

***Information
on complete general secondary education qualification/level,
and admission to higher education programs in Ukraine
due to COVID-19***

*Compiled by the National Information Centre of Academic Mobility, ENIC Ukraine
(State-owned Company Information and Image Centre of
the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine)*

Certificate of Complete General Secondary Education (since 2019), and Attestat of Complete General Secondary Education (before 2019) – is an educational document that confirms the successful completion of general secondary school in Ukraine, provides general access to higher education and is a prerequisite for admission to higher education to junior bachelor's degree, bachelor's degree (master's degree (long cycle) in medicine, pharmacy or veterinary) programs on the basis of complete general secondary education.

Certificate of Complete General Secondary Education is issued after completion of the 11-year program and final exams of the State Final Attestation (the SFA) in several subjects (Mathematics and Ukrainian language – mandatory, and one-two subjects optional). The subjects and number of exams are specified annually by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Since 2015, the SFA has been conducted in the form of the External Independent Evaluation (the EIE). In this case, the results are added to the supplement of the Certificate of Complete General Secondary Education in the line for the SFA results. In certain cases specified by the relevant legislation, graduates have the right to pass the SFA in another form provided by an educational institution or to be exempted from passing the SFA.

The External Independent Evaluation (the EIE) is a learning outcomes assessment system, and component of the admission procedure to higher education programs as an instrument of competitive selection to higher education programs. The EIE ensures to general secondary school graduates the right for equal and fair admission to higher education programs as the EIE results are used to determine the competitive selection scores for different programs.

Graduates choose subjects (3-5) for the EIE tests according to the list of chosen areas of study in higher education institutions. The results of the EIE in Ukraine are organized as rating scale: 100-200 points. The required subject groups and the EIT points for admission are specified by higher education institutions. Higher education institutions can also set additional conditions for admission (art and vocal exams, tests, interviews etc.).

After the EIE tests, a Certificate of External Independent Evaluation and a separate Information Card with the results of the EIT are issued. The EIE certificates can be used to apply to higher education institutions for 2-3 years which is determined annually by the legal act governing the conditions of admission to higher education. For example, in 2019 the Certificates of External Independent Evaluation of 2017-2019 were accepted, in 2020 – certificates of 2017-2020. In 2021, the certificates of 2018-2021 were valid. Applicants can apply any combination of the EIE certificates of valid years.

In general, the EIE certificates are a prerequisite for applying to higher education based on the fact that the EIE results are a component of the higher education admission selective procedure. But for some special categories of entrants, specified by the relevant legislation, the admission to higher education is possible even without the EIE certificates. In some exceptional cases, it is possible for higher education institutions to conduct entrance examinations (or tests/interview, etc.) for certain categories of persons.

Thus, the External Independent Evaluation system has become both the main (but not the only) component of the admission procedure and fair selection to higher education programs (since 2006), and (since 2015) the main (but not the only) tool for conducting the State Final Attestation for graduates of complete general secondary school.

In the context of the pandemic, significant changes have been made to the system of attestation of graduates, in particular to the SFA, in connection with the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Students who completed general secondary education in the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years were exempted from passing the State Final Attestation, which was mandatory in previous years to obtain the Certificate of Complete General Secondary Education.

Applicants who successfully completed the 11-year program of complete secondary education in the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years were awarded general secondary education qualification/level and a Certificate of Complete General Secondary Education without passing the SFA. In this case, the word "exempted" is indicated in the SFA line in the Certificate of Complete General Secondary Education supplement. Also, at their own choice, the graduates had the opportunity to pass the SFA exams in the form of the External Independent Evaluation. In this case, the results of the EIE are added to the Certificate of Complete General Secondary Education supplement in the SFA line by the choice of a graduate. In 2019/2020 and 2020/2021, the EIE tests were voluntary for the school graduates.

However, the EIE was and is the main part of the competitive selection procedure and admission to higher education programs (except as provided by legislation).

The graduates of general secondary education institutions have the right to enter higher education institutions (provided they have the EIE results), regardless of whether they have the result for the SFA in the Certificate of Complete General Secondary Education supplement, or it is stated "exempted" the SFA line.

The holder of the document on complete general secondary education has the right to pass the EIE and use its results to participate in the competitive selection to the chosen higher education program(s). The EIE tests are available for the following cases:

- for persons who were previously exempted from the SFA
- when the validity of the EIE certificates for applying to higher education has expired
- when it is necessary to improve the results of the previous EIE tests for the competition to the chosen higher education program(s)

According to Article IV.1, Section IV of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon, 11 April 1997), it may be considered that the Certificate of Complete General Secondary Education gives general right to access higher education, and the External Independent Evaluation system provides for equal and fair admission procedure to higher education programs, as an instrument of competitive selection.

To sum up, in Ukraine, the Certificate of Complete General Secondary Education, as well as the Certificate of External Independent Evaluation are the main components of access and admission to higher education programs, while the Certificate of Complete General Secondary Education certifies the qualification of complete secondary education and gives general access to higher education programs, and the Certificate of External Independent Evaluation provides for the admission selective procedure to higher education programs and is used to specify the competitive scores for enrollment to a particular higher education program.

Resources for additional information:

- 1) Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine:
<https://mon.gov.ua/ua/tag/zagalna-serednya-osvita>
- 2) Law on Education: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2145-19#Text>
- 3) Law on Complete General Secondary Education:
<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/463-20#Text>
- 4) Law on Higher Education: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1556-18#Text>
- 5) Law on Amendments to Section II “Final and Transitional Provisions” of the Law of Ukraine on Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine aimed at Providing Additional Social and Economic Guarantees in Connection with the Spread of COVID-19” (concerning certain issues of completion of the 2020/2021 academic year) № 1378-IX:
<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/540-20>
- 6) Ukrainian Quality of Education Evaluation Center (the EIE system):
<https://testportal.gov.ua/>
- 7) National Information Centre of Academic Mobility (ENIC України)/SC Information and Image Centre of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine: <http://enic.in.ua/index.php/en/>