development and progress in higher education. The ÖSYM conducts research primarily on topics related to the university entrance examination. Staff members in the faculties of education conduct research on the various levels and aspects of education. Their research papers are published in academic journals in Turkey and abroad (see: UNESCO/CEPES, 1990).

Research and development activities regarding pre-higher education (pre-primary, primary and secondary) are carried out by the Ministry of National Education. Two main research and development units exist within the Ministry, one for general education and the other for vocational and technical education.

In recent years, several studies on the following issues have been undertaken: evaluation of teachers' performance; utilization of science laboratories; school maps; in-service training of teachers; analysis of teaching burden; etc. In addition, several surveys have been carried out on various aspects such as: the course passing and credit rating system; Anatolian high schools; relationship between the school and the families; private training centres; preparation of textbooks, etc.

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Web resources

Ministry of National Education: <http://www.meb.gov.tr/index.asp> [Mainly in Turkish; some information in English. Last checked: October 2007.]

Council of Higher Education: <http://www.yok.gov.tr/> [In Turkish. Last checked: October 2007.]

EURYBASE, the information database on education systems in Europe: <http://www.eurydice.org/> [In several languages.]

For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/links.htm>