

# ***The Danish School System***

## **General information**

At least 9 years of education is compulsory in Denmark. The average Danish child starts school at the age of 7 (however, it is common that children start at the age of 6 in the kindergarten class in the Folkeskole). He or she may leave school after his/her 16th year (after 9th grade) and those who do so, usually plan to attend vocational school by an apprenticeship. However, most students continue their secondary education and leave school with a diploma after the 10th year (approx. 17 years old) or the 12th year (approx. 19 years old). These examinations are called Folkeskolens Afgangsprøve (examination from the grade school), Folkeskolens Udvidede Afgangsprøve (extended examination from the grade school), and Studentereksamen (high-school graduation), respectively. Furthermore, there is a 2-year HF course (preparation for higher education). This exam is in many respects similar to Studentereksamen. More info at [www.uvm.dk/eng](http://www.uvm.dk/eng).

## **As a rule Danish AFS-applicants will come from**

Folkeskole:	9th or 10th grade (similar to freshmen in US high-schools, 10th grade being voluntary).
Gymnasium:	1st year (1. g), 2nd year (2. g), in rare cases 3rd year (3. g).
HF:	In rare cases: 1st year.
Handelskole (Commercial School):	1st or 2nd year.

As a rule, Danish AFS-applicants will have had 5-8 years of English in school.

## **About the Folkeskole**

The Folkeskole consists of 1 year of kindergarten class, 9 years of compulsory education and 1 year voluntary education. The curriculum of the 10th grade must include the following subjects: Danish, English, civics and physical education. Furthermore, the pupils must be offered the following electives: mathematics, comparative religion, physics/chemistry, German and French. In some electives, it is possible to choose between either a basic or an extended course in 8th grade. Between 8th and 10th grade it is also possible to select other subjects such as typing, drama, history, biology, geography, music, Latin, and art. However, these subjects are not compulsory and vary from school to school in the various municipalities.

After 9th grade it is possible to take a leaving exam in some subjects (Danish, arithmetic/math, English, German and physics/chemistry - this exam is called Folkeskolens Afgangsprøve. Upon termination of the 10th year of schooling the pupils might pass either the above-mentioned (Folkeskolens Afgangsprøve or Folkeskolens Udvidede Afgangsprøve) depending on whether the pupil has attended the basic course or the extended course. The more practical minded subjects will be finished with a leaving examination earlier in the school attendance (e.g. after the 8th year of schooling). No grades are given before the 8th grade. The weekly number of hours is as follows: 1st and 2nd grade: 15 to 20 lessons, 3rd grade: 18 to 23 lessons, 4th grade: 20 to 25 lessons, 5th grade: 23 to 29 lessons, at all the following levels: 24 to 32 lessons.

After 10 years of schooling, the two mentioned examinations (Folkeskolens Afgangsprøve and Folkeskolens Udvidede Afgangsprøve) entitle to various forms of education depending on what kind of subjects the diploma holds. The leaving examinations are also required for a number of positions in professional life.

## **About the Gymnasium**

Enrollment in one of the approx. 125 Gymnasiums in Denmark takes place at the end of the 9th or the 10th year of schooling. At present the Gymnasium enrolls about 50-55% of the year's graduating classes from the Folkeskole.

Upon admission to the 3-year Gymnasium, the students must choose between two main lines: the language or the mathematics line. The language line now has four majors: modern languages, classical languages, civics/languages, music/languages. The mathematics line now has three majors: math/physics, math/civics and math/natural science.

Students graduate from the Gymnasium after having passed the Studentereksamen. The diploma qualifies the holder for admittance to various kinds of professional training and for enrollment at the universities and other institutes of higher education.

## About the HF (Higher Preparation Exam)

The HF-program lasts 2 years. All students can enter the HF, the only conditions being that students must have had at least 10 years of schooling and be at least 18 years old before taking the final examination.

The HF-program is mainly geared towards adults who have left school at an early age without a secondary diploma, but it has also become very popular among Folkeskole-graduates. The HF-diploma gives admittance to various kinds of professional training and for enrollment at the universities and other institutes of higher education.

## What happens to AFS-students when they return?

None of the Danish AFS students receive any credit for their year abroad. Many of our students are recruited from the Folkeskole (9th and 10th year) and upon returning, they generally go on to Gymnasium or HF. In spite of the fact that Gymnasium students are "set back" one year, they have, as a rule, no difficulties in readjusting. Danish AFS-students selected are committed to continue their education when they return.

## Practical information

The school year runs from about August 10 to June 22. There is a one week vacation in mid-October, two weeks of Christmas vacation and one week of Easter vacation.

Monday to Friday classes will run from approx. 8 am. to approx. 3 pm.

## Grading System

US system versus Danish grading system (a new grading scale is being implemented as per the school year 07/08):

	Old	New	
Very good	13		The unusually independent and excellent performance.
A+	11	12	The excellent and independent performance.
A	10	10	The excellent performance, but somewhat according to routine.
A-	9	7	The good performance somewhat above average.
B+	8		The good and average performance.
B	7	4	The plain performance somewhat below average.
C	6	02	The somewhat hesitating (uncertain), but fairly satisfactory performance.
F(D)	5		The uncertain and not satisfactory performance.
	3	0	The very hesitating, very insufficient unsatisfactory performance.
F	0	-3	The quite unacceptable performance.

Generally speaking it is easier to obtain high grades in the Folkeskole than in the Gymnasium.