Approach to instruction time across Europe

Eurydice’s *Recommended Annual Instruction Time in Full-time Compulsory Education in Europe* examines the recommended minimum instruction time across European education systems.

In addition to figures illustrating the data by country and by subject, the report contains a comparative overview examining policy changes over the last year. The overview covers several subjects which are currently of particular interest at European level: reading, writing and literature, maths, natural sciences, other languages and physical education and health.

The report shows that schools in the four UK countries have some of the highest levels of autonomy when allocating instruction time. In England and Scotland, central authorities do not define a minimum instruction time, whereas in Wales and Northern Ireland, there is 'horizontal flexibility', that is, the total instruction time for a group of subjects is defined at central level, but schools decide how much time to allocate to individual subjects. This is in stark contrast to France and Germany (among others), where central authorities stipulate the total amount of instruction time for each subject in each grade of education.

Teaching and learning of foreign languages at school

The most recent edition of Eurydice’s *Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe* shows positive trends in the teaching and learning of foreign languages across Europe. Highlights include that, compared to ten years previously, pupils in primary education have started learning their first foreign language at an earlier age and the number of lower secondary students learning two foreign languages has risen.

The report covers a wide range of subjects in relation to the teaching and learning of foreign languages across five chapters: context, organisation, participation, teachers and teaching processes. Particular emphasis is placed on:

- the provision of foreign languages in the curriculum
- the range of languages studied and expected levels of attainment
- the extent of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)
- foreign language teacher profiles and qualifications
- transnational mobility of foreign language teachers
- language support for newly arrived migrant students.
Academic staff in Europe

The Eurydice network has published Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Academic Staff – 2017. The report is the first Europe-wide comparative analysis of the current realities for academic staff within the changing higher education landscape. It covers qualification requirements, the recruitment process, employment and working conditions in academia, the impact of external quality assurance, and top-level strategies for internationalisation. It also includes national diagrams showing key characteristics of academic staff categories.

Based mainly on qualitative data gathered by the Eurydice network, the report covers higher education systems in 35 countries, focusing on academic higher education staff who are primarily responsible for teaching and/or research.

Keeping up with the Jönses

A new NFER blog post draws on a recent Eurydice study and NFER research, to explore how research evidence informs education policy in other European countries. What emerges is that education systems that learn from previous experience (their own and others’) are more likely to design effective interventions. They are also more likely to succeed in addressing the entrenched challenges faced by all developed nations of reducing inequality and raising attainment.