

Profile of the U.S.S.R. Education System

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The educational system of the U.S.S.R. has created a highly literate population of its nearly 270 million inhabitants. Although there exists a unified educational system for the entire Soviet Union, centrally determined educational policies are implemented by local education ministries within the individual Republics and Regions.

Fifty-one political Republics and Regions, encompassing 103 different nationalities many of which have separate languages and highly developed cultural identities, comprise the political and educational system of the U.S.S.R.

Officially, the language of instruction is Russian, although many of the Republic schools -- even at the university level -- offer instruction in the local language as well, with Russian as a compulsory subject.

After a period of development of Marxist-Leninist educational theory following the Russian Revolution, the Soviet educational system began to take shape in the 1930s under Josef Stalin. Its basic premise was and is egalitarianism and polytechnicism. Schools within the U.S.S.R. are very consciously utilized for socialization purposes by the leadership.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The most visible changes in Soviet education have been in the length of primary/secondary schooling. Although technically separate, primary and secondary education result in the first benchmark credential of concern to

evaluators, the Attestat zrelosti (Maturity Certificate).

Until 1959, primary and secondary education in the U.S.S.R. consisted of nine years of schooling. Krushchev's educational reform of 1960, an attempt to introduce labor training in the educational process, increased the number of years required to obtain the Attestat zrelosti to 11 years. Largely the increased time was to compensate for the time spent on labor assignments. Upon Khrushchev's fall from power in 1964, the extra year was dropped resulting in a 10-year system.

Since 1964, primary education covers the first eight years' schooling with secondary education being the ninth and tenth years. Today ten years' study leads to the Attestat zrelosti issued by the Ministry of Education. While primary and secondary education is completed in only ten years, the academic calendar is ten months, with class attendance six days per week.

Following the completion of the eighth year, students may opt for a two-year technical/vocational program or directly complete the academic course of study. The large majority of students, particularly in the rural areas, finish their secondary education in some form of technical/vocational program. The final diploma is awarded under the auspices of the State Qualifying Commission.

Individuals completing the final two years of academic study directly after primary education are generally the children of the urban white-collar workers. The curriculum encompasses Russian language and literature, history, the Soviet constitution, economic geography, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy, mechanical drawing, and electives.

SPECIAL REPORT

Under Brezhnev and his successors, a number of special interest schools were developed. Of note are specialized schools in mathematics and languages, where selection takes place from age 15 on the basis of "olympiad" examinations. Language schools teach academic subjects in the acquired language. These types of schools attract principally urban, economically advantaged students.

TECHNICAL SECONDARY EDUCATION

Vocational Technical Institutes (professional'noe tekhnicheskoe učilišče — PTU)

The PTU is usually affiliated with a factory or industrial enterprise that provides vocational training opportunities of a cooperative education. The PTU generally offers a three-year program for eighth-grade graduates and a one-year course for tenth-grade graduates (who enroll to acquire a skill). Students can continue at tertiary level institutions, generally in fields of study related to their secondary level specialized training. Attendance is often in part-time evening or correspondence programs.

Specialized Secondary Schools (sredno-special'noe učebnoe zavadenie — SSUZ)

The SSUZ can be of two types: the technikum or the učilišče. Both offer integrated programs which include technical training and academic subjects required for the Attestat zrelosti examination and subsequent access to higher education. The technikum offers programs in highly skilled technical and clerical occupations. The učilišče provides integrated programs focused on such occupations as nursing, health professions, librarianship, and lower-level teaching certificates. Generally, the eighth-grade graduates will attend for four years, the tenth-grade graduate for two years.

Any student who finishes eighth grade and then enters a SSUZ for four years undertakes the same courses using the same syllabi as does the eighth-grade graduate who proceeds directly through ninth and tenth grades except, of course, for those drawn into the special-interest schools.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education institutions are generally governed by the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education. However,

some "institutes" are governed by the industrial or resource ministries.

Higher education is offered at universities, institutes, polytechnic institutes, pedagogical institutes, as well as high schools.

Admission to higher education requires the Attestat zrelosti or its equivalent from the vocational track. Access to higher education is theoretically on a competitive examination basis. However, nationality quotas play a role in the admissions process

and students from special schools are given particular consideration in the selection process. Since there are more university applications than spaces available, many students obtain work experience or fulfill their two-year military obligation between secondary school and university entrance.

Degrees

o Diplom ob okončanju vysšego učebnogo zavadeniya (Diploma of Completion of a Higher Educational Institution), awarded under the auspices of the State Examination Commission, is normally earned after four to five years of study; six years for medicine. The courses are lecture intensive, with emphasis on general education for the first two-three years, followed by intense specialization in the latter part of the program. Students choose their specialization in the application process and rarely change once enrolled. All students take compulsory courses in a foreign language, Communist Party history, Marxism-Leninism, and political philosophy.

o The second degree is the Kandidat Nauk (Candidate of Science). Acceptance to graduate study or aspirantura, requires the Diplom in the prospective field of study, the passing of an admission examination, plus two years' work or military experience. Graduate programs last a minimum of two years and consist mainly of research and the preparation of a thesis. Attendance at lectures and seminars is not mandatory. Upon successful completion of research and defense of a thesis, the Kandidat Nauk is awarded.

o Until 1956, the Doktorantura (Doctorate) was granted upon successful submission of a doctoral dissertation. Since 1956, however, the only higher qualification, the Doktor Nauk (Doctor of Science) has been awarded in recognition of advanced original work, usually to academicians and scientists who have extensive publications or inventions to their credit.

SUMMARY

Educational Profile of the USSR

<u>ELEMENTARY/ SECONDARY EDUCATION</u> (academic)	PROGRAM LENGTH	DIPLOMA/CERTIFICATE
	grade 1-10 (from 1964)	<u>Attestat Zrelosti</u> <u>Attestat o srednem</u> <u>obrazovanji</u>
(vocational/technical)	3 years (for 8 grade graduates) 1 year (for 10 grade graduates)	<u>Svidetel'stvo/</u> <u>Diplom ob okoncanji</u> <u>srednego special'nogo</u> <u>ucebnego zavedenija</u>
<u>TEHNIKUM/UCILISCE</u>	4 years (for 8 grade graduates) 2 years (for 10 grade graduates)	<u>Diplom ob okoncanji</u> <u>srednego special'nogo</u> <u>ucebnego zavedenija</u>
<u>HIGHER EDUCATION</u>		
UNIVERSITIES	<u>First Degrees</u> 4-5 years	<u>Diplom ob okoncanji</u> <u>vysšego ucebnogo</u> <u>zavedenija</u> (in field of specialization)
POLYTECHNICAL INSTITUTES	6 years (medicine)	
HIGHER UCILISCE		
PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTES	4 years	<u>Diplom ob okoncanji</u> <u>vysšego ucebnogo</u> <u>zavedenija</u> (in field of specialization)
	<u>Graduate Programs</u> minimum 2-3 years after the <u>Diplom</u> by research & dissertation	<u>KANDIDAT NAUK</u>
	after <u>Kandidat Nauk</u> by research & dissertation	<u>DOKTOR NAUK</u>

GRADING

Excellent	Отлично	(5)
Good	Хорошо	(4)
Satisfactory	Удовлетворительно	(3)
Unsatisfactory/Fail	Не-удовлетворительно	(2)
Credit	Зачет	

Academic Year runs from September to June

SUGGESTED READING

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GLOSSARY

<u>Аспирантура</u> <u>Aspirantura</u>	Graduate status leading to the <u>Kandidat Nauk</u>
Аттестат об окончании средней школы-Аттестат зрелости <u>Attestat ob okončanii</u> <u>srednej skoly/Attestat</u> <u>zrelosti</u>	Certificate awarded on completion of general secondary education
Диплом об окончании среднего специального учебного заведения <u>Diplom ob okončanii srednego</u> <u>special'nogo učebnogo</u> <u>zavedeniija</u>	Certificate awarded on completion of specialized secondary education
Диплом об окончании высшего учебного заведения <u>Diplom ob okončanii vysšego</u> <u>učebnogo zavedeniija</u>	First degree awarded on completion of a four-five year program at a university or other institution of higher education
Доктор наук <u>Doktor Nauk</u>	The highest title in the USSR is awarded in field of specialization after the <u>Kandidat Nauk</u> .
Государственный экзамен <u>Gosudarstvennyj ekzamen</u>	State examination taken at the end of study for the first higher education degree, the <u>Diplom</u> .
Государственная экзаменационная комиссия <u>Gosudarstvennaja</u> <u>ekzamenacionnaja komissija</u>	A State Examination Commission which conducts examinations for the award of the university level <u>Diplom</u> .
Государственная квалификационная комиссия <u>Gosudarstvennaja</u> <u>kvalifikacionnaja komissija</u>	A State Qualifying Commission which conducts examinations for the award of the <u>technikum</u> and <u>ucilisce</u> level <u>Diplom</u> .
Кандидат наук <u>Kandidat Nauk</u>	The first graduate degree in the USSR, awarded after 2-3 years of graduate study and research.
Вступительный экзамен <u>Vstupitel'nyj ekzamen</u>	Competitive entrance examination for admission to university level institutions