

The Australian Education System

Education and training in Australia are a shared responsibility between the federal government and the states and territories. For example, the federal Minister for Education is responsible for areas such as childcare and university funding, international education, and research. In contrast, state education ministers are responsible for teacher registration, school resourcing and curriculum.

The state and territory governments hold primary responsibility for school education in Australia under the Australian Constitution. The state and territory governments regulate government and non-government schools, including faith-based ones, within their respective jurisdiction. Additionally, state and territory governments oversee course accreditation, student assessment, and industrial awards for government and non-government schools and early childhood learning centres.

The Australian school education system consists of three sectors – government, Catholic and independent across three phases of schooling: early childhood, primary and secondary. Education settings and schools in Australia are either government funded or a mix of government and privately funded.

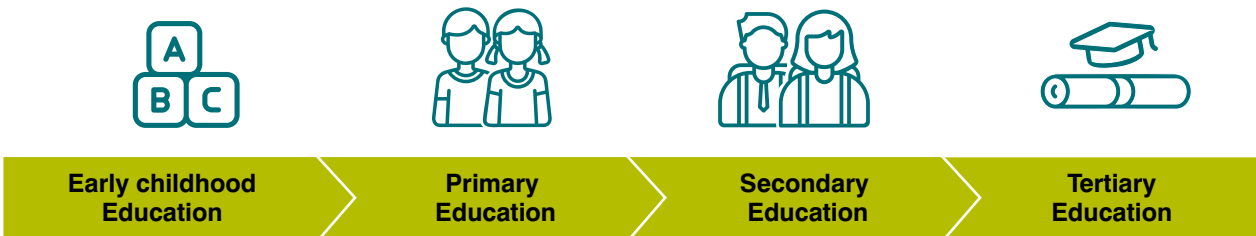
Australian children and young people in each state and territory follow a similar school route as they move into, through and out of an education and training system. Their education begins with a non-compulsory early childhood education, which is free in some states and territories, and it can start as early as three years old. Early childhood education is offered across a broad range of settings, including kindergartens, childcare centres, special education settings, and government and non-government primary schools.

The age at which students begin in primary school varies slightly between states and territories, though most Australian primary school students begin in Foundation (also known as Kindergarten, Prep, or Pre-primary) at the age of five or six. Students then progress through Years (sometimes referred to as Grades) 1 to 6, preparing to transition to secondary school at approximately 12 years old. In Australia, students are required to complete Years 7 to 10 in all states and territories, making school compulsory until usually the age of 17, depending on location and the age at which they started.



After completing secondary school, students can choose to attend tertiary education in Australia. There are two types of tertiary study: Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training, commonly known in Australia as VET. Individuals choose which type of study to pursue depending on their career goals. Higher education programs typically involve more academic learning and can take longer to complete while VET courses usually involve more practical, hands-on learning and can be shorter in duration.

Figure 1: The Australian Education System



To find out more about government, Catholic and independent schools within each state and territory, click on the links below to view each of their websites.

Government	Catholic	Independent
Australian Capital Territory	Australian Capital Territory	Australian Capital Territory
New South Wales	New South Wales	New South Wales
Northern Territory	Northern Territory	Northern Territory
Queensland	Queensland	Queensland
South Australia	South Australia	South Australia
Tasmania	Tasmania	Tasmania
Victoria	Victoria	Victoria
Western Australia	Western Australia	Western Australia

