



# **International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011 - Draft**

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## **1. WHAT IS ISCED?**

1. The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) presents a classification of education and training systems with a standard set of concepts and definitions. It is designed to serve as a framework to classify educational programmes in internationally agreed categories. It can be used for assembling, compiling and presenting cross-nationally comparable statistics and indicators of education.
2. ISCED can be used for statistics on different aspects of education such as enrolment and attendance, human or financial resources invested in education, and the educational attainment of the population. The basic concepts and definitions of ISCED were designed to be internationally valid and comprehensive of the full range of education systems irrespective of the situation in a particular system.
3. ISCED classifies educational programmes by their content using two main cross-classification variables: levels of education (see Section 5) and fields of education (see Annex 1). This version of ISCED presents a revision of the levels of ISCED 1997, while the ISCED 1997 fields of education have been retained.
4. Information compiled according to ISCED can be used for assembling statistics on many different aspects of education of interest to policy-makers and other users of international education statistics.
5. ISCED can be used for education statistics based on different data sources such as administrative registers, individual and household surveys, and macro-economic aggregated statistics.
6. The application of ISCED facilitates the transformation of detailed national education statistics on participants, providers and sponsors of education, compiled on the basis of national concepts and definitions, into aggregate categories that can be compared and interpreted on an international scale.
7. ISCED rests on three components: (i) internationally agreed concepts and definitions; (ii) the classification system; and (iii) ISCED mappings of educational programmes and qualifications in countries worldwide.
8. The ISCED mappings are an essential tool for organising information about national education systems, their programmes and qualifications in order to ensure the comparability of ISCED level information and support their interpretation for international statistical purposes.
9. ISCED mappings ensure a transparent process of coding national educational programmes into comparable structures for use in international statistics by linking the classification criteria to the properties of the educational programmes.

## **2. DEFINITION OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN ISCED**

10. ISCED defines the term educational activities as deliberate, organized and sustained activities, involving some form of communication, which are designed to bring about learning. The key words in this formulation are to be understood as follows:
11. **COMMUNICATION:** a relationship between two or more persons or an inanimate medium and persons, involving the transfer of information (messages, ideas,

knowledge, strategies, etc.). Communication may be verbal or non-verbal, direct/face-to-face or indirect/remote, and may involve a wide variety of channels and media.

12. **LEARNING:** individual acquisition of information, knowledge, understanding, attitude, value or skill, or modification in behaviour.
13. **ORGANIZED:** planned in a pattern or sequence with explicit or implicit aims. It involves a providing agency (person or persons or body) that facilitates a learning environment, and a method of teaching through which communication is organized. The teaching method typically involves someone who is engaged in communicating and guiding knowledge and skills with a view to bringing about learning. The medium of instruction can also be indirect, e.g. through radio, television, computer software, cinema, recordings, internet or other communication technologies, etc.
14. **SUSTAINED:** the learning experience has the elements of duration and continuity.
15. The term ‘educational activity’ implies a broader meaning than the terms ‘course’ or ‘combination of courses’. Education at a given level comprises not only courses organized into programmes but also free-standing courses and non-course activities. Programmes may have major components not normally characterized as courses – for example, play-based activities, periods of work experience, research projects, and preparation of dissertations.

### 3. SCOPE OF EDUCATION IN ISCED

16. ISCED covers formal and non-formal education offered throughout a person’s life. ISCED does not cover informal or random learning. Formal and non-formal education include a variety of programmes and types of education that are designed within a national context, such as initial education, second chance programmes, literacy programmes, adult education, continuing education, open and distance education, apprenticeships, technical or vocational education, training, or special needs education. (see Glossary).
17. **Formal education** is defined as education that is institutionalized and recognized by the relevant national authorities. Credentials from formal education are therefore also considered within the scope of ISCED. Institutionalized education occurs when an organisation provides structured educational arrangements, such as a student-teacher relationship, that are specially designed for education and learning.
18. Formal education typically takes place in institutions that provide full-time education for children and young adults in a system designed as a continuous pathway of schooling. This is referred to as initial education. Formal education also includes education for all age groups with programme content and certificates that are equivalent to those from initial education.
19. Programmes that take place partly or fully in the workplace may also be considered formal education if they lead to a certification that is recognized by national authorities. These programmes are often provided in cooperation between educational institutions and employers (e.g. apprenticeships). This includes those which are part of ‘dual system’ programmes (see Glossary).
20. ISCED assumes that in formal education, the minimum duration of an educational programme is one half academic year of full-time study or its equivalent.

21. **Non-formal education** is defined as an addition or alternative to formal education and can take on a number of forms. It can be provided by private enterprises, non-governmental organisations and public or semi-public organisations. The defining characteristic of non-formal education is that it is not recognized as formal education.
22. Non-formal education can be alternative education paths that are not recognized by national authorities in education even though they are generally acknowledged in society and lead to labour market relevant skills. It can include training in a workplace for improving or adapting existing qualifications and skills. It can also be training for unemployed or inactive persons. Finally, non-formal education can include learning activities pursued for self development, with the purpose of acquiring knowledge or skills that may not be specifically job-related.
23. Non-formal education can take place both within and outside educational institutions and caters to persons of all ages. Depending on the national context, it can cover programmes on adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children, life skills, work skills, and social or cultural development. Non-formal educational programmes do not necessarily have a pathway structure and may be very short in duration, including less than one day. However, programmes included in ISCED must be equivalent to one half academic year of full-time study (see Paragraph 20).
24. The educational attainment of individuals is solely determined by formal education credentials and certificates. However, in exceptions, credentials and certificates from non-formal educational programmes can be explicitly recognized as equivalent to formal education certificates and as such, be a pathway into formal education. In this case, they may be relevant to determine an individual's educational attainment.
25. National qualification frameworks can be useful tools for distinguishing skills related to programmes and qualifications in formal and non-formal education.
26. There may be national schemes for assessing and accrediting skills obtained through work experience, for recognition in the formal education system.
27. Informal learning does not fall within the scope of ISCED. Like formal and non-formal education, informal learning can be distinguished from random learning. Informal learning is defined as intentional, but is less organized, not institutionalized and less structured. It may include learning activities that occur in the family, in the work place, and in daily life, on a self-directed, family-directed or socially directed basis.
28. ISCED also excludes **incidental learning**, i.e. various forms of learning that are not organized, **or random learning**, i.e. communication that is not designed to bring about learning. Incidental or random learning that occurs as a by-product of another event is excluded because it is not organized and does not result from a planned intervention designed to bring about learning. Examples of random learning include communication that takes place during the course of a meeting, or following a radio or television broadcast that is not designed as an educational programme.

#### 4. UNIT OF CLASSIFICATION

29. The basic unit of classification in ISCED is the educational programme within the context of national education systems. Educational programmes are defined as a coherent set or sequence of educational activities that are designed and organized to achieve pre-determined learning objectives or a specific set of educational tasks over a

sustained period. Objectives encompass improving knowledge, skills and competencies within any personal, civic, social and/or employment related context. This is typically linked to the purpose of preparing for more advanced studies and/or for an occupation or range of occupations. A common characteristic of educational programmes is that, upon fulfilment of learning objectives or educational tasks, completion is recognized or certified by the provider.

30. The classification of educational programmes determines the reporting of statistics on education systems, e.g., enrolment, entrants, teachers and other personnel and financial resources.
31. Qualifications corresponding to educational programmes represent a derived unit of classification. A qualification is the official recognition of successful completion of an educational programme (see Paragraphs 49 and 50). In ISCED, the term ‘qualification’ is synonymous to other terms such as diploma, certificate, degree or credential. The classification of qualifications is the basis for statistics on educational attainment, graduates or graduations. Qualifications can be obtained through: i) successful completion of a programme; ii) successful completion of a stage of a programme (intermediate qualifications, see Glossary); or iii) recognition of skills and competencies equivalent to those acquired in formal education, independent of participation in such programmes.
32. In ISCED, educational programmes are classified first and qualifications are subsequently classified.
33. ISCED is not designed for the direct assessment of the competencies of learners engaged in educational activities because there is no clear relationship between programmes and actual educational achievement. The educational programmes that an individual has participated in or has successfully completed are, at best, only an approximation of the skills and competencies obtained.

## **5. CROSS-CLASSIFICATION VARIABLES**

34. The main cross-classification variables of ISCED are levels and fields of education. The classification of the levels of education is part of an overall framework that covers the whole education system. A summary of the ISCED classification is given in Section 9.
35. Within levels, programme and qualifications are further classified by complementary dimensions. These include the orientation of programme for levels 2 to 5; the access to a higher level of education for levels 2 to 4; completion of the programme for levels 2 to 7; and the position in the national degree and qualification structure for levels 6 and 7. ISCED levels 1 and 8 are not further subdivided and ISCED level 0 is subdivided according to age. The categories and subcategories of these complementary dimensions provide more detail for collecting and reporting cross-nationally comparative data. The following subsections describe the complementary dimensions further.
36. Other descriptive characteristics and attributes of programmes beyond those described in ISCED may include the service provider, the educational setting or location, the mode of service provision, the type of participant or the mode of participation. Some of these are not attributes of the educational programmes but rather represent the institutions that provide the programmes. However, these characteristics serve an

important function in distinguishing the nature of the programmes in many countries and in defining the scope of data collections.

## LEVELS

37. The notion of ‘levels’ of education is taken to be related to gradations of learning experiences and the competencies which an educational programme is designed to impart. In general, the level is related to the degree of complexity of the content of the programme in terms of increasingly specialised knowledge, skills and capabilities.
38. Levels of education are therefore a construct based on the assumption that educational programmes can be grouped into an ordered series of categories. These categories represent broad steps of educational progression, from elementary to more complex content. The more advanced the programme, the higher the level of education.
39. Classifying educational programmes into a progression of levels aims to reflect the reality of education systems as far as possible. However, individuals can arrange their educational pathways in many ways, as education systems provide multiple branching paths, alternative programme sequences, and second chance provisions (see Glossary).
40. The classification of educational programmes by level should be based on content. However, curricula are too diverse, multi-faceted and complex to directly assess and compare the content of programmes across education systems in a consistent way. Due to the absence of direct measures to classify educational content, ISCED is built around proxy criteria that help to assign a given educational programme to an appropriate level of education.
41. These proxy criteria are comprised of main and subsidiary criteria. Main criteria indicate necessary characteristics of educational programmes at the respective ISCED level. Subsidiary criteria indicate characteristics of many but not all educational programmes at this ISCED level (see Sections 12 to 21).
42. The primary criterion for classifying a programme is its educational content and how the content is reflected in the proxy criteria. To ensure international comparability, the institutional context should not be used as a substitute for educational content as a classification criterion. For example, ISCED 4 programmes may take place in institutions that typically provide tertiary (ISCED 6) programmes.

## ORIENTATION

43. The orientation of a programme is distinguished for ISCED levels 2 to 5. There are two categories of orientation: general and vocational education.
44. **General education** represents educational programmes that are designed to develop learners’ general knowledge, capabilities and literacy and numeracy skills, often to prepare participants for further education at the same or a higher level. These programmes are typically school-based.
45. **Vocational education** is defined as programmes that are mainly designed for learners to acquire the practical skills, know-how and understanding necessary for employment in a particular occupation or trade or class of occupations or trades. Vocational educational programmes may be school- and/or work-based. Successful completion of



such programmes leads to labour-market relevant vocational qualifications recognized by the competent national authorities.

46. Educational programmes that are designed to introduce participants to the world of work and to prepare them for entry into vocational and technical educational programmes but that do not lead directly to a labour market relevant qualification are typically considered as having a general orientation.
47. Most programmes at the tertiary education ISCED levels 6 to 8 are specialised and thus lead to a labour-market relevant qualification. These programmes may also lead to higher levels of specialisation within the academic field and are therefore labelled academic/professional without distinguishing orientation categories.

## **COMPLETION AND ACCESS TO FURTHER EDUCATION**

48. The definition of programme and level completion is used for two purposes. First, it helps to define the criteria of entry requirements when classifying educational programmes by level. Secondly, educational programmes within ISCED levels 2 to 4 are distinguished by three subcategories:
  - level completion and access to further education;
  - level completion with no access to further education; and
  - no completion of level and no access to further education.
49. In ISCED, the term ‘completion of a programme’ is equivalent to successful completion. The requirements for successful completion of an education programme are normally stipulated in the programme and usually include:
  - attendance requirements (enrol and regularly attend through the final year of a programme); and/or
  - demonstrated acquisition of expected skills and knowledge.
50. The acquisition of the expected skills and knowledge is normally recognized by:
  - passing a final, curriculum-based examination or series of examinations;
  - accumulating the specified number of study credits; or
  - a successful formal assessment of the skills/knowledge acquired.

In all cases, a successful outcome typically results in certification that is recognized by the formal education system.

51. Completion of programmes at ISCED levels 1 to 3 is considered as level completion when the programme is designed to grant direct access to a higher ISCED level, which in the case of ISCED 3 is ISCED 5, 6 or 7. Access to a higher ISCED level is a criterion that is independent of the orientation of the programme. Programmes are considered as giving access to a higher ISCED level even if this access is limited to only some of the programmes at the higher level.
52. Completion of vocational programmes at ISCED levels 2 and 3 that are not designed to lead to further education is considered as level completion if the programme meets the following criteria: i) the programme has a duration of at least two years of study at a given level; and ii) the cumulative duration is a minimum of eight years of schooling

up to and including ISCED level 2, and 11 years of schooling up to and including ISCED level 3. The completion of vocational programmes not fulfilling the duration criteria is not considered as level completion.

53. The completion of ISCED level 1 programmes and general programmes at ISCED levels 2 and 3, not providing access to a higher ISCED level, is not considered as level completion.
54. Programmes for adults may have a shorter duration than similar programmes in initial education at a given level. However, completion of a programme should only count as level completion if the obtained credential indicates the mastery of content of equivalent complexity as in the initial education programme at the same level.
55. At ISCED levels 5 to 8, any successful completion of a programme is considered as level completion. However, intermediate qualifications obtained before completing the full programme are typically classified at a lower ISCED level.
56. The definitions of programme and level completion should be applied consistently for classification of educational programmes and qualifications. This ensures consistency between different types of statistics, such as graduation and educational attainment.

#### **POSITION IN THE NATIONAL DEGREE AND QUALIFICATION STRUCTURE**

57. ISCED level 6 and 7 programmes are cross-categorised by their position in the national degree and qualification structure. Considering the sequence of degrees in national programmes is necessary to correctly count first time entrants to and graduates of tertiary education. The position of a qualification is assigned as first, second or further, based on the sequence of qualifications within national tertiary education systems. The position in the degree structure does not necessarily indicate differences in the complexity of programmes classified at the same level.
58. ISCED level 6 programmes are classified as first degree if no prior level 6 qualification is provided in the theoretical pathway of programmes. Otherwise programmes are classified as further degree at level 6.
59. ISCED level 7 programmes are classified as first degree if completion of a level 6 programme is not an entry requirement. Level 7 programmes that require prior completion of a level 6 programme are classified as second degree. Any level 7 programme that requires prior completion of another level 7 programme is to be classified as further degree.

#### **DURATION AND CUMULATIVE DURATION CRITERIA**

60. Because of their importance to the classification of programmes to levels and identification of level completion, the duration criteria are described in detail here. The remaining criteria are described in Sections 12 to 21.
61. ISCED uses the following ranges of programme duration as criteria for classifying formal educational programmes by level:
  - ISCED 0: no duration criteria, however a programme should be at least one half academic year in duration;

- ISCED 1: programmes vary from 4 to 7 years. The most common duration is 6 years;
  - ISCED 2: programmes vary from 2 to 5 years. The most common duration is 3 years;
  - ISCED 3: programmes vary from 2 to 5 years. The most common duration is 3 years;
  - ISCED 4: no duration criteria, however a programme should be at least one half academic year in duration;
  - ISCED 5: programmes vary from 2 to 3 years;
  - ISCED 6: programmes vary from 3 to 4 years but in exceptional cases can be longer;
  - ISCED 7: programmes vary from 1 year to 3 years when following level 6 or have more than 4 years when following level 3; and
  - ISCED 8: programmes are at least 3 years, but may be longer.
62. ISCED uses the following ranges of cumulative duration as criteria for classifying formal education programmes by level:
- ISCED 1+2: the typical cumulative duration is 9 to 10 years, but may range from 8 to 11 years; and
  - ISCED 1+2+3: the typical cumulative duration is 12 years, but may range from 11 to 14 years. Entrance to tertiary education requires a minimum of 11 years of education at ISCED levels 1 to 3.
63. When applying the criteria of duration, the theoretical duration for full-time participation, for which the programme is designed, should be used (see Glossary).
64. While the main aim of ISCED is to promote the collection and use of comparable education data, it is recognized that nationally distinct conditions may exist that require flexibility in the definition of duration by level. Therefore, Paragraphs 61 and 62 provide a range of years of duration. Ideally, the most common or typical duration is used when classifying programmes.
65. The duration by level and cumulative duration as given in Paragraphs 61 and 62 serve as a guide. However, institutional transition points may be used as criteria for assigning a programme to an ISCED level. The choice of national transition points for matching the international classification categories is determined by the content of the underlying educational programmes.

## **6. PROGRAMMES SPANNING ISCED LEVELS, SEQUENTIAL PROGRAMMES AND MODULAR PROGRAMMES**

66. When classifying national educational programmes by ISCED levels, transition points between national programmes and exit points into the labour market may not always coincide with transition points between ISCED levels. Three such cases can be identified: i) programmes which span two or more ISCED levels; ii) two or more

programmes which are sequential within the same ISCED level; and iii) programmes which are provided in modules without clearly defined sequencing or entry and exit points.

67. A national educational programme with a duration exceeding the criteria provided for ISCED levels (see Paragraphs 61 and 62) is considered as spanning more than one level. It is therefore necessary to identify the transition point (or points) from one ISCED level to the next within the course of the programme according to the level criteria. For example, when a national primary education programme lasts for eight years or longer, the final grades are to be classified as ISCED level 2.
68. To classify a programme spanning more than one ISCED level, existing transition points within the programme, such as stages or intermediate qualifications, should be used to assign the relevant grades of the programme to corresponding ISCED levels. If no such transition point exists, the typical cumulative duration of the ISCED level (see Paragraph 62), provides guidance on how to identify the boundaries between ISCED levels. Further instructions are given in Sections 12 to 21 on ISCED levels.
69. There are special considerations for reporting on programmes that span different ISCED levels. Enrolment numbers are to be allocated across ISCED levels, typically using statistics by grade or year. Financial and human resources should also be estimated by level. When reporting new entrants to or graduates of an ISCED level, all levels that the programme spans are considered separately.
70. In order to comply with the duration criteria for ISCED levels (see Paragraphs 61 and 62), it is necessary to classify two sequential programmes at the same ISCED level, where their combined length meets the criteria. In such cases, the progression in the national system is not reflected in reporting of ISCED levels but can be reflected in reporting by subcategories (see Paragraph 48). Typically, such situations occur where national systems consist of a sequence of four programmes within ISCED levels 1 to 3, and in most cases, two programmes are classified as level 2.
71. Sequential programmes within one ISCED level require special consideration in reporting. Enrolment should be combined for all programmes in the level. Data on entrants consider only those in the first programme in the ISCED level, while data on graduates consider only those completing the final programme in the level. For educational attainment, only completion of the final programme counts as level completion; completion of other programmes in the ISCED level is reported as the subcategory 'no completion of level' (see Paragraph 48).
72. Modular programmes allow students to compose the content of their education in a flexible way by combining different modules. The completion of each module is typically certified. A combination of modules is considered as an educational programme if it meets the ISCED definition for programme (see Paragraph 29), including the requirement that the combined duration is at least one half academic year (see Paragraph 20). A modular programme is considered as completed if all programme requirements are fulfilled.

## **7. APPLICATION OF ISCED FOR SPECIFIC TYPES OF EDUCATION**

73. The criteria presented in Sections 12 to 21 on ISCED levels are typically identified with respect to initial education. However, not all formal and non-formal educational programmes can be easily classified based on these criteria, even though they are clearly within the scope of ISCED.
74. Programmes that may have special characteristics that permit to apply the usual criteria for the classification of programmes in ISCED include:
- Programmes designed for specific segments of the population, in particular adult education, literacy programmes, and special needs education. The content of such programmes is often adjusted to meet the particular needs of participants;
  - Programmes where it may be difficult to identify the participants, for example educational broadcast programmes; and
  - Programmes provided through the Internet or distance learning.
75. All such educational activities should be classified based on their equivalence with the educational content of initial programmes. For example, where an adult learning programme satisfies the content-based criteria of ISCED level 1, it should be classified as an ISCED level 1 programme.
76. The qualifications awarded upon successful completion of a programme can often help to classify an educational programme. For example, a distance education programme might be classified based on the type of qualifications that are awarded upon its successful completion.

## **8. TYPES OF DATA AND ISCED**

77. ISCED is typically used for statistics on participants, entrants, graduates and educational attainment. ISCED does not constitute a guide for data collection and does not define in detail statistical units and the coverage of the collections. However, in the implementation of ISCED for different types of statistics, the following principles should be considered.

### **ENROLMENT, ATTENDANCE AND ENTRANTS**

78. In order to accurately measure enrolment, attendance and entrants by ISCED levels and categories, students must be assigned to an ISCED level, category and subcategory. The institutional context should not be used as basis for assembling statistics. Students within the same institution in different ISCED levels need to be reported separately, if necessary using estimation. Students in educational programmes spanning ISCED levels should to be reported using statistics by grade or stage.
79. Students are assigned to ISCED levels and categories according to the characteristics of the programme and not the characteristics of individual students. For example, the category pre-primary education targets children age 3 and above, but children below that age who are enrolled in such programmes should also be reported in this category.

Similarly, statistics using categories on access to a higher level should be based on the programme design and not on individual students' pathways.

80. New entrants to an ISCED level must be distinguished from entrants to educational programmes who do not enter a new level. Entrants to an educational programme that is preceded by a programme at the same level are excluded when reporting entrants to a level. For programmes spanning two ISCED levels, participants entering the first grade of the higher ISCED level need to be considered as entrants to an ISCED level even though from a national point of view they continue their education within the same programme.

## **GRADUATES**

81. Graduates from an ISCED level only include those who successfully completed an educational programme and obtained a qualification classified as 'level completion'. Graduates who obtained a qualification classified as 'no completion of level' should either be excluded or reported in a separate category (see Paragraph 48).
82. Data on graduates from an ISCED level should only consider first time graduates at the given level. This is especially relevant for tertiary education, where a sequence of programmes may follow each other within a level. Graduates from programmes classified as 'further degree' (see Paragraph 57) already graduated from the same level and should not be considered again as graduates from that level. Only programmes classified as first degree at level 6 and as first or second degree at level 7 should be considered for statistics on graduates at these levels.

## **EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**

83. The educational attainment of an individual is defined as the ISCED level corresponding to the highest recognized formal education qualification obtained.
84. In most cases, educational attainment corresponds to the highest educational programme successfully completed which is validated by a recognized qualification. The concept of "educational programme successfully completed" typically corresponds to the situation in which a pupil or student attends and completes a formal educational programme.
85. The completion of an educational programme at ISCED levels 1, 2 and 3 does not always lead to certification. Programmes may also span more than one ISCED level and therefore do not provide a qualification at the end of the lower ISCED level. In these cases, other criteria in place of qualifications should be used; for example having attended the final year of the programme (or the level in the case where a programme spans more than one ISCED level) or having access to a higher level of education.
86. Exceptionally, credentials and certificates from non-formal education programmes or credentials based on skills obtained through work experience can be recognized as equivalent to formal education qualifications. Such qualifications may be used to determine the educational attainment of an individual (see Paragraphs 24 and 26).
87. Educational attainment can be reported according to completed ISCED level and other subcategories as introduced in Paragraph 48 and detailed in Sections 12 to 21 on ISCED levels.

88. The ISCED definition of education attainment should be distinguished from other measurement approaches commonly used to specify educational attainment. These may include educational levels attended but not successfully completed, or validated skills and competencies which are not necessarily acquired by participation in an educational programme.
89. Individuals who attended a national educational programme without successful completion are considered as drop outs. They should be classified differently from individuals who successfully completed a programme but not an ISCED level (see third subcategory in Paragraph 48). For details on the classification see Paragraph 97.
90. Educational attainment statistics report on individuals of all age groups, some of whom have completed educational programmes or obtained qualifications in the past that may be different from those currently provided. In order to achieve comparability of educational attainment across and within countries and over time, education qualifications should be classified on the basis of their characteristics at the time of successful completion.

## **9. THE ISCED CLASSIFICATION AND CODING SYSTEM**

91. The ISCED classification consists of nine levels of education. Within each level complementary dimensions are used to identify further categories and subcategories, if applicable. The system of three-digit codes used in ISCED indicates the level in the first digit and for complementary dimensions the categories and subcategories in the second and third digit, respectively.
92. The second digit indicates the categories within the following complementary dimensions:
  - ISCED level 0: target age group;
  - ISCED level 1: *no categories in use*;
  - ISCED level 2 to 5: orientation;
  - ISCED level 6: duration and position in the national degree and qualification structure;
  - ISCED level 7: position in the national degree and qualification structure; and
  - ISCED level 8: *no categories in use*.
93. The third digit indicates the subcategories within the following complementary dimensions:
  - ISCED level 0 and 1: *no subcategories in use*;
  - ISCED level 2 to 5: level completion and access to higher level programmes; and
  - ISCED level 6, 7 and 8: *no subcategories in use*.
94. Not all combinations of categories and subcategories exist or are widespread. The three-digit codes provided in this document are thus limited to the combinations in use. If users of ISCED identify additional combinations of categories and subcategories, the list of three-digit codes can be expanded using the existing codes provided for the complementary dimensions.

95. Table 1 shows the classification of educational programmes by ISCED levels and categories with the first and second digit codes. Detailed tables in Sections 12 to 21 provide the three-digit codes for subcategories.

**Table 1: The classification of educational programmes by ISCED levels and categories**

ISCED Level	Category
0 early childhood education	0.1 early childhood development
	0.2 pre-primary education
1 primary education	
2 lower secondary education	2.1 general education
	2.2 vocational education
3 upper secondary education	3.1 general education
	3.2 vocational education
4 post-secondary non-tertiary education	4.1 general education
	4.2 vocational education
5 tertiary education; short cycle	5.1 general education
	5.2 vocational education
6 tertiary education; bachelor level or equivalent	6.1 long first degree
	6.2 first degree
	6.3 further degree
7 tertiary education; master level or equivalent	7.1 long first degree
	7.2 second degree
	7.3 further degree
8 tertiary education; doctoral level or equivalent	

96. For educational attainment some qualifications are coded differently than the corresponding educational programmes. Qualifications from programmes in the subcategories ‘no completion of level’ are coded below the ISCED level at which the programme is classified. For example, a vocational ISCED level 3 programme categorised as ‘no completion of level’ is coded as 3.2.0. The code for the corresponding qualification is 2.2.9, with the third digit indicating the completion of the level 3 programme and the first digit indicating that only level 2 is attained. Tables on the coding of educational attainment data are provided separately in Sections 12 to 21 on ISCED levels.
97. If only one variable should be used to code attendance together with attainment (see Paragraph 89) a specific code should be reserved for attendance without programme completion. This code extends the list of codes for the dimension on completion of ISCED levels. Using the additional code, the first digit indicates the highest level attained; the third digit, using the code 8, indicates attendance at the next higher level without completion of a programme. For example, attendance of ISCED level 1 without completion is coded with the three-digit code 0.0.8; attendance of a general ISCED level 2 programme without completion is coded with the three-digit code 1.1.8.



## 10. ISCED GOVERNANCE

98. ISCED belongs to the United Nations International Family of Economic and Social Classifications, which are applied in statistics world-wide with the purpose of compiling and analysing cross-nationally comparable data.
99. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) is the custodian of ISCED and is thus responsible for the maintenance, updating and revision of reference classification and for guidance on the effective and consistent use of ISCED for data collection and analysis.
100. Further responsibilities of the UIS include to describe how the structure and details of the classification are used when producing and presenting statistics; to promote the use of ISCED for comparative statistics; to establish monitoring mechanisms for proper feedback from ISCED users about problems in its use; to establish an ISCED committee to review the classification; and to maintain links to work on other classifications.
101. The UIS will produce an operational manual to facilitate the work with countries in classifying national educational programmes and provide other guidance and training materials.
102. The UIS will maintain a database comprising mappings of national education systems according to international standards and make them widely accessible. The UIS should also introduce a mechanism for the peer review of mappings of national education systems to ISCED, working through member states and regional agencies.
103. The UIS will form an ISCED Committee that will advise UIS regarding the classification of national programmes and qualifications to review the current version of ISCED and identify potential areas for further development. However, ISCED revisions are not within the remit of the Committee. The Committee shall consist of UNESCO (representing the UN system of organizations) and key education data collection partners, such as those maintaining the UNESCO-OECD-Eurostat (UOE) methodology. The committee shall also include a select group of education experts with knowledge of ISCED and representing different regions of the world.

## 11. ISCED LEVELS

104. The following sections define the nine ISCED levels. The sections for each ISCED level are structured as follows:
  - A. *Principal characteristics* describe the objectives of programmes at different ISCED levels, the way in which instruction is organized (characteristics of the teaching-learning process and assessment methods, if applicable), as well as their entry requirements. For some ISCED levels, common or well-known national names of programmes are indicated to facilitate understanding of the correspondence between national educational programmes and ISCED levels.
  - B. *Classification criteria* define more formally how educational programmes are classified at the respective ISCED level using main and subsidiary criteria. For more information on the general concept of a 'level' in ISCED, see Section 5.

- C. *Considerations concerning programmes spanning ISCED levels* provide further guidelines for the classification of educational programmes that encompass but also extend beyond one ISCED level. For more information on the underlying concept of educational programmes spanning ISCED levels, see Section 6.
  - D. *Complementary dimensions* define characteristics that distinguish different types of programmes within ISCED levels according to programme orientation, level completion and access to higher ISCED level programmes, programme duration, or position in the national degree/qualification structure. For more general information on these complementary dimensions in ISCED, see Section 5.
  - E. *Programmes also included in ISCED level* indicate less typical or non-formal educational programmes (e.g. in special, second chance or adult education) that may not fulfil all classification criteria (e.g. typical entry age), but which are equivalent to other programmes in this ISCED level in terms of complexity of content. These programmes are therefore also included in the respective ISCED level.
  - F. *Classification of educational programmes* provides the detailed codes for ISCED levels, categories and subcategories that are assigned to educational programmes.
  - G. *Classification of educational attainment* provides information on how to classify educational attainment. It indicates in which cases an educational qualification needs to be classified at a different ISCED level than the ISCED level of the respective educational programme with which the qualification is linked. The detailed codes applicable for educational attainment data are also provided.
105. Following description of the levels, Section 22 provides a correspondence table linking the 2011 version of ISCED to ISCED 1997.

## 12. ISCED LEVEL 0 – EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

### A. PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS

106. Programmes at ISCED level 0, or ‘early childhood education’, are typically designed to support children’s cognitive, social and emotional development and introduce young children to organized instruction outside of the family setting. ISCED level 0 refers to those early childhood programmes that have an education component.
107. In this level, programmes are not necessarily highly structured or formal but provide an organized and purposeful set of learning activities. They allow children to learn in interaction with other children under guidance, typically in creative and play-based activities.
108. Upon completion of these programmes, children enter ISCED level 1 (primary education) to continue their education. ISCED level 0 programmes target children below the age of entry into ISCED level 1.
109. Programmes classified at ISCED level 0 are referred to in many ways across the world, for example early childhood development, kindergarten, play school, reception, pre-primary or pre-school or *educación inicial*. For programmes called *crèche*, nursery or *guardería*, it is important to ensure that they meet the ISCED level 0 classification criteria specified below. For international purposes the term ‘early childhood education’ is used to label ISCED level 0.
110. Within ISCED level 0, early childhood development and pre-primary education are distinguished by the age of the children these educational programmes serve.

### B. CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA

111. For the definition of early childhood education, the following criteria are relevant:

#### **Main criteria**

- a. Educational properties of the programme (see Paragraph 112);
- b. Institutional context (see Paragraph 113);
- c. Typical target age of the programme (see Paragraphs 114 and 115); and
- d. Programme duration/intensity (see Paragraph 116).

#### **Subsidiary criteria**

- a. Staff qualifications (see Paragraph 117);
  - b. Existence of a regulatory framework (see Paragraph 118); and
  - c. Not necessarily part of compulsory education (see Paragraph 119).
112. ISCED level 0 programmes provide children with an organized and purposeful set of learning opportunities. Programmes providing only childcare (supervision, nutrition and health) are not covered by ISCED.

113. ISCED level 0 programmes are usually school-based or centre-based. ISCED level 0 also includes programmes in community-based and home-based centres that are designed for a group of children, but excludes purely family-based arrangements that may be purposeful but are not organized in a 'programme' (i.e. informal education of children by their parents, other relatives or friends).
114. Although many ISCED level 0 programmes target children from the age of three, educational programmes for younger children are also included in ISCED level 0, provided they fulfil the other main classification criteria (see Paragraph 111).
115. The upper age limit depends in each case on the theoretical age of entry into ISCED level 1, i.e. primary education (but see Paragraph 124).
116. ISCED recommends the following minimum duration and intensity to improve cross-national comparability: ISCED level 0 programmes must account for at least the equivalent of 2 hours per day and 100 days a year.
117. Where appropriate, the requirement of pedagogical qualifications for educators is a good proxy criterion for an educational programme in those education systems in which such a requirement exists. It serves to distinguish early childhood education from child care for which no explicitly pedagogically trained staff is required.
118. Where relevant, the existence of a reference or regulatory framework issued or recognized by public authorities (e.g. a Ministry of Education) is a good proxy criterion for an educational programme. This would include guidelines, standards or instructions that describe the learning opportunities provided to young children.
119. In education systems that have compulsory schooling, non-compulsory educational programmes fulfilling the criteria above are classified as ISCED level 0. However, the beginning of compulsory education is not a sufficient criterion to distinguish ISCED level 0 programmes from ISCED level 1 programmes since some or all of the former may be compulsory in some education systems.

### **C. CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING PROGRAMMES SPANNING ISCED LEVELS**

120. Educational programmes spanning ISCED levels 0 and 1 need special consideration for classification. In education systems where a part of early childhood education is included in 'basic education', only those grades, stages or cycles corresponding to the criteria given in Paragraph 111 should be classified as ISCED level 0. Those grades, stages or cycles corresponding to the criteria given in Paragraph 131 should be classified as ISCED level 1.
121. If use of the classification criteria does not result in a clear boundary between ISCED levels 0 and 1, ISCED recommends: i) for programmes spanning ISCED levels 0 and 1 that are organized in stages, the end of the stage closest to six years of age should be used as the transition point between ISCED levels 0 and 1; ii) for programmes spanning ISCED levels 0 and 1 not divided into stages, grades targeting children under the age of six should be classified as ISCED level 0, and the remaining grades are classified as ISCED level 1.

**D. COMPLEMENTARY DIMENSIONS**

122. One dimension differentiates educational programmes in ISCED level 0:

- Target age group (see Paragraph 123).

**Target age group**

123. Educational programmes for ISCED level 0 fall into the following two categories defined by target age:

1. *Early childhood development*: Programmes typically targeting children younger than age three; and
2. *Pre-primary education*: Programmes typically targeting children from age three until the age of entry into ISCED level 1.

**E. PROGRAMMES ALSO INCLUDED IN ISCED LEVEL 0**

124. ISCED level 0 includes programmes for children with special needs corresponding to the criteria described in Paragraph 111. For these programmes, no upper age limit is specified.

**F. CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AT ISCED LEVEL 0**

125. Educational programmes in ISCED level 0 are coded 0.1 for early childhood development programmes and 0.2 for pre-primary education programmes (see Paragraph 123). There are no subcategories differentiated by the third digit.

**G. CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AT ISCED LEVELS 0 AND 1**

126. For classifying educational attainment, ISCED level 0 is used for individuals who have not successfully completed ISCED level 1. If required, special consideration may be given to incomplete primary education (see Paragraph 97). Classification codes for educational attainment related to pre-primary and primary education are provided in Paragraphs 144 to 146 and in Table 2.

## 13. ISCED LEVEL 1 – PRIMARY EDUCATION

### A. PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS

127. Programmes at ISCED level 1, or ‘primary education’, are typically designed to provide students with basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics (i.e. literacy and numeracy), and to establish a sound foundation for learning and understanding of core areas of knowledge, personal and social development.
128. Educational activities at ISCED level 1 (particularly in the early grades) are organized around units, projects or broad learning areas often with an integrated approach rather than providing instruction in specific subjects. Typically, there is one main teacher in charge of the class who organizes the learning process.
129. Age is typically the only entry requirement at this level. The customary or legal age of entry is usually neither younger than five years nor older than seven years. Upon completion of primary education programmes, children may continue their education at ISCED level 2 (lower secondary education).
130. Programmes classified at ISCED level 1 are referred to in many ways across the world, e.g. primary education, elementary education or basic education (stage 1/lower grades if an education system has one programme that spans ISCED levels 1 and 2). For international purposes the term ‘primary education’ is used to label ISCED level 1.

### B. CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA

131. For the definition of primary education, the following criteria are relevant:

#### **Main criteria**

- a. Systematic instruction in basic skills and knowledge (see Paragraph 132);
- b. Typical entrance age and duration (see Paragraph 133); and
- c. Instruction organized by one main class teacher (see Paragraph 134).

#### **Subsidiary criteria**

- a. Part of compulsory education (see Paragraph 135).
132. The boundary between ISCED level 0 and ISCED level 1 coincides with the transition point in an education system where systematic instruction in reading, writing and mathematics begins. Although some ISCED level 0 programmes may already provide some introduction in reading, writing and mathematics, these programmes do not yet give children sound basic skills in these areas, therefore not sufficiently fulfilling the criteria to classify them in ISCED level 1. The transition from pre-primary to primary education is typically marked by entry into the nationally designated primary, elementary or basic education institutions or programmes.
  133. The typical entry age for ISCED level 1 ranges from age five to seven. Programmes at this level typically last six years, although their duration ranges between four and seven

years. Primary education typically lasts until age ten to twelve (but see Paragraph 140 and 141). For the classification of educational programmes at this stage of education that are longer than seven years, see Paragraphs 136 to 138.

134. Typically, one main teacher is in charge of a group of children and facilitates the learning process, often organized around units, projects or broad learning areas with an integrated approach (particularly in the early years of primary education). Teachers at ISCED level 1 are typically trained in pedagogical approaches for core subjects. In contrast, in ISCED level 2 programmes, there may be more than one teacher instructing specific subject areas, often with more in-depth training in particular subjects.
135. The beginning of primary education often coincides with the beginning of compulsory education, except for education systems where some or all of pre-primary education is already compulsory. Therefore, where compulsory education is legislated, it starts with ISCED level 1 *or before*. In some education systems, the end of ISCED level 1 coincides with the end of compulsory education.

### **C. CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING PROGRAMMES SPANNING ISCED LEVELS**

136. Educational programmes spanning ISCED levels 0 and 1 or 1 and 2 need special consideration for classification. In education systems where primary education is part of an educational programme of eight or more years, only those grades, stages or cycles corresponding to the criteria given in Paragraph 131 should be classified as ISCED level 1. Any grades, stages or cycles corresponding to the criteria given in Paragraph 111 should be classified as ISCED level 0, and any of those corresponding to the criteria given in Paragraph 151 should be classified as ISCED level 2.
137. If use of the classification criteria does not result in a clear boundary between ISCED levels 0 and 1, criteria to determine the end of ISCED level 0 and the beginning of ISCED level 1 are provided in Paragraphs 120 and 121.
138. If use of the classification criteria does not result in a clear boundary between ISCED levels 1 and 2, the following is recommended: i) for programmes spanning ISCED levels 1 and 2 that are organized in stages, the end of the stage closest to six years after the start of ISCED level 1 should be used as the transition point between ISCED levels 1 and 2; ii) for programmes spanning ISCED levels 1 and 2 not divided into stages, only the first six years should be classified as ISCED level 1, and the remaining years are classified as ISCED level 2 (see Paragraph 158).

### **D. COMPLEMENTARY DIMENSIONS**

139. None.

### **E. PROGRAMMES ALSO INCLUDED IN ISCED LEVEL 1**

140. ISCED level 1 also includes programmes suited to children with special needs if the programme provides systematic basic instruction in reading, writing and mathematics, irrespective of the age of the children.
141. This level also includes second chance or re-integration programmes. Such educational programmes usually target individuals who left school before completing primary

education, allowing them to re-enter the education system and complete primary education. Participants are typically older than the target age group for ISCED level 1 (but not necessarily adults).

142. Literacy programmes within or outside the school system that are similar in complexity of content to programmes in primary education, for adults and youth older than typical ISCED level 1 students are also included at this level.

#### **F. CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AT ISCED LEVEL 1**

143. All educational programmes in ISCED level 1 are coded 1.1.2. There are no categories or subcategories to be differentiated by the second or third digit.

#### **G. CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AT ISCED LEVELS 0 AND 1**

144. When coding educational attainment, special consideration may be required for the classification of individuals who attended but did not complete primary education. For further details see Paragraph 97.
145. For educational attainment, educational qualifications from ISCED level 2 programmes that are too short for consideration as ISCED level 2 completion (codes 2.1.0 and 2.2.0, see Paragraph 163 and Table 3) are classified as ISCED level 1.
146. The classification codes for educational attainment related to ISCED level 0 and 1 programmes and qualifications from lower secondary education programmes not sufficient for consideration as ISCED level 2 completion are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Classification codes for educational attainment related to ISCED levels 0 and 1**

Categories	Subcategories	
0.0	0.0.0	Never attended an educational programme
0.2	0.2.0	Attended pre-primary education programme
1.1 General	1.1.2	Successful completion of ISCED level 1 programmes, access to ISCED level 2
	1.1.9	Qualifications from general ISCED level 2 programmes too short for completion of ISCED level 2
1.2 Vocational	1.2.9	Qualifications from vocational ISCED level 2 programmes too short for completion of ISCED level 2



## **14. ISCED LEVEL 2 – LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION**

### **A. PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS**

147. Programmes at ISCED level 2, or ‘lower secondary education’, are typically designed to complete the provision of basic education which begins at ISCED level 1. Usually, the educational aim is to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and human development on which education systems may systematically expand further educational opportunities. Some education systems may already offer vocational education programmes at ISCED level 2 to provide individuals with specific skills to enter employment.
148. Programmes at this level are usually organized around a more subject-oriented curriculum, introducing theoretical concepts across a broad range of subjects. Teachers typically have pedagogical training in specific subjects and, more often than at ISCED level 1, a class of students may have several teachers who have specialized knowledge of the subjects they teach.
149. ISCED level 2 begins after four to seven years of ISCED level 1 education, with six years being the most common duration. Students enter ISCED level 2 typically between age ten and thirteen (age twelve being the most common in education systems).
150. Programmes classified at ISCED level 2 are referred to in many ways across the world, for example secondary school (stage one/lower grades if there is nationally one programme that spans ISCED levels 2 and 3), junior secondary school, middle school or junior high school. If there is a programme that spans ISCED levels 1 and 2, the terms elementary education or basic school (stage two/upper grades) are often used. For international purposes the term ‘lower secondary education’ is used to label ISCED level 2.

### **B. CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA**

151. For the definition of lower secondary education, the following criteria are relevant:

#### **Main criteria**

- a. Transition to more subject-oriented instruction (see Paragraph 152);
- b. Entry requirements (see Paragraph 153); and
- c. Cumulative duration since the beginning of ISCED level 1 (see Paragraph 154).

#### **Subsidiary criteria**

- a. Typical entry age (see Paragraph 155);
- b. Instruction by subject teachers and teacher qualifications (see Paragraph 156); and
- c. Relationship with compulsory education (see Paragraph 157).

152. The boundary between ISCED level 1 and ISCED level 2 coincides with the transition point in education systems from which subject-oriented instruction is emphasized.
153. This level requires completion of ISCED level 1 or the ability to study ISCED level 2 content through a combination of prior education or life and work experience. A certificate for the successful completion of ISCED level 1 or a specific level of achievement may be required for entering some or all ISCED level 2 programmes.
154. ISCED level 2 ends after eight to ten years of education from the start of ISCED level 1, with nine years being the most widespread cumulative duration. At the end of ISCED level 2, pupils are typically age fourteen to sixteen (most often age fifteen).
155. Generally, lower secondary education (ISCED level 2) begins after four to seven years of ISCED level 1 education, with six years being most common. Pupils enter this level typically between age ten and thirteen (age twelve in most education systems).
156. The type of teacher qualifications may be different at ISCED level 2 compared to ISCED level 1. Teachers at ISCED level 2 are often qualified in one or more specific subjects, as well as in pedagogy. In addition, the organization of instruction can differ from ISCED level 1 as there are often several teachers for one class, who teach in their respective field or fields of specialization.
157. In many education systems with compulsory education legislation, the end of lower secondary education coincides with the end of compulsory (general) education.

#### **C. CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING PROGRAMMES SPANNING ISCED LEVELS**

158. Educational programmes spanning ISCED levels 1 and 2 or 2 and 3 need special consideration for classification. Only those grades, stages or cycles corresponding to the criteria given in Paragraph 151 should be classified as ISCED level 2. Those grades, stages or cycles corresponding to the criteria given in Paragraph 131 should be classified as ISCED level 1, and those corresponding to the criteria given in Paragraph 175 should be classified as ISCED level 3.
159. If use of the classification criteria does not result in a clear boundary between ISCED levels 1 and 2, it is recommended to use the criteria provided in Paragraphs 136 and 138 to determine the end of ISCED level 1 and the beginning of ISCED level 2.
160. If use of the classification criteria does not result in a clear boundary between ISCED levels 2 and 3, the following is recommended: i) for programmes spanning ISCED levels 2 and 3 that are organized in stages, the end of the stage closest to nine years after the start of ISCED level 1 should be used as the transition point between ISCED levels 2 and 3; ii) for programmes spanning ISCED levels 2 and 3 not divided into stages, only the grades between the end of ISCED level 1 until the end of nine years of schooling should be classified as ISCED level 2, and the remaining years are classified as ISCED level 3 (see Paragraph 181).

#### **D. COMPLEMENTARY DIMENSIONS**

161. Two dimensions differentiate educational programmes in ISCED level 2:
  - Programme orientation (see Paragraph 162);

- Level completion and access to higher ISCED level programmes (see Paragraph 163).

### **Programme orientation**

162. The following two orientation categories are defined in Paragraphs 44 and 45:
1. General education; and
  2. Vocational education.

### **Level completion and access to higher ISCED level programmes**

163. The following three level completion and access subcategories are defined for ISCED level 2:
0. *No completion of ISCED level 2* applies to two kinds of programmes:
    - Short vocational programmes with a duration of less than two years at ISCED level 2 or that end after less than eight years of education since the beginning of ISCED level 1. These do not give access to ISCED level 3 and are thus terminal. Completion of such programmes does not count as completion of ISCED level 2.
    - Programmes that are the first in a sequence of two programmes where access to ISCED level 3 is granted by completion of the second programme only. These are classified in this subcategory independent of their duration. Such programmes almost always have a general orientation.
  1. *Completion of ISCED level 2 without access to higher level programmes:* vocational programmes with a duration of two or more years at this level that end at least eight years after the beginning of ISCED level 1 and do not give access to ISCED level 3. These programmes are considered terminal. Completion of such programmes qualifies for completion of ISCED level 2.
  2. *Completion of ISCED level 2 with access to higher level programmes:* any programmes that give direct access to ISCED level 3.

## **E. PROGRAMMES ALSO INCLUDED IN ISCED LEVEL 2**

164. ISCED level 2 also includes programmes suited to individuals with special needs that are equivalent to other ISCED level 2 programmes in terms of complexity of content.
165. This level also includes lower secondary second chance or re-integration programmes. Such educational programmes usually target individuals who left education after completing primary but before completing lower secondary education, allowing them to re-enter the education system and complete lower secondary education. Participants are typically older than the target age group for ISCED level 2.
166. This level also includes adult education programmes similar in complexity of content to the education given in other programmes at this level.

## F. CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AT ISCED LEVEL 2

167. The use of two complementary dimensions allows for reporting using orientation as categories and level completion and access to the next higher ISCED level as subcategories. Not all potential combinations of orientation and completion and access exist or are widespread across education systems. The codes for lower secondary education in Table 3 are thus limited to the subcategories in use.

**Table 3. Classification codes for educational programmes at ISCED level 2**

ISCED level	Categories (Orientation)	Subcategories (Level completion and access to higher level programmes)
2	2.1 General	2.1.0 General ISCED level 2 programmes too short for completion of ISCED level 2, no access to ISCED level 3
		2.1.2 General ISCED level 2 programmes sufficient for completion of ISCED level 2, access to ISCED level 3
	2.2 Vocational	2.2.0 Vocational ISCED level 2 programmes too short for completion of ISCED level 2, no access to ISCED level 3
		2.2.1 Vocational ISCED level 2 programmes sufficient for completion of ISCED level 2, no access to ISCED level 3
		2.2.2 Vocational ISCED level 2 programmes sufficient for completion of ISCED level 2, access to ISCED level 3

## G. CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AT ISCED LEVEL 2

168. For educational attainment, educational qualifications from ISCED level 2 programmes that are too short for consideration as ISCED level 2 completion (codes 2.1.0 and 2.2.0, see Paragraphs 163 and 167) are classified as ISCED level 1 (codes 1.1.9 and 1.2.9, see also Table 2).

169. Similarly, educational qualifications from ISCED level 3 programmes that are too short for consideration as ISCED level 3 completion (code 3.2.0, see Paragraphs 186 and 190) are classified as ISCED level 2 (code 2.2.9, see also Table 6).

170. The classification codes for educational attainment related to lower secondary education and for qualifications from upper secondary education programmes that are too short for consideration as ISCED level 3 completion are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. Classification codes for educational attainment related to ISCED level 2**

Categories (Orientation)	Subcategories (Level completion and access to higher level programmes)
1.1 General	1.1.9 Qualifications from general ISCED level 2 programmes too short for completion of ISCED level 2, no access to ISCED level 3
1.2 Vocational	1.2.9 Qualifications from vocational ISCED level 2 programmes too short for completion of ISCED level 2, no access to ISCED level 3
2.1 General	2.1.2 Qualifications from general ISCED level 2 programmes sufficient for completion of ISCED level 2, access to ISCED level 3
2.2 Vocational	<p>2.2.1 Qualifications from vocational ISCED level 2 programmes sufficient for completion of ISCED level 2, no access to ISCED level 3</p> <p>2.2.2 Qualifications from vocational ISCED level 2 programmes sufficient for completion of ISCED level 2, access to ISCED level 3</p> <p>2.2.9 Qualifications from vocational ISCED level 3 programmes too short for completion of ISCED level 3, no access to ISCED levels 5/6/7</p>

## **15. ISCED LEVEL 3 – UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION**

### **A. PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS**

171. Programmes at ISCED level 3, or ‘upper secondary education’, are typically designed to complete secondary education in preparation for tertiary education, or to provide skills relevant for employment, or both.
172. Programmes at this level offer students more varied, specialised and in-depth instruction than programmes at ISCED level 2. They are more differentiated, with an increased range of options and streams available. Teachers are often highly qualified in the subjects or fields of specialisation they teach.
173. ISCED level 3 begins after eight to eleven years of education since the beginning of ISCED level 1. Pupils enter this level typically between age fourteen and sixteen.
174. Programmes classified at ISCED level 3 are referred to in many ways across the world, e.g. secondary school (stage two/upper grades), senior secondary school or (senior) high school. For international purposes the term ‘upper secondary education’ is used to label ISCED level 3.

### **B. CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA**

175. For the definition of upper secondary education, the following criteria are relevant:

#### **Main criteria**

- a. Final stage of general and vocational secondary education (see Paragraph 176);
- b. Entry requirements (see Paragraph 177); and
- c. Cumulative duration since the beginning of ISCED level 1 (see Paragraph 178).

#### **Subsidiary criteria**

- a. More differentiated programmes, with an increased range of options and streams (see Paragraph 179); and
  - b. Teacher qualifications (see Paragraph 180).
176. General ISCED level 3 programmes form the final stage of general secondary education and their completion allows direct access to tertiary education. General secondary education programmes that do not give direct access to tertiary education should be classified as ISCED level 2. Vocational ISCED level 3 programmes may also give access to tertiary education. When identifying transition points between ISCED levels, correspondence between general and vocational pathways should be ensured.
  177. ISCED level 3 requires the completion of lower secondary education (ISCED level 2) or the ability to handle ISCED level 3 content through a combination of prior education and life and work experience. A specific ISCED level 2 certificate or a

specific level of achievement may be required for entering some or all ISCED level 3 programmes.

178. ISCED level 3 programmes usually end twelve or thirteen years after the beginning of ISCED level 1 (or around age eighteen), with twelve years being the most widespread cumulative duration. However, exit from upper secondary education may range across education systems from eleven to fourteen years of education since the beginning of ISCED level 1 (or around age seventeen to twenty).
179. The transition from ISCED level 2 to ISCED level 3 coincides with the transition point in education systems at which programmes offer students more varied, specialised and in-depth instruction in specific subjects or fields. Typically, programmes are more differentiated, with an increased range of options and streams available.
180. Standards for teacher qualifications may be different at ISCED level 3 compared to ISCED level 2. In addition to pedagogical training, teachers are often more qualified with respect to the subject matter they teach.

### **C. CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING PROGRAMMES SPANNING ISCED LEVELS**

181. Educational programmes spanning ISCED levels 2 and 3 or 3 and 5 need special consideration for classification. Only those grades, stages or cycles corresponding to the criteria given in Paragraph 175 should be classified as ISCED level 3. Those grades, stages or cycles corresponding to the criteria given in Paragraph 151 should be classified as ISCED level 2, and those corresponding to the criteria given in Paragraph 219 should be classified as ISCED level 5.
182. If use of the classification criteria does not result in a clear boundary between ISCED levels 2 and 3, criteria to determine the end of ISCED level 2 and the beginning of ISCED level 3 are provided in Paragraphs 158 and 160.
183. If the theoretical duration of a vocational ISCED level 3 programme is two or more years longer than the theoretical duration of a general ISCED level 3 programme in the same education system, the programme should be regarded as spanning upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) and short-cycle tertiary education (ISCED level 5). The grades, stages or cycles which extend beyond the general ISCED level 3 programme should be classified as ISCED level 5.

### **D. COMPLEMENTARY DIMENSIONS**

184. Two dimensions differentiate educational programmes in ISCED level 3:
  - Programme orientation (see Paragraph 185); and
  - Level completion and access to higher ISCED level programmes (see Paragraph 186).

#### **Programme orientation**

185. The following two orientation categories are defined in Paragraphs 44 and 45:
  1. General education; and
  2. Vocational education.

**Level completion and access to higher ISCED level programmes**

186. The following three level completion and access subcategories are defined for ISCED level 3:
0. *No completion of ISCED level 3*: short vocational programmes with a duration of less than two years at the level or that end less than eleven years after the beginning of ISCED level 1. These do not give access to tertiary education and are thus terminal. Completion of such programmes does not count as completion of ISCED level 3.
  1. *Completion of ISCED level 3 without access to higher ISCED level programmes*: vocational programmes with a duration of two or more years at this level that end at least eleven years after the beginning of ISCED level 1 and do not give access to tertiary education. These programmes are terminal. Completion of such programmes qualifies for completion of ISCED level 3.
  2. *Completion of ISCED level 3 with access to higher ISCED level programmes*: general or vocational programmes that give direct access to tertiary education, i.e. ISCED levels 5, 6 or 7.

**E. PROGRAMMES ALSO INCLUDED IN ISCED LEVEL 3**

187. ISCED level 3 also includes programmes suited to individuals with special needs that are equivalent in complexity of content to other ISCED level 3 programmes.
188. This level can include some second cycle vocational programmes in cases where the transition points at the end of the second cycle correspond to transition points between levels in other, mainly general, pathways offered in the system.
189. This level also includes upper secondary second chance or re-integration programmes. Such educational programmes usually target individuals who left education before completing upper secondary education, allowing them to re-enter the education system and complete upper secondary education. Participants are typically older than the target age group for ISCED level 3.

**F. CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AT ISCED LEVEL 3**

190. The use of two complementary dimensions allows for reporting using orientation as categories and level completion and access to higher ISCED levels as subcategories. Not all combinations of orientation and completion and access exist or are widespread across education systems. The codes for upper secondary education programmes in Table 5 are thus limited to the categories in use.



**Table 5. Classification codes for educational programmes at ISCED level 3**

Categories (Orientation)	Subcategories (Level completion and access to higher level programmes)
3.1 General	3.1.2 General ISCED level 3 programmes sufficient for completion of ISCED level 3, access to ISCED levels 5/6/7
3.2 Vocational	3.2.0 Vocational ISCED level 3 programmes too short for completion of ISCED level 3, no access to ISCED levels 5/6/7
	3.2.1 Vocational ISCED level 3 programmes sufficient for completion of ISCED level 3, no access to ISCED levels 5/6/7
	3.2.2 Vocational ISCED level 3 programmes sufficient for completion of ISCED level 3, access to ISCED levels 5/6/7

**G. CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AT ISCED LEVEL 3**

191. For educational attainment, educational qualifications from ISCED level 3 programmes not considered as sufficient for ISCED level 3 completion (codes 3.1.0 and 3.2.0, see Paragraphs 186 and 190) are classified at ISCED level 2 (codes 2.1.9 and 2.2.9, see also Table 4).
192. The classification codes for educational attainment related to upper secondary education programmes and qualifications are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6. Classification codes for educational attainment related to ISCED level 3**

Categories (Orientation)	Subcategories (Level completion and access to higher level programmes)
2.2 Vocational	2.2.9 Qualifications from vocational ISCED level 3 programmes too short for completion of ISCED level 3, no access to ISCED levels 5/6/7
3.1 General	3.1.2 Qualifications from general ISCED level 3 programmes sufficient for completion of ISCED level 3, access to ISCED levels 5/6/7
3.2 Vocational	3.2.1 Qualifications from vocational ISCED level 3 programmes sufficient for completion of ISCED level 3, no access to ISCED levels 5/6/7
	3.2.2 Qualifications from vocational ISCED level 3 programmes sufficient for completion of ISCED level 3, access to ISCED levels 5/6/7

## 16. ISCED LEVEL 4 – POST-SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY EDUCATION

### A. PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS

193. Programmes at ISCED level 4, or ‘post-secondary non-tertiary education’, are typically designed to provide individuals who completed ISCED level 3 with non-tertiary qualifications that they require for progression to tertiary education or for employment when their ISCED level 3 qualification does not grant such access. For example, graduates from general ISCED level 3 programmes may choose to complete a non-tertiary vocational qualification; or graduates from vocational ISCED level 3 programmes may choose to increase their level of qualification or specialise further. Given the complexity of their content, ISCED level 4 programmes cannot be regarded as tertiary education programmes, although they are clearly post-secondary education.
194. The completion of an ISCED level 3 programme is required to enter ISCED level 4 programmes. However, these entry requirements may be lower than for tertiary programmes at ISCED levels 5, 6 or 7.
195. Usually, programmes at this level are designed for direct labour market entry. In some education systems, there are general programmes at this level. Such programmes typically target students who have completed ISCED level 3 but who want to increase their opportunities to enter tertiary education.
196. Programmes to be classified at ISCED level 4 are referred to in many ways across the world, e.g. technician diploma, *brevet technicien*, primary professional education, polytechnic programmes. For international comparability purposes the term ‘post-secondary non-tertiary education’ is used to label ISCED level 4.

### B. CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA

197. For the definition of post-secondary non-tertiary education the following criteria are relevant:

#### Main criteria

- a. Orientation (see Paragraph 198);
- b. Complexity of content higher than ISCED level 3 and below the level of tertiary education (see Paragraph 199); and
- c. Entry requirements (see Paragraph 200).

#### Subsidiary criteria

None.

198. ISCED level 4 programmes are not considered as tertiary education and are typically vocational and terminal programmes that prepare for the labour market. General programmes at this level can exist in some education systems. However, programmes designed to review the contents of ISCED level 3 programmes – for example, with the

aim of preparing students for tertiary education entrance examinations - should not be included at this level.

199. ISCED level 4 programmes often serve to broaden the knowledge of participants who have completed a programme at ISCED level 3. Programmes are often not significantly more advanced than programmes at ISCED level 3, but the content is typically more specialized or detailed than at the upper-secondary level. Programmes are clearly less advanced than at the tertiary level, and can be provided in a variety of institutional settings, not only those considered as post-secondary non-tertiary.
200. Entry into ISCED level 4 programmes requires the successful completion of ISCED level 3, but not necessarily of an ISCED level 3 programme that provides direct access to tertiary education.

### **C. CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING PROGRAMMES SPANNING ISCED LEVELS**

201. Not applicable.

### **D. COMPLEMENTARY DIMENSIONS**

202. Two dimensions differentiate educational programmes in ISCED level 4:
- Programme orientation (see Paragraph 203); and
  - Access to higher ISCED level programmes (see Paragraph 204).

#### **Programme orientation**

203. The following two orientation categories are defined in Paragraphs 44 and 45:
1. General education; and
  2. Vocational education.

#### **Access to higher ISCED level programmes**

204. The following two access subcategories are defined for ISCED level 4:
1. Programmes *not granting access to tertiary education* (primarily designed for direct labour market entry); and
  2. Programmes *granting access to tertiary education* or expanding access to tertiary education and in some cases providing credit at the tertiary levels.

### **E. PROGRAMMES ALSO INCLUDED IN ISCED LEVEL 4**

205. Not applicable.

### **F. CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AT ISCED LEVEL 4**

206. The use of two complementary dimensions allows for reporting using orientation as a category and completion and access as subcategories. Not all combinations of categories and subcategories exist or are widespread across education systems. The classification for post-secondary non-tertiary education is shown in Table 7.

**Table 7. Classification codes for educational programmes at ISCED level 4**

Categories (Orientation)	Subcategories (Access to higher level programmes)
4.1 General	4.1.2 General ISCED level 4 programmes, access to ISCED levels 5/6/7
4.2 Vocational	4.2.1 Vocational ISCED level 4 programmes, no access to ISCED levels 5/6/7
	4.2.2 Vocational ISCED level 4 programmes, access to ISCED levels 5/6/7

**G. CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AT ISCED LEVEL 4**

207. For educational attainment, qualifications from ISCED level 5 programmes of only one year and not considered as sufficient for completion of tertiary education, are classified as ISCED level 4.
208. The classification codes for educational attainment related to post-secondary non-tertiary education qualifications are shown in Table 8.

**Table 8. Classification codes for educational attainment at ISCED level 4**

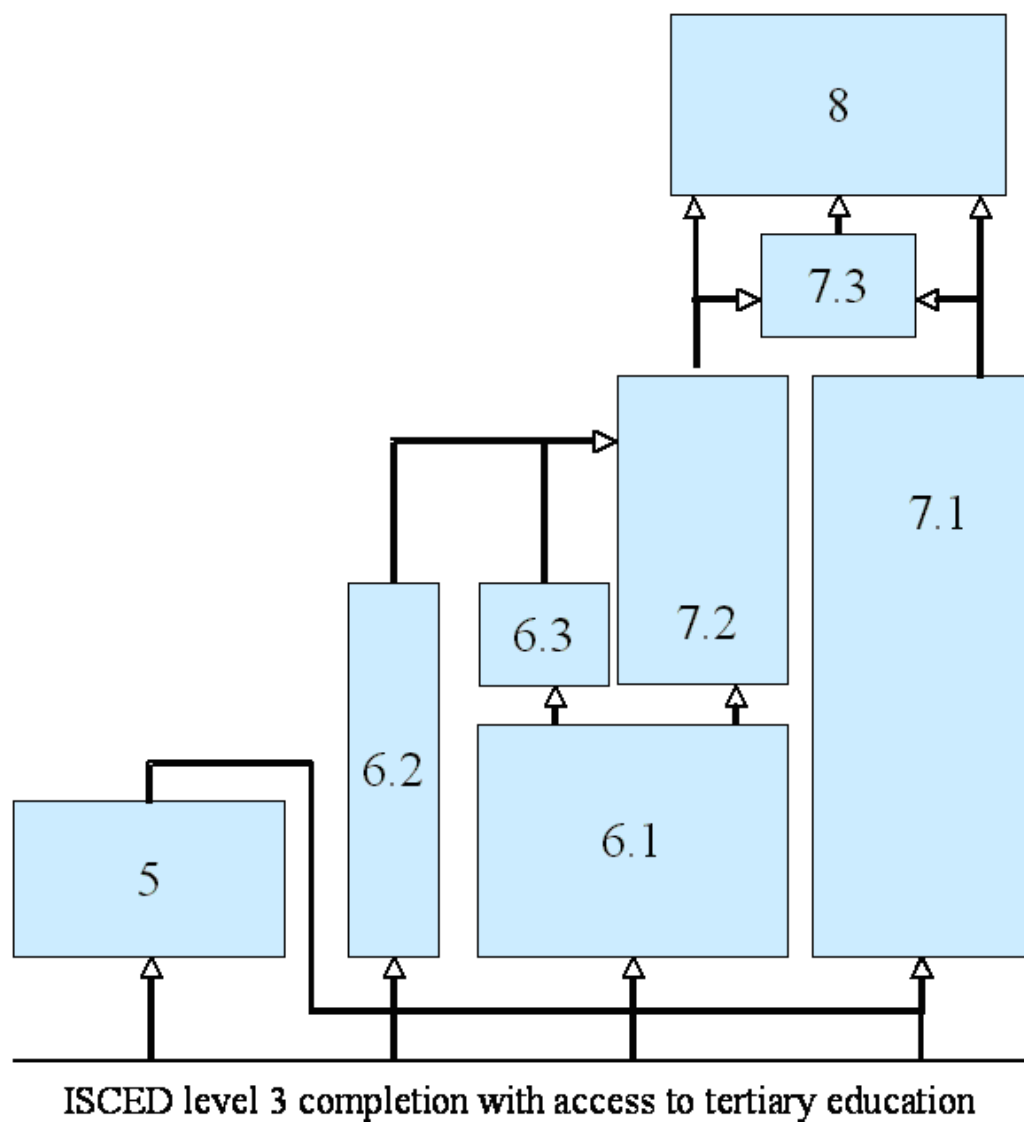
Categories (Orientation)	Subcategories (Access to higher level programmes)
4.1 General	4.1.2 Qualifications from general ISCED level 4 programmes, access to ISCED levels 5/6/7
	4.1.9 Qualifications from general ISCED level 5 programmes too short for completion of ISCED level 5
4.2 Vocational	4.2.1 Qualifications from vocational ISCED level 4 programmes, no access to ISCED levels 5/6/7
	4.2.2 Qualifications from vocational ISCED level 4 programmes, access to ISCED levels 5/6/7
	4.2.9 Qualifications from vocational ISCED level 5 programmes too short for completion of ISCED level 5

**17. TERTIARY EDUCATION**

209. Tertiary education comprises ISCED levels 5, 6, 7 and 8, which are labelled as short-cycle tertiary, bachelor level or equivalent, master level or equivalent and doctoral level and equivalent, respectively.
210. In tertiary education, an educational programme is always classified at the same level as the level of the qualification awarded (unless a programme is partly classified as ISCED level 3, see Paragraph 183). Therefore, in contrast to ISCED levels 0, 1, 2 and 3, the concept of programmes spanning ISCED levels is not used for tertiary education.

211. There is usually a clear hierarchy between qualifications granted by post-secondary and tertiary education programmes. However, unlike programmes at ISCED levels 1, 2 and 3, national programmes at ISCED levels 4, 5, 6 and 7 can exist in parallel rather than as one level building sequentially on another. After completion of an ISCED level 3 programme that provides access to tertiary education (codes 3.1.2 and 3.2.2), there are a range of programmes at different ISCED levels, depending on availability in a specific education system. These are:
- post-secondary non-tertiary programmes at ISCED level 4 (see above);
  - short-cycle tertiary education programmes at ISCED level 5;
  - bachelor level or equivalent programmes at ISCED level 6; or
  - long first degree programmes leading to a qualification equivalent to a master degree at ISCED level 7.
212. The transition between programmes at the post-secondary level is not always clearly distinguished and it may be possible to combine programmes and transfer credits from one programme to another. In certain cases, credits received from previously completed educational programmes may also be counted towards the completion of a programme at a higher ISCED level. For example, credits from the completion of an ISCED level 4 or 5 programme can reduce the study duration required to complete a level 6 programme. In some systems, individuals may transfer to an educational programme at ISCED level 6 after completion of an ISCED level 5 programme, which may reduce the time required for an individual to complete an ISCED level 6 programme. Others may directly enter ISCED level 6 or 7 from ISCED level 3. In many education systems, most students must first complete ISCED level 6 before gaining entry to ISCED level 7.
213. The successful completion of ISCED level 7 is required for entry into ISCED level 8.
214. Figure 1 illustrates the categories of tertiary education programmes and the pathways between them.

Figure 1: Tertiary education pathways in ISCED



## **18. ISCED LEVEL 5 – SHORT-CYCLE TERTIARY EDUCATION OR EQUIVALENT**

### **A. PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS**

215. Programmes at ISCED level 5, or ‘short-cycle tertiary education or equivalent’, are primarily designed to provide participants with advanced vocational skills. Typically, they are practically based, occupationally specific and prepare students to enter the labour market. However, programmes may also provide a pathway to further tertiary education. General (including academic) tertiary education programmes below the level of a bachelor programme or equivalent are also classified as ISCED level 5.
216. Entry to ISCED level 5 programmes requires the successful completion of ISCED level 3 with access to tertiary education (codes 3.1.2 or 3.2.2). Programmes at ISCED level 5 have more complex content than programmes in ISCED levels 3 and 4, but they are shorter and usually less theoretically oriented than ISCED level 6 programmes.
217. Although ISCED level 5 programmes are primarily designed to prepare for employment, they may give credit for transfer into ISCED level 6 programmes. Upon completion of these programmes, individuals may continue their education at ISCED level 6 (bachelor level education) or first tertiary degree ISCED level 7 programmes. These programmes do not give direct access to other ISCED level 7 programmes or to ISCED level 8.
218. Programmes to be classified at ISCED level 5 are referred to in many ways across the world, e.g. master craftsman programme, (higher) technical education, junior college education, technician or advanced/higher vocational training, undergraduate, associate degree or *bac + 2* programmes. For international comparability purposes the term ‘short-cycle tertiary education’ is used to label ISCED level 5.

### **B. CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA**

219. For the definition of short-cycle tertiary education or equivalent, the following criteria are relevant:

#### **Main criteria**

- a. Content of short-cycle tertiary education programmes (see Paragraph 220);
- b. Entry requirements (see Paragraph 221); and
- c. Duration of programme (see Paragraph 222).

#### **Subsidiary criteria**

- a. Institutional transition point (see Paragraph 223).
220. ISCED level 5 captures the lowest level of tertiary education. The content of programmes at this level is more complex than in secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education, but less than in ISCED level 6 (bachelor level or equivalent) programmes.

221. These programmes require the successful completion of ISCED level 3 or 4 programmes that give access to tertiary education (codes 3.1.2 and 3.2.2).
222. Terminal programmes have a minimum of two years duration and are typically shorter than three years. Programmes of less than two years duration are included in ISCED level 5 only if they are part of a sequence of tertiary programmes with a total duration of at least two years. For education systems where qualifications are awarded by credit accumulation, a comparable amount of time and intensity would be required.
223. The transition point from non-tertiary to tertiary education institutions can help to identify the boundary between upper secondary education (ISCED level 3), post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED level 4) and tertiary education. ISCED level 5 programmes are often provided by different educational institutions than ISCED level 6, 7 and 8 programmes.

#### **C. CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING PROGRAMMES SPANNING ISCED LEVELS**

224. Educational programmes spanning ISCED levels 3 and 5 need special consideration for classification. Only those grades, stages or cycles corresponding to the criteria given in Paragraph 219 should be classified as ISCED level 5. Those grades, stages or cycles corresponding to the criteria given in Paragraph 175 should be classified as ISCED level 3. If use of the classification criteria does not result in a clear boundary between ISCED levels 3 and 5, criteria to determine the end of ISCED level 3 and the beginning of ISCED level 5 are provided in Paragraph 183.

#### **D. COMPLEMENTARY DIMENSIONS**

225. Two dimensions differentiate educational programmes at ISCED level 5:
- Programme orientation (see Paragraph 226); and
  - Level completion (see Paragraph 227).

##### **Programme orientation**

226. The following two orientation categories are defined in Paragraph 44 and 45:

1. General education; and
2. Vocational education.

##### **Level completion**

227. Two level completion categories are defined for ISCED level 5:
0. *No completion of ISCED level 5*: programmes of less than two years duration are too short to be considered as completion of ISCED level 5.
  1. *Completion of ISCED level 5*: programmes with duration of two or more years are sufficient to be considered as completion of ISCED level 5.

#### **E. PROGRAMMES ALSO INCLUDED IN ISCED LEVEL 5**

228. Not applicable.



**F. CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AT ISCED LEVEL 5**

229. The use of two complementary dimensions allows for reporting using orientation as categories and level completion as subcategories. The codes to be used for ISCED level 5 are provided in Table 9.

**Table 9. Classification codes for educational programmes at ISCED level 5**

Categories (Orientation)	Subcategories (Level completion)
5.1 General	5.1.0 General ISCED level 5 programmes too short for completion of ISCED level 5
	5.1.1 General ISCED level 5 programmes sufficient for completion of ISCED level 5
5.2 Vocational	5.2.0 Vocational ISCED level 5 programmes too short for completion of ISCED level 5
	5.2.1 Vocational ISCED level 5 programmes sufficient for completion of ISCED level 5

**G. CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AT ISCED LEVEL 5**

230. For educational attainment, educational qualifications from ISCED level 5 programmes that are not considered as sufficient for ISCED level 5 completion (codes 5.1.0 and 5.2.0, see Paragraphs 227 and 229) are classified at ISCED level 4 (codes 4.1.9 and 4.2.9, see also Table 8).
231. Intermediate certificates from ISCED level 6 programmes (see Paragraph 240) that are not considered as sufficient for ISCED level 6 completion are classified at ISCED level 5 for educational attainment. These are obtained after completion of about two years of studies and are not recognized qualifications although they constitute a necessary *stage* on the path to an ISCED level 6 qualification.
232. The classification codes for educational attainment related to ISCED level 5 are provided in Table 10.

**Table 10. Classification codes for educational attainment related to ISCED level 5**

Categories (Orientation)	Subcategories (Level completion)
4.1 General	4.1.9 Qualifications from general ISCED level 5 programmes too short for completion of ISCED level 5
4.2 Vocational	4.2.9 Qualifications from vocational ISCED level 5 programmes too short for completion of ISCED level 5
5.1 General	5.1.0 Qualifications from general ISCED level 5 programmes and intermediate certificates from ISCED level 6 programmes
5.2 Vocational	5.2.0 Qualifications from vocational ISCED level 5 programmes

## 19. ISCED LEVEL 6 – BACHELOR LEVEL EDUCATION OR EQUIVALENT

### A. PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS

233. Programmes at ISCED level 6, or ‘bachelor level education or equivalent’, are primarily designed to provide participants with basic academic skills or professional competencies, leading to a first university degree or equivalent qualification. Programmes at this level are typically theoretically based and traditionally offered by universities and other higher education institutions. They emphasise the liberal arts, natural and social sciences (history, philosophy, mathematics, etc.) or preparation for specific professions (e.g. medicine and law).
234. Instruction at this level is informed by knowledge of the state-of-art of the field, and teaching often takes the form of lectures by staff who are typically required to have achieved or are enrolled at ISCED level 8. Programmes at this level may involve the completion of a research project or thesis, but one which is less advanced than those at ISCED levels 7 or 8.
235. Entry to these programmes normally requires the successful completion of an ISCED level 3 or 4 programme with access to tertiary education (codes 3.1.2, 3.2.2, 4.1.2 or 4.2.2). Entry or transfer into ISCED level 6 is also sometimes possible after the successful completion of ISCED level 5. Upon completion of ISCED level 6 programmes, individuals may continue their education at ISCED level 7 (master level education or equivalent). ISCED level 6 programmes do not give direct access to ISCED level 8.
236. Programmes to be classified at ISCED level 6 are referred to in many ways across the world, such as bachelor programme, *licence*, first university cycle, diploma programmes, or *enseignement supérieur technique et professionnel*. For international purposes the term ‘bachelor level education or equivalent’ is used to label ISCED level 6.

### B. CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA

237. For the definition of bachelor level education or equivalent, the following criteria are relevant:

#### Main criteria

- a. Theoretically based content (see Paragraph 238);
- b. Entry requirements (see Paragraph 239);
- c. (Cumulative) duration of programme (see Paragraph 240);
- d. Position in the national degree and qualification structure (see Paragraph 241); and
- e. No direct access to ISCED level 8 programmes (see Paragraph 242).

#### Subsidiary criteria

- a. Staff qualifications (see Paragraph 243).

238. Programmes at ISCED level 6 are theoretically based and informed by state-of-the-art research. This level is traditionally offered by universities and other higher education institutions, emphasising the liberal arts, natural and social sciences (history, philosophy, mathematics, etc.) or preparation for specific professions (e.g. medicine and law).
239. These programmes require the successful completion of ISCED level 3 or 4 programmes that give access to tertiary education (codes 3.1.2, 3.2.2, 4.1.2 and 4.2.2). In addition to qualification requirements, entry to educational programmes at this level may depend on subject choice and/or grades achieved at ISCED level 3. Additionally, it may be required to pass entry examinations.
240. Programmes at this level typically have duration of three to four years of full-time study at the tertiary level. For systems in which degrees are awarded by credit accumulation (i.e. accredited bachelor programmes), a comparable amount of time and intensity would be required. If applicable, longer educational programmes may also be included in ISCED level 6 if they are equivalent to programmes already classified at this level in the same education system *and* fulfil all other main criteria.
241. Programmes at this level typically lead to first degrees and equivalent qualifications in tertiary education (although individuals may have completed an ISCED level 5 qualification prior to enrolling in an ISCED level 6 programme). However, programmes leading to a second degree/qualification may be included in ISCED level 6 if they are equivalent to programmes already classified at this level in the same education system *and* fulfil all other main criteria.
242. Programmes classified at this level do not yet give direct access to ISCED level 8.
243. Where appropriate, the requirement of ISCED level 8 qualifications for some of the teaching staff may be a good proxy criterion for educational programmes at this level in education systems where such a requirement exists. This serves to distinguish practically-oriented ISCED level 5 programmes from theoretically-oriented ISCED level 6 programmes.

#### **C. CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING PROGRAMMES SPANNING ISCED LEVELS**

244. Not applicable.

#### **D. COMPLEMENTARY DIMENSIONS**

245. One dimension differentiates educational programmes in ISCED level 6:
- Programme duration and position in the national degree and qualification structure (see Paragraph 246).

##### **Programme duration and position in the national degree and qualification structure**

246. The following three categories for programme duration and position in the national degree and qualification structure are defined for ISCED level 6:
1. Programmes leading to a *first degree/qualification* with a cumulative theoretical duration (at ISCED tertiary level) of three to four years;

2. Long programmes leading to a *first degree/qualification* with a cumulative theoretical duration (at ISCED tertiary level) of more than four years; and
  3. Programmes leading to a *further degree/qualification* at level 6.
247. ISCED does not currently distinguish between academic and professional orientations at the tertiary level as there are no internationally-accepted definitions.

#### **E. PROGRAMMES ALSO INCLUDED IN ISCED LEVEL 6**

248. Not applicable.

#### **F. CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AT ISCED LEVEL 6**

249. The two complementary dimensions, programme duration and position in the national degree and qualification structure, can be combined for reporting as separate categories. The codes to be used for ISCED level 6 are provided in Table 11.

**Table 11. Classification codes for educational programmes at ISCED level 6**

Categories (Duration and position)	Description
6.1	ISCED level 6 programmes leading to a first degree/qualification in three to four years
6.2	ISCED level 6 programmes leading to a first degree/qualification in more than four years but equivalent to a programme in category 6.1
6.3	ISCED level 6 programmes leading to a second degree/qualification but equivalent to a programme in categories 6.1 or 6.2

#### **G. CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AT ISCED LEVEL 6**

250. For educational attainment, intermediate certificates from ISCED level 6 programmes that are not considered as sufficient for ISCED level 6 completion are classified at ISCED level 5 (code 5.1.0, see also Table 10). These are obtained after completion of about two years of study and are not recognized qualifications but constitute a necessary *stage* on the path to an ISCED level 6 qualification.
251. The classification codes for educational attainment related to ISCED level 6 are shown in Table 12.

**Table 12. Classification codes for educational attainment at ISCED level 6**

Categories (Duration and position)	Description
5.1	Intermediate certificates from ISCED level 6 programmes
6.1	First degree/qualification obtained from a three to four year level 6 programme
6.2	First degree/qualification obtained from a level 6 programme longer than four years duration and equivalent to category 6.1
6.3	Further level 6 degree/qualification equivalent to category 6.1 or 6.2

## 20. ISCED LEVEL 7 – MASTER LEVEL EDUCATION OR EQUIVALENT

### A. PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS

252. Programmes at ISCED level 7, or ‘master level education or equivalent’, are primarily designed to provide participants with advanced academic skills, leading to a second university degree or equivalent qualification. Programmes at this level may have a substantial research component, but do not yet lead to the award of a doctoral qualification. Typically, programmes at this level are theoretically based and traditionally offered by universities and other higher education institutions. They emphasise the liberal arts, natural and social sciences (history, philosophy, mathematics, etc.) or preparation for specific professions (e.g. medicine and law).
253. Instruction at this level is informed by knowledge of the state-of-the-art of the field, and teaching often takes the form of lectures by staff who are typically required to have achieved ISCED level 8. Programmes at this level may involve the completion of a research project or thesis that is more advanced than those expected in ISCED level 6 and less advanced than those expected in ISCED level 8.
254. Given the variety in the national degree and qualification structures found in education systems, there are three kinds of programmes at this level: i) programmes preparing for a second degree/qualification that build on skills previously acquired in ISCED level 6 programmes; ii) programmes preparing for long first degrees/qualifications; and iii) programmes preparing for further degrees/qualifications below ISCED level 8 but requiring completion of another ISCED level 7 programme for entry.
255. Entry to ISCED level 7 programmes normally requires the successful completion of ISCED level 6. In the case of long programmes that prepare for a first degree equivalent to a master degree, entry requires the successful completion of an ISCED level 3 or 4 programme with access to tertiary education (codes 3.1.2, 3.2.2, 4.1.2 or 4.2.2). ISCED level 7 programmes have a significantly more complex content than programmes at ISCED level 6 and are usually more specialised. Upon completion, individuals may continue their education at ISCED level 8 (doctoral level education).
256. Programmes to be classified at ISCED level 7 are referred to in many ways across the world such as master programmes, *maîtrise*, or *magister*. For international purposes the term ‘master level education or equivalent’ is used to label ISCED level 7.

### B. CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA

257. For the definition of master level education or equivalent, the following criteria are relevant:

#### Main criteria

- a. Theoretically based content (see Paragraph 258);
- b. Position in the national degree and qualification structure (see Paragraph 259 and 260);
- c. Entry requirements (see Paragraph 261); and

- d. (Cumulative) duration of programme (see Paragraph 262).

### **Subsidiary criteria**

- a. Direct access to ISCED level 8 programmes (see Paragraph 263).
258. Programmes at ISCED level 7 are theoretically based and informed by state-of-the-art research. Therefore this level is traditionally offered by universities and other higher education institutions, emphasising the liberal arts, natural and social sciences (history, philosophy, mathematics, etc.) or preparation for specific professions (e.g. medicine and law).
259. Programmes at this level typically prepare for a *second degree/qualification* following a first degree from ISCED level 6 programmes. Equivalent qualifications such as post-graduate professional qualifications are also classified at ISCED level 7, unless already classified at ISCED level 6 (see Paragraph 241).
260. Programmes of more than four years duration preparing for a *first degree/qualification* are included in this level if equivalent to master level programmes in terms of the complexity of content. In this case, the degree/qualification awarded gives direct access to ISCED level 8 or the programme is equivalent to a second degree/qualification programme already classified at the ISCED 7 level. Long first tertiary degree programmes in engineering, medicine or dentistry are commonly placed in this category.
261. Long first degree programmes require the successful completion of an ISCED level 3 or 4 programme with access to tertiary education (codes 3.1.2, 3.2.2, 4.1.2 or 4.2.2). Programmes preparing for a second degree/qualification require the successful completion of ISCED level 6 programmes. Programmes preparing for further degrees require the successful completion of another ISCED level 7 programme.
262. Second or further degree/qualification programmes at this level typically have durations of one to four years of full-time study. Programmes preparing for a first degree/qualification must have duration of more than four years in order to be classified at ISCED level 7. For education systems in which degrees are awarded by credit accumulation, a comparable amount of time and intensity would be required. The cumulative duration of studies at the tertiary level thus lasts from four to eight years or even longer.
263. Tertiary education programmes providing direct access to ISCED level 8 are classified at ISCED level 7. However, not all ISCED level 7 programmes provide access to ISCED level 8. Access to ISCED level 8 is a sufficient but not necessary criterion for classification of programmes at ISCED level 7.

## **C. CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING PROGRAMMES SPANNING ISCED LEVELS**

264. Not applicable.

## **D. COMPLEMENTARY DIMENSIONS**

265. One dimension differentiates educational programmes in ISCED level 7:

- Position in the national degree and qualification structure (see Paragraph 266).

### **Position in the national degree and qualification structure**

266. The following three categories for a programme's position in the national degree and qualification structure are defined for ISCED level 7:
1. Programmes leading to *first degrees/qualifications* with a duration of more than four years that do not require prior tertiary education;
  2. Programmes leading to *second degrees/qualifications* following completion of an ISCED level 6 programme; and
  3. Programmes leading to *further degrees/qualifications* following completion of another ISCED level 7 programme.
267. ISCED does not currently distinguish between academic and professional orientations at the tertiary level as there are no internationally accepted definitions.

### **E. PROGRAMMES ALSO INCLUDED IN ISCED LEVEL 7**

268. ISCED level 7 includes programmes leading to the award of research qualifications that are designed explicitly to train participants in conducting original research, but are below the level of a doctoral degree. These programmes will often meet many of the same criteria as an ISCED level 8 programme, although they tend to be of shorter duration (cumulative duration of five to six years from the start of tertiary education), typically lack the level of independence required of students seeking an advanced research qualification, and prepare for entry into ISCED level 8 programmes. Completion of ISCED level 7 programmes may reduce the study duration in a subsequent doctoral programme to less than three years. Within the level, they are classified depending on their position in the national degree and qualification structure.

### **F. CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AT ISCED LEVEL 7**

269. Fields of education require the coding of a separate variable. The other complementary dimension, position in the national degree and qualification structure, is reported in separate categories. The codes to be used for ISCED level 7 are shown in Table 13.

**Table 13. Classification codes for educational programmes at ISCED level 7**

Categories (Position)	Description
7.1	ISCED level 7 programmes leading to a first degree/qualification in more than four years and equivalent to a programme in category 7.2
7.2	ISCED level 7 programmes leading to a second degree/qualification, requiring attainment of level 6 for entry and not already classified in category 6.3
7.3	ISCED level 7 programmes lead to a further degree/qualification requiring successful completion of category 7.1 or 7.2 for entry



**G. CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AT ISCED LEVEL 7**

270. The classification codes for educational attainment related to ISCED level 7 are shown in Table 14.

**Table 14. Classification codes for educational attainment at ISCED level 7**

Categories (Position)	Description
7.1	First degree/qualification obtained from a programme of more than four years duration and equivalent to a programme in category 7.2
7.2	Second degree/qualification obtained from an ISCED level 7 programme requiring attainment of level 6 for entry and not already classified in category 6.3
7.3	Further degree/qualification from an ISCED level 7 programme requiring attainment of category 7.1 or 7.2 for entry

## **21. ISCED LEVEL 8 – DOCTORAL LEVEL EDUCATION OR EQUIVALENT**

### **A. PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS**

271. Programmes at ISCED level 8, or ‘doctoral level education or equivalent’, are designed primarily to lead to an advanced research qualification. Programmes at this ISCED level are devoted to advanced study and original research and typically offered only by research-oriented universities. Doctoral programmes exist in both academic and professional fields.
272. ISCED level 8 usually concludes with the submission and defence of a thesis, dissertation or equivalent written work of publishable quality representing a significant contribution to knowledge in the respective field of study. These programmes therefore are typically based on research and not only on course-work. In some education systems, ISCED level 8 programmes contain very limited course-work, or none at all, and individuals working towards a doctoral degree engage in research mostly independently or in small groups with varying degrees of supervision. In some education systems, doctoral research is undertaken by individuals employed by the university as junior researchers or research assistants in addition to their being enrolled as doctoral students.
273. Entry to ISCED level 8 programmes or junior research positions normally requires the successful completion of ISCED level 7. ISCED level 8 qualifications give access to professions with high academic skill requirements and research posts in government and industry as well as research and teaching positions in educational institutions offering education at ISCED levels 6, 7 and 8.
274. The theoretical duration of ISCED level 8 programmes is at least three years full-time equivalent (for a cumulative total duration of at least seven years of full time education at the tertiary level).
275. Programmes to be classified at ISCED level 8 are referred to in many ways across the world such as PhD, DPhil, Doctorate or similar terms. For international purposes, the term ‘doctoral level education or equivalent’ is used to label ISCED level 8.

### **B. CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA**

276. For the definition of doctoral level education or equivalent, the following criteria are relevant:

#### **Main criteria**

- a. Written work requirements (see Paragraph 277);
- b. Entry requirements (see Paragraph 278); and
- c. (Cumulative) duration of programme (see Paragraph 279).

#### **Subsidiary criteria**

- a. Doctoral degree required for specific occupations (see Paragraph 280).

277. Successful completion of an ISCED level 8 programme requires the submission of a thesis, dissertation or equivalent written work of publishable quality that is the product of original research and represents a significant contribution to knowledge in the respective field of study.
278. Programmes preparing for a doctoral degree require the successful completion of specific ISCED level 7 programmes for entry.
279. ISCED level 8 programmes require at least three years of full-time equivalent study, making a total cumulative duration of at least seven years of full-time education at the tertiary level. Prior completion of an advanced research programme at ISCED level 7 may reduce the time required for an individual to complete an ISCED level 8 programme (see Paragraph 268). Shorter, non-doctoral advanced research programmes are classified in ISCED level 7.
280. Achievement of an ISCED level 8 qualification is often a condition for entering faculty posts in educational institutions that offer ISCED level 6, 7 and 8 programmes, as well as research posts in government and industry.

#### **C. CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING PROGRAMMES SPANNING ISCED LEVELS**

281. Not applicable.

#### **D. COMPLEMENTARY DIMENSIONS**

282. Not applicable.
283. ISCED does not currently distinguish between academic and professional orientations at the tertiary level as there are no internationally accepted definitions available.

#### **E. PROGRAMMES ALSO INCLUDED IN ISCED LEVEL 8**

284. Second advanced research qualifications or higher doctorates requiring the submission of a second substantial piece of research (further to the first doctoral thesis) usually at a considerably later stage of an academic career and often without formal supervision. Examples are the *habilitation*, *agrégation* or *doktor nauk* qualifications, although most education systems only have one advanced research qualification granting doctoral degrees or equivalent qualifications. Second research qualifications are not separately accounted for by ISCED. They are not usually linked with an educational programme.

#### **F. CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AT ISCED LEVEL 8**

285. All educational programmes in ISCED level 8 are coded 8.0.0. There are no categories or subcategories to be differentiated by the second or third digit.

#### **G. CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AT ISCED LEVEL 8**

286. All qualifications from educational programmes classified as ISCED level 8 are coded 8.0.0. There are no categories or subcategories to be differentiated by the second or third digit.

## **22. CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN ISCED 2011 AND ISCED 1997 LEVELS**

287. This section describes the correspondence between ISCED levels in the ISCED 2011 classification and the earlier version, ISCED 1997.
288. In ISCED 2011, level 0 covers early childhood education for all ages, including very young children. Programmes are sub-classified into two categories depending on the target age: early childhood development (category 0.1) and pre-primary education (category 0.2). The category for early childhood development (category 0.1) targets children younger than age three. It was first introduced in ISCED 2011 and no corresponding category exists in ISCED 1997. Pre-primary education (category 0.2) corresponds exactly to level 0 in ISCED 1997.
289. Level 1, primary education, in ISCED 2011 corresponds to level 1 in ISCED 1997.
290. ISCED 2011 levels 2 and 3, lower secondary and upper secondary education, correspond mainly to levels 2 and 3 in ISCED 1997. However, due to the clarification of criteria and subsidiary criteria, ISCED 2011 may be implemented differently than ISCED 1997. Such differences may affect time series data for some countries.
291. ISCED 2011 simplifies the complementary dimensions at ISCED levels 2 and 3 compared to 1997:
- Programme orientation in ISCED 2011 differentiates only between vocational programmes and general programmes. ISCED 1997 classified pre-vocational education separately. Such programmes do not provide labour market relevant qualifications and are now mainly classified as general education;
  - ISCED 2011 identifies only one group of programmes that provide access to further education. By comparison, ISCED 1997 differentiated access to further education in categories A and B, dependent on the type of subsequent education. The ISCED 2011 category ‘level completion with access to further education’ corresponds to the combined categories A and B in ISCED 1997;
  - ISCED 2011 sub-classifies programmes not providing access to further education into the categories ‘completing the level’ and ‘not completing the level’. These two categories in ISCED 2011 typically correspond to the categories ‘C short’ and ‘C long’ in ISCED 1997.
292. ISCED 2011 level 4, post-secondary non-tertiary education, corresponds largely to level 4 in ISCED 1997. However, programmes leading to a qualification equivalent to upper secondary general education are classified as level 3 in ISCED 2011, while they were often classified as level 4 in ISCED 1997. In addition, due to the clarification of criteria and subsidiary criteria, ISCED 2011 may be implemented differently than ISCED 1997. Such differences may affect time series data for some countries.
293. ISCED 2011 simplifies the orientation dimensions at ISCED level 4 as for levels 2 and 3 (see Paragraphs 203, 162, 185). The ISCED 2011 subcategories ‘access to further education’ and ‘no access to further education’ correspond to the destinations A and B, respectively, in ISCED 1997.

294. ISCED 2011 has four levels of tertiary education, compared to two levels in ISCED 1997. Levels 5, 6 and 7 in ISCED 2011 together correspond to level 5 in ISCED 1997. Level 8 in ISCED 2011 corresponds to level 6 in ISCED 1997.
295. ISCED 2011 simplifies the complementary dimensions at the tertiary ISCED levels compared to 1997:
- At level 5 in ISCED 2011, vocational programmes are differentiated from general programmes at the second digit. In ISCED 1997, this differentiation did not exist for the corresponding short ISCED 5B and intermediate ISCED 5A programmes.
  - At levels 6 and 7 of ISCED 2011, the second digit of the classification distinguishes between programmes according to programme duration and position in the national degree and qualification structure for the calculation of statistics such as entry and graduation rates. In ISCED 1997, programme orientation or ‘type of programme’ was used to sub-classify ISCED 5A into first degree programmes (level 6 in ISCED 2011) and second and further degree programmes (level 7 in ISCED 2011).
296. Table 15 shows the correspondence between ISCED levels in the 1997 and 2011 versions.

**Table 15: Correspondence between ISCED 1997 and ISCED 2011 levels**

ISCED 1997	ISCED 2011
-	ISCED 0.1
ISCED 0	ISCED 0.2
ISCED level 1	ISCED level 1*
ISCED level 2	ISCED level 2*
ISCED level 3	ISCED level 3*
ISCED level 4	ISCED level 4*
ISCED level 5	ISCED level 5
	ISCED level 6
	ISCED level 7
ISCED level 6	ISCED level 8*

\* content of category slightly changed

297. Table 16 and Table 17 show the correspondence between ISCED 2011 and ISCED 1997, including complementary dimensions, categories and subcategories.

**Table 16: Correspondence between ISCED 2011 and ISCED 1997 in detail: Levels 0 to 4**

ISCED 2011					ISCED 1997			
Level	Category	Subcategory	Level label	Notes on subcategories	Level label	Level	Destination	Orientation
0	0.1	0.1.0	early childhood development	Educational programmes targeting under 3 year olds.	<i>not covered in ISCED 1997</i>			
	0.2	0.2.0	pre-primary education		pre-primary education	0	n.a.	n.a.
1	1.0	1.0.0	primary education		primary education or first stage of basic education	1	n.a.	n.a.
2	2.1 (general)	2.1.0	lower secondary education	Programmes too short for completion at ISCED level 2, no access to ISCED level 3	lower secondary education or second stage of basic education	2	A/B	general/pre-vocational
		2.1.2		Programmes sufficient for completion at ISCED level 2, access to ISCED level 3			A/B	
	2.2 (vocational)	2.2.0		Programmes too short for completion at ISCED level 2, no access to ISCED level 3			C	vocational
		2.2.1		Programmes sufficient for completion at ISCED level 2, no access to ISCED level 3			C	
		2.2.2		Programmes sufficient for completion at ISCED level 2, access to ISCED level 3			A/B	
3	3.1 (general)	3.1.0	upper secondary education	Programmes too short for completion at ISCED level 3, no access to ISCED levels 5/6/7	upper secondary education	3	A/B	general/pre-vocational
		3.1.2		In ISCED 2011 this includes programmes classified in ISCED 4A in ISCED 1997 if they are equivalent to other programmes in ISCED 1997 3A.			A/B	
	3.2 (vocational)	3.2.0		no access to higher ISCED level, duration <2 years or <11 years since start of ISCED 1			C	vocational
		3.2.1		no access to higher ISCED level, duration ≥2 years or ≥11 years since start of ISCED 1			C	
		3.2.2					A/B	
4	4.1 (general)	4.1.2	post-secondary non-tertiary education	Unless programme prepares for qualification equivalent to ISCED 1997 3A: then 3.1.2 in ISCED 2011.	post-secondary non-tertiary education	4	A	general
	4.2 (vocational)	4.2.1					A/B/C	vocational

**Table 17: Correspondence between ISCED 2011 and ISCED 1997 in detail: Tertiary levels**

ISCED 2011						ISCED 1997				
Level	Category	Subcategory	Level label	Notes on (sub) categories	Notes	Level label	Level	Type	Position	Cumulative duration in tertiary
5	5.1	5.1.0	tertiary education; short-cycle	general, no completion		tertiary education, first stage	5	A	n.a.	<2 years
		5.1.1		general, completion	Intermediate certificates only considered for educational attainment.		5	A	n.a., intermediate	<3 years
	5.2	5.2.0		vocational, no completion			5	B	n.a.	<2 years
		5.2.1		vocational, completion			5	B	n.a.	<3 years
6	6.1	6.1.0	tertiary education; bachelor level or equivalent	1 <sup>st</sup> degree (bachelor level)			5	A/B	1 <sup>st</sup>	3-4 years
	6.2	6.2.0		long 1 <sup>st</sup> degree (bachelor level)			5	A/B	1 <sup>st</sup>	>4 years
	6.3	6.3.0		further degree (bachelor level)	If equivalent to other programmes already classified in level 6.		5	A/B	2 <sup>st</sup>	
7	7.1	7.1.0	tertiary education; master level or equivalent	long 1 <sup>st</sup> degree (master level)	Unless equivalent with programmes already classified in level 6, then 6.2 or 6.3.		5	A/B	1 <sup>st</sup>	>4 years
	7.2	7.2.0		2 <sup>nd</sup> degree (master level)	Programmes that do not directly lead to a doctoral degree.	5	A/B	2 <sup>nd</sup>	≥4 years	
	7.3	7.3.0		further degree (master level)	Requires completion of 7.1 or 7.2 for entry. Programmes that do not directly lead to a doctoral degree.	5	A	2 <sup>nd</sup> /further		
8	8.0	8.0.0	tertiary education; doctoral level or equivalent		Programmes that lead directly to a doctoral degree only.	tertiary education, second stage	6	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

## **23. ANNEX 1: BROAD GROUPS AND FIELDS OF EDUCATION**

(Note: Fields of education remain unchanged from the ISCED 1997 version.)

298. The fields of education in the original ISCED have been modified to eliminate overlapping, and increased to include new fields. Thus, there are now 25 fields of education as compared to 21 in the original version. Another innovation is the establishment of broad groups composed of fields of education having similarities. One such example is the broad group Health and Welfare comprising educational programmes in medicine, medical services, nursing, dental services and social services.
299. Further, it should also be stated that UNESCO intends to insert new fields as and when the need arises. Member States would be accordingly advised when this occurs. It is also recommended that inter- or multi-disciplinary programmes should be classified according to a majority rule, i.e. in the field of education in which the students spend most of their time.

### **0 General Programmes**

#### **01 Basic programmes**

Basic general programmes pre-primary, elementary, primary, secondary, etc.

#### **08 Literacy and numeracy**

Simple and functional literacy, numeracy.

#### **09 Personal development**

Enhancing personal skills, e.g. behavioural capacities, mental skills, personal organizational capacities, life orientation programmes.

### **1 Education**

#### **14 Teacher training and education science**

Teacher training for pre-school, kindergarten, elementary school, vocational, practical, non-vocational subject, adult education, teacher trainers and for handicapped children. General and specialized teacher training programmes.

Education science: curriculum development in non-vocational and vocational subjects. Educational assessment, testing and measurement, educational research, other education science.



## **2 Humanities and Arts**

### **21 Arts**

Fine arts: drawing, painting, sculpture;

Performing arts: music, drama, dance, circus;

Graphic and audio-visual arts: photography, cinematography, music production, radio and TV production, printing and publishing;

Design; Craft skills.

### **22 Humanities**

Religion and theology;

Foreign languages and cultures: living or 'dead' languages and their literature, area studies;

Native languages: current or vernacular language and its literature;

Other humanities: interpretation and translation, linguistics, comparative literature, history, archaeology, philosophy, ethics.

## **3 Social sciences, business and law**

### **31 Social and behavioural science**

Economics, economic history, political science, sociology, demography, anthropology (except physical anthropology), ethnology, futurology, psychology, geography (except physical geography), peace and conflict studies, human rights.

### **32 Journalism and information**

Journalism; library technician and science; technicians in museums and similar repositories;

Documentation techniques;

Archival sciences.

### **34 Business and administration**

Retailing, marketing, sales, public relations, real estate;

Finance, banking, insurance, investment analysis;

Accounting, auditing, bookkeeping;

Management, public administration, institutional administration, personnel administration;

Secretarial and office work.

**38 Law**

Local magistrates, 'notaires', law (general, international, labour, maritime, etc.), jurisprudence, history of law.

**4 Science****42 Life sciences**

Biology, botany, bacteriology, toxicology, microbiology, zoology, entomology, ornithology, genetics, biochemistry, biophysics, other allied sciences, excluding clinical and veterinary sciences.

**44 Physical sciences**

Astronomy and space sciences, physics, other allied subjects, chemistry, other allied subjects, geology, geophysics, mineralogy, physical anthropology, physical geography and other geosciences, meteorology and other atmospheric sciences including climatic research, marine science, vulcanology, palaeoecology.

**46 Mathematics and statistics**

Mathematics, operations research, numerical analysis, actuarial science, statistics and other allied fields.

**48 Computing**

Computer sciences: system design, computer programming, data processing, networks, operating systems - software development only (hardware development should be classified with the engineering fields).

**5 Engineering, manufacturing and construction****52 Engineering and engineering trades**

Engineering drawing, mechanics, metal work, electricity, electronics, telecommunications, energy and chemical engineering, vehicle maintenance, surveying.

**54 Manufacturing and processing**

Food and drink processing, textiles, clothes, footwear, leather, materials (wood, paper, plastic, glass, etc.), mining and extraction.

### **58 Architecture and building**

Architecture and town planning: structural architecture, landscape architecture, community planning, cartography;

Building, construction;

Civil engineering.

## **6 Agriculture**

### **62 Agriculture, forestry and fishery**

Agriculture, crop and livestock production, agronomy, animal husbandry, horticulture and gardening, forestry and forest product techniques, natural parks, wildlife, fisheries, fishery science and technology.

### **64 Veterinary**

Veterinary medicine, veterinary assisting.

## **7 Health and welfare**

### **72 Health**

Medicine: anatomy, epidemiology, cytology, physiology, immunology and immunoematology, pathology, anaesthesiology, paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology, internal medicine, surgery, neurology, psychiatry, radiology, ophthalmology;

Medical services: public health services, hygiene, pharmacy, pharmacology, therapeutics, rehabilitation, prosthetics, optometry, nutrition;

Nursing: basic nursing, midwifery;

Dental services: dental assisting, dental hygienist, dental laboratory technician, odontology.

### **76 Social services**

Social care: care of the disabled, child care, youth services, gerontological services;

Social work: counselling, welfare n.e.c.

## **8 Services**

### **81 Personal services**

Hotel and catering, travel and tourism, sports and leisure, hairdressing, beauty treatment and other personal services: cleaning, laundry, dry-cleaning, cosmetic services, domestic science.

### **84 Transport services**

Seamanship, ship's officer, nautical science, air crew, air traffic control, railway operations, road motor vehicle operations, postal service.

### **85 Environmental protection**

Environmental conservation, control and protection, air and water pollution control, labour protection and security.

### **86 Security services**

Protection of property and persons: police work and related law enforcement, criminology, fire-protection and fire fighting, civil security;

Military.

### **Not known or unspecified**

(This category is not part of the classification itself but in data collection '99' is needed for 'fields of education not known or unspecified'.)