



## CROATIA

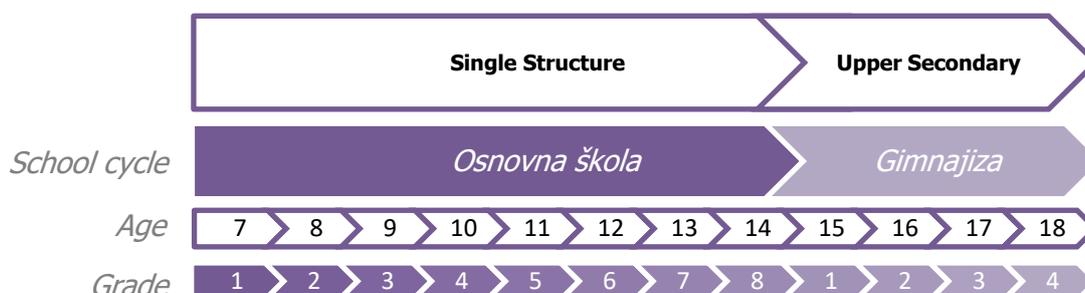
# INFOPACK - RECOGNITION OF LEARNING PERIODS ABROAD IN GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION

### Contents

<b><u>GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM</u></b>	<b>1</b>
<b><u>INFORMATION FOR PUPILS GOING ABROAD FROM CROATIA</u></b>	<b>3</b>
<b><u>RECOGNITION OF LEARNING PERIODS ABROAD</u></b>	<b>3</b>
<b><u>INFORMATION FOR PUPILS HOSTED IN CROATIA</u></b>	<b>4</b>
<b><u>TESTIMONIAL</u></b>	<b>5</b>

The information below gives an overview of procedures<sup>1</sup> for the recognition of learning periods abroad in general secondary school. It can be consulted by pupils, as well their families and teachers, who are or plan to be involved in long-term individual pupil mobility programmes abroad. Please note that this general overview does not include details on different programme types (which may be run by governmental agencies, civil society organisations, private companies or schools themselves) and such information can be obtained directly with the provider of the respective mobility programme.

### GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM



<sup>1</sup> Based on data gathered in February 2021.

Education is compulsory until 15 years of age. Secondary education is a four-year cycle which starts after completion of primary education<sup>2</sup> and it is not compulsory. General secondary education<sup>3</sup> (grammar schools – gimnazije) comprises five types of programmes:

1. General education grammar school programme
2. Language grammar school programme
3. Classical grammar school programme
4. Natural sciences and mathematics grammar school programme
5. Natural sciences grammar school programme.

## Graduation and Certification

The State school leaving exam (State Graduation Exams)<sup>4</sup> marks the end of general secondary education and is organised and carried out by the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education (NCEEE). It consists of three compulsory exams (i.e., Croatian language and literature, Math and a Foreign Language), and exams in elective courses chosen by the pupil; a maximum of six elective exams can be chosen<sup>5</sup>.

Compulsory exams can be taken at two levels: the higher level (A) and the basic level (B). Pupils decide which level to take depending on the enrolment requirements of the university programme they wish to follow<sup>6</sup>.

Pupils who have successfully passed the State school leaving exam get a Certificate of Completion (*Svjedodžba o položenoj državnoj maturi*) which notes the marks obtained in each subject.<sup>7</sup>

Enrolment in universities is based on the State school leaving exam marks and school marks. Some faculties require pupils to take a separate entrance exam.

For more information on the structure and features of the different national education systems in Europe please see the Eurydice overview: National Education Systems | Eurydice (europa.eu).

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<sup>2</sup> Single structure education in Croatia is compulsory and lasts for eight years, it is compulsory for all children aged, as a rule, from 7 to 15. [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/single-structure-education-integrated-primary-and-lower-secondary-education-1\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/single-structure-education-integrated-primary-and-lower-secondary-education-1_en),

[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/upper-secondary-and-post-secondary-non-tertiary-education-1\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/upper-secondary-and-post-secondary-non-tertiary-education-1_en)

<sup>3</sup> under the conditions laid down in the Primary and Secondary School Education Act (OG No. 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 90 / 11, 5/12, 16/12, 86/12, 94/13, 136/14 - RUSRH, 152/14, 7/17, 68/18 and 98/19).

<sup>4</sup> Ordinance on the State Graduation Exams (OG 01/13 and 41/19)

<sup>5</sup> Eurydice, National Education systems, Croatia, Key features of the educational system, [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/croatia\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/croatia_en) and Assessment in General upper secondary education, [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/assessment-general-upper-secondary-education-10\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/assessment-general-upper-secondary-education-10_en)

<sup>6</sup> National Centre for External Evaluation of Education, Rules fortaking the end-of-school examination

<https://www.ncvvo.hr/kategorija/drzavna-matura/pravilnik-o-polaganju-drzavne-mature/>

<sup>7</sup> Eurydice, National Education systems, Croatia, Assessment in General upper secondary education [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/assessment-general-upper-secondary-education-10\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/assessment-general-upper-secondary-education-10_en)

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## INFORMATION FOR PUPILS GOING ABROAD FROM CROATIA

### Age and grade

Pupils usually go on exchange during the 3rd grade of upper secondary school (second last grade) when they are 16/17 years old, and they return for the final grade<sup>8</sup>.

### Registration in the sending school

The Ministry of Education allows for up to one academic year to be spent abroad and it is then up to schools to decide autonomously on whether to grant this permission; it is usually granted. Pupils are registered in the sending school while abroad.

### Funding for the sending school

There is no specific State funding for the sending school for a pupil who is registered as being abroad: schools are funded on the basis of the global number of all pupils and classes at the beginning of a school year.

## RECOGNITION OF LEARNING PERIODS ABROAD

The following information addresses learning periods abroad lasting either up to 6 months, or a full school year. According to the analysis conducted, there is no information available on recognition procedures for periods abroad of more than 6 months and shorter than a full school year, or of any duration shorter than a full school year and finishing after the end of the school year in Croatia. In fact, mobility programmes foreseeing these timings and durations are not usually offered.

The same procedures are applied, irrespective of which country the learning period is spent in (EU or non-EU).

*Please note that in the case of a mobility within a school-to-school partnership<sup>9</sup> (e.g. Erasmus+) the learning agreement between sending and host school can be used as recognition tool for programmes of any duration up to a full school year.*

Recognition of learning periods abroad is decided by the school council and the teachers' board of sending schools.<sup>10</sup> Generally, no learning agreement is required, however when abroad you should attend a similar type of school to your sending school<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> E. Briga, 'Recognition of school study periods abroad in Europe: An overview and policy recommendations. European Federation for Intercultural Learning', EFIL, Brussels, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> within a school-to-school partnerships, learning outcomes are usually recognised based on a learning agreement developed between the schools concerned

<sup>10</sup> Agency for science and higher education, Recognition of foreign education qualifications in Croatia  
<https://www.azvo.hr/en/enic-naric-office/recognition-of-foreign-education-qualifications-in-croatia>

<sup>11</sup> Briga, 2018.

## Periods of between 2 and 6 months

If you go abroad for periods of between 2 and 6 months you are reintegrated back into your class and need to pass the exams at the end of the semester or at the end of the school year<sup>12</sup>. You need to bring confirmation of attendance from the host school and the teachers' board decides on which subjects you need to be examined in.

## A full school year

Recognition is based on the correspondence of subjects between the sending and host school curricula.

Upon return, you must provide your sending school with a certificate of attendance from the host school as well as a transcript of grades translated into Croatian by an official translator. The school might require additional documents such as a learning agreement (drafted before or during the mobility experience), an overview of the curriculum of subjects studied in the host country including a detailed description of each subject.

The school council and the teachers' board evaluate these documents and decide which additional exams you need to take to move to the next grade. Usually, you will be asked to take exams for the subjects you were not able to study abroad, for example Croatian language.

As a large number of subjects (15-17) is taken in upper secondary school this means that you might have to take a number of additional exams to have your learning period abroad validated, which is quite challenging<sup>13</sup>.

## INFORMATION FOR PUPILS HOSTED IN CROATIA

### Registration in the host school

The school decides autonomously on your admission and the documents that are required<sup>14</sup>. Usually, you will be asked to bring those documents related to the mobility, such as a parent's approval, the school's approval and that of the exchange organisation. You will not be enrolled as regular pupil: you will be placed in a class based on your age and you can choose which subjects to follow. You can also be hosted in the last grade of upper secondary school.

### Funding for the host school

There is no funding for the host school.

### Certification for hosted pupils

You will receive a confirmation of attendance including information on the subjects studied and the number of study hours attended. However, your competences are not assessed and therefore you do not receive a certificate with grades.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> All pupils who went abroad with AFS Croatia until 2019 received recognition of their study period abroad.

<sup>14</sup> Croatian Education Agency, Recognition of foreign educational qualifications

<https://www.azoo.hr/inozemne-obrazovne-kvalifikacije/>

## Possibility of graduating in the host country during the mobility

You can attend the final grade but cannot complete secondary education in Croatia as you are not allowed to take the State school leaving exam.

### TESTIMONIAL

#### Ema from Croatia: a full school year in Germany

*"I learnt to approach every situation from different perspectives."*

I have a passion for foreign languages and intense travels, which is why I decided to go on exchange.

When I arrived in Germany, I was well aware of what to expect in terms of culture shock, thanks to the tips given during the pre-orientation camp. However, some advice on how to deal with loneliness and misunderstandings would have been useful.

At the beginning the language barrier was difficult to overcome, but with a lot of studying and help from my host family and teachers I became fluent in three months.

Talking about family, some months after my arrival I had to change my school and my host family. The new host family lived close to a concert hall. Once I was very excited to go to a concert but not sure whether my host parents would allow me. Not only they allowed it, my host father came with me!

#### *A school year certificate for recognition*

I wanted to get a school year certificate from my German school, so that when I went back to Croatia, I wouldn't have to repeat the year. Thanks to the support of both my German and Croatian teachers, I was able to obtain the certificate, have it validated by the Croatian Ministry and pass the graduation exam in my school.

The most important lesson I learnt during my exchange is to put myself into somebody else's shoes and treat them accordingly. This kind of experience also increases your self-confidence, soft skills and opens up your mind. My advice is: stay as long as possible, take your time to adapt and to enjoy your new reality, do not make too many plans, and connect with local people.

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