



Structures of Education,
Initial Training
and Adult Education
Systems in Europe

UNITED KINGDOM

1999

**ENGLAND AND WALES
NORTHERN IRELAND
SCOTLAND**

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If you wish to have more detailed information on education systems in Europe, we warmly recommend that you consult the EURYBASE database (<http://www.eurydice.org>) and the CEDEFOP monographs (<http://www.cedefop.gr>)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
BACKGROUND	10
United Kingdom	10
ENGLAND AND WALES	11
1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION	11
1.1 Basis of the education system: principles and legislation	11
1.2 Distribution of responsibilities for the organisation and administration of the education system	11
1.3 Inspection/supervision/guidance	14
1.4 Financing	15
1.5 Advisory and consultative bodies	16
1.6 Private schools	17
2. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION	18
2.1 Organisation	18
2.2 Curriculum/assessment	18
2.3 Teachers	19
2.4 Statistics	19
3. COMPULSORY EDUCATION	20
3A Primary schools	21
3A.1 Organisation	21
3A.2 Curriculum	21
3A.3 Certification/guidance	22
3A.4 Teachers	22
3B Secondary schools	23
3B.1 Organisation	23
3B.2 Curriculum	23
3B.3 Assessment/certification/guidance	23
3B.4 Teachers	24
Statistics	25
4. POST-COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION AND FURTHER EDUCATION	25
4.1 Organisation	26
4.2 Curriculum, assessment and qualifications	26
4.3 Teachers	28
4.4 Statistics	28
5. INITIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING	29
5.1 Organisation	29
5.2 Education/training establishments	30
5.3 Financing	30
5.4 Curriculum and qualifications	31
5.5 Teachers/trainers	31
5.6 Statistics	31
6. HIGHER EDUCATION	32
6.1 Admission requirements	32
6.2 Fees/financial support for students	32
6.3 Academic year	33
6.4 Courses	33

6.5 Assessment/qualifications	33
6.6 Teachers.....	34
6.6 Statistics	34
7. ADULT EDUCATION	35
7.1 Organisation	35
7.2 Education/training establishments.....	36
7.3 Financing	36
7.4 Curriculum and qualifications.....	36
7.5 Statistics	37
NORTHERN IRELAND	38
1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION	38
1.2 Distribution of responsibilities for the organisation and administration of the education system	38
1.3 Inspection/supervision/guidance.....	40
1.4 Financing	40
1.5 Advisory and consultative bodies.....	40
1.6 Private schools	41
2 PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION.....	41
2.1 Organisation	41
2.2 Curriculum/assessment	41
2.3 Teachers.....	42
2.4 Statistics	42
3. COMPULSORY EDUCATION	42
3A. Primary level.....	43
3A.1 Organisation	43
3A.2 Curriculum	43
3A.3 Assessment/certification/guidance	43
3A.4 Teachers.....	43
3B Secondary level.....	43
3B.1 Organisation.....	43
3B.2 Secondary curriculum	44
3B.3 Assessment/certification/guidance.....	44
3B.4 Teachers.....	44
Statistics	44
4. POST-COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION AND FURTHER EDUCATION	45
Statistics	45
5. INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING	45
6. HIGHER EDUCATION	46
7. ADULT EDUCATION	46
SCOTLAND	47
1. ADMINISTRATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES	47
1.1 Principles and legislation.....	47
1.2 Distribution of responsibilities	47
1.3 Inspection	48
1.4 Financing	49
1.5 Advisory and consultative bodies.....	49
1.6 Vocational Training	50

1.7 Private schools	50
2. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION.....	51
2.1 Pre-primary establishments	51
2.2 Day care facilities	51
2.3 Organization	51
2.4 Curriculum	51
2.5 Teachers.....	51
2.6 Statistics	52
3. COMPULSORY EDUCATION	52
3A PRIMARY EDUCATION.....	52
3A.1 Organization	52
3A.2 Curriculum	53
3A.3 Assessment	53
3B LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION.....	53
3B.1 Organization.....	54
3B.2 Curriculum.....	54
3B.3 Assessment and Certification	54
3B.4 Teachers.....	55
Statistics	55
4. POST COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION	55
4.1 Organization	56
4.2 Curriculum	56
4.3 Higher Still.....	56
4.4 Assessment	56
4.5 Certification.....	57
4.5 Teachers.....	57
4.6 Statistics	57
5. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING	57
5.1 Further education	58
5.2 Youth training	58
5.3 Teachers/trainees	58
5.4 Statistics	59
6. HIGHER EDUCATION	59
6.1 Admission.....	59
6.2 Student finance	59
6.3 The academic year	60
6.4 Courses and certification.....	60
6.5 Assessment	60
6.6. Teachers.....	60
6.7 Statistics	60
7. ADULT EDUCATION.....	61
7.1 Legislative framework.....	61
7.2 Financing and funding	61
7.3 Adult Education.....	61

INTRODUCTION

Europe is characterized by a very wide variety of education and training systems. In order that this diversity should be fully appreciated, EURYDICE, the information network on education in Europe and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) jointly published *Education and Initial Training Systems in the European Union* for the first time in 1990. This book was updated in 1995 and then again in 1999/2000. Given the number of countries it now covers¹ and the amount of data available, this most recent update has been placed for consultation on the EURYDICE Network website (<http://www.eurydice.org>), instead of being distributed in printed paper form. In this way, it may be accessed by a maximum number of readers and updated on a more regular basis.

Descriptions relating to individual countries in turn include basic information on the administration and structure of their systems of education and initial vocational training at all levels, as well as brief accounts of their higher education and systems for initial and in-service teacher training, and of the status of teachers. EURYDICE and CEDEFOP have also used this latest update to add a chapter on adult education, which is an important topic in relation to the development of lifelong learning in Europe.

As in the previous edition, the information is structured with respect to a common table of contents to facilitate inter-country comparisons while ensuring that special features peculiar to each system are duly emphasized.

The first chapter within each country section is devoted to a short presentation of the country concerned, together with the basic principles governing its education and training, the division of responsibilities and then more specific information (relating to administration, inspection, financing, private schooling and advisory bodies). The major reforms of education systems are also considered.

The other chapters deal in turn with pre-primary education, compulsory and post-compulsory education (general, technical and vocational), the initial vocational training of young people and higher education. Here also, the way these chapters are structured depends on each national context. Where pre-primary education is not in reality separate from primary education, or where compulsory education spans different levels, no artificial division has been created. In the case of all countries, a brief description of the aims and structure of the level of education concerned is followed by further headings devoted to the curriculum, assessment, teachers and statistics.

Initial vocational training is the subject of a chapter in its own right, as it is generally provided outside the ordinary education system, whether as part of schemes for apprenticeship, the special training of young people or vocational integration. This is followed by a chapter on higher education, in which a summary description is supplemented by sections on admission, fees, the academic year, courses, qualifications and assessment.

As indicated above, this latest updating also provides for the first time a general description of the way formal systems of general education and vocational training for adults are organized. The legislative framework and financing of this kind of education are also covered.

The situation regarding teachers is dealt with in a specific section for each level of education discussed. Also provided are statistics on the number of pupils, students, teachers and educational institutions and, where figures are available, on pupil or student/teacher ratios, attendance and attainment rates or, yet again, on the choice of branches of study or areas of specialization.

¹ **The European countries taking part in the Community Programme in Education, Socrates.**

The description for each country is preceded by a diagram of its education system with explanatory notes. Here again, the way the diagrams are presented has, as far as possible, been standardized so that common – and differing – features of the various systems can be more easily identified and compared.

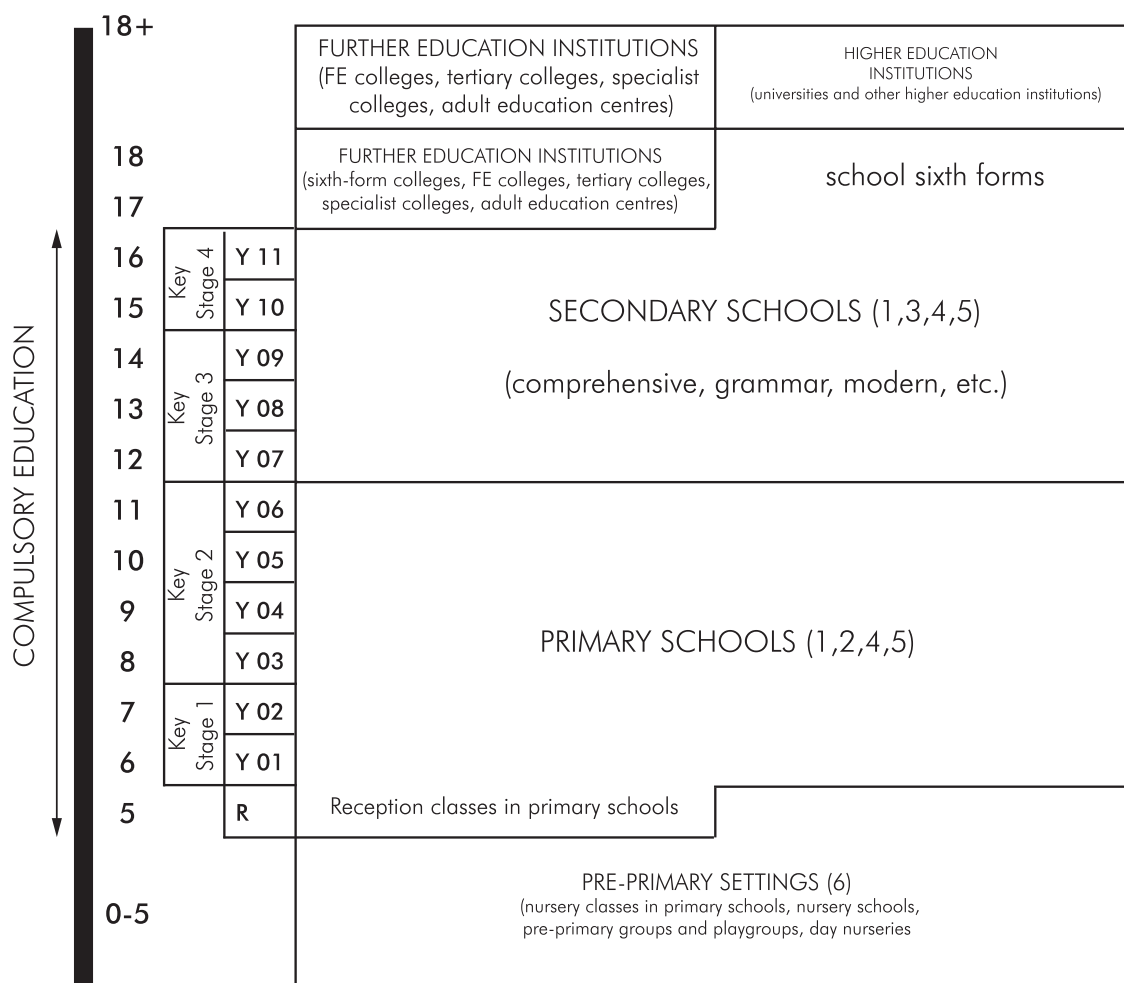
The National Units in the EURYDICE Network have drafted the descriptions for their countries, each using the same proposed outline of content as a common framework. The information on initial vocational training and on adult education has been prepared in close collaboration with members of the documentary information network of CEDEFOP (in the case of the European Union and EFTA/EEA countries) and the National Observatories of the European Training Foundation – ETF (as regards the ten countries of central and eastern Europe). We are extremely grateful to them and to all those who were involved in this project, both in the EURYDICE European Unit in Brussels and at CEDEFOP in Thessaloniki, for their invaluable contribution to this fundamental source of information which is vital to a better understanding of education and training systems in Europe.

Luce Pépin
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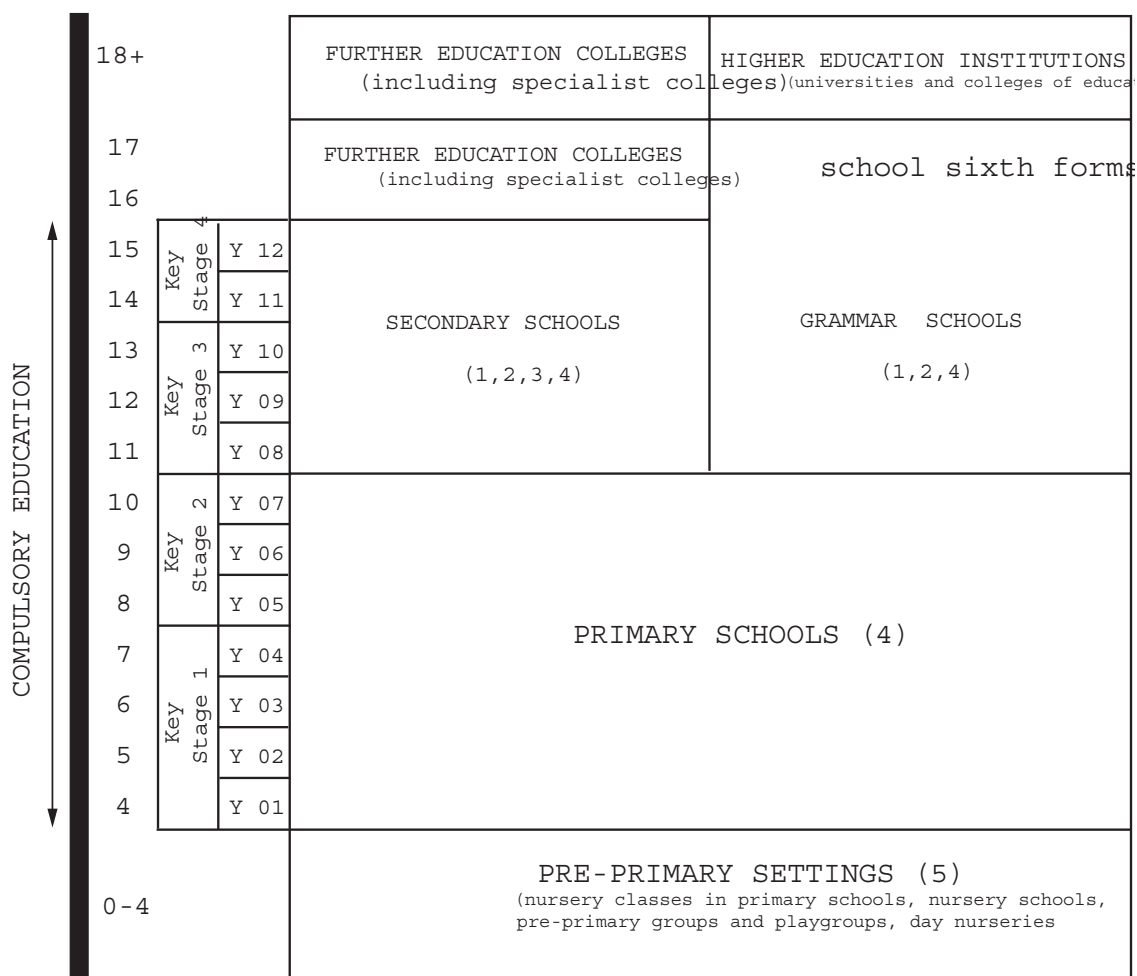
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ENGLAND AND WALES



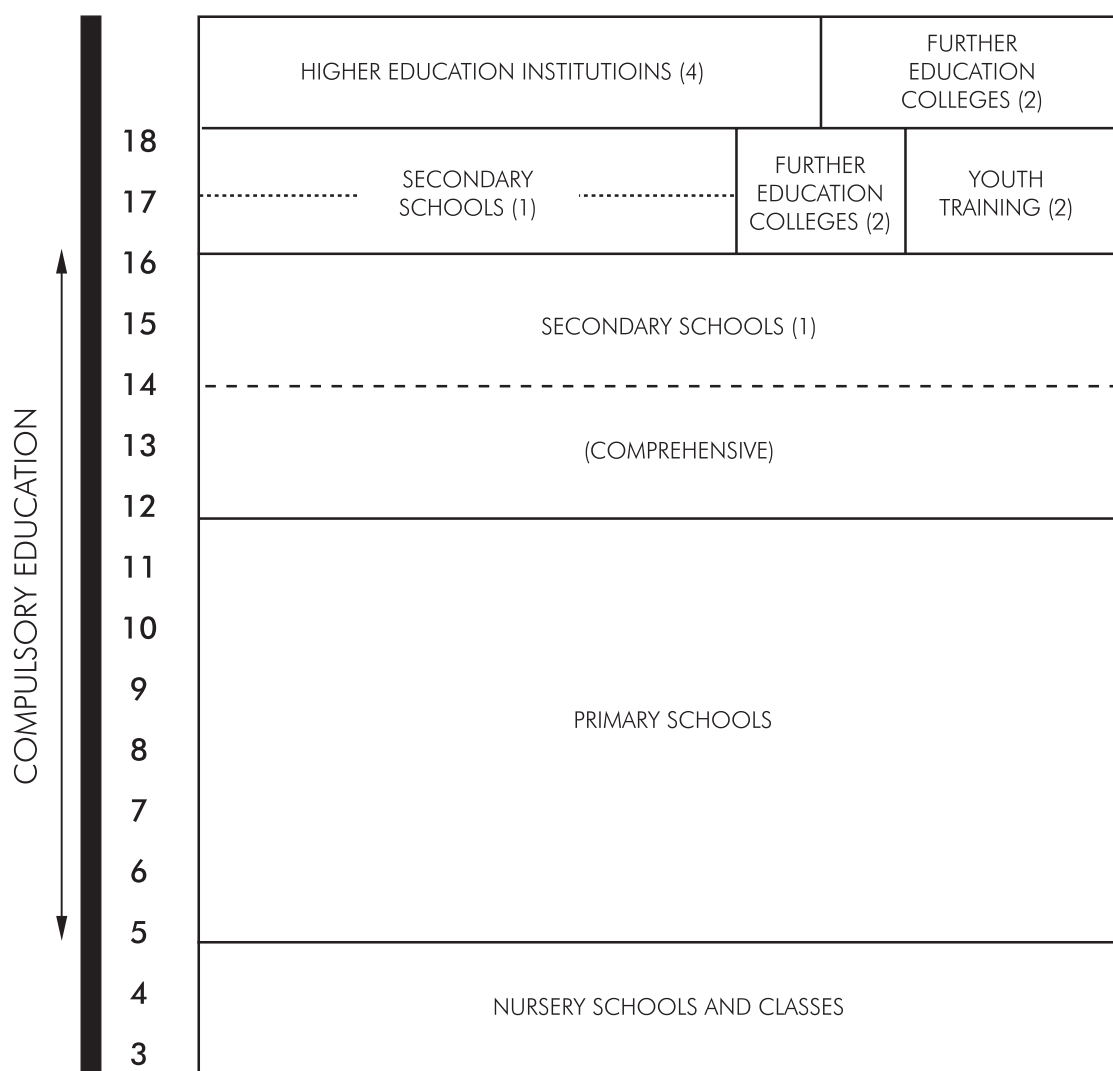
1. This diagram shows the predominant two-tier system of primary and secondary schools. In some areas, a three-tier system is in operation; children transfer from first school to middle school at age eight or nine and subsequently to a secondary school at age 12 or 13.
2. Some primary schools (known as infant schools) cater only for children up to seven; others, known as junior schools, cater only for children aged 7 to 11.
3. The vast majority of secondary schools are comprehensive schools and do not select pupils on grounds of ability. Grammar schools select children on ability.
4. The majority of children with special educational needs are educated in mainstream schools. However, there are also a number of special schools.
5. There are also a number of pupil referral units for children who are not attending school because of illness, exclusion or for other reasons.
6. Nursery schools and classes generally accept children from around the age of three, and pre-primary groups and playgroups generally accept children from around two-and-a-half.

NORTHERN IRELAND



1. Secondary schools and grammar schools are collectively known as post-primary schools.
2. Although the vast majority of post-primary schools are selective, there are also a small number of non-selective schools in one area of Northern Ireland.
3. A small number of secondary schools also provide for 16- to 18-year-olds.
4. The majority of children with special educational needs are educated in mainstream schools. However, there are also a number of special schools.
5. Nursery schools and classes generally accept children from around the age of three, and pre-primary groups and playgroups generally accept children from around two-and-a-half.

SCOTLAND



1. 99% of Scottish education authority secondary schools are comprehensive schools offering all type of courses to pupils of all abilities. 90% provide 6 years of education (4 years of compulsory lower and 2 years of optional upper secondary education). Pupils may leave at 16. Examinations usually taken at age 17 provide access to tertiary (further and higher) education.

2. Further education colleges offer courses in academic and vocational subjects from craft to degree level. They accept pupils currently attending secondary school for some courses. FE colleges also provide courses for "off-the-job" components of training programmes.

3. The Government-funded youth training programme is called Skillseekers. The programme is delivered through contracts with independent training providers (often private employers). It provides training on the basis of individual training plans leading to a recognised qualification.

4. Higher Education Institutions comprise universities, former technological institutions, arts and health care colleges and Teacher Education Institutions.

— division in the level/type of education.

- - alternative beginning or end of level/type of education.

BACKGROUND

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom (UK) consists of Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland) and Northern Ireland. It has a constitutional monarchy and the Sovereign is Head of State and Head of Government. The Government comprises the Legislature (Parliament), the Executive (the Cabinet, which consists of about 20 Ministers, who are usually heads of the Government Departments and are chosen by the Prime Minister) and the Judiciary. Parliament consists of the Queen, the House of Lords and the House of Commons. Most of the work of Parliament is conducted in the House of Commons at Westminster, which is composed of 659 elected Members, including 40 for Wales, 72 for Scotland and 18 for Northern Ireland. The Labour Party currently has the majority in the House of Commons, having won the last General Election in 1997 and thus ended a succession of Conservative Governments since 1979.

New arrangements for devolving power from the Westminster Parliament will involve the establishment of National Assemblies in Northern Ireland and Wales and a new Scottish Parliament in 1999. The Westminster Parliament will remain unchanged and continue to deal with non-devolved areas. Details about these new constitutional arrangements in the UK are given in the relevant national descriptions below.

Local government in the UK is structured in two contrasting ways. In parts of England, in Wales, in Northern Ireland and in Scotland there is a single tier of local government. In Wales, there are 22 unitary (single-tier) authorities, in Northern Ireland, there are 26 unitary authorities, and in Scotland, there are 32 unitary authorities, known as Scottish Local Authorities (SLAs). Following recent reorganisation, England is made up of single-tier authorities in: 33 London boroughs, 36 metropolitan authorities and 47 English shire unitary authorities. In the remainder of England, two-tier authorities exist and number 34 county councils and 238 district councils.

Every major religion is represented in the UK, because there are many ethnic groups and people who have come from overseas to settle. However, the established church in England is the Church of England, which is Protestant Episcopal, and in Scotland, it is the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. There is no established church in Wales. In Northern Ireland, just over half the population is Protestant, and just under half is Roman Catholic.

The official language in England by custom and practice is English, but in Wales, both English and Welsh are used in official documents. English is the official language in Scotland, with Gaelic as a national language, spoken by some 70,000 Scots. English is also the official language of Northern Ireland.

The UK covers an area of 244,101 square kilometres (130,410 for England, 20,758 for Wales, 78,789 for Scotland and 14,160 for Northern Ireland).

In 1996, the population of the UK was 58,801,000. Of this number, 49,089,000 lived in England, 1,663,000 in Northern Ireland, 5,128,000 in Scotland and 2,921,000 in Wales.

The constitution of the UK is not contained in any single document but statutes, common law and convention are the main sources of constitutional law. There has always been a separate legal system in Scotland which is quite different from the legal system in the rest of the UK. Although some statutory provisions are UK-wide, the nature of the union means that there may be separate legislation, common law provisions and conventions in the four constituent parts of the UK. In the case of education, separate legislation exists for England and Wales, for Scotland and for Northern Ireland respectively. This reflects variation in the education systems in terms of organisation, administration and control as well as educational terminology, the designation of educational institutions and the qualifications system. For clarity, the descriptions which follow are provided in three sections, each outlining the separate systems in England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

ENGLAND AND WALES

1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION

1.1 Basis of the education system: principles and legislation

Education legislation is contained in a series of Acts of Parliament. Education Acts apply to both England and Wales but, when applied to Wales, references to the Secretary of State mean the Secretary of State for Wales. Acts of Parliament often give Government ministers or other authorities the power to regulate administrative details by means of 'delegated' or secondary legislation. This mostly takes the form of Orders and Regulations made by the Secretary of State for Education in England and the Secretary of State for Wales in Wales. These are collectively known as statutory instruments, and may be introduced separately for England and Wales where requirements differ. The **National Assembly for Wales**, to be established in May 1999, will take over the functions of the Secretary of State for Wales; it will have certain powers to amend primary legislation and extensive powers to make secondary legislation.

Education provision is based on the principle that all children between the ages of five and 16 must receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. All children between the ages of five and 16 are entitled to free education. Any subsequent full-time education provided in schools or at further education institutions is also free for students up to the age of 19. Students attending higher education institutions may have to pay a contribution towards tuition fees.

Major reforms introduced by Conservative Governments from 1979 include the Education Reform Act 1988, which introduced, for the first time, a National Curriculum for schools. This Act also provided for a high level of financial delegation to schools, which, together with other legislation passed during the 1980s,

extended the financial and managerial responsibilities of school governing bodies. The Further and Higher Education Act 1992 abolished the distinction between universities and polytechnics, and established new funding councils for both further and higher education. It also transferred further education institutions from local authority control to become corporate bodies.

Much of the essential law of education as it relates to schools is now embodied by the Education Act 1996, which repealed and consolidated earlier legislation without changing its effect.

The education agenda of the current Labour Government includes raising educational standards, reducing the effect of social exclusion and opening up opportunities for lifelong learning. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 introduced measures to raise standards of school education, and created a new framework of community, foundation and voluntary schools.

1.2 Distribution of responsibilities for the organisation and administration of the education system

Central government and national agencies

The Government helps set the framework for the education and training system and works in partnership with other central and local bodies to implement these policies. It also provides funds for many of the public bodies involved in education and training. The Secretary of State for Education and Employment is a Cabinet Minister in Her Majesty's Government, responsible to Parliament for developing and administering policies on education, training, and employment. The Secretary of State for Wales is also a Cabinet Minister with broadly similar responsibilities for Wales (which will

transfer, in May 1999, to the National Assembly for Wales).

The Secretary of State for Education and Employment has overall responsibility for the **Department for Education and Employment (DfEE)**, the Government Department responsible for policy on education and training in England. It is staffed by permanent civil servants, headed by a Permanent Secretary. It is divided into a number of Directorates responsible for different aspects or sectors of the education and employment service. The **Welsh Office (WO)** has an Education Department with broadly similar responsibilities for Wales.

There are also a number of **non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs)**, which may be established by statute but are not Government Departments nor parts of a department. They normally operate within broad policy guidelines set by departmental ministers. Their duties may include executive, administrative, regulatory or commercial functions. They employ their own staff.

The **Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)** is a statutory NDPB whose members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Employment. The members must include persons with experience in the provision of education, training, and in commercial, financial or professional matters. The QCA's prime duty is to advise the Secretary of State on all matters affecting the school curriculum, pupil assessment and publicly funded qualifications offered in schools, colleges and workplaces in England. It is responsible for the development and management of the statutory system of National Curriculum assessment at age seven, 11 and 14. It provides guidance and support materials for teachers, and some teaching materials (although the final choice of teaching methods and materials rests with schools). The QCA is the regulatory body for public examinations and publicly funded qualifications. It sets or approves national grade standards, accredits qualifications, and defines and maintains standards of quality assurance expected of the **awarding bodies**, which offer general and vocational qualifications including GCSEs, GCE A-levels, GNVQs and NVQs (see 3B.3 and 4.2). Awarding bodies are responsible for syllabus development, approval of schools and other institutions as examination centres, standardisation of marking and quality assurance. They are independent, not-for-profit companies, funded largely by examination fees, whose members are drawn from education and industry. Within the area of vocational education and training, the QCA is responsible for the national occupational standards programme. **The Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC)**

works closely with the QCA in England, and performs, in relation to Wales, functions similar to those that QCA exercises in relation to England.

The **Further Education Funding Councils for England and Wales** are statutory NDPBs established to secure further education facilities for people who want to continue learning after leaving school. Their members are appointed by the Secretaries of State, and include persons with experience in the provision of education, and in commercial, financial or professional matters. They distribute public money to further education institutions, and inspect the standards of quality and achievement in the further education sector.

The **Higher Education Funding Councils for England and Wales** respectively are statutory NDPBs whose members are appointed by the Secretaries of State, and include persons with experience in the provision of higher education and in commercial, financial or professional matters. The Funding Councils distribute public money for teaching and research to universities and other institutions which provide higher education. Funding for research is also provided by the six **Research Councils** (NDPBs established under Royal Charter, within the control of the Department of Trade and Industry) and by the **Arts and Humanities Research Board**, in the case of humanities.

The **Teacher Training Agency (TTA)** is a statutory NDPB whose members, appointed by the Secretary of State, include persons who have experience in teaching and the provision of education. It is responsible for ensuring that there are sufficient facilities for training teachers for service in maintained schools in England, and for funding initial teacher training in England. It is also responsible for designating institutions which satisfy the criteria and standards specified by the Secretary of State, as accredited providers of courses of initial teacher training, for ensuring the effective implementation of the national curricula for teacher training and for setting standards and developing a strategy for the continuing professional development of teachers. The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales is responsible for performing these duties in respect of Wales.

Local administration

The provision and organisation of school education and adult education services is the responsibility of the 172 democratically elected local councils in England and Wales which have designated responsibility as **local education authorities (LEAs)**. Most LEAs have an Education

Committee which determines and monitors the execution of these responsibilities, with a membership comprising elected council members (the majority) and members who have experience in education or are familiar with the educational conditions prevailing in the local area. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 provides for Education Committees to include representatives of parents. The management of education is delegated to the Chief Education Officer (sometimes known as the Director of Education), who is assisted by professional and administrative staff. The principal duties of LEAs are:

- to provide a sufficient number of school places and ensure there is sufficient pre-primary provision in their area;
- quality assurance and development planning for raising the standards of education provided;
- to set a budget for the education service in their area and determine the funding for individual schools and any adult education establishments;
- to determine school admissions policies where appropriate;
- to assess and make provision for pupils' special educational needs, to provide educational psychology and education welfare services, and secure regular school attendance;
- to arrange school transport as appropriate;
- to employ staff in certain categories of school (but not appoint, dismiss or manage staff, which is the responsibility of the school governing body); and
- to arrange for adequate provision of adult education and provide services for young people (the youth service).

Education Action Zones have begun to be established in areas of disadvantage, with the objective of improving standards in the participating schools. They represent a new type of organisation at local level, consisting of clusters of up to around 20 schools, working in partnership with local parents, institutions providing pre-primary care and education, businesses, the LEA, community organisations, TECs (see below), careers services, colleges, other statutory agencies (such as health authorities and the police) and others. The strategic direction for the Zone is set by a corporate body, the Action Forum, whose membership reflects the composition of the partnership.

Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) and Chambers of Commerce, Training and Enterprise (CTEs) are independent companies set up by the Government to organise training at local level. There are 62 TECs and 16 CTEs in England, and four TECs in Wales. See 5.1.1.

Educational institutions

In general, educational institutions enjoy a high degree of autonomy.

The aims and overall conduct of publicly funded **schools** are the responsibility of the school governing body, although the responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school is delegated to the headteacher. The governing body has a wide range of powers and duties including responsibilities for the budget, staffing (determining the number and composition of the staff, selecting staff, including the headteacher, and promoting, and disciplining staff other than the headteacher), pupil exclusions, and, depending on the category of school, pupil admissions. It decides the general direction of the school and its curriculum, subject to the requirements of the National Curriculum. It has a duty to oversee the management of the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement. The headteacher and staff report to the governing body on the school's overall performance, and in its turn the governing body should ensure accountability to parents and the wider local community. It is required by law to prepare an annual report and hold an annual parents' meeting.

The composition of the governing body varies according to the category and size of school, and will change, in some respects, in September 1999. Governing bodies will continue to include parent governors (elected by parents); teacher governors (elected by teachers at the school); co-opted governors (appointed by the school governing body); LEA governors (appointed by the LEA); foundation governors (certain categories of school only, appointed, for example, for the purpose of preserving and developing the school's religious character); and the headteacher (who may choose whether or not to be a governor). From September 1999, governing bodies will also include staff governors (elected by non-teaching staff at the school); and those foundation schools which do not have a foundation or trustees will appoint partnership governors from members of the community served by the school.

Further education (FE) institutions include further education colleges (both general and specialist, providing both full-time and part-time courses), sixth-form colleges (providing mainly full-time courses for 16- to 19-year-olds) and tertiary

colleges (combining the functions of general FE colleges and sixth-form colleges). These were given the autonomy to run their own affairs within the further education sector in 1993. The corporation (the governing body) is accountable for the management of the college and for the proper use of the public funds entrusted to it. It has full responsibility for internal organisation and all aspects of educational provision. Corporations consist of 10-20 members, including the principal and a member from the local TEC. Other members are drawn largely from local business and industry, but also include members elected by staff and students (and, in former sixth-form colleges, parents).

Adult education services, providing largely part-time leisure courses, are the responsibility of LEAs, but the way in which services are organised can vary greatly. For example, there may be free-standing adult education centres; an integrated community education service offered through schools; or courses may be provided by other organisations such as further education institutions under contract to the LEA.

All **higher education institutions** are legally independent. Their governing bodies have full responsibility for educational provision (including teaching and assessment methods) and internal organisation. All universities and some other higher education institutions have the power to award their own degrees.

1.3 Inspection/supervision/guidance

Schools

The school governing body has a general responsibility for seeing that the school is run effectively, and should play an important role in monitoring and evaluating school performance.

LEAs have a responsibility for quality assurance in their schools and may offer inspection and advisory services. They are responsible for taking initial action in failing schools, and also have the power to withdraw the school's delegated budget and appoint additional governors in certain circumstances. They also have a new duty to exercise their functions with a view to promoting high standards of education for pupils of school age in their area.

Overall responsibility for the national school inspections systems for England and Wales lies with Her Majesty's Chief Inspectors of Schools (HMCI) for England and for Wales respectively. The office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspectorate in England is known as **OFSTED (the Office for Standards in Education)**, that in Wales as the

OHMCI (Wales). OFSTED and OHMCI are non-ministerial Government Departments, independent from the Department for Education and Employment and the Welsh Office. Their remit is to improve standards of achievement and quality of education through regular independent inspection, public reporting and informed independent advice.

OFSTED and OHMCI arrange inspections and allocate schools to inspection teams (independent contractors) by competitive tender. Inspection teams are put together and led by Registered Inspectors, approved by OFSTED and OHMCI. The team must include inspectors capable of inspecting as appropriate: National Curriculum subjects; the curriculum for pupils under five and students post-16; vocational courses; religious education; equal opportunities issues; and the education of pupils for whom English is an additional language. All teams must include a lay member (someone without personal experience in the management or the provision of education in any school). Inspection teams work to published national frameworks. Every inspection leads to a public report, which reflects the inspection team's judgement on standards, the quality of education provided (including the quality of teaching, and curriculum and assessment), the efficiency with which resources are managed, and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

A similar system of inspection applies to all institutions in receipt of public funding providing education for four-year-olds.

The permanent inspection staff, Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs), who are civil servants, are responsible for providing the advice necessary to regulate and monitor the school inspection system. HMIs also visit schools in order to report on good practice in teaching and management, and issues such as public examinations and international comparisons. They carry out analyses to identify trends, evaluate the effects of educational policy and follow up on issues and concerns to which inspection findings have drawn attention.

OFSTED and OHMCI are also responsible for inspecting LEA-funded adult education, initial teacher training, independent schools and LEAs.

Further education institutions

The **Further Education Funding Council for England** is responsible for assessing the quality of education provided in the institutions it funds. In order to perform this duty, the Council has an Inspectorate comprising full- and part-time inspectors, drawn from industry, commerce and the professions, who receive appropriate

training. External inspections of each institution take place every four years. Inspection teams assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect, and set out their assessments in public inspection reports. The revised framework for inspection, which took effect in September 1997, puts a greater emphasis on judging the effectiveness of the college's self-assessment arrangements. The Council also conducts strategic reviews and analyses of the further education sector and operates systems of advice, support, information, consultation and dissemination of good practice.

Arrangements in Wales are similar to arrangements in England in many respects. However, educational effectiveness of institutions is assessed by the Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (Wales) (OHMCI), acting on behalf of the Further Education Funding Council for Wales.

Higher education institutions

In 1997, the **Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)** was formed, combining the quality assessment functions of the former Quality Assessment Committees of the Higher Education Funding Councils for England and Wales, and the quality audit work of the Higher Education Quality Council of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the UK (CVCP). It is working to develop a UK-wide quality assurance method.

Under current arrangements, the QAA undertakes both institutional and subject quality reviews. The purpose of institutional quality audit is to establish the extent to which institutions are discharging effectively their responsibilities for the standards of awards granted in their name, and for the quality of education provided to enable students to attain those standards. For subject quality review, assessment visits are made to gather, consider and verify evidence of the quality of education in the programme, covering six core areas: curriculum design, content and organisation; teaching, learning and assessment; student progression and achievement; student support and guidance; learning resources; and quality assurance and enhancement.

The quality of research is also assessed by the higher education funding bodies every three to five years through the Research Assessment Exercise. Assessment is by peer review, and the judgements of quality provided are used to calculate the allocation of research funds.

1.4 Financing

Publicly funded **schools** receive their funding from local education authorities (LEAs). All publicly funded schools are fully funded for recurrent costs, and most are also fully funded for capital expenditure. However, for voluntary aided schools, 15 per cent of capital expenditure is the responsibility of the founding body.

Local authorities are free to decide how much of the total **revenue resources** available to them to devote to education. The majority of these resources are received from central government, based on the Government's standard assessment of the authority's expenditure needs as compared with the income it raises locally. The rest comes from local authority self-financed sources, primarily the Council Tax (a local property tax).

Since April 1999, revised arrangements for the funding of schools by LEAs have been in force. Although since local management of schools (LMS) was introduced under the Education Reform Act 1988 there has been a high level of financial delegation to schools, the new arrangements will further increase the level of delegation. Funding formulae, which are set by LEAs in consultation with their schools, must provide for the calculation of the school's budget mainly on the basis of the number and age of the pupils. Formulae also take into account other factors such as the number of pupils with special educational needs, the extra costs incurred by small schools, and the additional needs of schools in socially deprived areas.

Education in maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools is **free of charge** to parents, including tuition, books and stationery. Schools may, however, invite parents to make voluntary contributions for some activities.

The school governing body and headteacher are entirely responsible for the expenditure of the school's annual budget, which covers all staffing costs (including teacher supply cover), recurrent equipment, books and materials, and premises' running costs, repairs and maintenance.

Local authorities and educational institutions may also receive specific grants for certain priority projects identified by the Secretary of State, from the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) or the Welsh Office. Many grants are allocated on the basis of competitive bids. Schools may also raise extra funds through voluntary contributions and renting out school premises to local bodies.

The total amount that a local authority may borrow to finance **capital expenditure** (defined as spending that produces or protects an asset that will last a long time such as a building, machinery or large items of equipment) on all its services is determined each year by central government. Each local authority receives an Annual Capital Guideline, which is the Government's estimate of that local authority's capital expenditure needs. Other potential sources of capital investment include funds bid for under the New Deal for Schools scheme, the Single Regeneration Budget, the National Lottery and through Private Finance Initiative credits. As with revenue resources, it is the responsibility of each local authority to determine how its available capital resources are allocated between services, including education, taking account of its statutory responsibilities and its perception of local needs and priorities.

Although governing bodies are normally consulted about proposals for capital expenditure, final responsibility rests with LEAs, who have a duty to ensure that there are sufficient schools in their areas, and hence for opening, closing, enlarging or changing the location of schools.

Further education institutions are mainly funded by central government through the Further Education Funding Councils for England and Wales respectively. The method for recurrent funding is intended to reward efficient, successful institutions, but also provides a substantial measure of financial stability from year to year. Colleges may raise additional income for example by running courses which are funded from alternative sources, and by providing residential and catering services. The Funding Councils also distribute capital grants.

The governing body of a further education institution is responsible for ensuring that all expenditure incurred by the institution, including all staffing costs, teaching materials, and premises' running costs, repairs and maintenance, professional fees, publicity and marketing etc. can be met from within its resources.

Full-time further education is provided free of charge to home and European Union students under the age of 19. Students of any age attending part-time courses may be charged tuition fees. Fees may be waived for some students such as those receiving certain state benefits, or those taking courses in adult basic education or English as an additional language. TECs normally meet the costs of training courses for students on Government-supported training schemes. Students are responsible for purchasing their own study materials.

Higher education institutions are mainly funded by central government through the **Higher Education Funding Councils for England and Wales** respectively. The Funding Councils are responsible for deciding the method by which funding is allocated to institutions, within broad Government policy guidelines. The distribution of funding for teaching depends largely on the number of students and the subjects which an institution teaches. Nearly all funding for research, however, is related directly to the quality and volume of research.

Other sources of funding include research grants and contracts awarded by the Research Councils (see 1.3); tuition fees paid by overseas students and (from 1998) contributions towards tuition fees paid by home students; charities; research commissions from commercial or industrial firms; endowments; and residential and catering and conference services.

As all universities and other higher education institutions are autonomous institutions, their governing bodies are responsible for all expenditure and financial management.

Students are responsible for their own living and travel costs, study materials, etc., but support may be available through student loans, and, for students who started courses prior to September 1998, maintenance grants.

1.5 Advisory and consultative bodies

There are a number of **non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs)** which not only advise the Secretary of State but also have delegated responsibility for particular aspects of the education service. They include the QCA, ACCAC, the TTA and the Further Education and Higher Education Funding Councils (see 1.3.).

The Government may also set up **advisory councils or committees** to undertake research or collect information. The membership normally includes representatives of the relevant interests and professions. For example, the National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets (NACETT) was set up by the Government in 1993 to monitor and report on progress towards education and training targets, to advise on policies influencing progress, and to provide business leadership in raising skill levels and increasing employer commitment to the targets. From time to time, an *ad hoc* committee of inquiry is set up to examine specific aspects of the education service. For example, the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education was established in May 1996

by the Secretaries of State for Education and Employment, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to make recommendations on how the purposes, shape, structure, size and funding of higher education, including support for students, should develop to meet the needs of the United Kingdom over the next 20 years. Its members were drawn from education, industry and commerce, the National Union of Students (NUS) and the professions. The Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools was set up by the Secretary of State for Education and Employment in November 1997.

Many **interest groups** exist to represent parents, teachers, governors, students, employers, trade unions and political and religious groups. For example, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the UK (CVCP) represents the full range of university interests, and speaks on behalf of all UK universities in their relations with other sectors of education, with industry and with the Government. It consists of the executive heads of all the universities of the UK and is paid for by the universities through an annual subscription. The Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP) represents non-university higher education institutions. The National Union of Students (NUS) represents the interests of students in further and higher education throughout the United Kingdom. These associations, as well as the general public, are normally invited to comment on Government discussion papers and policy proposals.

1.6 Private schools

Private provision at the **pre-compulsory stage** of education may take the form of day nurseries, pre-primary groups or playgroups, privately run nursery schools and nursery classes in independent schools. The Government is now expanding and developing publicly funded early years education by cooperation with the private and voluntary sectors, which may receive grants for four-year-olds, subject to meeting certain conditions and requirements.

Schools outside the maintained sector are known as independent schools. Some long-established senior (secondary) schools are known as public schools. Most boarding schools are independent schools.

Independent schools receive no direct state funding, but are financed from fees and income from investments. The majority are run by boards of governors as not-for-profit organisations.

Independent schools must be registered with the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) or the Welsh Office, which can require them to remedy deficiencies in their premises, accommodation or instruction. They are not required to implement the National Curriculum, but they must satisfy inspectors that their curriculum is of the requisite depth and breadth for the age, aptitudes and abilities of their pupils and for any special educational needs which they may have.

They offer the same range of publicly recognised qualifications, such as GCSEs and GCE A-levels, as schools in the maintained sector. Although they are not required to participate in the National Curriculum assessment arrangements at age seven, 11 and 14, they are encouraged to do so.

Around seven per cent of pupils in England attend independent schools.

There are a number of independent **further education** institutions offering post-compulsory education. Many of these institutions offer an academic education leading to GCE A-level etc., but there are also a number of specialist institutions such as secretarial and business colleges and art colleges.

Most private further education institutions are accredited by the British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education, which was set up by bodies responsible for the maintenance of academic standards to define, monitor and improve standards in independent further and higher education institutions in Britain. These institutions are financed largely from tuition fees; they receive no direct Government funding. They offer the same range of publicly recognised qualifications as publicly funded institutions.

There is only one independent **university**, the University of Buckingham. It is a self-governing institution with the power to award its own degrees.

There are also a small number of private institutions which offer courses of higher education.

These institutions receive no direct government funding. However, students on designated courses may be eligible for financial help in the form of a loan and a means-tested contribution towards tuition fees and student support.

2. Pre-primary education

Pre-primary, nursery or early years education in England and Wales is undergoing reform. This is as a result of Government commitment to expand publicly funded pre-primary provision and to integrate nursery education with pre-primary childcare and out-of-school care (the care of pupils before and after school and during school holidays). A National Childcare Strategy relating to education and day care is being developed.

Nursery education is full- or part-time education for children below statutory school age (five years). It aims to 'emphasise early literacy, numeracy and the development of personal and social skills and to contribute to children's knowledge, understanding and skills in other areas' before they begin compulsory schooling.

Although pupil participation in nursery education in England and Wales is not compulsory, it is widespread and increasing. Local education authorities (LEAs) are obliged to secure a good-quality, part-time nursery place for all children aged four whose parents want one. The Government intends to extend this obligation to three-year-olds over time.

2.1 Organisation

LEAs work with public, private and voluntary bodies as part of Early Years Development and Childcare (EYDC) Partnerships. Only those early years settings registered with an EYDC Partnership are eligible to receive nursery education grant. Early years settings include nursery schools, nursery classes attached to primary schools, reception classes in primary schools, pre-primary play groups, day nurseries and combined nursery centres, run either by public, private or voluntary bodies.

Nursery schools and nursery classes in primary schools normally admit children from the age of around three years, depending on the admissions policy and the number of places available. Parents have a right to express a preference for a particular nursery institution for their child and initially look to the LEA for guidance on the places available locally. It is recommended that, on deciding their admissions policies, LEAs give priority to children with special educational needs and to

children from socially and economically deprived areas. Early years settings are generally coeducational, but single-sex institutions do exist, for example, in nursery classes attached to single sex private schools.

LEA-maintained nursery schools or nursery classes attached to primary schools are normally open five days per week (Monday to Friday) from around 9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. during term time. They are closed during normal school holidays. Most children attend for five half-day sessions per week, each session lasting two-and-a-half hours (either morning or afternoon). Other early years settings have a similar timetable. Some children attend for five full days a week. Public and private day nurseries and combined nursery centres admit and care for children for the entire day. They usually open from around 7.30 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. throughout the year.

Classroom organisation is decided by the headteacher and staff. Children are usually placed either in mixed-aged classes or grouped into classes according to age. This depends on the number of pupils and the size of the classes. Nursery schools and classes maintained by LEAs do not charge fees for the provision of nursery education, but local authority day nurseries may charge fees. Private and voluntary bodies working in partnership with their LEA receive some Government funding in respect of the four-year-olds they are educating. Private nursery schools and pre-primary play groups outside such partnerships usually charge fees.

2.2 Curriculum/assessment

There is no nationally prescribed curriculum for nursery education, but providers receiving Government funding are expected to work towards nationally determined 'desirable learning outcomes'. The desirable learning outcomes specify learning goals for children to achieve by the time children reach compulsory school age in the areas of: personal and social development; language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development. However, these are currently under review and new guidance is expected to be implemented in September 2000. The

headteacher and staff decide on the timetable, teaching methods and materials used in nursery schools and classes.

It is recommended, although not legally required, that frequent informal assessment of children's progress be made during nursery education and the results shared with parents. Such assessment should support the identification of a child's future learning needs and facilitate appropriate intervention and support.

Government guidance recommends a minimum of two adults per group of 26 pupils in pre-primary settings where the staff include a qualified teacher and a qualified nursery assistant. The ratio is reduced to 2:20 where one member of staff has other administrative duties to perform (for example, where he or she is also the headteacher). However, in other early years settings such as day nurseries, the recommended staff:pupil ratio is one to four for two- to three-year-old children and one to eight for three- to five-year-old children.

2.3 Teachers

Teachers in pre-primary education are allocated by group and not usually by subject, although children may, from time to time, have sessions with teachers who specialise in subjects such as music or physical education.

Teaching staff employed in nursery schools and classes are usually either qualified teachers or qualified nursery assistants. Teachers follow a period of initial training, usually lasting three years, and receive **Qualified Teacher Status** or are otherwise licensed or authorised to teach. Qualified nursery assistants hold a relevant qualification in childcare and education.

Nursery teachers or qualified nursery assistants in maintained nursery schools or classes are not civil servants, but are employed by contract, which may be permanent or temporary, full- or part-time, to the individual institution or LEA.

All full-time teachers in publicly funded schools (including nursery teachers) are required by statute to have at least five working days when they are not required to teach pupils. It is recommended that the five working days be used for in-service training.

2.4 Statistics

	Number of public sector nursery schools
England (1997/8)	533
Wales (1996/7)	51

	Number of full- and part-time pupils age 2-4 in the United Kingdom 1997/8 (including Scotland)
Public-sector schools of which:	1,072,700
Nursery classes	78,400
Nursery schools	379,000
Other classes in primary schools	615,300
Non-maintained schools	69,300
Total (all schools)	1,142,000

	Pupil:teacher ratio public-sector nursery Schools 1997/8
England	18.6
Wales	19.3

	Participation in education (full- or part-time) in the United Kingdom 1997/8 (including Scotland)
3-year-olds	50 per cent
4-year-olds	95 per cent

Figures include private schools, but exclude day nurseries, pre-primary groups and playgroups.

3. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Compulsory education is from age five to 16. All children must receive appropriate full-time education, by regular attendance at school or otherwise, from the beginning of the school term which follows their fifth birthday, to the last Friday in June in the school year in which a child reaches the age of 16. For children not educated at school, the most common alternative provision is education at home.

The period of compulsory education is divided into four **key stages**: key stage 1 (age five to seven years), key stage 2 (age seven to 11 years), key stage 3 (age 11 to 14 years) and key stage 4 (age 14 to 16 years).

Within the predominant two-tier system of **primary and secondary schools**, key stage 1 and key stage 2 are provided in primary schools, and key stage 3 and key stage 4 are provided in secondary schools. Many primary schools also admit four-year-olds to the reception class, and some also have a nursery class for younger children. Although many secondary schools cater for pupils up to the end of compulsory education (16) only, over half also provide post-compulsory education for young people up to the age of 18+.

In some areas, a three-tier system is in operation; pupils transfer from first school to middle school at age eight or nine and subsequently to a secondary school at age 12 or 13. Some primary schools, known as infant schools, cater only for children up to age seven, after which they transfer to a junior school until the age of 11.

The **basic principle** underlying school education is that it should provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum which is suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and to any special educational needs (SEN) the child might have. A balanced and broadly based curriculum is defined as one which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and
- prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, a new **legal framework** of community, voluntary, and foundation schools has been created. The new framework, which takes effect on 1 September 1999, will introduce a significant degree of convergence between categories of school. Around two-thirds of primary schools and three-quarters of secondary schools are currently categorised as county schools (schools established and fully funded by local education authorities, LEAs). These will be allocated to the new **community schools** category. Most other schools are currently categorised as **voluntary aided** or **voluntary controlled schools** (established by voluntary bodies, mainly churches, who retain some control over their management, but largely funded by LEAs). These names will be retained under the new framework, and existing voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools will be allocated to the new category with the same name. The small number of schools which opted to take grant-maintained status under the Education Reform Act 1988 will be allocated to the new **foundation schools** category.

Parents may apply to any school for a place for their child, and there must be a written **admissions** policy to explain how places will be allocated if there are more applications than places at the school. For example, priority may be given to children who live closest to the school, to children who already have brothers or sisters at the school, or to children with special needs which may be best met by the school. Schools supported by religious foundations generally give preference to members of a particular faith or denomination. Attendance at a primary school nursery class does not normally guarantee subsequent admission to the primary school reception class. Primary schools and most secondary schools accept pupils without regard to academic ability, but a small number of secondary schools, known as grammar schools, admit pupils on the basis of their performance in selection tests, taken at the age of 11. Some secondary schools which specialise in certain subjects, such as modern foreign languages, or technology, may give priority for admission to up to ten per cent of children based on their aptitude for the subject concerned.

Almost all primary schools are **coeducational**,

as are around 90 per cent of secondary schools.

The **size of schools** varies widely, but only 15 per cent of primary schools in England have 100 pupils or fewer, and less than two per cent have more than 500 pupils. In Wales, however, nearly a third of primary schools have 100 pupils or fewer. Over 85 per cent of secondary schools in England and over 90 per cent in Wales have between 400 and 1,500 pupils.

Schools may develop informal **links** aimed at easing the transfer of pupils from one phase to another. In some cases, a junior school may give priority to applications from pupils at a particular infant school (with which it may share a site), and secondary schools may give priority to pupils who attend particular feeder primary schools.

The composition of the governing bodies of all schools normally reflects several sectors of **the community**, including the local business community and parents. Many schools have a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), which may provide parents with the opportunity to discuss issues of concern with teaching staff, but is used more frequently as a means of organising fund-raising activities.

Schools are required to take **attendance** registers twice a day, and attendance rates for individual schools are published. The average number of half-days missed in 1997/8 in England by day pupils of compulsory school age was 6.3 per cent for primary schools and ten per cent for secondary schools. These totals include instances of absences for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided (e.g. illness), and all unexplained or unjustified absences.

3A Primary schools

3A.1 Organisation

The legal **school year** runs from 1 September to 31 August. It must consist of 380 (half-day) sessions, but the actual dates of terms and holidays are decided by the LEA or the school governing body (depending on the category of school). The school year is normally divided into three terms (autumn term, spring term, and summer term) with a long summer break of about six weeks in July and August and shorter breaks of two to three weeks at Christmas and Easter.

The **school week** normally runs from Monday to Friday.

The **school day** is divided into a morning and an afternoon session. The times at which a school opens and closes each day are decided by the school governing body. Minimum recommended weekly lesson times are 21 hours for pupils aged five to seven years and 23½ hours for pupils aged eight to 11 years, but most schools provide more hours of lessons than the suggested minimum. These times are in addition to the daily act of collective worship, registration and breaks for lunch and recreation.

Outside normal school hours, the **premises** may be used for other requirements of the school (such as meetings of the Parent-Teacher Association); or they may be used by the LEA or the wider community for adult education, out-of-school childcare, sport, or youth clubs.

Pupils are placed in a **class** according to their age, and at the end of each school year, they normally progress to the next class. Many primary schools, particularly small schools, may have one or more mixed-aged classes. Each class is normally the responsibility of a class teacher who teaches all or most of the curriculum.

Teaching normally takes place in mixed-ability groups or classes, but some larger primary schools may group pupils for some subjects such as mathematics according to their ability in that subject (a practice known as 'setting'). Many teachers use some form of ability grouping within a mixed-ability class. For example, a class may be divided into small groups for part of the school day and each group instructed separately. Pupils with special educational needs are educated in mainstream schools, wherever possible, alongside children of the same age without such needs.

3A.2 Curriculum

Schools have discretion to develop the whole curriculum to reflect their particular needs and circumstances. However, every publicly funded primary school must provide the National Curriculum, religious education and collective worship for all pupils. At the request of a parent, a pupil may be withdrawn from religious education and collective worship.

In England, the **National Curriculum** at **key stage 1** (age five to seven) and **key stage 2** (age seven to 11) comprises the following compulsory subjects: English, mathematics, science, design and technology, information technology, history, geography, art, music and

physical education.

The requirements are the same in Wales, except that Welsh is also a compulsory subject, and pupils at key stage 1 in Welsh-speaking classes do not have to follow the key stage 1 programme of study in English.

The amount of time to be allocated to each curriculum subject is not prescribed. Teaching does not necessarily have to be organised and delivered within subject boundaries and teachers often organise their work in an integrated way, using thematic work as a way to teach several subjects at once. Teaching methods and learning materials are decided by the class teacher, in consultation with the headteacher and subject coordinators (classroom teachers, who, in addition, have responsibility for a particular subject area and who give help and guidance to their colleagues). However, since September 1998, schools have been encouraged to follow a national framework for the 'literacy hour', for which detailed guidance has been provided. Similar arrangements for the teaching of mathematics will take effect from September 1999. Teachers are also responsible for ensuring that there are sufficient opportunities for differentiated work for students of all abilities.

The National Curriculum applies to pupils with special educational needs, but may be changed or not applied in specific cases.

The Government has recently published guidelines on the purposes, nature and amount of **homework** for pupils of different ages. Recommendations for primary school pupils range from one hour a week for children in Years 1 and 2 (age five to seven) to 30 minutes a day for children in Years 5 and 6 (age nine to 11). These guidelines apply to England only.

3A.3 Certification/guidance

All publicly funded primary schools in England must assess each child's knowledge, understanding, attitudes and skills within seven weeks of entry to primary school. This **baseline assessment** is intended to allow staff to plan the curriculum appropriately and to provide learning activities that match each child's needs. In Wales, baseline assessment will become compulsory in 1999.

Teachers and schools continuously assess their pupils' progress. In addition, statutory **assessment arrangements for the National Curriculum** enable each pupil's progress to be measured against national standards in the core

subjects of English, Welsh (in Welsh-speaking schools in Wales), mathematics and science. The assessment arrangements consist of teacher assessment in accordance with nationally set criteria (drawing on evidence of oral, written and practical work in class, homework and school tests), and nationally set tests and tasks.

At the end of **key stage 1** (age seven), pupils undertake practical classroom-based tasks and written tests in English and mathematics. Pupils in Welsh-speaking schools in Wales take Welsh, and are exempt from English. These tests are marked by the class teacher, but audited by an external agency.

At the end of **key stage 2** (age 11), pupils take written tests in English, mathematics and science. Pupils in Welsh-speaking schools in Wales also take tests in Welsh. The tests are marked by an external agency.

The results of both teacher assessment and the tests and tasks are expressed in terms of the National Curriculum 1-8 level scale, where level 2 is the level expected of seven-year-olds and level 4 is the level expected of 11-year-olds. The results of the national key stage 2 teacher assessment and test and task results of each school are published, and are intended to provide the basis for schools to set targets for improvements. They are not used to assess the ability or aptitude of pupils for the purpose of selection for secondary school.

There is no certificate awarded to pupils on completion of primary education.

Both LEAs and schools have responsibilities for identifying children with special educational needs. Schools are expected to designate a teacher (the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)) to coordinate their responsibilities in this area. LEAs are also responsible for assessing those needs, and, where necessary, making a formal statement specifying the provision which should be made to meet those needs.

3A.4 Teachers

See 3B.4

3B Secondary schools

3B.1 Organisation

The arrangements for the **school year, week and day** and the use of **school premises** are as at primary level. The minimum recommended weekly lesson times for pupils aged 12 to 16 years is 24 hours.

Pupils are generally placed in a class according to their age and progress to the next class at the end of each school year. Pupils may be taught in mixed-ability groups, grouped by general ability (a practice known as 'streaming') or, more commonly, grouped according to ability in a particular subject (a practice known as 'setting'). Pupils are taught by specialist teachers for most of their subjects. As at primary level, wherever possible, pupils with special educational needs are educated in mainstream schools, alongside children of the same age without such needs.

3B.2 Curriculum

Every publicly funded secondary school must provide the National Curriculum, religious education, collective worship and sex education for all pupils. At the request of a parent, a pupil may be withdrawn from religious education, collective worship or sex education (but not from the aspects of human growth and reproduction taught as part of National Curriculum science). As at primary level, schools have discretion to develop the whole curriculum to reflect their particular needs and circumstances. In particular, there is intended to be room in the timetable for schools to offer pupils at key stage 4 a choice of subjects, including vocational options, in addition to those required by the National Curriculum. Some schools in England may specialise in a particular area of the curriculum, such as technology, modern foreign languages, sport or art. Although known as specialist schools, they nevertheless deliver the full National Curriculum and accept pupils of all abilities and aptitudes.

The **National Curriculum at key stage 3** (age 11 to 14) in **England and Wales** comprises the following compulsory subjects: English, mathematics, science, design and technology, information technology, history, geography, modern foreign languages, art, music and

physical education. In Wales, Welsh is also a compulsory subject.

The **National Curriculum at key stage 4** (age 14 to 16) in **England** comprises the following compulsory subjects: English, mathematics, science, design and technology, information technology, modern foreign languages and physical education.

The **National Curriculum at key stage 4** (age 14 to 16) in **Wales**, comprises the following compulsory subjects: English, Welsh in Welsh-speaking schools, mathematics, science and physical education.

As in primary education, teachers are responsible for determining **teaching methods** and materials. There are no prescribed texts, except, for example, literature texts required to meet the needs of particular external qualifications. Teachers are also responsible for ensuring that there are sufficient opportunities for differentiated work for pupils of all abilities. At the end of key stage 4, some subjects are examined by tier, that is to say that different examination papers are targeted at specific ability groups, and schools may organise the teaching in different sets to reflect this.

The National Curriculum applies to pupils with special educational needs, but may be changed or not applied in specific cases.

The Government has recently published guidelines on the purposes, nature and amount of **homework** for pupils of different ages. Recommendations for secondary school pupils range from 45 to 90 minutes a day for pupils in Years 7 and 8 (age 11 to 13) to one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half hours a day for pupils in Years 10 and 11 (age 14 to 16). These guidelines apply to England only.

3B.3 Assessment/certification/guidance

Teachers and schools continuously assess their pupils' progress. In addition, at the end of **key stage 3** (at age 14), statutory **assessment arrangements for the National Curriculum** enable each pupil's progress to be measured against national standards. The requirements include teacher assessment in accordance with nationally set criteria in all National Curriculum subjects (drawing on evidence of oral, written and practical work in class, homework and school tests), and nationally set and marked tests in English, Welsh (for Welsh-speaking schools in Wales), mathematics and science. The results of the teacher assessment and the tests are expressed in terms of the National

Curriculum 1-8 level scale, where levels 5 or 6 are the levels expected of 14-year-olds.

Assessment of pupils at the end of **key stage 4** is mainly by the General Certificate of Secondary Education (**GCSE**). These qualifications are externally set and marked by awarding bodies (see 1.3) in accordance with a mandatory code of practice. The choice of awarding body and syllabus is made by the school. GCSEs are normally taken in a range of single subjects, and a certificate is issued listing the grade a candidate has achieved in each subject. Candidates are awarded one of eight grades (A*-G) according to their performance against nationally set criteria; they must reach the minimum standards for Grade G for a subject to be included on a certificate. For most subjects, the grade awarded is based mainly on end-of-course examinations, although it may also be based partly on course work done throughout a period of up to two years. There are also some modular courses which include a number of end-of-module examinations. The Part One General National Vocational Qualification (**GNVQ**) is a qualification designed to develop general work-related knowledge and skills in 14- to- 16-year-olds. Pupils may study Part One GNVQs at either Foundation Level (equivalent to two GCSEs at grades D-G) or Intermediate Level (equivalent to two GCSEs at grades A*-C). In addition to these qualifications, there are also a number of approved qualifications in literacy, numeracy and information technology aimed at pupils who are not yet ready for GCSEs or GNVQs.

Schools are required to publish information showing their overall results for the end of key stage 3 assessments and the qualifications achieved at the end of key stage 4, together with national comparative information. In addition, overall results for each school in qualifications achieved at the end of key stage 4 are published nationally. These results may be used by schools as a resource to help set targets for improvement, and by parents of pupils and prospective pupils for making choices about the education of their children. Performance at the end of key stage 4 is seen as a useful predictor of potential achievement and as such is used to guide pupils' decisions on post-16 education and training.

Qualifications taken at the end of compulsory education are being integrated into the new national framework of qualifications, which will also embrace existing general, general vocational and vocational qualifications taken by students in post-compulsory education and at work:

	General	General Vocational	Vocational
Entry Level	National Curriculum levels 1, 2, and 3		
Foundation Level 1	e.g. GCSE grades D-G	e.g. GNVQ Foundation	e.g. level 1 NVQ
Intermediate Level 2	e.g. GCSE grades A*-C	e.g. GNVQ Intermediate	e.g. level 2 NVQ
Advanced Level 3	e.g. GCE A/AS-level	e.g. GNVQ Advanced	e.g. level 3 NVQ
Advanced Level 4			e.g. level 4 NVQ
Advanced Level 5			e.g. level 5 NVQ

The framework may also be developed to embrace higher education qualifications.

Schools also offer a programme of careers education and are required to provide access to careers advisers and to work with careers services to ensure that pupils have access to materials providing careers guidance.

Arrangements for the identification and assessment of special educational needs are as at primary level.

3B.4 Teachers

In England and Wales, teachers employed in publicly funded schools are normally required to have Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) which is gained by completing an initial teacher training (ITT) course or programme accredited by the Teacher Training Agency (in England) or the Welsh Office (in Wales). Although student teachers study at least one specialist subject during training, and courses cover a specific age range (three to eight, three or five to 11, seven to 11, seven to 14, 11 to 16 or 18, or 14 to 19), QTS allows holders to teach any subject at any level.

There are currently several models of training which lead to QTS. The concurrent model is the predominant route for intending primary school teachers, although it is also available to intending secondary teachers. It usually involves four years' full-time teacher training leading to an education degree, normally the Bachelor of Education (BEd). Courses are offered by universities and other higher education institutions. They include curriculum, pedagogical and educational studies and study of one or more advanced specialist subjects(s), and incorporate 32 weeks spent in schools.

The consecutive model is the predominant route for intending secondary teachers, although it is also available to intending primary school teachers. Holders of a first degree (awarded

after three or four years of study at a university or other higher education institution) may apply for a one-year course of professional training leading to a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE). These courses are offered by universities and other higher education institutions, and combine subject and professional study with 24 weeks spent in schools (18 weeks for intending primary teachers). A two-year conversion course is also available for students wishing to teach a different subject to the one of their degree. The PGCE can also be offered by a group of schools, normally in partnership with another institution (School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT)).

Alternative routes to QTS include employment-based routes (the graduate and registered teacher programmes).

At primary level, teachers are mainly generalists, teaching most, or all, of the curriculum to their class. However, many classroom teachers have an additional responsibility, as a subject coordinator, for providing help and guidance to colleagues within the school for a particular subject area. In some primary schools, there may be specialist teachers for a few subjects, for example music, and some schools may make use of teachers' subject expertise by enabling them to teach their specialist subject(s) more widely across the school.

At secondary level, pupils are mainly taught by subject specialists.

Teachers are not civil servants. They are employees of the LEA or the school (depending on the type of school). However, teachers are appointed to a specific post at a specific school by the governing body of that school.

Appointments may be made on a permanent basis, on a fixed-term contract, a temporary contract, or, in the case of supply work (cover for absent members of staff), on a casual basis. Teachers may be employed on a full-time or a part-time basis.

Each school determines its own need for staff development activities, which may be supported in part by specific Government grants. The statutory conditions of service provide for all full-time teachers to have at least five working days when they are not required to teach pupils, of which at least three should be used for continuing professional development.

Statistics

Public-sector	Schools	Pupils (full-time equivalent)	Teachers (full-time equivalent)	Pupil: teacher ratio
England Jan 97				
Primary	18,392	4,271,131	182,442.4	23.4
Secondary	3,567	3,041,584	181,692.1	16.7
Wales Jan 96				
Primary	1,681	281,611	12,531	22.5
Secondary	228	198,503	12,392	16.0

Figures for public sector schools excluding city technology colleges.

Pupil numbers in secondary schools include those at post-compulsory level.

4. POST-COMPULSORY Secondary EDUCATION and further education

Post-compulsory education includes post-compulsory secondary education and further education. Post-compulsory education for 16 to 19 year olds may be provided in secondary schools, where it is considered to be secondary education, and also in 'further education' institutions. The Further and Higher Education Act 1992 defines 'further education' as 'full-

time and part-time education suitable to the requirements of persons over compulsory school age (16 years) including vocational, social, physical and recreational training'. Courses designated as courses of higher education are excluded (see Section 6). Post-compulsory education is provided free of charge to students up to the age of 19. Adult and continuing

education, which is provided by further education, and other institutions, is covered in Section 7.

The general **aim of statutory education**, as originally laid down in the Education Act 1944, now superseded by the Education Act 1996, is to contribute to the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community. It is now generally recognized that education institutions, particularly at the level of secondary and further education, also have a duty to prepare their students for future employment and for lifelong learning.

Links between educational institutions and local industry are encouraged. The two main aspects of **education-business links** are work experience for students, intended to motivate young people and improve their core skills, and teacher placements in industry, intended to enhance teachers' understanding of business, leading to a more relevant curriculum and better-informed students. There is a national network of Education Business Partnerships which coordinates local education/business activities. These partnerships generally involve Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs), local education authorities (LEAs) and local employers. Governing bodies of educational institutions usually have representatives from local businesses; further education institutions must also include a representative from the local TEC.

4.1 Organisation

Traditionally, young people stayed on at school or transferred to a sixth-form college to follow academic courses (General Certificate of Education Advanced-levels (GCE A-levels)) or transferred to a further education or tertiary college to study vocational courses. However, the distinction between the post-compulsory courses offered in schools and further education colleges is becoming blurred. Many further education institutions have for some time offered a wide range of academic as well as vocational courses for young people over the age of 16, and schools are now being encouraged to offer vocational as well as academic courses.

Further education institutions include sixth-form colleges, tertiary colleges and further education colleges (both general and specialist). These autonomous institutions receive funding through the Further Education Funding Councils for specific types of courses known as **Schedule 2 Courses** (see below). Whereas schools offer post-compulsory education on a full-time basis,

further education institutions offer courses full-time, part-time, or on day-release or block-release for students in employment. Schools, and, for historical reasons, sixth-form colleges, normally offer courses in the daytime only while other further education institutions also provide courses in the evening.

The individual institutions decide their own **admissions policy**. Students are usually admitted on the basis of their past educational and personal record. Success in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations is not officially required for access to post-compulsory education, but most institutions require students to achieve five good passes at GCSE before admitting them to a GCE A-level course. Other types of courses may have specific requirements with regard to previous achievement.

Most further education institutions are organised into departments. In larger colleges, several departments may be grouped into faculties or schools. Departments may have senior lecturers responsible for groups of courses. Students are grouped according to their course of study.

The academic year runs from 1 September to 31 August, with breaks at Christmas, Easter and during the summer, although certain courses may be offered during these holiday periods. Some courses are offered on a roll-on, roll-off basis which means that enrolment can take place at any time during the year.

4.2 Curriculum, assessment and qualifications

There is no statutory curriculum at post-compulsory level. The qualifications and curriculum authorities are in the process of making arrangements for the statutory approval of publicly funded courses of study leading to external qualifications under the Education Act 1997.

Further education institutions (sixth-form colleges, tertiary colleges and further education colleges, both general and specialist) are funded by the Further Education Funding Councils to provide specific types of courses known as **Schedule 2 Courses**. These are:

- courses which prepare students to obtain a vocational qualification;
- courses which prepare students for the GCSE or the GCE A-Level or Advanced Supplementary (AS) examinations;
- courses in basic English or mathematics;

- courses in English as a second language;
- Welsh language or literacy courses in Wales;
- independent living and communication skills courses for people with learning difficulties, which prepare them to participate in any of the above courses.

A new framework of qualifications which embraces existing academic and vocational qualifications is being developed (see 3B.3)

Academic (general) courses

Young people who wish to go on to university or other higher education institutions usually study subjects to GCE A-level. GCE A-level is the main external examination offered in schools at post-compulsory level but the **GCE AS examination** is also available and is equivalent to one half of a GCE A-Level.

The syllabus and examinations of A-levels and AS courses are set by the relevant awarding body. GCE A-level and AS are single-subject examinations (e.g. A-level history) and candidates may attempt any number, although most students take between two and four subjects at A level, or the AS equivalent. There are no compulsory subjects. In principle, there is no limit on the permutations of A-level and AS examinations which students may choose. However, in practice, students' choices may be restricted by what an individual institution can offer in terms of subjects and by its timetable. Each subject requires six to ten hours' work (including private study) per week over two years full-time, and often builds on the curriculum studied up to GCSE level. GCE AS courses take half the time required by A-levels - normally spread over two years - but are equally demanding intellectually. Except in exceptional circumstances, students do not repeat a year.

The structure of GCE A-levels and AS examinations has recently been reviewed with the aim of broadening the subjects studied in the first year of the course. From the year 2000, students will be encouraged to study up to five Advanced **Subsidiary** (AS) subjects in the first year of the sixth form before going on to study, for example, three subjects at A-level in the second year.

Students in secondary schools must, by law, receive religious education and careers education. Schools may also require them to follow courses such as physical education, personal and social education and general studies. Teaching methods are decided largely by teachers within the requirements of the

syllabus, for example, regarding practical work. Teaching materials including textbooks are also decided by teachers in consultation with senior staff in their department.

Students can choose between linear and modular A-levels, each of which are assessed through written and/or oral examinations and for some, through course work. Students taking linear A-levels, sometimes called 'traditional' A-levels, are examined at the end of two years, whereas those who take modular A-levels may be examined on individual modules throughout the course (although 30 per cent of the course is examined at the end of the two years). Candidates may receive one of five 'pass' grades (A-E), a 'narrow failure' (F) or be ungraded (U) for each subject in which they are examined.

In addition to GCE A-level and AS courses, students in post-compulsory education (either in a further education institution or a secondary school) may take courses in preparation for GCSE examinations (see 3B.3).

Vocational courses

Although traditionally offered in further education institutions, vocational courses are increasingly being made available in schools. Courses prepare students for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) (see Section 5.4), General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) or other qualifications offered by awarding bodies and approved by the QCA.

General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) are aimed primarily at young people over compulsory school age who remain in full-time education, although they are available to students of any age. They are intended to offer a comprehensive preparation for employment, as well as a route to higher-level qualifications. The subject areas cover:

- art and design
- business
- construction and the built environment
- distribution
- engineering
- health and social care
- hospitality and catering
- information technology
- land-based and environmental industries

- leisure and tourism
- manufacturing
- media, communication and production
- performing arts
- science.

GNVQs are awarded by various awarding bodies and are regulated by QCA in England and by ACCAC in Wales. Most subject areas will eventually be available at three levels: foundation, intermediate, and advanced, but some higher levels may also be made available. There are no set time limits for completing GNVQ qualifications. Students study a number of units, some of which are mandatory; the total number of units required varies between levels. Assessment is mainly through course work but there are some tests. GNVQs are currently being revised.

4.3 Teachers

Teachers providing post-compulsory education in secondary schools must **have Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)**. In further education institutions, there are at present no statutory requirements for teachers to have teacher training qualifications but the Government Green Paper, *The Learning Age*, proposed that all full-time FE teachers and those with a substantial part-time commitment should have a nationally recognised initial teacher training qualification. Most FE institutions encourage staff without an initial teaching qualification to obtain an appropriate qualification such as the Further and Adult Education Teachers' Certificate or a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE, FE). Both qualifications take between one and two years. Teachers of vocational subjects usually have, on average, ten years' experience in their profession. Teachers in schools are entitled to five 'non-contact' days per school year. This is largely to facilitate in-service training; there are no regulations covering in-service training in further education institutions.

Teachers are normally employees of the governing body or, in some types of secondary schools, LEA. Teachers may be full- or part-time. In further education institutions, there is an increasing tendency to employ staff on short-term contracts or to contract staff, who may have self-employed status, through employment agencies.

4.4 Statistics

In 1997/8, there were 453 Further Education Funding Council sector institutions in England and 29 in Wales.

There were 3.95 million students enrolled in 1997/8 in Further Education Funding Council sector institutions in England and 3.17 million of these students were enrolled on Council-funded provision. 19 per cent of the students on Council-funded provision were aged under 19 (0.6 million).

In 1996/7, there were 36,685 students between the ages of 16 and 18 in Further Education Funding Council sector institutions in Wales.

Age	%
16	84.8
17	77.3
18	60.9

Full-time male	29,900
Full-time female	22,900
Part-time headcount	48,000
Total	100,800

5. Initial Education and Training

5.1 Organisation

The main regulation of the vocational training system is by the reserve powers of the Secretary of State for Education and Employment provided by the **Employment Act 1989** and other Acts. The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) is responsible for policy on education and training. Other Government Departments such as the Ministries of Health, Environment and Agriculture have responsibilities for regulating training in health and safety. The **Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998** gives employees aged 16 or 17 who are not receiving full-time secondary or further education, and who have not reached the standard of achievement prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State, the right to paid time off work to pursue approved qualifications. Vocational training in further education institutions is governed largely by the **Further and Higher Education Act 1992**.

Bodies with responsibilities for vocational training

The **Further Education Funding Councils** in England and Wales are responsible for ensuring that there are sufficient facilities for the education and training of people over compulsory school age; this responsibility includes ensuring the provision of courses to prepare students for a vocational qualification. Funding Councils provide funding for further education institutions and have a duty to assess the quality of the courses they fund.

Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) are companies which organise training at local level under contract to the DfEE (or Welsh Office in Wales). TECs vary in their organisation and services, depending on the needs of the local area. Their role is to assess local requirements and, within the limits of the resources available to them, ensure that the training and enterprise needs of local employers and workforces are met. TECs offer a guarantee of Government-funded training to persons under 18 not in employment or full-time education. Chambers of Commerce and Industry cooperate with TECs

in identifying skills shortages and training needs, as do employers' groups and trade unions. Some TECs and Chambers of Commerce have merged to form **Chambers of Commerce, Training and Enterprise (CCTEs)**. Employers are asked by TECs and local schools to provide work experience for young people; they are also encouraged to participate in the New Deal (see below), with the offer of a subsidy for each unemployed person placed under the scheme.

A network of **National Training Organisations (NTOs)** has been set up to replace Industry Training Organisations, Lead Bodies and Occupational Standards Councils. These are employer-led bodies whose role is to assess the current and future training needs of the sectors they represent and to ensure that these needs are met. They are responsible for helping to define standards and competencies and for developing skills within their own industrial or commercial sector; they also have a general role in promoting education and training qualifications among employers.

- Within the area of vocational education and training, the **Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)** coordinates the development and maintenance of occupational standards and accredits and reviews the qualifications of **awarding bodies** (see 1.2).

The national **Training Standards Council** will assess the quality of provision among 2,000 private training providers that qualify for public funding, whilst awarding bodies carry out quality assurance on their courses.

Types, programmes and levels of vocational training

Employer-led training for young people

Traditional **apprenticeships** originated with the medieval craft guilds. Because of structural changes in the economy, the apprenticeship system fell into decline; in 1995 there were 183,000, which represented a 50 per cent reduction on 1985. Although traditional apprenticeships still exist, many have been replaced by the Modern Apprenticeship scheme (see below).

Many large employers offer **traineeships** to 18-year-old school-leavers. Trainees usually follow an approved course of study for a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) (see 5.4) or a qualification approved by a professional institute.

Employers recruiting new graduates from higher education often provide professional development plans which may include part-time study for qualifications of the relevant professional institute.

Government-supported training schemes for young people

The **Modern Apprenticeship** initiative was introduced in 1995 to provide a high-quality work-based route to NVQ level 3 (see 3B.3), and to provide the broader skills and qualifications needed by industry and employers. Modern Apprenticeships are intended largely for school leavers aged 16, but they are also open to more mature trainees who are able to complete their training before the age of 25. Most modern apprentices have employed status and are paid a salary by their employer. The funding of training is subject to local negotiations and agreements between TECs and employers. Training frameworks have been developed by NTOs (see above) for 81 sectors of industry and business, ranging from engineering and construction to business administration, banking, information technology and the retail sector.

National traineeships are a relatively recent initiative. They provide employment and training opportunities for college- and school-leavers. Like Modern Apprenticeships, they use training and qualifications frameworks created by the relevant NTOs, and are funded and delivered by TECs through employers. On completion of their traineeships, individuals should have achieved NVQ level 2. In March 1999, 35,000 young people had started on National Traineeships in 46 industrial, commercial and service sectors.

The New Deal for 18- to 24-year-olds

Under the 'New Deal' for unemployed people, young people between the ages of 18 and 24, who have been unemployed for six months or more are offered a 'gateway' of guidance and assessment, followed by one of four options:

- employment in the public or private sector with day-release for education or training leading to a nationally recognised qualification;

- up to six months' work experience in projects with the Environment Task Force;
- up to six months' work experience in the voluntary sector;
- a full-time education or training programme lasting up to one year, designed to lead to an appropriate qualification.

Those employed under the scheme are paid normal rates by their employer but the Government subsidises employment and training costs. Allowances are paid to those young people in education and training programmes and to those on work placements in the voluntary sector and Environment Task Force.

Other training

Other work-based training schemes for young people and adults exist and those on such courses are now being joined by New Deal trainees. In June 1998, there were 239,000 on Government-supported work-based training for young people and 34,000 on adult training programmes (See section 7).

5.2 Education/training establishments

Vocational education and training is provided largely by further education institutions (see 4.1) and other approved training providers including autonomous professional institutes, training companies and individual employers. Secondary schools are also increasingly offering courses of vocational education leading mainly to General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs).

5.3 Financing

Further education institutions are funded by central government through the Further Education Funding Councils. They provide full-time education and training free of charge to students between the ages of 16 and 19. There are a number of Government-supported training schemes (see above) which are largely funded through TECs. Other training may be funded by individuals or by employers, or a combination of both.

There are three types of support available to students in further education and training:

- discretionary awards which are made available through LEAs but are currently under review;
- access funds which are distributed by the Further Education Funding Councils through individual colleges to students in severe financial difficulty;
- and career development loans, on which the Government pays the interest while a student is studying or training, which are available from banks.

5.4 Curriculum and qualifications

The curricula of courses of initial vocational training are determined largely by the requirements of particular qualifications as laid down by the awarding and regulatory bodies. The main initial vocational qualifications are General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). GNVQs are broad-based qualifications designed to meet the needs of 16- to 19-year-olds at school or in further education institutions (see 4.2). National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) are job-specific vocational qualifications aimed largely at people who have left full-time education. They may be obtained by successfully completing courses offered by awarding bodies, which comply with the competence-based criteria laid down by the QCA. Alternatively, they may be obtained by showing 'competence' in an occupation (as defined in a 'statement of competence' from one of the standard-setting bodies, usually National Training Organisations, see 5.1). Competence is defined as a combination of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding and the ability to apply

them. Units of competence, which may have been achieved in a range of different ways and over a period of time may be combined into an NVQ. An awarding body may accept a variety of evidence to show that someone has achieved the necessary level of competence. There are no set time limits for completing an NVQ. Awarding bodies also offer a range of other qualifications designed to meet the needs of business and industry. Professional institutes provide courses, examinations and diplomas as part of their professional development programmes.

5.5 Teachers/trainers

There are no statutory requirements on qualifications required for trainers in training establishments or companies. However, in practice it is unlikely that a trainer would not have a first degree in a relevant subject area, for example, engineering, marketing, accountancy, information technology, social sciences, etc. Trainers may also be graduates of the Institute of the Professional Development Scheme of the Institute of Personnel and Development or hold that Institute's Certificate in Training Practice. The Training Standards Council will play an increasing role in assessing the quality of training providers and trainers. For information on teachers in further education institutions, see 4.3.

5.6 Statistics

See Section 4 statistics for participation rates in all post-compulsory education and training for 16- to 18-year-olds.

6. Higher education

The **Education Reform Act 1988** defines higher education as 'education provided by means of a course of any description mentioned in Schedule 6 of the Act', that is, 'a course of a standard higher than the standard of courses leading to General Certificate of Education Advanced-level (GCE A-level) or Business and Technology Education Council National Diploma or Certificate'.

Higher education in the United Kingdom is provided in universities and other higher education institutions including specialist institutions such as agricultural, art and theological colleges. Higher education courses are also available in some further education colleges. The Open University provides higher education courses through distance learning.

There is no single coherent body of legislation dealing with higher education but the **Further and Higher Education Act 1992** introduced many reforms. Following the implementation of this Act, there is a single sector for all higher education institutions in England and another in Wales.

Universities are diverse, ranging in size, mission and history. Most universities have been created by Royal Charter but others are based on Parliamentary Statute. The existing 'old' universities include the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, which date from the 12th and 13th centuries; the first colleges of the University of Wales and universities established in major cities in the 19th and early 20th centuries; together with many universities founded in the 1950s and 1960s. Former polytechnics (sometimes called 'new' universities) developed out of the national network of colleges maintained by local authorities and gained university status following the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. Universities are self-governing institutions and each determines which degrees and other qualifications it will offer and the conditions which apply.

Colleges of higher education also vary in size, mission, subjects offered and history. The range of colleges varies from small specialist institutions to large multi-disciplined institutions. All colleges are now self-governing institutions and can provide degree courses, various non-degree or sub-degree courses and postgraduate qualifications. Some award their own degrees and qualifications while others offer

qualifications which are validated by a university or national awarding body.

6.1 Admission requirements

Each higher education institution has its own admissions policy. In general, applicants are required to have at least three passes in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations at grade C or above, and two passes at General Certificate of Education Advanced-level (or an equivalent number of Advanced Supplementary (AS) passes – see 4.2). In practice, due to the competition for places, many institutions require levels of qualifications considerably above the minimum. Alternative qualifications, including qualifications in vocational education, are becoming increasingly acceptable and many institutions also welcome applications from mature candidates who have had appropriate experience but may lack formal qualifications. Access courses, which prepare adults without formal qualifications for higher education studies, are offered in many further education institutions, often in collaboration with higher education institutions.

Applications for full-time undergraduate higher education courses are normally made through a central clearing house, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). Applications are usually made in the autumn, a year before the start of the course. Applications for postgraduate and part-time courses are made directly to the university or college.

6.2 Fees/financial support for students

Fees are charged by all higher education institutions. From 1998-99, new UK and European Union undergraduate students have been required to pay a means-tested contribution of up to £1,000 a year towards the cost of their tuition fees. Many students are, however, eligible for support to help meet the

cost of these fees, the amount of support depending on their own, their parents' or their husband's or wife's income. From 1999/2000, maintenance grants, which were hitherto available to many students, will be replaced entirely by loans, part of which will be means-tested. The rate of repayment of such loans will depend on the level of the person's income after graduation.

Awards or studentships for postgraduate study may be obtained for approved courses of advanced study and for research. Awards are available from the Research Councils, the Arts and Humanities Research Board or in certain cases, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). Students taking courses leading to a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE), or other postgraduate courses of initial teacher training leading to the award of qualified teacher status, or a specified equivalent qualification, are eligible for mandatory awards and loans in the same way as undergraduate students.

6.3 Academic year

The academic year for higher education starts in September or October and finishes in June or July of the following year. Organisation of courses is at the discretion of the individual institution but most follow similar patterns. The academic year has traditionally been divided into three terms, commonly of 12 weeks' duration, and the organisation of teaching has reflected this three-term system. However, modular systems of study based on two semesters a year are becoming more widespread, particularly in the 'new universities', although this does not necessarily involve changing the dates of required attendance.

6.4 Courses

Higher education courses are generally above the standard of GCE A-levels or National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 and include higher education certificates and diplomas, degree courses and postgraduate courses.

First degree courses generally take three years full-time to complete, although certain specialist courses may last longer (for example, students of foreign languages are normally required to

study or work for an additional year in the country of the target language). **Sandwich courses**, which include periods of practical work in organisations outside the university or college, last four years and degrees in medicine, dentistry and veterinary studies last five years. **Sub-degree courses** leading to certificates or diplomas usually take one or two years respectively to complete. Many courses can also be completed on a part-time basis.

Courses are increasingly offered on a modular basis which enables students to build up their degree or other qualification by selecting self-contained modules or units. Credits are awarded for successful completion of modules and a degree is awarded after accumulating the appropriate number of credits. **Credit Accumulation and Transfer Schemes (CATS)** also allow students to follow certain courses at different institutions for which they will be given credit towards their degree. Such schemes also facilitate degree completion by students who are unable to undertake one continuous period of study.

Teaching methods are generally decided by the individual teacher, department or institution, or a combination of these. Most courses involve a combination of formal lectures and more informal seminars or tutorials, in which students are encouraged to participate and lead discussions. Certain courses require practical sessions, such as laboratory work for science subjects and oral classes for foreign languages. Institutions may also exploit information technology, for example using televised lectures, including interactive sessions. Students are normally required to purchase books and other equipment recommended for courses.

Higher degrees or postgraduate degrees may be obtained by successful completion of taught courses or individual research, or a combination of these. Study can be on a part-time or full-time basis. Taught programmes normally last one year full-time or two years part-time. Research programmes normally last three years full-time and over four years part-time.

6.5 Assessment/qualifications

Assessment procedures are determined by the individual institution, but for first degrees, all require students to take examinations. Most institutions now base a component of the degree class on examinations taken during the period of study, and many also base a component on a form of continuous assessment.

The main undergraduate qualification awarded by higher education institutions is the first degree. Universities are free to decide the titles of their own qualifications but the most common first degree qualifications lead to the titles of Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Science (BSc). Sub-degree qualifications include Higher National Diploma (HND), Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Certificates and Diplomas in Higher Education. Postgraduate qualifications include diplomas and certificates, for example Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE), masters' degrees, for example Master of Science (MSc), and doctorates, for example, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is currently working with institutions to develop frameworks to provide a consistent terminology for qualifications which would be clearly understood by students, employers and others.

Many higher education institutions offer courses which may be accredited by professional bodies. In some areas, such as architecture, medicine, dentistry and law, successful completion of the appropriate course is a legal requirement in order to practise professionally in the field.

6.6 Teachers

Higher education institutions are responsible for employing their own staff. Academic staff in most universities and in some colleges carry out research as well as teaching and may be employed on a part-time or full-time basis. Most have doctorates and many have professional qualifications. There is currently no statutory requirement for teaching staff in higher education institutions to receive any initial training but institutions increasingly provide training for their staff, especially those who are

new to the profession. A new national body, the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, is being established in 1999 to set up an accreditation scheme for teachers in higher education and to encourage innovation in teaching and learning.

6.6 Statistics

In 1996, the new entrant rate to university-level education for the United Kingdom was 41 per cent. 81 per cent of students completed their course of study. The median graduation age for students taking first degree courses was 22.

Higher education students 1996/7	England	Wales
Undergraduate students 1996/7	807,138	57,192
Full-time	352,459	20,018
Part-time	1,159,597	77,210
Total		
Postgraduate students 1996/7	115,729	7,030
Full-time	183,358	10,449
Part-time	299,087	17,479
Total		
Academic staff 1996/7		
Full-time	89,551	5,363
Part-time	14,405	637
Total	103,956	6,000
Higher education institutions 1998		
Universities*	89	9
Higher education colleges**	44	4
Total	133	13

* England figure includes the privately funded University of Buckingham and the constituent colleges of the University of London. Wales figure includes the constituent colleges and universities of the University of Wales.

** includes teacher training colleges

7. ADULT EDUCATION

7.1 Organisation

Adult education and training is governed by the same legislation as initial vocational training (see Section 5). However, under the Education Act 1996, local education authorities (LEAs) also have a duty to secure adequate provision of adult further education which lies outside the area for which the Further Education Funding Councils are responsible.

Bodies with responsibilities for adult education and training

The responsibilities of Further Education Funding Councils, Training and Enterprise Councils, National Training Organisations (NTOs), awarding bodies and the qualifications and curriculum authorities are outlined in Section 5. Since the passing of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, LEAs have had a duty to secure only the provision of courses, mainly recreational or non-vocational courses for adults, which are not included in Schedule 2 of the Act (see Section 4). However, many LEAs continue to provide courses now designated as *Schedule 2 courses* in addition to recreational courses. The pattern of LEA provision varies including:

- free-standing adult education services;
- provision as part of an integrated community education service offered through community schools;
- contracting with other organisations such as further education institutions to make provision on behalf of the LEA; and, in some LEAs,
- a combination of direct and contracted provision.

The **Workers' Education Association (WEA)** is a voluntary body which aims to encourage adults to undertake continuing education. It was founded in 1903 and has 900 local branches. It provides courses for adults in a wide range of

subjects of varying lengths, from weekend seminars to three-year courses. It receives funding from the Further Education Funding Councils.

Principal advisory bodies in the field of adult education include the **National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)** and the **Basic Skills Agency**. NIACE is the national centre for information, cooperation and consultation in the field of adult continuing education and receives funding from the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), the Welsh Office, LEAs, universities and from voluntary organisations. The Basic Skills Agency (formerly the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit, ALBSU) is the central development agency for adult literacy, adult numeracy and related basic skills learning; it also receives financial support from the Government.

The **University for Industry (Ufi)** is a recent initiative launched by the Government to stimulate demand for lifelong learning amongst businesses and individuals, and to promote the availability of, and improve access to, relevant, high-quality and innovative learning, in particular through the use of information and communications technologies. The Ufi will act as a broker helping people and businesses to identify their learning needs and to access this learning in the right form. It will promote learning ranging from the basic skills of literacy and numeracy to specialised technological skills and business management.

Types, programmes and levels of vocational training

The types of adult education and training programmes are very varied. **Adult literacy and basic skills courses** are designed specifically for adults and include very flexible and informal programmes; they often take the form of drop-in workshops, where voluntary tutors provide tuition on a one-to-one basis. **Access courses** prepare mainly mature students without academic qualifications for higher education: some provide access to a particular institution of higher education, which may thus be involved in designing the course, but most are designed to offer access to higher education in general. Adults may also take courses of general or vocational education, which may lead to any of

the nationally recognised qualifications (see below). **Recreational or non-vocational courses** which do not lead to any particular qualification are also offered by many institutions, in particular, by LEA-run adult education centres. **Employers** provide training in-house and externally depending on the needs of the company and the individual. See 3B.3 for the levels of general and vocational qualifications.

The mode and length of study vary depending on the type of course and the institution concerned, but, in general, courses may be full- or part-time and may last from a day or two for employer-based courses to several years for a first degree course.

There are a number of Government-supported training schemes for adults. **Work-based learning for adults (WBLA)** is delivered in England and Wales by TECs. The aim of WBLA is to help adults, particularly those with poor employability skills and the long-term unemployed, to move into sustained employment, including self-employment. Several different models of education and training are offered within the programme including:

- a combination of employability training and occupational training;
- employed status with additional training; and
- occupational training which significantly improves skills in demand in the local labour market.

The programme also offers transitional support to participants immediately following their entry into employment and encourages the use of lifelong learning.

The **New Deal for people aged 25 plus** aims to help people who are 25 or over and have been unemployed for two years or more back into work. A personal adviser helps people seeking work to develop a plan that suits their needs, combining existing provisions for people who have been unemployed for two years or more (see above) with new measures such as subsidised employment and education and training opportunities.

7.2 Education/training establishments

Adult education and training is provided by further education institutions (see Section 4); approved training providers, including

autonomous professional institutes, training companies and individual employers; higher education institutions (see Section 6); adult education centres run by LEAs; and Workers Education Association (WEA) centres.

7.3 Financing

Central government funds further education institutions through the Further Education Funding Councils and provides finance for LEAs to run their education services (see 1.3). Fees are charged to most adults for education and training but those on courses below higher education level who receive certain types of state benefits are normally exempt. There are a number of Government-supported training schemes (see above) which are largely funded through TECs. Other training may be funded by individuals, or by employers, or a combination of both.

Student loans are available to higher education students (see 6.2) and Career Development Loans are available to students on certain types of vocational courses (see 5.3).

7.4 Curriculum and qualifications

Adults may take courses leading to any of the nationally recognised qualifications such as the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE - see 3B.3); General Certificate of Education Advanced-level (GCE A-level) or General Certificate of Education Advanced Supplementary examinations (GCE AS examinations) (see 4.2); General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) or National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) (see 4.2); sub-degree certificates and diplomas of higher education, first degrees, postgraduate certificates and diplomas and higher degrees (see 6.5). Curricula are generally drawn up by teaching staff but, for courses leading to most non-higher education qualifications, they are subject to the requirements of the appropriate awarding and regulatory bodies.

7.5 Statistics

In 1997/8, 3.95 million students were enrolled in Further Education Funding Council sector institutions in England. The number of students enrolled on Council-funded provision was 3.17 million. 81 per cent of students (2.57 million) on Council-funded provision were adults over 19 years.

In Wales in 1996/7, there were 99,958 students over the age of 19 enrolled in Further Education Funding Council sector institutions in Wales.

The total number of enrolments in daytime, evening and open and distance learning courses of adult education provided by LEAs in England in November 1997 was 1,062,108. Figures include enrolments on courses of

general education, vocational education and training and recreational courses.

Enrolments on LEA-provided courses of adult education in England in 1997*	
Age	Enrolments
Under 19	47,380
19 –59	784,036
60+	230,692
Total	1,062,108

***These figures are on a snapshot basis, that is as at 1st November.**

NORTHERN IRELAND

1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION

1.1 Basis of the education system: principles and legislation

The vast majority of Northern Ireland's recent primary education legislation has been in the form of Orders laid before Parliament under the Northern Ireland Act 1974. Much of the legislation parallels that for England and Wales, but some provisions are specific to Northern Ireland. The new **Northern Ireland Assembly** (see below) will have authority to pass primary legislation for Northern Ireland in certain devolved areas, and will exercise full legislative and executive authority in respect of those matters currently within the responsibility of the six Northern Ireland Government Departments.

The Northern Ireland education system is based on the principle that all children between the ages of four and 16 must receive efficient full-time education. All children between these ages are entitled to free education, and any subsequent full-time education is also free for students up to the age of 19. As in England and Wales, students attending higher education institutions may have to pay a contribution towards tuition fees.

The fundamental reforms embodied in the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 reflected many of the provisions of the Education Reform Act 1988 for England and Wales, but included some important measures which were particular to Northern Ireland, such as the importance of education in improving understanding and tolerance between the communities in Northern Ireland.

1.2 Distribution of responsibilities for the organisation and administration of the education system

Central government and national agencies

As in the rest of the UK, the UK Government helps set the framework for the education and training system and works in partnership with other central and local bodies to implement these policies. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is a Cabinet Minister in Her Majesty's Government, responsible for the Northern Ireland Office, which deals with political and constitutional matters. The work of the six Northern Ireland Government Departments which carry out functions in the economic and social fields is also subject to the direction of the Secretary of State and of her junior ministers, one of whom, a Parliamentary Under-Secretary, is responsible for education. The new **Northern Ireland Assembly** met for the first time on Wednesday 1 July 1998, following a referendum held on 22 May 1998. It will exercise full legislative and executive authority in respect of those matters currently within the responsibility of the six Northern Ireland Government Departments.

The **Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI)** has a general duty to promote the education of the people of Northern Ireland and to secure the effective implementation of relevant legislation and policies by working with the Education and Library Boards and others. It is responsible for funding institutions of further and higher education directly, and for school expenditure via the Boards. It is also responsible for the rate and distribution of educational building and for the supply, training and superannuation of teachers. The Department is headed by the Permanent Secretary and is divided into two commands, each led by a Deputy Secretary, and the Education and Training Inspectorate, which is led by the Chief Inspector.

As in England and Wales, there are also a number of **non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs)**, which may be established by statute but are not Government Departments nor parts of a Department. They normally operate within

broad policy guidelines set by Departmental ministers. Their duties may include executive, administrative, regulatory or commercial functions. They employ their own staff.

The **Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)** is a statutory NDPB whose members are appointed by DENI and include representatives from education, industry and commerce as well as two assessors from DENI. Its prime duty is to advise DENI on all aspects affecting the school curriculum, and on assessment and qualifications. It produces information and guidance materials for schools (although the final choice of teaching methods and materials rests with schools). It is the regulatory body for GNVQs (see "England and Wales" 4.2) in Northern Ireland and is also the awarding body for general qualifications such as GCSEs (see "England and Wales" 3B.3) and GCE A-levels (see "England and Wales" 4.2).

The **Council for Catholic-Maintained Schools (CCMS)** is a statutory NDPB whose members consist of trustee representatives appointed by the Northern Ireland Bishops, and persons appointed by the Head of DENI in consultation with the Bishops, the parents and teachers. The main purpose of the CCMS is to promote high standards of education in Catholic-maintained schools for which it provides an upper tier of management. It promotes and coordinates the planning of provision in the Catholic-maintained sector, employs teachers, and promotes effective management in Catholic-maintained schools.

The **Training and Employment Agency** is an executive agency of the Northern Ireland Department of Economic Development. (Executive agencies are set up to perform the executive functions of Government. They remain part of the civil service but with greater delegation of financial, pay and personnel matters.) It is responsible for the administration and delivery of all Government training programmes. Its board members are appointed by the Minister.

Local administration

Responsibility for education rests with the five **Education and Library Boards**, each of which includes one or more of the 26 democratically elected district council areas. Boards are reappointed every four years, following the district council elections. Forty per cent of the members of each Board is made up of district councillors who have been nominated for appointment by their respective district council; 22 per cent represent the interests of the

Protestant and Catholic Churches and the remaining members are appointed by the Minister on the basis of their interest in the services for which the Boards are responsible; for example teachers, library and youth interests, trade unionists and business interests are represented.

The Education and Library Boards are responsible for pre-primary, primary and secondary education, for youth services and for library and information services in the local communities. They must ensure that there are sufficient schools to meet local needs. They are responsible for enforcing school attendance and provide a curriculum advisory and support service to all the schools in their area. They are required to prepare a statement of their arrangements for the education of children with behavioural difficulties. Boards provide school meals services and transport to and from school. They also employ teachers and have other management responsibilities for controlled schools. They award university and other scholarships.

Educational institutions

As in England and Wales, educational institutions enjoy a high degree of autonomy.

Publicly funded **schools** in Northern Ireland are known as grant-aided schools. The roles and functions of school boards of governors are broadly similar to those of school governing bodies in England and Wales. Their composition depends on the size and category of school.

There are both general and specialist **further education (FE) colleges**, providing both full-time and part-time courses. Since incorporation in April 1998, the responsibility for the management of further education colleges has been transferred to the governing bodies, whose roles and responsibilities are similar to those of the governing bodies of further education institutions in England and Wales. Governing bodies must consist of between 12 and 18 members, including the principal. Members must also include representatives elected by the staff, representatives elected by the students, nominees of the Education and Library Board and members co-opted by the governing body. At least half of the members must be drawn from business, industry and the professions. Unlike England and Wales, colleges are also responsible for providing recreational courses for adults.

As in England and Wales, all **higher education institutions** are autonomous bodies with full responsibility for educational provision and

internal organisation.

1.3 Inspection/supervision/ guidance

As in England and Wales, the board of governors and headteacher of each individual school have a responsibility for institutional self-evaluation. However, the Education and Library Boards do not have the same obligations and powers with respect to quality as do local education authorities in England and Wales.

The **Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI)**, a branch of DENI, is responsible for inspecting and reporting on the quality of education in schools in Northern Ireland. Inspectors are civil service employees of DENI. Each school is formally inspected by a team of inspectors at least once every seven years. Inspections are designed to evaluate the work of each school, taking account of its individual circumstances and conditions, and focusing on the ethos of the school, the quality of teaching and learning, and the quality of management. All ETI reports on the education system, including reports of school inspections, are published.

The ETI also assesses the vocational education and training of young people and adults in grant-aided training organisations, and reports on these to the Training and Employment Agency for Northern Ireland. It also assesses the support services of the Education and Library Boards, adult and community education, and initial teacher training institutions.

DENI inspects and reports on the quality in higher education teaching and research (advised by the Northern Ireland Higher Education Council and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)).

1.4 Financing

All publicly funded **schools** have their recurrent costs fully funded by DENI, either directly or through the Education and Library Boards. DENI also provides up to 100 per cent of capital funding, depending on the category of school.

Local Management of Schools (LMS), introduced from 1989, requires a high level of financial delegation to schools. Funding is allocated to schools according to a formula

determined by pupil numbers and other factors such as the premises, size of school, social/educational need, etc. All Board formulae conform to a broad framework set down by DENI. Many schools also attract additional grants from specific initiatives and raise extra funds through voluntary contributions etc.

With the exception of voluntary grammar schools, which charge a small fee, publicly funded schools (known as grant-aided schools) **do not charge** for tuition, books and stationery. As in England and Wales, schools may invite parents to make voluntary contributions for some activities.

The school board of governors and principal (headteacher) are entirely responsible for the expenditure of the school's annual budget, which covers most staff costs, recurrent equipment, books and materials, and most premises' running costs, repairs and maintenance.

Since their incorporation in April 1998, **further education** colleges have received their funding directly from DENI. A new funding formula is under consideration, and transitional arrangements are currently in force. In other respects, arrangements are similar to arrangements in England and Wales.

Higher education institutions are funded through DENI on the advice of the Northern Ireland Higher Education Council and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). In most other respects, arrangements are similar to arrangements in England and Wales.

1.5 Advisory and consultative bodies

The **Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education** was incorporated as a company in 1989. It aims to create a representative structure within which debate and policy development on issues affecting integrated education as a whole can take place. It receives funding from DENI as part of its new statutory responsibility to encourage and facilitate integrated education.

As in England and Wales, **interest groups**, which in many cases operate UK-wide, exist to represent parents, teachers, governors, students, employers, trade unions and political and religious groups.

1.6 Private schools

As in England and Wales, the Government is expanding **pre-compulsory** education in

cooperation with the voluntary and private sector institutions, which may be paid a grant for educating three- and four-year-olds, subject to meeting certain conditions and requirements.

There are few independent **schools** in Northern Ireland. They receive no direct state funding.

2 PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

In Northern Ireland, compulsory education begins at age four. Pre-primary provision is therefore defined as education provided for a child (whether at a school or any other premises) after he or she has attained the age of two years and before he or she has reached compulsory school age (four years), other than in the reception class of a primary school. As in England and Wales, a National Childcare Strategy relating to education and day care is being developed.

Provision of pre-primary or nursery education is not a statutory requirement in Northern Ireland, nor is participation compulsory. However, a current Government programme of expansion is aiming, in the longer term, to provide a full year of at least part-time, free pre-primary education for every child whose parents wish it. In the initial expansion programme, children from socially disadvantaged circumstances and the oldest children in the pre-primary cohort are being targeted.

2.1 Organisation

Although not required by law to provide pre-primary education, Education and Library Boards (Boards) are expected to produce plans detailing how they will secure pre-primary education for children resident in their local area. As in England and Wales, the Boards form partnerships with pre-primary education providers in all sectors (statutory, voluntary, private, integrated and Irish-medium).

Education and Library Boards must make arrangements for parents of pre-primary children to apply for admission to pre-primary

education at a school, should they so wish. They must also publish the arrangements for the admission of children to nursery education at each school in their area. Nursery schools and nursery classes in Northern Ireland normally admit children from the age of around three years, dependent on the admissions policy and the number of places available.

The types of pre-primary institutions in Northern Ireland are similar to those described for England and Wales.

As in England and Wales, pre-primary provision in Northern Ireland is available on a full- or a part-time basis, and opening hours and attendance times are also similar.

Classroom organisation is left largely to the discretion of the institution, with children either in mixed-age groups or grouped according to age, depending on the number of pupils and the size of the classes.

2.2 Curriculum/assessment

There is no prescribed curriculum for nursery education, although similar curricular guidance for pre-primary children to that recommended in England and Wales has been issued by the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI). All pre-primary education providers in receipt of Government funding are required to offer a curriculum which follows this guidance. As in England and Wales, teaching methods, timetables and materials used in pre-primary settings are decided by the headteacher and staff in each school.

The recommended (but not statutory) ratio of

staff to pre-primary children in grant-aided (Government-funded) schools in Northern Ireland is two members of staff to 25 children in full-time education. As in England and Wales, one should be a qualified teacher, the other a qualified nursery assistant. However, regulations are to be introduced to bring this ratio in line with England and Wales, that is two teachers to every 26 pupils in full-time attendance.

2.3 Teachers

Teachers employed in grant-aided schools must have qualifications approved by the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI). Similar

conditions of service to those for teachers in England and Wales apply in Northern Ireland. See 2.3 for England and Wales.

2.4 Statistics

Northern Ireland	
Number of nursery schools 1997/8	91
Pupil Teacher Ratio	24.
Maintained Nursery Schools 1997/8	4

See "England and Wales" chapter 2 statistics for other United Kingdom statistics.

3. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

The period of **compulsory education** in Northern Ireland is from age four to 16. It is divided into four **key stages**: key stage 1 for pupils aged four to eight; key stage 2 for pupils aged eight to 11; key stage 3 for pupils aged 11 to 14 and key stage 4 for pupils aged 14 to 16.

Key stages 1 and 2 are provided in **primary schools**, and key stages 3 and 4 are provided in secondary schools, known in Northern Ireland as **post-primary schools**. Many post-primary schools cater for pupils up to the end of compulsory education (16) only, but others also provide post-compulsory education for young people up to the age of 18+.

The **basic principles** underlying compulsory education in Northern Ireland are similar to those which apply in England and Wales, but there are some significant structural differences. Although a number of integrated schools have been established aiming to educate Catholic and Protestant children together, for historical reasons, the school system in Northern Ireland remains largely segregated on religious lines. The main categories of publicly funded schools in Northern Ireland are controlled schools (educating mainly Protestant children), controlled integrated schools (educating Protestant and Catholic children together), maintained schools (educating mainly Catholic children), grant-maintained integrated schools

(educating Protestant and Catholic children together) and voluntary grammar schools (which may have either Roman Catholic or non-denominational management).

Parents may apply to any school for a place for their child. If there are more applications than places at a school, arrangements for **allocating places** are broadly similar to those which operate in England and Wales. Primary schools are coeducational and accept all pupils without regard to their academic ability. Secondary education remains largely a selective system: around 35 per cent of pupils attend grammar schools and the remaining 65 per cent attend other secondary schools, according to their performance in transfer tests, taken at age 11. There are a significant number of single-sex grammar schools, but the vast majority of other secondary schools are coeducational.

As in England and Wales, the **size of schools** varies widely, but Northern Ireland has a larger proportion of small, rural primary schools.

The composition of the boards of governors of schools normally reflects several sectors of **the community**, including the local business community and parents.

Attendance rates for primary schools are not published. Attendance rates for individual post-primary schools are published. The average number of days missed in 1997/98 was nine

per cent.

3A. Primary level

3A.1 Organisation

Schools in Northern Ireland are required to be open for 190 days a year, but the actual dates of terms and holidays are set by the Education and Library Boards or the relevant school authorities. The school year runs from the beginning of September to the end of the following June, with eight weeks' summer break and approximately two weeks at Christmas and Easter.

Pupils under eight must receive not less than three hours instruction a day (other than religious education). Those aged over eight must receive four-and-a-half hours a day, in two sessions. Classes normally take place five days per week, Monday to Friday.

3A.2 Curriculum

As in England and Wales, schools can develop the whole curriculum to express their particular ethos and meet pupils' individual needs and circumstances. All publicly funded primary schools are required to provide the **Northern Ireland Curriculum**, as well as religious education and collective worship. The minimum requirements are English, mathematics, science and technology, history and geography, art and design, music and physical education. Irish is a requirement in Irish-speaking schools. In addition, there are four educational themes, to be woven through the main subjects of the curriculum: education for mutual understanding, cultural heritage, health education and information technology.

As in England and Wales, the amount of time to be allocated to each curriculum subject is not prescribed. The recommended daily literacy and numeracy lessons in primary schools in England and Wales are not being introduced in Northern Ireland. Teaching methods are broadly as in England and Wales.

3A.3 Assessment/certification/guidance

It is intended that **baseline assessment** will be introduced as a statutory requirement from September 1999. Arrangements will be broadly similar to those in operation in England and Wales, but in Northern Ireland, this assessment must be completed before the end of the first year of compulsory education.

Teachers and schools continuously assess their pupils' progress. In addition, the statutory assessment arrangements for the Northern Ireland Curriculum are as follows:

At the end of **key stage 1** (age 8), pupils are assessed by their teachers in English and mathematics (in Irish-speaking schools, in Irish and mathematics). At the end of **key stage 2** (age 11) pupils are again assessed by their teachers in English and mathematics (in Irish-speaking schools, in English, Irish and mathematics). In contrast to England and Wales, pupils are not required to sit formal tests, but the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA; see 1.3) provide assessment materials and moderate the assessments.

The outcomes from key stage 2 assessments are not used to decide the type of post-primary schools to be attended by pupils. Instead, those pupils wishing to transfer to selective grammar school education take 'transfer tests' in English, mathematics, and science and technology.

There is no certificate awarded to pupils on completion of primary education in Northern Ireland.

3A.4 Teachers

See 3B.4

3B Secondary level

3B.1 Organisation

The arrangements for the **school day, week and year** are as at primary level. Pupils aged 11-16 years must receive a minimum of 22½ hours instruction a week, excluding religious

education.

3B.2 Secondary curriculum

As at primary level, schools can develop the whole curriculum to express their particular ethos and meet pupils' individual needs and circumstances, and are required to provide the **Northern Ireland Curriculum**, as well as religious education and collective worship. Within the Northern Ireland Curriculum, the compulsory areas of study in secondary education (**key stages 3 and 4**) are: English; mathematics; science and technology; the environment and society; creative and expressive studies; and languages.

Within each area of study, there are a number of contributory subjects, of which the following are compulsory at **key stage 3**: English, mathematics, science, technology and design, history, geography, physical education, art and design, music, and a modern foreign language.

The compulsory subjects within the areas of study at **key stage 4** are: English, mathematics and science; history or geography or business studies or home economics or economics or political studies or social and environmental studies; physical education; and modern languages.

As at primary level, cross-curricular themes form part of the curriculum. At secondary level these also include economic awareness and careers education.

Teaching methods are broadly as in England and Wales.

3B.3 Assessment/certification/guidance

Teachers and schools continuously assess their pupils' progress. In addition, the statutory assessment arrangements for the Northern Ireland Curriculum are as follows:

At the end of **key stage 3**, pupils are assessed by teachers in English, mathematics and science. In addition, pupils are required to sit tests set and marked by the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA).

Assessment arrangements at the end of **key stage 4** are similar to those in operation in England and Wales.

3B.4 Teachers

Teachers employed in publicly-funded schools must have eligibility to teach, which is normally achieved by completing an initial teacher training (ITT) course accredited by the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI).

As in England and Wales, there are two traditional routes which lead to recognition as a qualified teacher: the concurrent model, which leads to a degree in education, normally the Bachelor of Education (BEd); and the consecutive model, which leads to the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). Curricula are broadly similar to those in England and Wales.

As in England and Wales, teachers in primary schools are mainly generalists, and teachers in post-primary schools are mainly subject specialists.

Teachers are not civil servants. They are employees of the Education and Library Board or the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (depending on the type of school). In most respects, arrangements are broadly similar to those in operation in England and Wales.

Statistics

1997/8 Public-sector	Primary	Post- primary*
Schools	920	238
Pupils	181,458	153,094
Teachers (full-time equivalent)	9,367	10,547
Pupil:teacher ratio	19.6	14.5

*includes post-compulsory students in schools

4. POST-COMPULSORY Secondary EDUCATION and further education

As in England and Wales, post-compulsory education includes post-compulsory secondary education and further education. Adult and continuing education, which is provided by further education and other institutions, is covered in Section 7. Post-compulsory education is provided by post-primary schools (largely voluntary grammar schools) and by further education colleges. The further education sector has recently been reformed. The Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 introduced reforms similar to those made by the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 in England and Wales. As a result, further education institutions are now autonomous bodies and receive funding directly from the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI).

Institutions are organised along similar lines to those in England and Wales but voluntary grammar schools focus largely on general (academic) subjects. There is no statutory curriculum at this level; students may choose from a range of courses which lead to nationally recognised qualifications (see England and Wales 3B.3, 4.2 and 6.5).

Statistics

In 1997/8, there were 17 further education institutions in Northern Ireland.

Participation rates in full-time education (schools and colleges) in Northern Ireland 1997/8

Age	%
16	81.1
17	72.3
16-17	76.7

Number of teachers in further education institutions in Northern Ireland

Full-time	2,102
Part-time headcount	2,647
Total	4,749

5. INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING

In Northern Ireland, the organisation of initial vocational training differs in some respects from that in England and Wales. The Training and Employment Agency is responsible for the administration and delivery of all Government training programmes but it operates similar schemes to those provided in England and Wales (see 5.1). There are no Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) in Northern Ireland.

Further education colleges provide full- and part-time courses of vocational education and training to students over compulsory school age (16 years). They are funded directly by the

Department of Education Northern Ireland. Students may choose from a wide range of courses which lead to nationally recognised qualifications. Colleges may apply to the Training and Employment Agency to become recognised training providers and, as such, may be given contracts to provide training as part of Government-funded schemes.

6. Higher education

Higher education provision in Northern Ireland is broadly similar to that in England and Wales, but at the same time, takes the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland into account. The merger, in 1984, of the Ulster Polytechnic with the New University of Ulster to form the University of Ulster effectively removed the binary divide which separated universities from polytechnics and colleges.

In 1998, higher education was provided by two universities and two other higher education institutions, both colleges of education which provide only teacher education. A number of mainly vocational higher education courses, covering a wide range of subject areas, were also provided in institutes of further education.

Fees/financial support for students

The new arrangements for the payment of fees and financial support for undergraduate students also apply in Northern Ireland. Education and Library Boards are responsible for assessing the eligibility and entitlement for tuition fee support, a student loan and supplementary grants. Suitably qualified graduates may compete for a range of awards to help with the costs of approved courses of postgraduate study and research at institutions in the United Kingdom. Awards are available from the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI) for study in Northern Ireland, and

from the Research Councils for study in England, Wales or Scotland; applications for awards are normally made directly to the institution. The Education and Library Boards are also able to make awards at their discretion for some postgraduate courses which are outside DENI's award scheme.

Statistics

Higher education students	
Undergraduate students 1996/7	
Full-time	22,831
Part-time	7,347
Total	30,178
Postgraduate students 1996/7	
Full-time	3,195
Part-time	6,317
Total	9 512
Academic staff 1996/97	
Full-time	2,324
Part-time	192
Total	2,516
Higher education institutions 1998	
Universities	2
Higher education colleges*	2
Total	4

*includes teacher training colleges

7. Adult Education

There are some differences from England and Wales in the organisation, structure and financing of adult education in Northern Ireland. For example, further education colleges (see above) are the main providers of adult education, and, unlike colleges in England and Wales, they also have a statutory duty to provide recreational courses. Adults may choose from a wide range of full- and part-time courses of general education (including basic education),

vocational education and training, and recreational activities. Courses may lead to nationally recognised qualifications.

Government-supported vocational training for adults, like initial vocational training is administered by the Training and Employment Agency (see 5)

SCOTLAND

1. ADMINISTRATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1 Principles and legislation

The principles which underpin Scottish education are not laid down by law. They are partly a reflection of Government policy and partly a consensus view as set out in the many reports and advisory documents produced by the system. They are the basis of educational practice. The legislation is mainly concerned with the administration and organisation of the system.

Education in Scotland has always enjoyed a high status and most of the key principles/values on which it is built are long established. The provision of free, compulsory education for all within a specified age group (currently 5-16) is fundamental. So, too, is the broadly-based curriculum.

The basic legal framework for education in Scotland consists of a series of Education (Scotland) Acts which are Acts of Parliament of the United Kingdom but apply specifically and only to Scotland. With the exception of a few clauses which make deliberate reference to Scotland, Education Acts for England and Wales do not apply. The Education (Scotland) Acts are supplemented by Regulations which have the force of law.

The current Education Act is the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, as amended in 1981. Amongst other things, this Act gives power to education authorities to provide pre-primary education, lays down the ages between which education is compulsory, lays a duty on parents to see that their child is educated and on education authorities to make provision for education. It entitles pupils to receive education appropriate to their "age, aptitude and ability", to receive guidance in secondary schools and to be supported as necessary by psychological, health and social work services.

Its amending Act of 1981 gave parents the right to choose the school to which they send their children and set up the assisted places scheme for

independent schools. It also made some far-reaching changes in the way in which provision was made for children with special needs by establishing the Record of Needs and set up machinery for determining the pay and conditions of service of teachers.

The latest Education Act, the Education (Scotland) Act 1996 is concerned with the setting up of a new examination authority - the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) - to take the place of the Scottish Examination Board (SEB) and the Scottish Vocational Education Council (SCOTVEC), the paying of grants to providers of pre-primary education for children, some changes to the School Boards Act, the granting of powers to the First Minister to introduce regulations concerning testing and assessment in the first two years of secondary education and one or two minor administrative matters.

Further Education and Higher Education are the subject of a separate Act, the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, which established a new structure for these sectors of education. There are also a number of other Scottish Acts, currently in force, which are concerned with education and there are several Acts, which are not primarily concerned with education, yet also have implications for the Scottish educational system and the organisation and administration of schools and colleges.

1.2 Distribution of responsibilities

Central Government

The First Minister for Scotland is responsible to the Scottish Parliament for the overall supervision and development of the education service in Scotland and for legislation affecting Scottish education, through The Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED). The SEED broadly determines national aims and standards, formulates national policy, commissions policy-

related research and issues guidelines in the area of curriculum and assessment and oversees teacher training and supply. In practice, the First Minister delegates day-to-day responsibility to a Minister of State for Education. The First Minister is advised by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and by the national bodies dealing with the development of the curriculum and with public examinations.

At a referendum held in Scotland on 11 September 1997 the electorate endorsed the proposals set out in the Government's White Paper *Scotland's Parliament* to establish a devolved Scottish Parliament. The Scotland Bill was introduced in the House of Commons on 17 December 1997 and received Royal Assent on 19 November 1998. Elections took place on 6 May 1999 and the new Scottish Parliament assumed full powers on 1 July 1999. Following the establishment of the Scottish Parliament, the Secretary of State for Scotland will represent Scottish interests within the UK Government. The First Minister will head the Scottish Executive and take responsibility for Scottish policy and legislation in devolved areas.

The Scottish Parliament will have powers to legislate on a wide range of subjects of importance to the people of Scotland, including education. Scotland will remain a full part of the United Kingdom and many matters which can more effectively and beneficially be administered on a UK basis will continue to be governed from Westminster.

Local Government

The provision of publicly-funded education is the responsibility of the 32 unitary councils, known as Scottish Local Authorities (SLAs). They have a statutory duty to provide adequate and efficient school education, to make provision for special educational needs and to provide the teaching of Gaelic in schools in Gaelic-speaking areas. They are responsible for the construction of buildings, the employment of teachers and other staff and the provision of equipment and materials. They exercise responsibility for the curriculum taught in schools, taking account of national guidance.

Each SLA has an education committee composed of elected local councillors and representatives of the main churches and teachers' groups. The committee is responsible for making policy decisions on educational provision, within the framework of national law and regulations. The executive functions are fulfilled by an education department, headed in each case by a Director of Education (or equivalent) who may have one or more deputies and a number of assistant directors.

Institutions

The School Boards (Scotland) Act of 1988 requires that Scottish local authorities seek to establish a School Board for each school (except nursery schools) under their management. The Boards comprise elected parent and staff members and other co-opted members of the local community. The Director of Education (or a person nominated by the Director) and the local Councillor are also entitled to attend Board meetings and speak. The head teacher of the school is the Board's chief professional adviser. Boards have powers which are broadly consultative.

Under the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, most Scottish further education colleges transferred from local authority control and became incorporated bodies, funded by the First Minister through The Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED). Each College of Further Education is managed by a Board of Management, at least half of whose members come from industry or commerce, and which includes a nominee of the Local Enterprise Company. The Scottish Executive has delegated substantial powers to these Boards, and Colleges are now able to undertake commercial activities. The Colleges have well established links with local industry and commerce.

In 1999 a Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) was established, under powers provided in the 1992 Act. The new Council will fund Scotland's forty-three incorporated FE colleges, using financial resources made available to the Council by the Government. The new Council will work closely with the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC).

As in the rest of the UK, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Scotland are autonomous. Universities and certain other HEIs have powers to award their own degrees; the remainder have validation arrangements with another HEI. Evaluation at national level in higher education is carried out by the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) whose remit extends over the whole of the UK.

1.3 Inspection

All educational institutions (schools, further education and teacher education colleges) receiving grants from public funds are subject to inspection. Her Majesty's Inspectors report directly to the First Minister on the provision of education in schools and can advise the First

Minister and the Department on any relevant educational topic. The Inspectorate is headed by a Senior Chief Inspector and there are Chief Inspectors responsible for major policy sectors and geographical areas. Responsibility for each subject is held by a national specialist within the Inspectorate. In 1998 there were about 80 HM Inspectors in Scotland plus Chief Inspectors and a senior management group. Local authorities also carry out quality assessment of the various aspects of the educational provision which they make.

1.4 Financing

Schools

Education is the most expensive service provided by local authorities. Public sector school education is provided free to the pupils, as are books and stationery. The cost of education in publicly-funded schools is met from resources raised by local authorities (via revenue from council tax and non-domestic rates) and from an annual grant (the Revenue Support Grant) payable from the National Exchequer. The education budget is agreed at local authority level with the education committee in each local authority determining the level of support to be given to its schools.

In 1994 new arrangements for Devolved School Management (DSM) began to be put in place. Under these arrangements, management of at least 80% of the school's budget rests with the headteacher and School Boards have a specific consultative role. Devolved budgets cover staffing, furnishings, repairs, supplies, services and energy costs. DSM was fully implemented in all Scottish schools in 1998.

Capital expenditure on new buildings, modernisation projects and equipment is financed by the education authorities within broad capital expenditure limits laid down annually by Government. These limits cover all local authority capital programmes.

Further education

Further education is funded directly by the Scottish Executive. Forty three of the forty seven Scottish further education colleges are incorporated and receive grant-in-aid directly from The Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED). The two further education centres in Orkney and Shetland, which are integrated with school education, are managed by the Islands' Councils which receive support from SEED for further education. The remaining two further education colleges which are not incorporated receive

funding directly from SEED. From 1999, funding for further education colleges will be through the new Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) using financial resources made available by the Government.

Higher education

Higher Education Institutions are funded by the Scottish Executive through the Scottish Higher Education Council (SHEFC) which is responsible for distributing funding to the individual institutions for teaching, research and associated activities. The Council also provides the First Minister with information and advice relating to all aspects of higher education in Scotland, including the financial needs of the sector.

1.5 Advisory and consultative bodies

The education system is supported by eight agencies linked, in most cases through their funding, to The Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED). These are:

- • The Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (SCCC), a body on which the teaching profession and various educational interests are represented and which advises on the school curriculum.
- • The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), a statutory body which has responsibility for most national qualifications below degree level offered in Scotland. It also approves education and training establishments which offer courses leading to its qualifications. [SQA replaces SEB and SCOTVEC from previous version]
- • The Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU), the centre established to support key developments and innovations in the further education sector in Scotland. The Unit supports teaching and learning, the application of information technology, and organisational, professional and managerial development. It also supports colleges in implementing key Government policy initiatives.
- Community Learning Scotland (CLS) the national body whose role is to provide a support service for adult basic and continuing education, youth work and community development. Before April 1999, CLS was known as The Scottish Community Education Council (SCEC).
- The Scottish Council for Educational

Technology (SCET), whose main duties are to offer information, publications, open learning resources, software, film, video and training associated with the use of technology in education.

- The Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE), which carries out research on all aspects of education and acts as a national forum for debate about educational research issues in Scotland.

The Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC), a statutory body established in 1993 to administer the funding of all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), including universities, and to oversee evaluative procedures for such institutions.

- The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC), established in 1965 and statutorily responsible for maintaining a register of teachers in Scotland and for the establishment and monitoring of professional teaching standards.

1.6 Vocational Training

There have been vocational training institutions of one kind or another in Scotland for well over 200 years, matching the development of industry. In the present century the system of vocational education and training has changed several times to reflect the needs of the world of work, modifications in industrial and commercial practices brought about, for example, by new technology, new educational thinking, and the aspirations of people seeking to acquire new skills or improve the ones they already possess.

Vocational training developed in the present century in a number of different ways. At the beginning of the century the need for high level professional and vocational education was met by the foundation of the so-called Central Institutions. These institutions, over the years, in response to a demand by a number of professions for degree level qualifications, came to offer degree-level courses. Alongside these also grew up the Colleges of Education, which were designed to train teachers, although, as time passed, they branched out into the training of other professionals, for example in social work and youth work.

At another level further education developed to meet the training needs of industry. The 1960s in Scotland saw a considerable expansion of further education college places in local authority-run colleges, forty three of which became incorporated on 1 April 1993. More recently, in the 1980s, major changes in the organisation of courses and assessment took place as a result of the SEED's 16-plus Action Plan which set up a modular system of training. To oversee the new modular system the Scottish Vocational Education Council (SCOTVEC) was set up, taking over and developing the work of the two previous Scottish examining bodies, SCOTEC for technical education and SCOTBEC for business education. On 1 April 1997, the SEB and SCOTVEC merged to form the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) in preparation for the unified curricula which will be implemented in 1999.

Vocational education and training is offered to some extent in secondary schools but mainly in Further Education colleges, by independent trainers and by employers in the workplace. The colleges also offer both non-advanced and advanced courses to students beyond the age of 18. From August 1999 a new system of courses and qualifications for everyone studying beyond Standard Grade was introduced in further education colleges as well as in schools and other centres.

1.7 Private schools

In Scotland there are two categories of independent school: those run by the private sector, and those which are subsidised by the Government (known as 'grant-aided') for children with special needs. The latter get most of their finance from central government or through fees from the local authorities which place children in them. Private sector schools must cover all their expenses, generally by charging school fees.

Independent schools provide education to some 4% of the school-age population in Scotland. They must be registered with SEED and are open to inspection. Central government may require them to improve their premises, accommodation or teaching.

2. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 gave education authorities a power to provide nursery places. The Government are committed, however, to the provision of a quality pre-primary education place for every child in their pre-primary year whose parents wish it, and to the provision of a place for every child in the term after their third birthday by 2002. Scottish Local Authorities are being funded by government grant to secure universal provision in their areas. SLAs are expected to plan, coordinate and deliver local services in partnership with the voluntary and private sectors, where appropriate.

2.1 Pre-primary establishments

There are four main types of provision for children below statutory school age in Scotland: nursery schools and classes managed by the education departments of local authorities; local authority day centres/nurseries managed outwith the education department (typically by social work departments); private sector day nurseries; and pre-primary playgroups. There are also nursery departments attached to some independent schools.

2.2 Day care facilities

For the care of children whose parents are working, some industrial and commercial firms, as well as major national and local government offices offer day-care facilities. Childminders who are registered with their local authority may also apply for registration with The Scottish Executive as providers of pre-primary education. These organisations and individuals are part of a care system rather than an educational system, but some also aim to provide some pre-primary education. All non-local authority managed centres must first be registered with their local Social Work Department before they can register to provide education.

2.3 Organization

Local Authorities provide pre-primary education through their education departments in the form of nursery schools or nursery classes in primary schools. These are staffed by teachers and nursery nurses on the basis of one adult to ten children. Most nursery schools are small with places for forty to sixty children at any one time, although in some parts of Scotland there are larger units. A nursery class in a primary school will usually have places for up to twenty children at one time. The number of children provided for is increased by having children attend for only part of the day, morning or afternoon

2.4 Curriculum

A Curriculum Framework for children, 3-5, was published in 1999 by HM Inspectors of Schools. It deals with key aspects of children's development and learning and seeks to promote effective learning and staff interaction, partnership with parents, appropriate provision for children with special educational needs, equal opportunities and effective transition to the primary school.

2.5 Teachers

In nursery schools and classes and in day nurseries, the staff normally comprises teachers, nursery nurses and auxiliaries. Teachers in nursery schools in Scotland are required to have undergone initial training and to hold a Teaching Qualification (TQ). They must be registered with the General Teaching Council of Scotland as fully trained primary school teachers before they can be employed by an education authority. Many also hold an additional qualification in early education. Nursery nurses who are not teachers but can be in charge of day nurseries and other pre-primary

establishments qualify through a two-year course at a further education college or vocational training on the job. No formal qualifications are demanded of auxiliaries.

2.6 Statistics

Statistics for Publicly Funded Nursery Schools/Classes, February, 1999

Pupils	79,362
Teachers (FTEs*)	1382**
Schools/Classes	1849

* Full-time equivalents

** Latest available figure is for Feb 1999. Only includes teachers in Local Authority managed nursery

school and classes. Does not include all registered pre-primary centres.

Source: The Scottish Executive Education Department, 1999

3. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

As in England and Wales, compulsory education in Scotland begins around the age of five and lasts until sixteen. The leaving dates for pupils who have reached age sixteen are the end of the Christmas term or the last day in May. Compulsory education is divided into primary (ages 5-12) and secondary (ages 12-16).

P1 to P2 (the infant or early education stage); P4 and P5 (the middle stage); and P6 and P7 (the upper primary stage).

Schools vary in size according to the community they serve; a one-teacher rural school may serve a much bigger area than a large city primary school. Just over one third of Scottish primary schools have 100 pupils or fewer and less than one in ten have 400 pupils or more.

3A PRIMARY EDUCATION

In general terms, the purpose of primary schooling is to provide a broad basic education concentrating on enabling children to read, write and count but also introducing them to ways of examining and understanding their environment, past and present, helping them to express themselves through art, music, drama and physical activity, and developing their awareness of religious, moral and social values and acceptable behaviour. Increasingly, pupils are being made aware of the impact of technology on society and are introduced to the use of computers from an early stage.

Normally children enter primary school at about the age of five and transfer to secondary schools at about the age of twelve. Three broad stages are normally distinguished in primary schools:

3A.1 Organization

Primary schools are organised in classes, by age, from primary 1 (P1) to primary 7 (P7). All primary school classes contain both boys and girls and cover the full range of abilities. There is no selection or streaming by ability and children are automatically promoted annually from one class to the next. Each class is normally the responsibility of a class teacher who teaches all or most of the curriculum. Education authorities frequently provide some support for the class teacher in art, drama, music and physical education by employing specialist teachers who normally teach in several different schools.

In the larger primary schools there will normally be more than one class at each stage. The normal maximum class size of thirty three is being reduced to thirty for pupils in P1-P3. In

smaller schools children of a number of different stages will be combined in one class with one teacher. As far as possible, education authorities try to keep such composite classes to a limit of twenty-five pupils. In the very smallest schools where there are fewer than twenty children, one teacher will teach all the children in one class.

The school year covers three terms and must last for a minimum of 190 days (38 weeks). The actual dates of terms are determined by each education authority. The school year normally lasts from the third week of August to the beginning of July with breaks of one week in October and two weeks in December/January and March/April.

There is no legislation as to the pattern of the school day and week, but it is usual for there to be two sessions per day - one in the morning and one in the afternoon - for five days per week (Monday to Friday). The primary school week normally lasts 27.5 hours in five days of 5.5 hours each. The number and duration of lessons is determined by each headteacher in consultation with the class teachers.

3A.2 Curriculum

The curriculum in Scottish primary schools is not determined by statute or regulation but by advice from The Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) in the various publications under the general title of the 5-14 Programme.

The aim of the curriculum is to provide breadth, balance, coherence and progression. To attain this the curriculum has been divided into a number of broad curricular areas, set in an appropriate balance. Progression is measured by attainment of five levels based on expected performance by the majority of pupils at certain ages between five and fourteen. It is recognised that pupils learn at different rates and some will reach the various levels before others. The curricular areas are:

- language
- mathematics
- environmental studies
- expressive arts
- religious and moral education

While time allocations are not determined by regulation, the national guidelines 5-14 recommend that in each week 15% of the available time should be devoted to language, 15% to mathematics, 25% to environmental

studies, 15% to expressive arts and 10% to religious and moral education, leaving 20% flexible to be allocated at the discretion of the school.

In 1993, the Government initiated the introduction of a modern European language for all pupils in their final two years of primary education. In addition a number of schools teach the curriculum through the medium of Gaelic and in some schools pupils are able to learn Gaelic as a second language.

3A.3 Assessment

Teachers assess their pupils in a variety of ways which includes watching them work, discussing their work with them, setting special tasks and making judgements about performance, and setting tests, some of which will be school tests and some national. These national tests are not a means of certification but are carried out to help teachers ensure that their pupil assessments are in line with nationally agreed standards. There is no certificate or final examination at the end of primary education.

3B LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION

Secondary education in Scotland extends over six years from the age of twelve. All pupils are admitted to secondary education from primary schools when they have completed seven years of primary education. There are no restrictions on entrance. Education is not compulsory after the age of sixteen and a number of pupils leave after that point. Sixteen is also the age at which pupils take the examinations for the Scottish Certificate of Education (SCE) at Standard Grade, an examination intended to cater for the whole school population.

Secondary education is divided into three broad stages, each of which has a different emphasis. The first two years (S1 and S2) provide a general education, following the national guidelines, 5-14, while the third and fourth years (S3 and S4) have elements of specialisation and of vocational education for all. Together they constitute lower secondary education.

Secondary education aims to provide an

education which prepares pupils for a place in society which meets their personal, social and vocational wishes, the expectations of their parents, of employers and of tertiary education.

All secondary schools in Scotland are comprehensive in character and most offer six years of secondary education. In the more remote areas, in particular Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles, there are two-year and four-year secondary schools which offer only lower secondary education. The courses offered in these schools do not differ essentially from the courses offered in the corresponding years of larger schools. All secondary schools offer a general education and, alongside it, some more vocationally oriented courses, for pupils from their third year onwards. Education authority secondary schools vary in size from under 100 pupils to around 2,000. The majority (70%) of Scottish secondary schools have between 400 and 1,200 pupils.

3B.1 Organization

All secondary schools offer a similar range of subjects at each stage. The core subjects at each stage are the same but what is offered beyond the core is a matter for the school to decide. Pupils have different specialist teachers for different subjects. They may be taught as a whole class or in groups within the same class in order to differentiate teaching. Classes have no more than thirty pupils in earlier years, no more than twenty-five in later years. In certain practical subjects, eg. science, the number of pupils is restricted to twenty.

The school year, week and day are organised as at primary level. Each lesson lasts around forty minutes, but schools have considerable freedom to decide on the pattern of their own timetables.

3B.2 Curriculum

The Scottish curriculum is not prescribed by law but advice on the curriculum of the secondary stage is given to all schools by the SCCC document *Curriculum Design for the Secondary Stages*.

At lower secondary level, in the four years of compulsory education, the curriculum is divided into two stages, each lasting two years. The first two years (S1 and S2) provide a general education, following the national guidelines 5-14. The aim of the 5-14 programme is to aid

planning and sustain pupil progress and transfer from primary to secondary. The third and fourth years (S3 and S4) have elements of specialisation and of vocational education for all.

Schools are recommended to design their curriculum for S3 and S4 using the following eight modes:

- language and communication
- mathematical studies and applications
- scientific studies and applications
- social and environmental studies
- technological activities and applications
- creative and aesthetic activities
- physical education
- religious and moral education

All subjects taught fall within the scope of one or other of the eight modes and every pupil should study at least one subject from each of them.

In addition to full two-year courses in S3 and S4, schools are now able to offer a variety of short or modular courses of varying lengths. The most common format for such courses is that of modules leading to the award of the National Certificate by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). National Certificate modules can be used to complement the curriculum at S3/S4 and are available in a wide range of subjects. SCE short courses were introduced in 1988 and now cover fourteen subject areas. Schools can also offer short courses which they have devised themselves but which do not lead to national certification.

3B.3 Assessment and Certification

Pupils are subject to continuous assessment according to the internal procedures of each school and are promoted automatically to the next class.

In the first two years of lower secondary education (S1/S2) assessment is carried out in accordance with the national guidelines 5-14. At the end of the four years of lower secondary education, pupils are eligible to receive the Scottish Certificate of Education (Standard Grade) from the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). This certificate, intended to be attainable by all pupils is gained by external examination together with an element of assessment carried out by the school itself and moderated by the SQA.

3B.4 Teachers

All who wish to teach in publicly funded nursery, primary and secondary schools in Scotland are required to have undergone initial training and to hold a Teaching Qualification (TQ) in order to be registered as teachers with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC). New teachers are not finally registered until they have completed two years of probation. Registration is a requirement before a teacher can be employed by an education authority. A Teaching Qualification can be gained by following one of three routes:

- to become a primary teacher or a secondary teacher of technology, physical education or music, it is possible to take a four-year course leading to a BEd degree at a Teacher Education Institution (the term for a Higher Education Institution which offers initial teacher education)
- to become a secondary teacher in certain subjects it is possible in some Teacher Education Institutions to take a combined degree which includes subject study, study of education and school experience
- for those who already hold a university degree and wish to teach in either primary or secondary school, a one-year course leading either to a Teaching Qualification (Primary) or a Teaching Qualification (Secondary) is offered by the Teacher Education Institutions

The First Minister, through the SEED controls the training of teachers in Scotland in a number of ways. Approval is required for courses, and guidelines are published by SEED which lay down the conditions under which that approval is given. Minimum entry requirements are nationally prescribed and have the force of regulation. Previously, total numbers entering teacher education courses were recommended by SEED but from 1998-99 the intakes will be

set by the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC). SHEFC receives guidance from SEED on minimum requirements for newly qualified teachers and other factors to be taken into account in setting intakes.

School teachers in the public sector in Scotland are appointed and employed by the education authorities. However, their conditions of service are negotiated nationally in the Scottish Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff in School Education (SJNC). The SJNC is a body with members representing education authorities, teacher unions and SEED. It negotiates all salary and conditions of service for school education.

Scottish teachers must spend five days per year undergoing in-service training and are contracted to devote, in addition, up to fifty hours during the year to Planned Activity Time (PAT) and personal professional development. These planned activities relate to the wider educational needs of the school and at least 40% of PAT is allocated to meet the needs of the teacher's own professional development.

Statistics

Statistics for Publicly Funded Primary Schools, September 1998

Pupils	437,014
Teachers (FTEs*)	22,508
Schools	2,291

* Full-time equivalents

Source: The Scottish Executive Education Department, 1999

4. POST COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION

Post-compulsory secondary education is from sixteen to eighteen, and pupils usually remain in the same institution for that purpose. The final

stage (S5 and S6) is one of greater specialisation and forms upper secondary education.

The aim of this stage in secondary education is to build on achievements in the earlier years, to prepare pupils for future years, whether in work, leisure or further study, and to offer a broad and rewarding educational experience.

There are no restrictions on pupils staying on at school beyond the age of sixteen although schools usually assume minimum standards for certain courses and will advise pupils whether it is sensible for them to take a longer or shorter time to achieve their intended awards. Although upper secondary education offers two years of schooling between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, not all pupils remain for two years. Some leave to take up employment or training. Some pupils proceed to higher education after only one year in upper secondary education if they have gained sufficient passes in their Higher Grade examinations taken in S5. Others may leave to follow courses at further education colleges. Upper secondary education is offered in six-year secondary schools and in further education colleges.

4.1 Organization

(see 3B.1)

4.2 Curriculum

In upper secondary education many pupils continue to study the same subjects as they studied in previous years but the level of study is higher and the number of subjects studied for the Higher Grade of the Scottish Certificate of Education is likely to be no more than five. A small number of subjects are also likely to be offered for the first time, for example, additional foreign languages. A broad range of options is generally available and freedom of choice is usually very much greater than in previous years. There are also fewer restrictions, such as having to take a subject within a compulsory mode, although almost all schools insist that a course is taken in English or in communication studies.

Pupils in upper secondary may also choose from the very wide range of short, modular courses which lead to the award of a National Certificate as an alternative to those leading to SCE Higher Grade and the Certificate of Sixth Year Studies (advanced courses taken by some pupils in their second year of upper secondary, S6 which, following 1999 will be replaced by the Advanced Higher}. Short modular courses, taken separately by pupils, may be components

of General Scottish Vocational Qualifications (GSVQs). In addition, some school pupils take complete GSVQ programmes, which are designed to articulate with SVQs. (GSVQs and SVQs are described in Section 6.)

4.3 Higher Still

From August 1999 a new system of courses and qualifications for everyone studying beyond Standard Grade will be introduced in schools, further education colleges and other centres in Scotland. It will bring together in one system academic and vocational subjects, promoting parity of esteem. The new system is known as Higher Still and qualifications will be available at five levels: Access; Intermediate 1; Intermediate 2; Higher; and Advanced Higher. Most students in schools and colleges will follow programmes which will consist of individual courses or which can combine to make up a Scottish Group Award. Each course will be at one of the five levels and consist of 160 hours of study made up of three 40-hour units plus an additional 40 hours. Higher Still will also develop the core skills of communication, numeracy, problem solving, information technology and working with others. It is likely that schools will offer more broadly based group awards (for example, Science and Mathematics, Arts and Humanities or Technological Studies) with the more specialised group awards (for example, Care, Communication and Media, or Engineering) more likely to be offered in further education colleges and other centres.

4.4 Assessment

Pupils taking Scottish Certificate of Education (SCE) courses at Higher Grade and leading to the Certificate of Sixth Year Studies (CSYS) are normally assessed by means of formal preliminary norm-referenced written examinations set internally in the school to determine their likely performance in the external examination. They also have set work which they submit to the teacher to be assessed. In SQA modular courses, assessment of the extent to which pupils have met nationally agreed criteria is carried out within the school. Many of these criteria are concerned with the pupil's competence in an activity or in carrying out a process.

Under the new Higher Still system, introduced in 1999, as part of each course the student will have to complete an assessment for each unit,

set by the teacher or lecturer to national standards. A course assessment will also be carried out which could be a written examination or course work assessed by an external examiner.

4.5 Certification

The Higher Grade of the Scottish Certificate of Education (SCE), taken in the fifth and sixth years of secondary education (S5 and S6) at about age seventeen or eighteen, is the target for many school pupils who aim to enter the professions or to go into higher education. The examinations are externally set by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and are norm-referenced and mainly written.

The Certificate of Sixth Year Studies (CSYS) is available for pupils who obtain a pass at Higher Grade in their fifth year and wish to continue their studies for another year. This certificate involves a written examination but may also require candidates to submit for external assessment work which they have done over the year. A National Certificate is awarded by SQA to pupils who have successfully completed its modular courses. Under the Higher Still system, qualifications will be available at five levels:

Access; Intermediate 1; Intermediate 2; Higher; and Advanced Higher. Advanced Highers will replace CSYS and students intending to sit Advanced Higher may bypass the external assessments at Higher level after their first year of study.

4.5 Teachers

See 3B.4

4.6 Statistics

Statistics for Publicly Funded Secondary Schools, September 1998

Pupils	313,247
Teachers (FTEs*)	24,085
Schools	392

* Full-time equivalents

Source : The Scottish Executive Education Department 1999

5. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

While vocational education and training is offered to some extent in secondary schools through vocational modules in the National Certificate, provision is mainly in further education colleges, by independent trainers and by employers in the workplace. Colleges also offer both non-advanced and advanced courses to students beyond the age of eighteen. Vocational education may continue into higher education, provided by the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) including universities, teacher training institutions and other educational institutions offering a variety of advanced level courses, both academic and vocational in nature.

The first Credit Accumulation and Transfer scheme in a Scottish higher education institution was established in 1990. Others followed in

1991 and as a result a national Scottish Credit Accumulation and Transfer (SCOTCAT) is being developed into a comprehensive Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework to accommodate school, college, higher education, work-based and professional qualifications, including the new Higher Still qualifications. The aim is to provide a flexible framework which will make the relationship between different types of qualification clearer, encourage participation and progression and continued lifelong learning. It is intended to introduce new arrangements for credit accumulation and transfer in 1999 alongside the reform of upper secondary education.

5.1 Further education

A typical further education college offers a wide range of courses at non-advanced and advanced levels. The courses are mainly vocational in kind and include both theoretical and practical work. It is standard practice for sixteen to eighteen year olds in employment to be given day-release or block release from work to attend colleges of further education. The needs of industry and students are met by the provision of a number of types of course:

- vocational and general education for post-16 students and trainees
- link courses for school pupils
- industrial pre-employment training serving specific employer needs
- off-the-job training for the Youth Training programme
- vocational and non-vocational evening classes
- access to higher education

Building on well-established links with industry, further education colleges have in recent years increased considerably their provision of updating and retraining courses for local employers.

The majority of further education courses lead to the SQA National Certificate or a General Scottish Vocational Qualification (GSVQ). Advanced level courses offered by further education colleges lead to the award of Higher National Certificates and Diplomas (HNCs and HNDs) and in some colleges to degrees. HNCs and HNDs are long-established vocational qualifications covering a diverse and growing range of employment sectors. HNC courses normally last one year and most HND courses two years, if taken full-time.

At the non-advanced level, students undertake National Certificate courses based on modules or short units of study normally to be completed within 40 hours. (National Certificates are described in section 4.) There are approximately 4,000 modules available. The National Certificate modular courses allow progression to advanced level courses, to courses in higher education and to advanced examinations of some professional and technical bodies and trade associations.

Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) and General Scottish Vocational Qualifications (GSVQs) were introduced in 1989 and 1991 respectively. SVQs exist at five levels and have been designed for employers by employers. They relate to an individual's ability to do a job, based on actual working practices in real workplace conditions.

Within the SVQ framework a more broadly based pre-vocational qualification – the General Scottish Vocational Qualification (GSVQ) – has also been developed. It is aimed specifically at sixteen to nineteen year olds at school and in further education and at adult returners. This qualification embraces a range of core skills and is designed to provide broad training for employment as well as for progression to higher education. It may also allow progression to a specific SVQ.

SVQs are analogous to the NVQs and GSVQs broadly compatible with the GNVQs operating in the rest of the UK. Both have recently been recognised as valid qualifications across the European Union. (GSVQs will be replaced by the new Scottish Group Awards under the Higher Still arrangements.)

5.2 Youth training

The Government-funded training programme for young people in Scotland is called Skillseekers. This programme replaced Youth Training in 1996 across Scotland and is managed and delivered by Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise through their network of Local Enterprise Companies (LECs). All young people aged sixteen and seventeen are entitled, under the Youth Training Guarantee, to Skillseekers training. LECs also have discretion to fund eighteen year olds and over, but in most cases there are clear criteria, for example employed status, key occupational sectors and higher levels of qualification.

The key elements of Skillseekers are:

- training leading to a recognised qualification, up to SVQ Level III
- an individual training plan
- employer involvement

The Skillseekers programme has been successful in increasing employer participation in training and 68% of the young people concerned are now employed while undertaking their training. In 1996 the Skillseekers programme was extended to include Modern Apprenticeships. More recently, the Government has initiated a New Deal programme to provide training and work opportunities for long-term unemployed people of whatever age.

5.3 Teachers/trainees

Teachers already holding a recognised

appointment in colleges of further education may take training which is offered on an in-service basis, leading to a Teaching Qualification (Further Education) and may register with the GTC. There is no legal requirement for them to do so. Training of teachers in higher education is a matter for individual institutions and no national training is offered.

Lecturers in further education are employed by their college See also Section 4.B

5.4 Statistics

Student Enrolments in non-advanced Further Education, 1997-98

Vocational	285,300
Non-Vocational	129,900
Total	415,200

Source: Scottish Executive Education Department, 1999

6. HIGHER EDUCATION

There are twenty Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Scotland, comprising fourteen universities and six other institutions. They are funded by the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC), except for the Scottish Agricultural College (which is funded through The Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department). Also available is the Open University in Scotland, funded from the Higher Education Funding Council for England. Funding arrangements for the OU in Scotland are currently under review and it is likely that funding will be through SHEFC in future. (Information about the OU in Scotland is given in section 9). The remaining Higher Education Institutions provide specialist courses, including teacher education, social work, community education, fine art, art and design, architecture, health care, music, drama, food, tourism, hospitality and agricultural science. Courses at higher education level (mainly Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma or both) are also offered by all the further education colleges and there are close collaborative links between the two sectors.

6.1 Admission

The usual entry qualification for higher education courses is a group of passes in

Standard Grade and Higher Grade examinations set by the SQA for the award of a Scottish Certificate of Education. Alternatively, for a Higher National Certificate Course, which may in turn lead on to a diploma or a degree, a cluster of appropriate passes at National Certificate level may be acceptable.

6.2 Student finance

The Student Awards Agency for Scotland has responsibility for providing assistance to students undertaking full-time courses of advanced further education or higher education. Students entering courses of full-time education in 1999-2000 will be expected to make a contribution towards their tuition fees, based on their family circumstances. The maximum level of contribution will be £1,000 (at 1998-99 rates). Many students will qualify for help with the contribution. Scottish domiciled students will apply to the Student Awards Agency for Scotland for help with their tuition costs.

Student loans will be the main way in which students will be assisted with living costs. The loans will be partly means-tested. The assessment of how much loan students are entitled to, will be done by the Awards Agency. Generally, students will apply for a loan at the

same time as they apply for help with tuition fees. Borrowers will start to repay their loans once they are in employment and have exceeded the required income threshold, which for 1998/99 was £10,000.

Assistance for students attending other full-time non-advanced courses and all part-time courses is the responsibility of the further education colleges or the local education authorities which have discretionary powers to offer assistance to individuals ordinarily resident in their areas.

6.3 The academic year

The academic year in Scottish universities is divided into three terms of approximately ten weeks each but a number of HEIs have introduced semester systems.

6.4 Courses and certification

In Scotland, degrees are awarded for the successful completion of a three year full-time course at an appropriate level (an Ordinary Degree) or a four year course which is more specialised and normally more demanding (an Honours Degree). In Scotland, although the first degree in most faculties is a Bachelor's degree, the first degree in Arts in the four ancient universities (Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrew's) and Dundee University is MA or Master of Arts. A Master's degree in all other faculties and in the other universities in a post-graduate qualification.

Many courses, especially in science and engineering, are sandwich courses, with students spending periods of professional training or work experience in a professional environment or industry. Such courses normally take a year longer to complete than full-time

courses.

6.5 Assessment

Assessment of students is most likely to be by written examinations, traditionally at the end of each academic year, but now varies considerably according to the institution and course. In some courses, assessment is on the basis of work submitted during the course or on a large piece of work done in the student's own time. Where appropriate, there will also be practical examinations as in the sciences or in oral proficiency in languages. The actual assessment is normally carried out by the department in which the student is studying but there will also be one or more external examiners from another institution or institutions who will sample some of the course work and examination scripts and in some cases give oral examinations to students.

6.6. Teachers

Teachers in higher education are employees of individual Higher Education Institutions. Training of teachers in higher education is a matter for individual institutions and no national training is offered.

6.7 Statistics

Statistics for higher education students (1997-98)

Full-time students	162,400
Part-time students	85,300
Total	247,700

7. ADULT EDUCATION

7.1 Legislative framework

Adult education is provided statutorily by education authorities as part of their duty to provide further education under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended by the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992.

7.2 Financing and funding

The SEED spends just over £3 million annually on community education in grants to voluntary bodies, capital grants schemes for local facilities and on a direct grant to CLS .

7.3 Adult Education

This type of further education, generally known in Scotland as 'community education', includes adult education, educational support for community development and work with children and young people. Community education is informal and community-based and brings the educational process to people and places which the formal education system does not easily reach, thereby increasing access to all forms of education and training. Its aims, as set out in 1995 by the Minister for Education at the Scottish Executive are:

- to make lifelong education a reality for the whole community, especially for those who are not yet associated with formal education and training;
- to develop collaborative initiatives amongst agencies to suit the needs of local communities;
- to support various government policies, such as rural and urban development, community care and the Citizen's Charter, through appropriate informal education.

Following the reorganisation of local government in Scotland in 1996, the new

authorities have adopted different approaches in the provision of community education services. In some cases, responsibility for the different services remains in the education department, in others it has been split across a number of departments.

General responsibility for promotion, development and oversight of community education is vested in Community Learning Scotland (CLS), which was formed in 1982 and has its headquarters in Edinburgh.

The general objective of adult education is to provide educational opportunity to meet the needs of as much of the population as possible. The precise objectives of different courses vary according to the type and level of the course. In some the objective may be the successful acquisition of a new skill, in others the acquisition of formal qualifications which may enhance the prospects of the person involved.

Adult education and training is offered by local councils, the library service, voluntary organisations, commercial and industrial firms, colleges of further education and universities and other higher education institutions. A number of adults also attend normal secondary schools for part of the time and take particular classes with school-age pupils. Adult education is also provided by the Education Units within Her Majesty's Prisons. Another body with a considerable interest in adult education is the Health Education Board for Scotland (HEBS), which has responsibilities for providing further training for professionals in the Health Service and also for educating the general public on health issues.

Although some courses for adults are delivered on a full-time basis during the day, many others involve part-time attendance, attendance at weekends or in the evenings. Flexible Learning Units (FLUs) have been set up by a number of further education colleges to enable students who do not have regular opportunities to study to follow courses as and when they are able, assisted by specially appointed tutors. Many courses involve formal lectures, seminars and discussions but there is now very wide use of flexible learning, using computers, taped lectures and telephone links with tutors, or attendance at out-stations using, for example, electronic whiteboard or video teleconferencing. These last methods are particularly effective where students live in the more remote areas.

Lifelong learning

In September 1998, The Scottish Executive published a paper on lifelong learning, *Opportunity Scotland*, including a ten point Action Plan. This paper sets out initiatives to make it easier for people in Scotland to access high quality learning opportunities at all levels and in a greater range of ways. By 2002 there will be a very different learning environment for adults, although it will be built mainly on the foundation of existing Scottish educational provision. Key elements in the Plan include the Scottish University for Industry, the National Grid for Learning, encouragement of the University of the Highlands and Islands Project, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, Skillseekers and the New Deal programme.

Community education

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- to make lifelong education a reality for the whole community, especially for those who are not yet associated with formal education and training
- to develop collaborative initiatives amongst agencies to suit the needs of local communities
- to support various government policies, such as rural and urban development, community care and the Citizen's Charter, through appropriate informal education

General responsibility for promotion, development and oversight of community education is vested in the Community Learning Scotland. The report *Communities: Change Through Learning* was a significant step forward in setting out a new vision for community education. The new approach is to be reflected in the new name of the national agency. Before April 1999 CLS was known as the Scottish Community Education Council.

Further education colleges

A sizeable and increasing proportion of FE students are mature. In 1996-97, 54% of FE students were aged 25 or over. Further education colleges offer an extensive variety of provision to adult returners which includes non-certificated short courses ranging from computing to first aid, courses leading to all SQA qualifications, adult basic education, courses for adults with special educational needs, tailor-made courses for industry, professional updating and courses providing access to higher education.

Higher education institutions

HEIs have encouraged a significant growth in numbers of mature students over the last decade. They have designed special access programmes usually in association with further education colleges; established a credit accumulation and transfer framework (SCOTCAT, which is described in section 6); increased their part-time course provision and developed the flexibility of their delivery.

Part-time courses leading to diplomas and degrees are offered by a number of the HEIs and particularly important in this provision for adults is the contribution made by the Open University (OU) which has an office and many students in Scotland.

The Open University

The Open University in Scotland is the Scottish operation of the Open University and is the single most important provider of part-time higher education in Scotland. Its 12,000 students are to be found in virtually every postcode district and community. The OU offers a very wide range of free-standing courses, diplomas, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. No formal entrance qualifications are required for undergraduate level courses. Study is mainly home-based using multi-media course materials, for which the OU has a first class reputation. Over 70% of OU students are in full-time employment. Academic support is provided by a network of around 600 specialist tutors based throughout Scotland. Students get the opportunity for contact with fellow students – depending on their course – by phone, online, at residential school or face-to-face tutorials at one of 80 venues in Scotland.

University for Industry

A new University for Industry (Ufi) is at the heart of the Government's vision for lifelong learning. It will be a new kind of public/private partnership working with businesses, education and training providers and other organisations to add, in new and exciting ways, to the existing menu of learning methods and stimulate new provision. The idea behind it is to connect people and businesses who want to improve their skills with the people who can offer them the learning they need, delivered how, where and when most convenient for the adult learner. There will be a distinctly Scottish Ufi which will seek to boost competitiveness and individual employability. The exploitation of information and communication technologies will be central to its activities.

The University of the Highlands and Islands Project

The University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) Project is one of the most radical developments in higher and further education in the UK. The Project is based on a partnership of thirteen colleges and research institutions and aims to bring educational, economic and social benefits to individuals and communities in the region. Although the Government is committed

to encouraging the development of the Project, responsibility for its development lies with a private company, UHI, in collaboration with academic partner institutions and other interests. Degrees offered by the UHI project are now validated by the Open University, a leader in distance learning.

The National Grid for Learning

The National Grid for Learning is a development of high quality educational material which will be available on the Internet to schools and colleges, teachers, lecturers, pupils, students and other learners. It is also a programme for delivering the infrastructure of cable and networks, the hardware, the services and the training required to establish a modern, comprehensive information and communication technology (ICT) system for schools and colleges. Although it will start with schools and colleges, the National Grid is intended ultimately to provide access to all sectors of education and lifelong learning.

In the field of adult education, community workers are required to have undertaken at least three years of study up to HND level and degree courses are provided for them in Teacher Education Institutions.