

Hungarian educational system

The school year runs from the beginning of September to early June and is divided into two semesters. Most schools start at the end of August and the first term of the academic year ends on 31st January. The second term begins the 1st February and lasts till the middle of June. Schools usually start at 8 a.m. and there are about 6 or 7 lessons a day each lasting 45 minutes. There are short breaks of 10-15 minutes between classes. Uniforms are usually not worn.

The general structure of schooling is 8 years of elementary school, 4 years of secondary school and the 3-6 years of higher education. According to Hungarian law students are obliged to study until the age of 18.

The first grade of education is the primary school that usually lasts 8 years. As for secondary school, it is possible to choose a 6 or 8 grade school which means that the student finishes primary school in the 4th or 6th grade.

There are various types of secondary schools in Hungary: "gimnázium" (similar to grammar schools and mainly prepares students for further studies, which can be a 6-grade, 8-grade or 4-grade school); "szakközépiskola" (a 4-grade school specializing students in a certain area, i.e. economics, mechanics, commerce preparing its students for working in that field); and "szakmunkásképző" (a 4-grade vocational school, which trains skilled workers). AFS Hungary usually places the exchange students into 4-grade grammar schools, although few can attend "szakközépiskola". Keep in mind that even if they attend a grammar school, it can also offer specialization's in academic subjects depending on the school's accreditation (e.g. more foreign language, science or humanities classes).

Schools in Hungary require motivated students and provide fewer extra-curricular activities that some other countries do. **Students accepted into secondary school take their studies seriously and devote much time to lesson preparation, since a lot of home assignments are given out for the afternoons.** In Hungarian grammar schools there are 12 compulsory subjects. At the end of the school leaving year (equivalent to 12th grade) students take a school leaving exam („érettségi” = ‘A levels’ (UK)/school diploma (US), which is necessary if they want to apply for university.

Schools can provide some extra activities such as school trips, sport and games, choir, arts or theater (it depends on the school's profile).

AFS guarantees an AFS Certificate. Other certificates depend upon the participant. Certificate of Attendance can be obtained with full school attendance.

AFS students in Hungary have to attend classes regularly, even if they find it difficult at first. AFS participants must go to school daily and will each be a member of a class with whom they must attend all the lessons. Non-attendance is registered and may result in the dismissal of the student from the school. If it happens it leads to an early return to the sending country. Hungarian schools do not grant diplomas to AFS students; however, if they work hard and their host school gives permission, they may sit for a final exam and can receive a transcript of subjects they passed. Several students are placed in schools that require a high level of academic excellence.

Grading system

5	excellent/outstanding/very good
4	good/above average
3	average/fair
2	poor
1	fail