

# What were your results?

## How other countries mark secondary school exams

In all the EU countries, the democratization of education has led to a vast increase in the numbers of pupils in upper secondary general education, and the numbers leaving with a qualification are continuing to rise. Moreover, the ever-growing needs of training have gradually altered the social role of the school leaving certificate: nowadays, the end of upper secondary education represents less the moment of entry to working life than the transition to higher education.

Given the individual traditions of each education system in relation to assessment, the conditions for the award of diplomas or certificates at this level of education vary from country to country. There are also differences between countries as regards the role and importance of these qualifications for purposes of entry to higher education. However, with the present increasing mobility of students in higher education, the problem of the recognition of qualifications arises in all countries. As freedom of movement of students becomes a reality in the European Union, it is increasingly necessary to identify clearly the criteria on which certification is based.

### Conditions for the award of upper secondary general education qualifications

Assessment procedures and certification at the end of upper secondary education divide along two main lines - whether examinations are set, and whether the teacher has sole responsibility for these. The table (below right) illustrates the variety of situations.

Most countries have established systems of external assessment at the end of upper secondary general education, with six exceptions - Belgium, Greece, Iceland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

In Belgium, Greece and Iceland, certificates are granted on the responsibility of the teachers in the school attended by the pupil. The teachers take into account the work done during the year, together with the results obtained in the regular written and oral tests and in the final examinations which they set. In Greece, the final decision on granting the qualification lies with the teachers' council. In Belgium,<sup>1</sup> the certificates require official recognition by a homologation committee. In Portugal,<sup>2</sup> Spain and Sweden, the award of a

certificate depends solely on the pupil's work during the year and there is no final examination.

### Organization of external final examinations

In the other countries, it is usually the Ministry of Education or some other educational body which has direct responsibility for setting the external (public) examinations at the end of upper secondary general education. In the Netherlands, the ministry prescribes the criteria and the subjects to be covered, the actual preparation being undertaken by a national committee of experts and a specialist centre. In Germany, uniform examination requirements have been prescribed jointly by all the Länder. In Austria, regulations prescribe the organization of the examination and the common curricula determine the content of the examinations for the whole country. In Austria and in most of the German Länder, exam questions are submitted by the schools to the authorities. In the United Kingdom, the examinations are set by independent examining bodies (called variously board, group or council), each of which sets its own papers; for each subject, schools enter their pupils for the examinations of the examining body of their choice. In Finland, the Ministry of Education appoints a national examination board which sets, corrects and assesses the examinations.

In most countries, the external final examinations include both written and oral parts, except in Ireland and the United Kingdom, where they are only in written form with the exception of modern languages. Oral examinations are generally taken before a teacher from the school and an external moderator. Written examinations are marked by an outside board or by the teachers under the supervision of external examiners (Ireland). In Austria, the examinations are held under the supervision of an external chairman. In Germany, pupils take the Abitur examinations in the school before an examining board which includes representatives of the relevant ministry, the teachers and the head teacher.

In the United Kingdom, pupils have freedom of choice as to both the subjects and the number of subjects they sit. In certain countries, a minimum number of subjects must be taken - four in Aus-



trian, Germany and Finland, five in Ireland and seven in the Netherlands. At least some of these may be chosen by pupils from a list of those available. In Denmark, France, Luxembourg and Norway, the number of examinations and the subjects in which they are taken are decided by the education authorities, the exact group varying according to the main and optional subjects studied. In Italy, the number of examinations is determined by law (two written and two oral). The education authorities decide in which subjects these examinations are to be taken.

### External examinations and award of final qualification (diploma, certificate, etc.)

In those countries in which external examinations are held, the results may be combined in a variety of ways with the pupil's school marks in determining the award of the final certificate.

In the Netherlands, the final mark represents the average of the marks obtained in the national examination and in the examinations set by the teacher.

In Germany, the upper secondary certificate is based on the results obtained in the Abitur examination and the marks

obtained in a group of subjects over the last two years.

In Denmark, the Studentereksamen certificate includes both the marks for the year's work and the examinations marks. The average is calculated of all the marks obtained in the year's work and a further average is calculated of all the examinations marks together with the year marks in those subjects in which examinations have not been taken.

In Norway, both the final examination works and the teacher's overall assessment appear on the final certificate.

In the United Kingdom, a certificate is given to every pupil

Written or oral exams, external or internal assessment?

End of upper secondary general education	
Certification based on external, standardized (public) examinations or externally supervised	Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom
Certification based on internal final examinations	Belgium, Greece, Iceland
Certification with no final examinations	Portugal, Spain, Sweden



External examinations and award of final qualifications in EU countries		
COUNTRIES	Name of certificate	Name of standardized external (public) examination
AUSTRIA	Reifeprüfungszeugnis	Reifeprüfung
BELGIUM French Community Flemish Community	Certificat de l'enseignement secondaire supérieur (CESS) Diploma van secundair onderwijs	----- -----
DENMARK	Bevis for Studentereksamen Bevis for Højere Forberedelseseksamen	Studentereksamen Højere Forberedelseseksamen
GERMANY	Zeugnis der allgemeinen Hochschulreife	Abiturprüfung
GREECE	Apolytirio lykeiou or Ptychio lykeiou	-----
FINLAND	Ylioppilastutkintotodistus	Ylioppilastutkinto
FRANCE	Baccalauréat	Baccalauréat
IRELAND	Leaving Certificate	Leaving certificate examination
ICELAND	Stúdentprofsskírteini	-----
ITALY	Diploma di maturità	Maturità
LUXEMBOURG	Diplôme de fin d'études secondaires	Examen de fin d'études secondaires
NORWAY	Reifeprüfungitnemal (fraden videreganeskole)	Eksamen (fraden videreganeskole)
NETHERLANDS	Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs (VWO) Hoger Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs (HAVO)	Eindexamen
PORTUGAL	Certificado de fim de Estudos Secundários	-----
SPAIN	Bachillerato	-----
SWEDEN	Gymnasiekompetens	-----
UNITED KINGDOM England, Wales and Northern Ireland	General Certificate of Education Advanced level (GCE A Level) and Advanced Supplementary (GCE A S)	GCE A level examination and GCE AS examination
UNITED KINGDOM Scotland	Scottish Certificate of Education	Standard Grade and Higher Grade Certificate of sixth year of studies

who reaches the minimum pass mark in at least one subject; only those subjects passed are mentioned, along with the grades attained in each of those subjects. In Ireland, all pupils who sit the examination are given a certificate; however, entrance to higher education and employment is determined by the grades awarded. Class work is not taken into consideration.

In Italy, only those pupils who achieve satisfactory results during the year are allowed to sit the Maturità, on which the award of the certificate depends.

In France, a minimum overall

mark must be reached across all subjects, and the award of the certificate depends entirely on this.

In Luxembourg, pupils must in principle obtain 50% of the possible marks in every subject in the examination and the school marks obtained during the year will count for one third of the final mark as from the examinations held in June 1994.

In Finland, pupils who pass the external examination receive a certificate indicating the marks obtained in each subject and the overall average; provided generally that they also obtain their upper secondary school-leaving

certificate which is based on the marks they receive for their work in their final year:

<sup>1</sup> In the Flemish Community, the homologation procedure will be abolished as from 1995/96.

<sup>2</sup> Major changes in the system of pupil assessment are likely to be introduced in Portugal as from 1995/96.

## Vocati Diff sim

Comparative vocational terms in the States all emphasize great diversity of given that they within their own specific, economic political environment means in turn that the Member States the actual process and reforming that also very different place within the existing system problems which addressed are often

The debates States during recent seemed to concern

- Ensuring that efficient places for particularly in other alternance schemes.

- The relationship between general education
- The developments to ensure a high level of the skill in the labour force, and to the needs of the
- Measures for training particularly the employed.

- The international "Europeanization" The debate seems characterized by similar types of measures of achievement of for example more for individual training and organization between educational institutions/organisations; decreasing the responsibilities of the training.

In a short article possible to deal in these elements, I attempt to report on a cross-country measures and the debate in Member

**Training of young apprenticeship**  
The discussion at Community level on the re-orientation of apprenticeship terms reflects many a number of Member States.  
The number of apprenticeships

