



CZECH REPUBLIC

INFOPACK - RECOGNITION OF LEARNING PERIODS ABROAD IN GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION

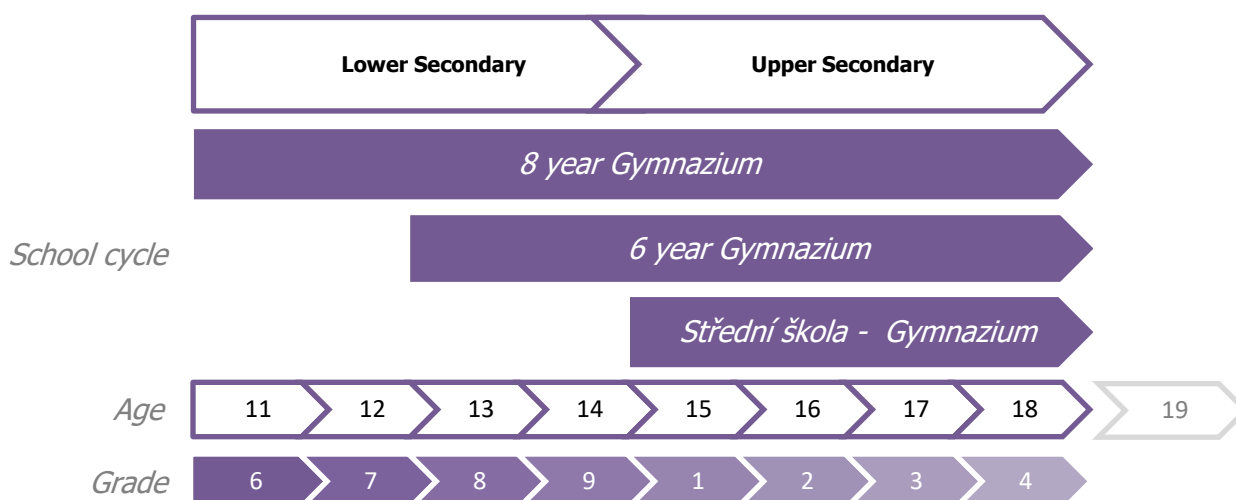
Contents

<u>GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM</u>	2
<u>INFORMATION FOR PUPILS GOING ABROAD FROM CZECH REPUBLIC</u>	3
<u>RECOGNITION OF LEARNING PERIODS ABROAD</u>	3
<u>INFORMATION FOR PUPILS HOSTED IN CZECH REPUBLIC</u>	4
<u>TESTIMONIAL</u>	5

The information below gives an overview of procedures¹ for the recognition of learning periods abroad in general secondary school. It can be consulted by pupils, as well as 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.

¹ Based on data gathered in February 2021.

GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM



Education is compulsory until 15 years of age. Upper secondary education (*střední školy*) is a four-year cycle starting after 9th grade. General secondary education (*Gymnazium*) is offered either as a four-year educational programme corresponding to upper secondary education, or as the last four years of the six-year or eight-year *Gymnazium* starting during compulsory schooling.

Graduation and Certification

Pupils receive a school-leaving certificate if they pass the end-of-school examination (*maturitní zkouška*, or *Maturita*).

The *Maturita* examination consists of exams in 4-5 subjects. The examination in two subjects (i.e. Czech language and world literature, plus either mathematics or a foreign language) is standardised and set by the Center for the Evaluation of Educational Outcomes (CERMAT).² The exams in the other two or three subjects are decided and tested by the school³.

The *Maturita* entitles graduates to enter higher education. The entrance requirements of some faculties are based on the results obtained in the *Maturita*.

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).

² Center for the Evaluation of Educational Outcomes – an organisation established and managed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in 2006. Its purpose is to organise and evaluate the Matura examination, <https://cermat.cz/>

³ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's by country analysis,

<https://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?primaryCountry=CZE>

The handbook of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports about the Education system in the Czech Republic, <http://www.msmt.cz/file/21631/download/>

The Center for the Evaluation of Educational Outcomes' website about the upcoming exam (Maturita 2021), <https://maturita.cermat.cz/menu/maturitni-zkouska> -

INFORMATION FOR PUPILS GOING ABROAD FROM CZECH REPUBLIC

Age and grade

Pupils usually go on a learning period abroad in the 2nd and 3rd year of *Gymnazium* (third and second last year of upper secondary school⁴), when they are 16-18.

Registration in the sending school

If you take part in a mobility programme outside of a school-to-school partnership agreement, school principals have the discretion to permit the interruption of studies for up to a full school year. In this case, you are not enrolled in the school and must apply for re-enrolment upon return, as foreseen by the law⁵.

Funding for the sending school

Since 1 January 2020, schools are financed on the basis of the actual number of hours of direct pedagogical activity carried out⁶ in accordance with Art. 118 of the Education Act.⁷ Therefore, the school does not receive financial support on the basis of the number of pupils enrolled⁸.

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 Czechia. 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 partnership⁹ (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.

⁴ E. Briga, 'Recognition of school study periods abroad in Europe: An overview and policy recommendations. European Federation for Intercultural Learning', EFIL, Brussels, 2018.

⁵ According to § 66 par. 5 of Act no. No. 561/2004 Coll.

⁶ Answer from the Department of Methodology and Financing of Schools and School Facilities of the Ministry of Education, 21 August 2020.

⁷ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports - Principles of the breakdown of the budget of direct expenditures of regional education of territorial self - governing units for the year 2020

<https://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/skolstvi-v-cr/ekonomika-skolstvi/principy-rozpisu-rozpoctu-primych-vydaju-regionalniho>

⁸ Answer from the Department of Methodology and Financing of Schools and School Facilities of the Ministry of Education, 21 August 2020.

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

Periods of between 2 and 6 months

If you spend between 2 and 6 months abroad, you must agree with your teachers on an individual study plan to fulfil during the exchange programme or upon return. On your return, you are reintegrated in your class and take some exams on the subjects you did not follow abroad, at the discretion of your teachers¹⁰.

A full school year

According to the regulation applying to pupils who interrupt their studies¹¹, the school principal decides whether you may continue in the following grade once you return from your learning period abroad, provided you demonstrate adequate knowledge¹². According to the same law¹³, the school principal also decides whether to recognise only some subjects¹⁴.

Often there is no recognition of the learning period abroad, and your knowledge on the overall curriculum of the given grade will be assessed by means of an exam.

Possibility to take an exam on the whole curriculum to be admitted to the next school year

Before leaving for the learning period abroad, you need to decide whether to take the exam on the overall curriculum on your return¹⁵. It is your responsibility to arrange with the sending school an individual study plan based on the curriculum of your grade and agree on what homework you will need to do and which exams to take online or after returning. However, this is not an official learning agreement but only an informal contract.

School principals are extremely influential in this process as they decide whether you can take the exam, or if you must repeat the school year. Most school principals are open to holding the exam, although the procedure for taking the exam can change every year and no guidelines are provided by the Ministry of Education¹⁶.

INFORMATION FOR PUPILS HOSTED IN CZECH REPUBLIC

Registration in the host school

As an exchange pupil, you are enrolled in a Czech school based on the certificates submitted by your sending school. The school principal of the host school can decide whether to require an entrance test. Based on this assessment, the school decides on your placement in class: exchange pupils are usually placed in 2nd or 3rd grade; your age is also taken into account¹⁷. You would generally not be placed in the 1st grade as you would need to pass an entrance exam from lower to upper

¹⁰ Briga, 2018.

¹¹ § 66 para. 5 of Act no. No. 561/2004 Coll.

¹² Educational Law c. 561/2004 Sb., about pre/school, primary, secondary, higher specialised and other education.

¹³ § 70 of the Education Act.

¹⁴ Answer from the Department of General Education of the Czech Ministry of the Czech Republic, 31 July 2020.

¹⁵ According to AFS Czech Republic, 50% of pupils enrolling in an individual mobility programme choose this option.

¹⁶ Briga, 2018.

¹⁷ Answer from the Department of General Education of the Czech Ministry of the Czech Republic, 6 November 2020.

secondary school, although there is an exception to this rule in the 6 or 8-year *Gymnazia*. Finally, you can be placed in the last grade but this is very rare.

Funding for the host school

The school does not receive State funding for the hosted pupil specifically as the funding is not based on the number of pupils enrolled.

Certification for hosted pupils

Hosted pupils can receive an official transcript of grades since they are enrolled as regular pupils. However, since their marks are often not positive, it is not considered useful to share this with them. Some exchange organisations provide the school with a specific assessment form to fill in for the hosted pupils, which takes into account the overall development of the pupil, beyond subject learning.

Possibility of graduating in the host country during the exchange

You can be admitted to complete upper secondary education in the Czechia and receive a school leaving certificate¹⁸, although this is rare practice.

TESTIMONIAL

Viktorie from Czech Republic: a full school year in Denmark

"Every time I went out of my comfort zone, I felt a little bit more confident."

Although I decided to participate in the exchange to learn a new language and discover a new culture, my expectations before leaving were quite pessimistic. I was scared to meet new people and not to be accepted. Luckily, my experience was everything but negative. Of course, I had some difficulties, especially when the pandemic began, but I decided to step out of my comfort zone and interact with people.

Before leaving I had prepared by studying some basic Danish and reading some books about Denmark.

One funny moment I remember was at a big supermarket in Copenhagen, where I went with some friends. One of them is Japanese and a big cheese fan, she ate so much of it in Denmark because it's not that easy to find it in Japan (at a reasonable price). At some point we thought we had lost her in the shop; instead, we found her in the cheese aisle, frozen, with her mouth open...she was looking at the cheese as if it were angels or some sort of miracle!

An easy recognition process and a warm welcome back to school

¹⁸ Answer from the Department of General Education of the Czech Ministry of the Czech Republic, 19 August 2020.

I had been warned that coming back to school might be hard but actually it wasn't. My classmates helped me a lot, so I wouldn't feel lost, and were curious about my experience. My teachers were very helpful, too, and I could enrol back in my school very easily.

I would definitely recommend this experience: it helped me grow personally, I was able to learn a new language and now I am thinking about studying abroad. My advice is to be patient, pro-active and not afraid to open up.

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