



# DENMARK

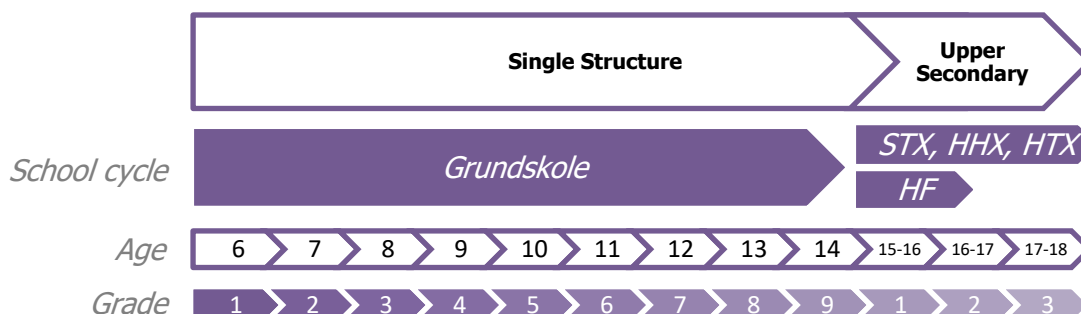
## INFOPACK - RECOGNITION OF LEARNING PERIODS ABROAD IN GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION

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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 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 from 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 16 years of age. Upper secondary education in Denmark is not compulsory. General upper secondary education programmes are:

- The STX Upper Secondary School leaving Examination (*Almen studentereksamen*) and HF Higher Preparatory Examination (*Højere forberedelseseksamen*) programmes offer a broad range of subjects in the fields of the humanities, natural science and social science. STX is offered at *Gymnasiums*. HF is offered at other institutions and lasts only two years.
- The HHX Higher Commercial Examination Programme (*Merkantil studentereksamen*) focuses on business and socioeconomic disciplines in combination with foreign languages and other general subjects and is offered at business colleges.
- The HTX Higher Technical Examination Programme (*Teknisk studentereksamen*) focuses on technological and scientific subjects in combination with general subjects and is offered at technical colleges.

## Graduation and Certification

At the end of secondary school pupils take a written examination in Danish and in the other subjects at A-level, together with a number of oral examinations in accordance with the number of subjects chosen at A-level<sup>2</sup>. The exams are set centrally by the Ministry of Education, while the exam is held at the school. A school leaving certificate <sup>3</sup> is issued when the pupil has a passing grade in weighted average between the end-of-term term marks and those of the examination<sup>4</sup>.

The examination average is included in the school leaving certificate forms part of the basis for admission to higher education.

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).

## INFORMATION FOR PUPILS GOING ABROAD FROM DENMARK

### Age and grade

Generally, pupils go on a learning period abroad by taking a gap year after they have completed their compulsory education (*Grundskole*) and before entering the 1st year of upper secondary school, which is normally at age 15/16. It is normal and culturally accepted not to go directly into upper secondary school directly after compulsory education, but instead to go either on a mobility abroad, or go to boarding school for a year (where they follow subjects related to their specific interests). Pupils can also go on exchange during upper secondary school for a semester.

### Registration in the sending school

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<sup>2</sup> Eurydice, National education systems, Denmark, Assessment in General Upper Secondary Education [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/assessment-general-upper-secondary-education-12\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/assessment-general-upper-secondary-education-12_en)

<sup>3</sup> The leaving diploma for lower secondary/ground school is called '*Afgangsbevis*'. The leaving diploma for upper secondary/gymnasiums is called '*Eksamensbevis*'

<sup>4</sup> The Danish Ministry of Education's description of the certificate: <https://www.uvm.dk/gymnasiale-uddannelser/proever-og-eksamen/beviser+>

If you take a gap year before starting upper secondary school, you do not need to be registered in a Danish school while abroad.

If you are already attending upper secondary education, schools have the discretion to allow you to interrupt a school year for a learning period abroad. This means you are still registered in your sending school and can return to the school on return from your mobility. However, it should be noted that if you are older than 18 years of age, you will not be eligible to receive your government education grant while on mobility.

## Funding for the sending school

The State funding that schools receive is based on the yearly number of pupils in the actual school, therefore your sending school will not receive any funding for you while you are on a mobility abroad.

## RECOGNITION OF LEARNING PERIODS ABROAD

The following information addresses learning periods abroad within the framework of a gap year or during upper secondary education. 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>5</sup> (e.g. Erasmus+) the learning agreement between sending and host school can be used as a tool for recognition, although there is no evidence that it can be successful for the recognition of a full school year abroad.*

## Gap year between lower secondary and upper secondary education

If you go abroad for a gap year before the 1st year of upper secondary school, you can apply to have your prior learning and qualifications assessed<sup>6</sup> when entering upper secondary school. If you already meet the learning outcomes of a specific course or exam, credit can be given. It should also be noted that teachers do recognise and appreciate the transversal skills that you develop during the mobility experience<sup>7</sup>.

## Periods abroad during upper secondary education

The learning periods abroad are normally for a trimester or semester. Recognition of learning periods abroad is a decision of the school, and you can make an agreement with your school before going on the exchange programme and define which subjects and exams will be recognised.

Usually, you can return to your class and follow the courses that were not recognised. However, teachers advise against this as you may find it difficult to return and study the lessons you have missed abroad, while trying to follow the current programme.

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<sup>5</sup> within a school-to-school partnership, learning outcomes are usually recognised based on a learning agreement developed between the schools concerned.

<sup>6</sup> Process of recognition of informal and non-formal learning throughout the entire education system, see Danish 2004 policy Recognition of prior learning in the education system.

<sup>7</sup> E. Briga, 'Recognition of school study periods abroad in Europe: An overview and policy recommendations. European Federation for Intercultural Learning', EFIL, Brussels, 2018.

Therefore, the longer the period spent abroad and the lower the number of subjects recognised upon return, the higher the chances that the pupil will have to repeat the year.

## INFORMATION FOR PUPILS HOSTED IN DENMARK

### Registration in the host school

There is no specific legislative provision regarding incoming pupils: the admission of exchange pupils is at the discretion of the school principal. The only requirement for enrolment is that your prior education must be equal to that of the Danish elementary school exam. The elementary exam in lower secondary school is composed of five compulsory exams (oral and written Danish, written math, oral English and an oral combination of physics/chemistry, biology and geography) and two exams you can draw from a pot of written English, written or oral German/French, oral history, oral social studies, oral religion, written biology, written geography, oral math, oral physical education/sports and written physics/chemistry. To pass the exam you need a minimum grade of 02 (E) in weighted average.

Should there be any doubt as to whether you fulfil the entry requirements the school principal can ask you to take an exam. On admission, you will be placed in classes based on your age, knowledge and prior education. It is possible that you could be placed in the last years of upper secondary education, though it does not happen often, but if age and prior learning matches, it can happen.

### Funding for the host school

The school receives the same amount of State funding as it receives for its own pupils.

### Certification for hosted pupils

The school principal decides whether and how to certify the studies undertaken in Denmark, based on school attendance and the performance in the different subjects.

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

If you are officially enrolled in the Danish school during your exchange, you may also take exams, even though this mainly applies to English-courses. If you learn Danish through your exchange, it is possible to take exams in Danish courses as well. However, this is a rare practice.

## TESTIMONIAL

### Philip from Denmark: a full year to Belgium

*"Sometimes it is the small, everyday things that you will love and miss the most."*

I decided to go on exchange for many reasons: to take a break from the school routine, to grow personally, to reflect upon my future school career and to understand a new culture.

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I prepared for the exchange by participating in cultural weekends and activities with other students and volunteers. Preparing to leave with an open mind is also essential, as it guarantees a lot of fun.

As I am not a very extroverted person, making friends wasn't that easy for me at first – until I found a very good one, who introduced me to his group of friends.

I have many fond memories of my exchange, one in particular about my birthday. In Belgium they eat a lot of fries, and I became a big fan myself, so for my birthday dinner my host family bought me an extra-large portion of fries. I don't think I could have thought of a better way to celebrate than with a super-size portion of fries!

### *Recognition granted and a school year discounted*

Before going on exchange, I was aware that I might lose one year of school, but luckily that didn't happen. I finished my 10th year before going abroad, which meant I only had three years of upper secondary school left, and these last years are done in a different school than the 10 previous years. When I came back to Denmark, I enrolled in an international school where my exchange year was recognised as my first year of upper secondary school, so I only had two years left instead of three.

Without my exchange I wouldn't be as independent; a year abroad teaches you a lot about yourself and opens many doors. Every exchange is different of course, but you will definitely live an amazing year with new friends and a new family, you will be amazed also by the small, everyday things, and those you will love and miss the most. I've been recommending it to anybody asking!

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