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National curriculum for upper secondary schools

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The Regulation is established on the basis of Subsection 15 (2) of the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act.

Chapter 1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

§ 1. Scope of application and structure of regulation

The national curriculum for upper secondary schools establishes the national standard for general upper secondary education.

The national curriculum for upper secondary schools (hereinafter *national curriculum*) shall be applied in all upper secondary schools in the Republic of Estonia regardless of the school's legal status, unless set forth otherwise in legislation.

The national curriculum consists of a general part and appendixes. The appendixes set forth syllabuses grouped according to each subject field and syllabuses of cross-curricular topics.

Chapter 2 GENERAL PART

Division 1 Core Values of Upper Secondary Education

§ 2. Core values of general upper secondary education

(1) General upper secondary education provides equal support to students' mental, physical, moral, social and emotional development and to satisfying their educational needs arising from individual particularities and personal interests. Upper secondary schools create opportunities for each student to develop the maximum extent and, taking into consideration his or her preferences, for creative self-actualization, reinforcement of a knowledge-based worldview and attainment of emotional, social and moral maturity.

(2) The upper secondary school continues the value education that was provided in basic school, and above all, shapes values and attitudes that are the basis for the successful co-existence of happiness in both personal life and in society. Importance shall be placed on values that contribute to the development of society's human resources and the national economy.

(3) The values deemed important in the national curriculum derive from the ethical principles specified in the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the basic documents of the European Union. General human values (honesty, compassion, respect for life, justice, human dignity, respect for self and others) are enshrined as core values, as are social values (liberty, democracy, respect for mother tongue and culture, patriotism, cultural diversity, tolerance, environmental sustainability, rule of law, solidarity, responsibility and gender equality).

(4) General upper secondary education is a continuation of basic education in socializing the new generation, which is based on Estonian cultural traditions, common European values and achievements of world culture and science. Intellectually, socially, emotionally, morally and physically mature people who have acquired a general upper secondary education are the guarantee of the sustainability of the social, cultural, economic and ecological development of Estonian society.

Division 2

Learning and Educational Objectives

§ 3. Setting of goals for upper secondary schools

(1) An upper secondary school has a role to play in both education and upbringing. The function of the upper secondary school is to prepare youth for functioning in different walks of life as a creative, diverse, socially mature, trustworthy person who is aware of his or her goals and able to achieve them: a partner in personal life, standard-bearer and promoter of culture, in various positions and roles in the labour market, and as a citizen responsible for sustainability of one's society and natural environment.

(2) The primary objective of learning and education in upper secondary schools is to allow students to find themselves areas of activity that conform to their interests and abilities with which to integrate their future educational career. The function of an upper secondary school is to create conditions for students to acquire knowledge, skills and values that enable them to continue their educational career in a higher educational institution or post-secondary vocational education.

(3) The following are priorities for fulfilling these functions and achieving these objectives:

- 1) independence of students, shaping their worldview and readiness for coping in life;
- 2) shaping an adequate self-esteem;
- 3) developing independent learning and cooperation skills;
- 4) introducing and assessing opportunities for a future educational career;
- 5) shaping of civic skills, activity and responsibility.

(4) The acquiring and developing of knowledge, values and practical skills takes place throughout the school learning and educational process and as a result of the combined effect of cooperation between home and school and of the student's immediate living environment.

(5) Estonian schools have the responsibility to safeguard and develop the Estonian nation, language and culture, and this is why special attention is paid to teaching the Estonian language.

§ 4. Competences

(1) In the sense of the national curriculum, competence is the aggregate relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes that ensure the ability to operate productively in a particular area of activity or field. Competence can be categorized as either general or field-specific competence.

(2) General competences are subject field and subject-specific competences that are essential to the development of a person into a human being and citizen. General competences are shaped through all subjects as well as during extracurricular and out-of-school activity, and their development is monitored and directed by teachers as well as in cooperation between school and home.

(3) The following are general competences:

- 1) value competence – ability to evaluate human relations and activities from the standpoint of generally accepted moral norms; to sense and value one's ties to other people, nature, the cultural heritage of one's own country and nation and those of others, and events in contemporary culture; to value art and to shape the sense of aesthetics;
- 2) social competence – the ability to become self-actualized, to function as an aware and conscientious citizen and to support the democratic development of society; to know and follow values and standards in society and the rules of various environments; to engage in cooperation with other people; to accept interpersonal differences and take them into account in interacting with people;
- 3) self-management competence – the ability to understand and evaluate oneself, one's weaknesses and strengths; to adhere to healthful lifestyles; to find solutions to problems related to oneself, one's mental and physical health as well as to problems arising in human relations;
- 4) learning to learn competence – ability to organize the learning environment and procure the information they need for learning; to plan studies and follow the plan; to use the outcome of the learning, including learning skills and strategies, in different contexts and for solving problems; to analyze one's knowledge and skills, strengths and weaknesses and on that basis, the need for further learning;
- 5) communication competence – ability to clearly and relevantly express oneself, taking into account situations and partners in communication; to present and justify their positions; to read and understand information and literature; to write different types of texts; using appropriate linguistic devices and a suitable style; to prioritize correct use of language and rich expressive language;
- 6) mathematics competence – the ability to use the language, symbols and methods characteristic of mathematical applications, to solve various situations in all walks of life and spheres of activity;
- 7) entrepreneurship competence – ability to create ideas and implement them, using the acquired knowledge and skills in different walks of life; to see problems and the opportunities that lie within them; to set goals and carry them out; to organize joint activities, show initiative and take responsibility for results; to react flexibly to changes and to take judicious risks.

Subjects with a similar objectives and content make up a subject field. The primary objective of a subject field is to shape the corresponding subject field competences, supported by the objectives of and learning outcomes in

each subject. The development of subject field competences is also supported by subjects in other subject fields and extracurricular and out-of-school activities.

The national curriculum includes the following subject fields:

- 1) language and literature;
- 2) foreign languages;
- 3) mathematics;
- 4) natural science;
- 5) social studies;
- 6) art subjects;
- 7) physical education.

The development of the general and subject field competences defined in the national curriculum is described in the school curriculum.

Syllabuses set forth both upper secondary school learning outcomes as well learning outcomes achieved upon successful completion of study topics. The learning outcomes support the development of subject field competences. Learning outcomes that express values are not assessed numerically; rather, feedback is given to the student regarding their achievement.

§ 5. Competences in upper secondary school

Upon graduating upper secondary school, a student:

- 1) acts in an ethical manner, follows generally recognized values and moral principles;
- 2) is responsible for his or her choices, decisions and obligations taken to his or herself, honours other people and his or her own freedom, is a sovereign person;
- 3) uses different learning strategies, knows how to prepare a research work and present it, is able to be a team player and contribute to the achieving of common goals;
- 4) contributes in a mindful manner to the preservation and development of Estonian nationality, language and culture and the Estonian state; understands Estonian culture in the context of European culture and the culture of other nations; understands, value and honours the cultural traditions of one's own nation and of other nations;
- 5) is capable of evaluating his or her aspirations, considering his or her abilities and opportunities, is capable of foreseeing potential success and lack of success, is aware of various employment spheres, trends on the labour market; is capable of obtaining information on further educational and employment opportunities, plans his or her careers;
- 6) uses language correctly and expressively, is capable to use supporting evidence in debate;
- 7) thinks critically and creatively, develops and values his or her own and others' ideas, provides justification for his or her choices and positions;
- 8) is proficient in at least two foreign languages on the level of independent language user;
- 9) uses mathematical knowledge and methods in various walks of life;
- 10) has a sophisticated worldview and understands the nature of contemporary natural sciences, is aware of global issues, takes co-responsibility for resolving them, values and adheres to the principles of sustainable development;
- 11) uses contemporary technology in a goal-oriented and responsible manner, evaluates the impact of technological applications on everyday life, has well-reasoned opinions on matters related to development and use of technology;
- 12) has developed his or her active civic position, senses him or herself as a member of society who is capable of dialogue in the Estonian, European and global context, is capable of resolving conflicts, behaves in a tolerant manner;
- 13) has an appreciation for art of a high level, is capable of handling tools and instruments, and use technologies and materials in his or her creative activity;
- 14) leads a healthy lifestyle, is capable of preserving and restoring, if necessary, his or her mental and physical condition.

Division 3 Concept of Learning and the Learning Environment

§ 6. Concept of learning

(1) The national curriculum for upper secondary schools treats learning as an active and goal-oriented activity on the part of a student aimed at making sense of and interpreting perceivable information in combination with other students, teachers, parents and the broader living environment, relying on already existing structures of knowledge.

(2) Occupying a central place in learning is the process whereby students actively construct knowledge. For this purpose, the upper secondary school learning and educational activity must create a learning environment that promotes independent study, including the development of the necessary learning skills. In learning and educational activity, students must be allowed to set their goals, learn to work independently as well as in

groups, and to provide the students with opportunities, using various working methods, to find the learning style most suitable to them.

§ 7. Learning environment

(1) The learning environment is understood to mean the combination of the mental, social and physical environment surrounding students, in which students develop and learn.

(2) The upper secondary schools organize studies that protect and promote the mental and physical health of students. The study load shall conform to the student's energy resources.

(3) The entire school community shall take part in developing the social and mental environment. The learning environment shall support the development of students into independent and active learners, promote the core values of the curriculum and the spirit of own school and preserve and develop local and school community traditions.

(4) In developing the social and mental environment.

1) relations that are based on mutual respect and consideration of mutual positions and honouring agreements shall be developed between students, parents, teachers, school administration and other participants involved in learning and education;

2) all students shall be treated without prejudice, fairly and equally, honouring their self-dignity and personal character;

3) decision-making authority and responsibility shall be distributed in a relevant and clear manner;

4) the efforts and learning success of all students shall be noted and recognized, refraining from labelling students and decreasing their belief in themselves;

5) violence and bullying among students shall be prevented;

6) openness to free exchange of opinions, including criticism shall be preserved;

7) opportunities shall be created for students to display initiative, take part in decision-making and acting both alone and together with companions;

8) An atmosphere shall be created characterized by willingness to help and mutual support in the case of learning and personal difficulty;

9) an atmosphere founded on mutual trust, friendliness, tolerance and good faith shall be created;

10) school life shall be organized as a model of a society that honours human rights and democracy, characterized by shared and ensuring core values in the school community and support for good ideas and positive innovations;

11) school life shall be organized on the basis of principles of ethnic, racial and gender equality.

In developing the physical environment, the upper secondary school shall ensure that:

1) the furnishings and design of the premises and rooms used are expedient for the purpose of studies;

2) it is possible to use, for the purpose of study, computers with an Internet connection, and that students have the opportunity to use the library;

3) the furnishings of the rooms and premises used are safe and conform to health protection and safety requirements;

4) the rooms, furnishings and study materials have an aesthetic appearance;

5) age-appropriate study materials and materials adapted to individual needs shall be used, including study materials and equipment based on contemporary information and communication technologies;

6) there exists an opportunity for promoting physical education and healthful lifestyles within and outside of lessons.

Studies may be organized outside the school premises as well (among other things, in the schoolyard, nature, museums, archives, environmental education centres, companies and institutions) and in virtual study environments.

Division 4 Organization of Studies

§ 8. Subject fields and subjects

The national curriculum sets forth the following syllabuses for subjects and courses:

1) language and literature: Compulsory subjects – Estonian, literature, Russian (in a school or class where Estonian is studied as a second language, and the study is carried out partially in Russian), literature (in a school or class where Estonian is studied as a second language, and the study is carried out partially in Russian); optional courses – „Oratory and debate ", „Myth and literature ", „Literature and society ", „Drama and theatre", „Literature and film", „Russian in Estonia ", „World literature from the antique area to the 18th century ", „Contemporary Russian literature ", „Contemporary foreign literature" (appendix 1);

2) foreign languages: With regard to foreign languages, the following are distinguished: Estonian as a second language; foreign language at B2 language proficiency level, where in addition to the compulsory courses, there are two electives; and foreign language at B1 language proficiency level, where in addition to the compulsory courses there are four elective courses. English, Russian, German, French or other foreign languages shall be studied at B2 proficiency level. English, Russian, German, French or other foreign languages shall be studied at the B1 proficiency level. For students studying Estonian as a second language there is one compulsory foreign language (appendix 2);

- 3) mathematics: Compulsory – narrow maths or extensive maths; optional courses - „Logic", „Elements of the economical mathematics”, Elements of number theory part I, „Elements of number theory part II”, „Elements of discrete mathematics part I”, „Elements of discrete mathematics part II”; „Planimetry part I. Geometry of triangles and circles” and „Planimetry part II. Geometry of polygons and circles” (appendix 3);
- 4) natural science: compulsory subjects - biology, geography (nature geography), chemistry, physics; optional courses - „Applied biology", „Geographic information science", „Principals of chemical processes ", „Chemistry of elements", „Chemistry of life", „Physics and Engineering ", „Another kind of physics", „Natural science, technology and society ", „Mechatronics and robotics", „3D modelling", „Technical drawing", „Use of computers for inquiry ", „Basics of programming and development of software applications " (appendix 4);
- 5) social studies: Compulsory subjects - history, civics and citizenship education, personal, social and health education, geography (human geography); optional courses - „General history – world history: Civilizations outside Europe ", „General history – History of European countries and the United States of America”, „Psychology”, „Everyday law”, „The globalizing world”, „Introduction to philosophy”, „Philosophy today” (appendix 5);
- 6) art subjects: Compulsory subjects - music, art (appendix 6);
- physical education. Compulsory subject – physical education; optional courses - „Physical abilities and kinetic skills", „Physical exercises in the open air“ (appendix 7);
- 7) religious studies optional courses - „People and Religion ", „The Religious Landscape of Estonia " (appendix 8);
- 8) national defence optional courses - „National defence", „Practical Studies at a Military field camp " (appendix 9);
- 9) economic and business studies business studies optional courses – „Economics Economic studies ", „Business studies " (appendix 10);
- 10) optional course „Career education" (appendix 11);
- 11) optional course „Bases of inquiry" (appendix 12).

§ 9. Compulsory courses of subjects

(1) Language and literature:

- 1) Estonian (in Russian-language or other-language upper secondary schools, where in accordance with the school curriculum Estonian is studied as a second language) 6 courses (1 course is 35 academic hours);
- 2) Literature - 5 courses.

(2) Foreign languages:

- 1) Estonian as a second language in upper secondary schools, where in accordance with the school curriculum Estonian is studied as a second language, and in the case of students who have acquired basic education in a language of instruction other than Estonian 9 courses.
- 2) foreign language at B2 proficiency level. 5 courses.
- 3) foreign language at B1 proficiency level. 5 courses.

(3) Mathematics:

- 1) narrow mathematics - 8 courses or
- 2) extensive mathematics - 14 courses.

(4) Science:

- 1) biology - 4 courses.
- 2) geography (physical geography) - 2 courses.
- 3) chemistry - 3 courses.
- 4) physics - 5 courses.

(5) Social studies:

- 1) history - 6 courses.
- 2) civics and citizenship education - 2 courses.
- 3) personal, social and health education (PSHE) - 1 course.
- 4) geography (human geography) - 1 course.

(6) Art subjects:

- 1) music 3 courses.
- 2) art 2 courses.

(7) Physical education: physical education - 5 courses.

§ 10. Cross-curricular topics

(1) Cross-curricular topics are a means of integrating general and subject field competences, subjects and subject fields, and are taken into account in developing the school environment. Cross-curricular topics span numerous subjects and are priorities for society, and enable creation of an idea of the development of society as a whole, supporting the student’s capacity to apply his or her knowledge in different situations.

(2) Study of cross-curricular topics is realized above all in the following:

- 1) the structure of the learning environment – the content and aims of cross-curricular topics are taken into account in developing the school's non-material, social and physical learning environment;
- 2) subject study – proceeding from the cross-curricular topics, suitable treatments of subjects, examples and methods are introduced into teaching of subjects, multi-subject, multiple-class and school projects are carried out jointly. The role of a subject in study of cross-curricular topics is different based on the subject's aims and content depending on how closely related the subject field is to the cross-curricular topic;
- 3) selection of optional courses – optional courses support the aims of cross-curricular topics;
- 4) creative work that stems from cross-curricular topics or which integrates subjects – students may proceed from a cross-curricular topic in choice of creative work done independently or as a group project;
- 5) organizing if possible, in cooperation with the owner of the school, extracurricular learning activities and hobby activities with regional institutions and enterprises, other educational and cultural institutions and civic associations and taking part in county, country and international projects.

Required cross-curricular topics are:

- 1) Lifelong learning and career planning – the aim is for the student to develop into a person who is prepared to learn lifelong, perform different roles in a changing educational, living and work environments and shape his or her life through conscious decisions, including making of reasonable career choices;
- 2) environment and sustainable development – the aim is for the student to become a socially active, responsible and environmentally conscious person who preserves and protects the environment, and by valuing sustainability, is prepared to find solutions to issues pertaining to the environment and human development;
- 3) civic initiative and entrepreneurship – the aim is for the student to become an active and responsible member of the community and society who understands the principles and mechanisms of the functioning of society and the importance of civic initiative, feels like a member of society and draws on the country's cultural traditions and development directions in his or her activities;
- 4) cultural identity – the aim is for the student to develop into a person who is culturally aware, who understands the role of culture in shaping people's thought and behaviour and who knows how cultures have changed over history, who has acquired an idea of versatility of cultures and particularities of lifestyles determined by culture and who values native culture and cultural diversity and is culturally tolerant and prepared for cooperation;
- 5) information environment – the aim is for the student to develop into an information-conscious person who senses and aware of the surrounding information environment, is able to analyze it critically and acts according to his or her aims and society's communications ethics;
- 6) technology and innovation – the aim is for the student to develop into a person who is well-disposed toward innovation and who knows how to use contemporary technologies in a goal-oriented manner, who copes with the rapidly changing technological living, learning and work environment;
- 7) health and safety – the aim is for the student to develop into a mentally, emotionally, socially and physically healthy member of society who is capable of following healthful lifestyles, acting in a safe manner and taking part in developing a health promoting environment;
- 8) values and morals – the aim is for the student to develop into a morally advanced person, who knows the generally recognized values and moral principles in society, follows the in school and outside school, who does not remain indifferent when they are flouted, and intervenes in accordance with his or her abilities when necessary.

The descriptions of cross-curricular topics are set forth in appendix 13.

§ 11. Fundamentals of organization of studies

(1) The student's minimum study load during upper secondary school shall be 96 courses (1 course is 35 academic hours).

(2) Schools shall ensure in their curricula that instruction in Estonian comprises at least 57 courses, or 60% of the minimum permitted course load for the upper secondary level, whereby Estonian literature, Estonian history, civics education, music and geography must be taught in Estonian.

(3) All of the compulsory courses specified in Section 9 shall be part of the student's study load, taking into account the possibility of choosing between narrow and broad mathematics, and exceptions in the case where, in accordance with the school curriculum, Estonian is studied as a second language.

(4) Upper secondary schools shall allow students to take optional courses by field with at least the following course load:

- 1) language and literature - 4 courses (1 course is 35 academic hours);
- 2) foreign language - 6 courses;
- 3) mathematics - upper secondary schools enable the study of extensive mathematics in the scope of 14 courses;
- 4) science - 8 courses;
- 5) social studies - 7 courses;
- 6) physical education – 2 courses;
- 7) religion studies - 2 courses;
- 8) national defence - 2 courses;
- 9) economic and business studies - 2 courses;
- 10) bases of inquiry - 1 course.

The subject field course loads described in Subsection 4 may include both the optional courses described in the national curriculum as well as the optional courses based on the school curriculum. In religion studies and national defence, studies take place pursuant to the syllabuses specified in the national curriculum.

Upper secondary schools shall enable, in addition to the optional courses specified in Subsection 4, optional courses totalling at least 11 courses which take into account the particularities of the school and regional character. The said optional courses may include both optional courses described in the national curriculum as well as the optional courses from the school curriculum. Studies of these optional courses must be organized if there are at least 12 students making a corresponding request.

Upper secondary schools shall enable studies in at least three fields of study. An upper secondary school may, within a field of study, establish as compulsory subjects for students up to 20 elective courses. Fields of study of upper secondary school shall vary from one another by at least eight optional courses. A field of study may include the optional courses dealt with in subsection 6 and must include optional courses from at least two of the following subject fields with the course load set forth in subsection 4:

- 1) language and literature;
- 2) foreign language;
- 3) mathematics;
- 4) natural science;
- 5) social studies.

At least one of the fields of study of upper secondary school shall include natural science subjects in the amount described in subsection 4. At least one of the fields of study of upper secondary school shall include social studies in the amount described in subsection 4.

The organization of learning and education shall be set forth in the school curriculum. An upper secondary school may plan the optional courses specified in subsections 4 and 6 and carry them out in cooperation with other schools and organizations, using, among other things, Estonian and international networks and information technology solutions.

For the purpose of using content and language integrated learning, administering vocational preliminary training or vocational education or taking into account regional or school particularities, the courses in the subject may be linked to one another (including compulsory courses and electives); with the consent of the school's board of trustees, the list of the compulsory subjects and cross-curricular topics specified by the national curriculum may be modified and the arrangement of teaching time may be changed. In both cases, the achievement of the learning outcomes set forth in the national curriculum must be ensured. The school curriculum shall describe the integration with the requirements of the national curriculum.

The curricula of the following schools may be prepared without taking into consideration the course load requirements for the optional courses and for fields of study as set forth in subsections 4 to 8: state schools, basic schools and upper secondary schools that operate as one institution with only distance learning taking place, and schools with whose owners the state has concluded agreements to create opportunities that enable students with specific special educational needs to acquire general secondary education.

With the exception of the schools set forth in subsection 11, an upper secondary school, where study takes place on the basis of the national curriculum set forth in this Regulation, or according to a curriculum developed on the basis of the curriculum of the International Baccalaureate Organization or the Convention Defining the Statute of the European Schools (hereinafter *international curriculum*), shall enable study in at least two fields of study.

§ 12. Notification and counselling of students

(1) The upper secondary school shall ensure for students the opportunity to receive information and advice regarding organization of studies.

(2) The upper secondary school shall organize notification of students regarding opportunities for further study and general trends on the labour market and shall ensure the availability of career services (career studies, information or counselling).

§ 13. Students with special educational needs

(1) The upper secondary school shall organize mentoring of talented students.

(2) Depending on the students' special educational needs, the upper secondary school may make changes or adjustments in the duration of study, learning content, educational process, learning environment or required learning outcomes. In the case of a student of limited legal capacity, the parent of the student shall be involved in the making of changes. If the changes or adjustments should entail a significant increase or decrease should take place in the weekly study load or intensity of study compared to the national or school curriculum, an individual curriculum must be prepared in order to implement the changes.

(3) If an individual curriculum compiled for a student with special educational needs foresees the reduction or replacement of the learning outcomes set forth in the national curriculum, or being excused from the study of a compulsory subject, an individual curriculum may be implemented on the basis of a recommendation of an advisory committee.

(4) An individual curriculum shall be compiled for a student being home-schooled for health reasons, and his or her course load may be reduced by up to eight courses for each academic year spent in home schooling.

§ 14. Exceptions applied for distance learning

(1) Distance learning is learning that targets adult students, where in comparison to diurnal learning, there is a higher proportion of independent learning in addition to the academic hours. As a result, in order to complete one course, less than 35 academic hours must be used for supervised study. The arrangement of teaching time shall be determined in the school curriculum or in the individual curriculum, without the need to consider the requirements for the arrangement of teaching time as set forth in sections 9 and 11, but it must enable the achievement of learning outcomes in at least the compulsory courses set forth in this Regulation, for a total of at least 72 courses.

(2) In distance learning, physical education shall not be one of the compulsory subjects.

Division 5

Assessment and Graduation from Upper Secondary School

§ 15. Assessment

(1) The purpose of assessment is the following:

- 1) to support the student's development;
- 2) to provide feedback regarding the student's progress;
- 3) to encourage and direct the student to study independently;
- 4) to direct the formation of the student's self-esteem, to guide and support the student in his or choice of future educational career;
- 5) to guide the teacher's activities in supporting the student's learning and individual development;
- 6) to lay a foundation for the decision regarding progression to the next class and graduation from school.

Assessment is a systematic gathering of information about the student's development, analysis of such information and providing of feedback. Assessment is a basis for further planning of studies. Assessment relies on various methods, assessment tools and ways. Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. Students have the right to receive information on the assessment system and on the grades and evaluations they have received. Students have the right to know what grade or evaluation is the basis for final grades in a course. The grading system and the procedure for notification of students and parents of grades and evaluations shall be set forth in the school's rules of procedure, and the procedure for challenging grades and evaluations shall be set forth in the curriculum of the school.

Requirements for student behaviour shall be set forth in the upper secondary school's rules of procedure.

§ 16. Formative assessment

(1) Formative assessment means assessment taking place during studies, in the course of which the student's knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviour are analyzed, feedback is provided on the student's previous results and shortcomings, the student is encouraged and guided in further studies and the future objectives and routes of studying are planned. Formative assessment focuses above all on comparing the student's development with his or her previous accomplishments. Feedback shall describe, at the right time and as precisely as possible, the student's strengths and shortcomings and shall include proposals for further activities that support the student's development.

(2) In the course of a lesson, the student shall receive mainly oral or written verbal feedback regarding knowledge and skills pertaining to the subject and the subject field (including general competences, the learning and educational objectives of the stage of study, and cross-curricular topics), as well as on behaviour, attitudes and values. The teachers shall give the student feedback throughout the school day, in order to support the formation of the student's behaviour, attitudes and values. The school shall respond to cases in conflict with generally recognized values and good practice.

(3) The student shall be involved in the process of assessing himself or herself, and his or her companions, in order to develop his or her skill to set his or her own objectives, to analyze his or her learning and behaviour according to the objectives, and to increase motivation for learning.

(4) One instrument used for formative assessment is the portfolio. The portfolio, as diary of learning, contains both student work as well as analysis and feedback on the work. The portfolio may be compiled in a subject- or field-based manner, regarding cross-curricular topics or general competences.

§ 17. Assessment of knowledge and skills as the basis for summarizing grades

(1) The student's knowledge and skills shall be compared with the expected learning outcomes listed in the curriculum that is the basis for the student's studies. The subject-related knowledge and skills may be evaluated in the course of the studies as well as at the end of the study topic. The results of assessment of subject-related knowledge and skills may be expressed either as numerical grades on a five-point scale or as numerical grades corresponding to the school's internal grading system.

(2) Grading using the 5-point scale:

1) The grade 5 or “very good” is used in evaluating the achievements in learning outcomes during the observed period or observed topic, if the achieved learning outcomes are fully in accordance with, and exceed, the required learning outcomes that are the basis for the student’s study;

2) The grade 4 or “good” is used in evaluating the achievements in learning outcomes during the observed period or observed topic, if the achieved learning outcomes are generally in accordance with the required learning outcomes that are the basis for the student’s study;

3) The grade 3 or “satisfactory” is used in evaluating the achievements in learning outcomes during the observed period or observed topic, if the achieved learning outcomes are generally in accordance with the required learning outcomes that are the basis for the student’s study, but there exist deficiencies and errors;

4) The grade 2 or “poor” is used in evaluating the achievements in learning outcomes during the observed period or observed topic, if there are substantial deficiencies in the achieved learning outcomes;

5) The grade 1 or “weak” is used in evaluating the achievements in learning outcomes during the observed period or observed topic, if there are substantial deficiencies in the achieved learning outcomes and there has been no development.

(3) In preparing and assessing the written work that will be assessed using the 5-point scale, the principle shall be followed that if the 5-point scale is used and the teacher has not stated otherwise, the work shall be compiled such that the student who has achieved 90-100% of the maximum number of possible points shall be assessed as grade 5, with grade 4 – 75-89%, grade 3 – 50-74%, grade 2 – 20-49%, and grade 1 – 0-19%.

(4) If the use of unauthorized assistance or copying is discovered in the evaluation process, the relevant written or practical assignment, oral answer (presentation), practical activity or outcome thereof may be graded as “weak” if so specified in the school curriculum.

(5) If a written or practical assignment, oral answer (presentation), practical activity or outcome thereof is graded with the grade “poor” or “weak” or the grade was not given, the student shall be given the opportunity for redoing the answer or the assignment. The procedure for redoing assignments or parts thereof shall be set forth in the school curriculum.

§ 18. Summarizing grades and graduation from upper secondary school

(1) The student’s learning outcomes in subjects shall in general be assessed in summarized fashion with course grades expressed on a five-point scale and on the basis of the course grades with grades for the stage of study, expressed on a five-point scale. In lieu of the five-point scale, the school may use a different grading system. The grading system used and the principles for converting the grades to the five-point scale shall be set forth in the school curriculum. Upon the student’s departure from the school, the summarized grades of that academic year, and the grades received during the quarter or course in progress shall be converted to a five-point scale. The school may, in assessment of elective courses, use the grades “pass” and “fail” and these assessments shall not be converted to the five-point scale.

(2) Also construed as summarized assessment is the certification of knowledge and skills in the case where the school, in accordance with subsection 17 (4) of the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act, considers study or activity that is external to the school curriculum as part of that which is taught in the school.

(3) The upper secondary school graduation certificate shall be given to students:

1) whose grades for the stage of study are at least satisfactory, or in the case of elective courses, are satisfactory or pass grades;

2) who scored at least a satisfactory result in the state examinations in the Estonian language or, according to the conditions set forth in subsection 4, in Estonian as a second language, in mathematics or foreign language (English, French, Russian or German), corresponding to the required study load in the subject;

3) who scored at least a satisfactory result in the school examination of an upper secondary school that covers a subject field or subject fields, as well as the social and natural science fields, that arise from the field of study set forth in the school curriculum;

4) who have conducted, during upper secondary school, a work of research or practical assignment, with the exception in the case of graduation from the school as an external student.

Students who have graduated from basic school in a school or class with Russian or another language of instruction, and who have been studying in an upper secondary school or upper secondary class where the language of instruction is Estonian, as well as students who are from an upper secondary school or upper secondary class with Russian or another language of instruction, and who have been studying in an upper secondary school or upper secondary class where the language of instruction is Estonian, may choose to take either the Estonian, or Estonian as a second language, state examination.

An external student shall be considered to have graduated from upper secondary school if he or she has passed the examinations set forth in subsection 3 and has passed the subject examinations in courses in which he or she lacks course grades or in which he or she has not proved his or her knowledge and skills through assessment of previous learning and work experience. An external student shall not be assessed in physical education. Schools where distance learning is implemented shall be obliged to create conditions for a person to graduate from the school as an external student who has submitted a relevant written application to the school by 1 November

of the academic year in progress. In graduating from the school as an external student, the school shall have enabled the graduate to receive study activity supervised by the school, comprising at least 15 academic hours (45 minutes). For the remainder, learning shall take place independently.

For students with special educational needs where, subject to conditions set forth in this Regulation, the learning outcomes set forth in this Regulation have been reduced or replaced by the school curriculum, or by an individual curriculum on recommendation by an advisory committee, the basis for graduation shall be the achievement of learning outcomes required in the school or individual curriculum.

Division 6

School Curriculum

§ 19. Fundamentals and structure of preparation of school curriculum

(1) The upper secondary school shall prepare the school curriculum on the basis of the national curriculum. The school curriculum is the basic document of learning and educational activities at upper secondary schools.

(2) Preparation of the school curriculum shall proceed from the national curriculum and the school development plan, taking into consideration regional needs, the needs of school staff, parents and students and mental and material resources.

(3) The head of the upper secondary school is responsible for the democratic organization of preparing and developing the school curriculum. The school curriculum is established by the head. Amendments to the school curriculum shall be submitted before establishment for an opinion to the school's board of trustees, student representative board and teachers' council.

(4) The school curriculum shall consist of a general part and course syllabuses arranged according to subject fields.

(5) The general part of the school curriculum shall set forth the following:

- 1) learning and educational objectives and principles;
- 2) descriptions of fields of study and an arrangement of teaching time along with lists of elective courses and selection principles, use of various languages of instruction by each course;
- 3) cross-curricular topics and principles for treating them, principles of integration;
- 4) principles for planning school-wide and interschool projects;
- 5) organization of learning and education
- 6) organization of assessment;
- 7) organization of graduation from upper secondary school;
- 8) student counselling;
- 9) organization of career services;
- 10) principles for compiling the teacher's work plan;
- 11) procedures for updating and supplementing the school curriculum.

Chapter 3

Implementing Provisions

§ 20. Bringing learning and educational activity and the learning environment into conformity

(1) Schools shall bring learning and educational activity and the school curriculum into conformity with this Regulation by 1 September 2013.

(2) The learning environment shall be brought into conformity with the requirement set out for the physical environment in this Regulation by 1 September 2013.

(3) Until it is brought into conformity with this Regulation, the school's learning and educational activities and curriculum must conform to the Government of the Republic Regulation no. 56 of 25 January 2002, "National curriculum for basic schools and upper secondary schools" (RT I 2002, 20, 116; 2007, 61, 392 RT I 2002, 20, 116; 2007, 61, 392).

(4) Schools that implement study in the form of distance learning in the 2010/2011 academic year are obliged to create conditions to graduate from the school as an external student for a person who has submitted the relevant written application to the school by 20 January of the academic year in progress.

§ 21. Estonian-language studies at the upper secondary school stage in municipal and state schools

At the time this Regulation enters into force, Subsection 11 (2) shall be implemented in schools, where the language of instruction is other than Estonian, regarding students who have begun their upper secondary school studies in the 2011/2012 academic year or later, and study throughout all upper secondary schools shall be brought into accordance with Subsection 11 (2) by 1 September 2013.

§ 22. Conditions for graduation from upper secondary school in force until 31 August 2013

(1) Subsections 18 (3) and 18 (4) shall be implemented effective 1 September 2013. Up to 31 August 2013 the conditions set forth in this Section shall be applied with regard to final examinations.

(2) To graduate from upper secondary school, at least five upper secondary school final examinations must be taken, of which at least three must be state examinations. In any one given subject, either a state examination or school examination may be taken.

(3) The state examination on Estonian shall be required for all students, with the exception of the case set forth in Subsection 4.

(4) Students who have graduated from basic school in a school or class with Russian or another language of instruction and who have begun studying in an upper secondary school or upper secondary school class where the language of instruction is Estonian, or students who are from an upper secondary school or language of instruction with Russian or other language of instruction and have started studying at a upper secondary school or upper secondary school class where the language of instruction is Estonian, may take, instead of the state examination on Estonian, the state examination on Estonian as a second language. A student who has been issued, according to the Language Act, a high-level Estonian language skill, or C1-level, certificate and who submits the applicable certificate to the school by 20 January of the academic year in progress, shall not be required to take the state examination on Estonian as a second language.

Students whose language of instruction is sign language may choose, for their compulsory examination, the state examination in Estonian or in Estonian as a second language.

Students have the right to take all final examinations as state examinations. Students may choose state examinations from among the following subjects in the school curriculum: Russian (in a school or class where Estonian is taught as a second language, and where part of the study takes place in Russian), English, German, French, Russian (as a foreign language), biology, chemistry, mathematics, physics, geography, history, and civics.

One foreign language examination (the Estonian examination shall not be considered a foreign language) may be among the three required state examinations. A student also has the right to take the state exam for English, German, French or Russian (as a foreign language) if he or she has not studied that language in school.

In place of the German language state examination, it is also possible, on the basis of a bilateral agreement, to sit for the Level II language diploma examination of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany, or the German general higher education Matura German language examination.

The German language examination taken, on the basis of a bilateral agreement, in order to obtain the German Level II language diploma, and the German and mathematics examinations taken for the German general higher education Matura diploma, shall be recognized as state examinations.

School examinations may be taken in all compulsory subjects and, additionally, in those optional courses that have been studied at the upper secondary school stage for at least 105 academic hours.

One of the school examinations may be taken by the upper secondary school graduate as a practical assignment or research work in chosen subject.

The upper secondary school graduating certificate shall be given by the school by decision of the teachers' council:

- 1) to upper secondary school students whose grades for the stage of study in the subjects in the school curriculum compiled on the basis of the national curriculum for upper secondary schools are at least satisfactory and who have passed all of their compulsory and selected final examinations at least satisfactorily;
- 2) to external students whose grades in subject examinations are at least satisfactory and who have passed all of their compulsory and selected final examinations at least satisfactorily;
- 3) to persons whose grades in subjects at their school stage are at least satisfactory but who in previous academic years did not receive an upper secondary school graduation certificate because they did not take the state examination or because they scored unsatisfactorily on the state examination, and who, in subsequent academic years, took all of the state examinations, except for special cases set forth in Subsections 10 and 11, and scored at least 20 points.

Upper secondary school students who have a specific spelling problem (dysgraphia) and who scored unsatisfactorily on the state examination in Estonian or Estonian as a second language shall be able to choose, instead of that state examination, a new state examination in another state examination subject.

An upper secondary school student who scored unsatisfactorily on the state examination in one subject may choose, instead of that state examination, a new state examination in another state examination subject.

§ 23. Repeal of regulation

Regulation No. 13 of the Government of the Republic of 28 January 2010, "National curriculum for upper secondary schools" (RT I 28.12.2010, 18) is hereby repealed.

Andrus Ansip
Prime Minister

Hanno Pevkur
Minister of Social Affairs, Acting Minister of Education and Research

Heiki Loot
Secretary of State

[Annex 1](#)

[Annex 2](#)

[Annex 3](#)

[Annex 4](#)

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