



Secondary Education in Basel, Switzerland: Equipping Youth for University Success



Dear Readers,

After completing eleven years of compulsory education, young people in Basel, Switzerland, have two main options. They can either enter a vocational training program or enroll in a gymnasium to continue their academic studies. To qualify for admission to one of the five prestigious gymnasiums in Basel upon completion of secondary school, at least one of the two certificates obtained during the final year of secondary school must meet the prescribed grading criteria for both the E and P levels, as defined in the institutional regulations on academic progress. It is noteworthy that each high school maintains a distinctive profile, characterized by a unique mix of core and supplementary courses, elective study programs, specialized academic initiatives, school development ventures, cultural enrichment efforts, and an individualized school environment. Together, these distinctive elements contribute to the distinctive identity and ethos of every secondary school (Department of Education, 2023a).

Cognitively challenging upper secondary schools provide the necessary qualifications for university admission. It is within the upper secondary school environment that pupils embark on a journey of holistic intellectual development, they gradually assume responsibility for their own educational achievements. They are immersed in a wide range of core subjects. It is worth noting that this uniformity of the curriculum is common to all five gymnasiums in the Basel region. (Department of Education, 2023b).

In the canton of Basel-Stadt, there are five publicly funded high schools that have as their mission the preparation of their students for higher education. All five of these institutions adhere to the Federal Ordinance on the Recognition of Matura Diplomas (MAR) as the basic framework for their educational programs. In this context, the overriding aim of the Gymnasium is to provide young people with a well-rounded, comprehensive general education. This will effectively prepare them for higher education at university level. In the secondary school environment, developing the ability to acquire new knowledge, to classify it appropriately, to evaluate it critically and to take responsibility for one's own academic achievements becomes paramount. These skills are essential for future academic and scientific careers (Department of Education, 2023a).

Upper secondary schools in Switzerland are characterized by a broad range of core subjects. These form the basis of education throughout the country. Pupils are required

Citation: Ari, A. (2023). Secondary education in Basel, Switzerland: Equipping youth for university success. *International Journal of Instruction*, 16(4), i-iv. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2023.1640a>

to study basic subjects, a core subject and an additional subject, and to work towards obtaining the Matura. A general upper secondary school curriculum outlines how lessons are divided between the subjects taught. Pupils normally attend 32 compulsory lessons per week. Upper secondary schools follow a standardized curriculum. This outlines learning objectives and summarizes content. Pupils have the flexibility to choose from a range of core and supplementary subjects according to their interests and goals. Elective subjects further enrich the educational experience (Erziehungsdepartement, 2023a).

Presented here is an overview of the primary subject areas and supplementary offerings (Erziehungsdepartement, 2023a):

Gymnasium	Core Subjects	Additional Offers
Gymnasium Bäumlihof GB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual design • Biology and chemistry • Italian • Latin • Music • Physics and applications • Mathematics • Spanish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Baccalaureate (IB) • Sports classes for competitive athletes and musicians • GBplus: individualized and compact learning
Gymnasium Kirschgarten GKG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual design • Biology and chemistry • Physics and applications • Mathematics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immersion
Gymnasium Leonhard GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual design • Italian • Music • Spanish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immersion with an exchange in Boston (USA) • LeO2: Deepening and supporting learning • Promoting talent for music and BG
Gymnasium am Münsterplatz GM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English with International Baccalaureate • Greek • Latin • Philosophy, psychology, • Pedagogy • Spanish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Baccalaureate (IB) • Immersion • Coaching classes
Wirtschaftsgymnasium WG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philosophy, psychology, • Pedagogy • Economic and legal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immersion • Mini business YES! (Young Enterprise Switzerland) • Exchange program with Boston (USA) and India

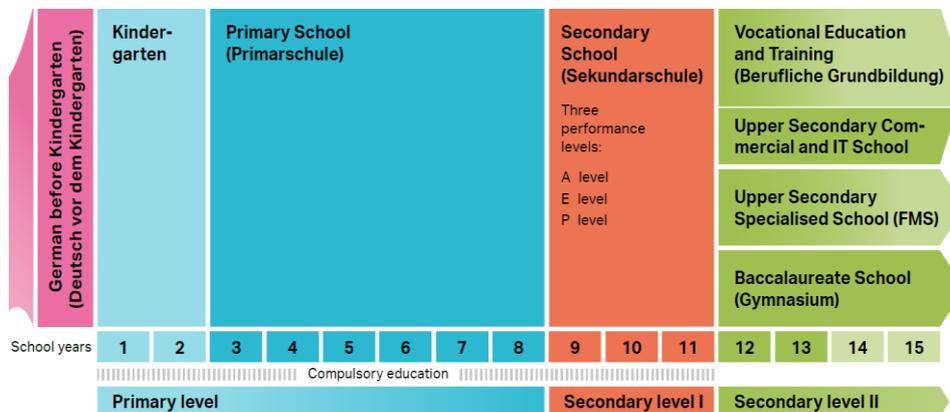


Figure 1
The Education System in Basel (Erziehungsdepartement, 2022c)

The acquisition of a Matura certificate at the end of upper secondary school is the gateway to an academic career. Career, as a federally recognized Matura qualification entitles the holder to admission to educational institutions throughout Switzerland and at a large number of international universities and colleges. As set out in the Matura Recognition Ordinance (MAR), the evaluation of the Matura thesis includes assessments in the German, French, English, Mathematics, History, Geography, Biology, Physics, Chemistry and courses in visual design or music, main subject and subsidiary subjects. The grading system for the Matura is graded on a scale of 1 to 6. 6 is the highest possible mark (Department of Education, 2023d).

Sincerely,

Prof. Asim Ari
Editor in Chief
International Journal of Instruction

Email: asimari64@gmail.com

Website: www.e-iji.net

REFERENCES

Ari, A. (2023). Planning the future with the right career choice at Basel secondary schools in Switzerland. *International Journal of Instruction*, 16(3), i-v. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2023.1630a>

Ari, A. (2023). Getting a good start to school life, Basel primary schools in Switzerland. *International Journal of Instruction*, 16(2), i-v. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2023.1620a>

Ari, A. (2023). A good start in education, Switzerland Basel Kindergartens. *International Journal of Instruction*, 16(1), i-vi. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2023.1610a>

- Ari, A. (2022). One of the best research universities in the world the University of Basel. *International Journal of Instruction*, 15(4), i-iv. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2022.1540a>
- Ari, A. & Felder, F. (2022). Federal education and Switzerland. *International Journal of Instruction*, 15(1), i-iv. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2022.1510a>
- Ari, A. & Schmitt, N. (2021). Democracy education in Switzerland, known for its strong democracy: From the Editor. *International Journal of Instruction*, 14(3), i-iv. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2021.1430a>
- Ari, A. & Stöckli, A. (2021). Switzerland case as an example of success in multicultural education: From the Editor. *International Journal of Instruction*, 14(2), i-iii. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2021.1420a>
- Ari, A. & Thiriet, S. (2022). Switzerland Basel-Stadt schools where every student is valuable. *International Journal of Instruction*, 15(3), i-iii. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2022.1530a>
- Erziehungsdepartement (2023a). Die fünf Gymnasien im Kanton Basel-Stadt. Retrieved from: https://www.mb.bs.ch/dam/jcr:4955842b-1f26-4579-b641-abcaefce4624/Die%205%20Basler%20Gymnasien_2022.pdf (Retrieved August 24, 2023).
- Erziehungsdepartement (2023b). Gymnasien. Retrieved from: <https://www.mb.bs.ch/schulen/gymnasien.html> (Retrieved August 24, 2023).
- Erziehungsdepartement (2023c). The education system in Basel. Retrieved from: <https://www.edubs.ch/publikationen/broschueren/dokumentenablage/downloads/ed-schulsystem-bs-englisch-180205-bf.pdf> (Retrieved June 19, 2023).
- Erziehungsdepartement (2023d). Maturitätsprüfungen. Retrieved from: <https://www.mb.bs.ch/schulen/gymnasien/maturitaetspruefungen.html> (Retrieved August 24, 2023).