



## EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA FOR 2016/2017 SCHOOL YEAR

The main results from the National Statistical Institute (NSI) annual comprehensive studies characterizing the activity of educational institutions are as follows:

- In the 2016/2017 academic year in kindergartens are enrolled 224.4 thousand children or with 3.3% less in comparison with the previous year.
- In 2016, high school graduates in general and vocational schools are respectively 24.4 and 20.6 thousand students.
- Enrolled in the varying degrees of higher education in 2016/2017 academic year are 249.9 thousand.
- As of 31.12.2016 for acquiring educational and scientific degree 'Doctor' in the country are trained 6 738, of which 503 foreign citizens.

### Pre-primary education

As of 1.12.2016 in the country functioned 1 894 independent kindergartens with director or with 108 less in comparison with the previous year. In there were enrolled 224.4 thousand children, of which 116.2 thousand or 51.8% were boys. In comparison with the previous year the number of children decreased by 3.3%.

The coverage of children in this educational level estimated by the group net enrolment rate<sup>1</sup> for the school 2016/2017 year was 79.4% or with 1.6 percent point less in comparison with the school 2015/2016 year.

The average number of children in a kindergarten in the country was 118 as in the urban areas was significantly larger (157) than in the rural areas (59). A group was formed by average 23 children, respectively - 25 in urban and 19 in rural areas.

The teaching personnel employed in kindergartens were 19.9 thousand as in comparison with the previous school year decreased by 511 persons or by 2.5%. Kindergarten teachers were 18.7 thousand, or 94.5% of all personnel in kindergartens.

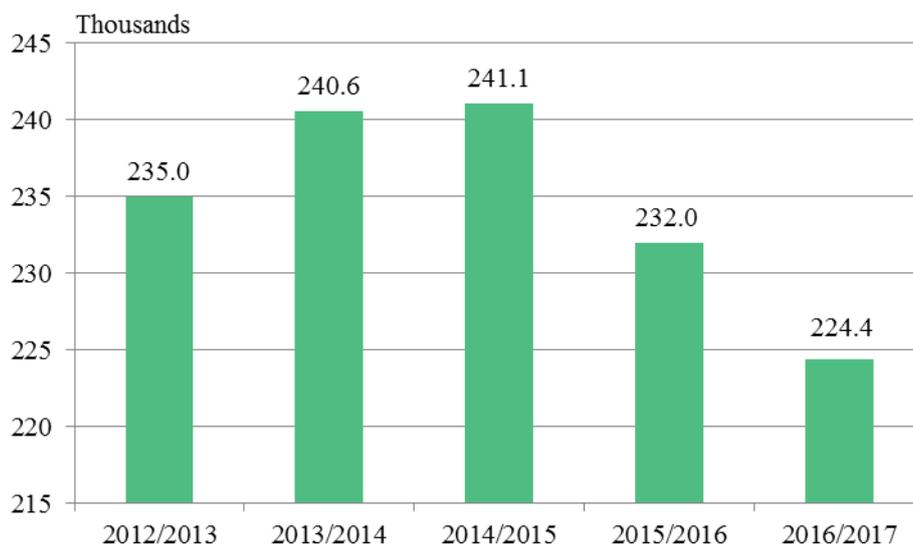
In 2016/2017 school year in the country had functioned 93 licensed private kindergartens, with 1 more than the previous year. There were enrolled 3 838 children or 1.7% of all children in kindergartens.

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<sup>1</sup> The group net enrollment rate of children in kindergartens is calculated as a percentage of the number of children in kindergartens in the age group 3 - 6 years to number of population in the same age group.



**Figure 1. Children in kindergartens**



### General education

As of 1.10.2016 there were classes in 1 990 general education schools<sup>1</sup>. Out of these 145 were primary schools, 1 291 - basic schools, 4 - lower secondary schools, 128 upper secondary and 422 - secondary general schools. In comparison with the previous school year, because of closure or modification, the total number of general education schools decreased by 24. The students were 605.7 thousand, of which 100.5 thousand were enrolled in schools in the rural areas. In comparison with the previous school year the students in this educational programme increased by 3.5 thousand or by 0.6%. There were 22 pupils on average for one class in the daily general education schools.

During the past 2015/2016 school year for different reasons 16.4 thousand students left the general education schools, of which 14.3 thousand were in basic education. The largest relative share was the share of the students who left because had gone abroad - 7.4 thousand or 45.0% of the total number of leaving students, followed by those who left because of family reasons - 5.8 thousand or 35.6% and those who left because of unwillingness to study - 10.5%.

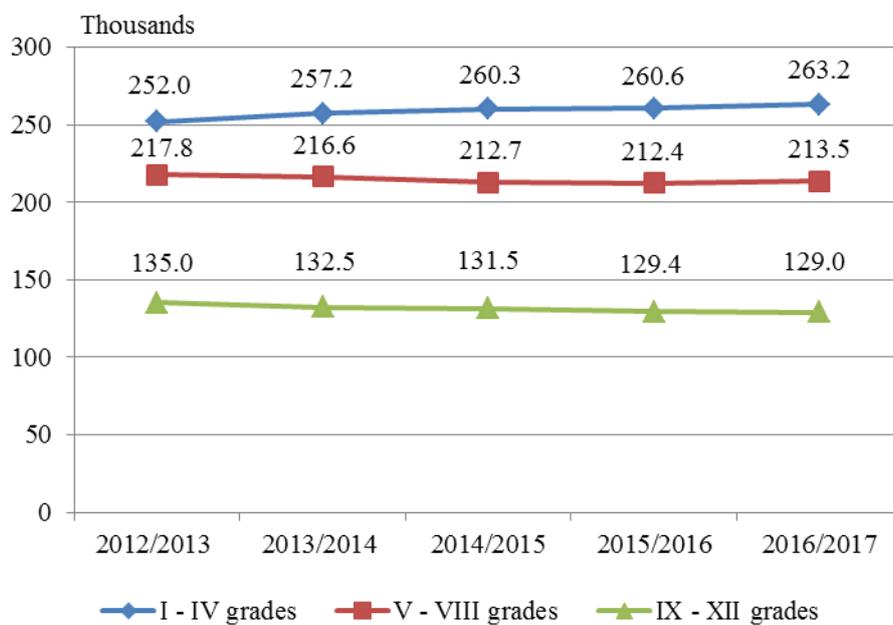
In 2016, 47.8 thousand students graduated from basic education and 24.4 thousand persons graduated secondary education in the general education schools.

The relative share of children in general education schools who studied foreign languages in the primary grades (I - IV) was 83.1%, as the largest share was from those who studied English - 91.3%.

<sup>1</sup> Incl. the Bulgarian schools abroad, financed by state.



**Figure 2. Enrolments in general education schools by group of grades**



The total number of the teaching staff (incl. directors and deputy directors with teaching activity) employed in general education schools during the 2016/2017 school year was 47.9 thousand or with 2.6 thousand more than in the previous school year. Of which with high education (education-qualification degree of 'Bachelor' or 'Master') were 93.6%, 5.8% were with education-qualification degree - 'Professional Bachelor' or the equivalent degree in past and 0.6% were with secondary education. In the teaching profession women were predominant who constitute 85.0% of the total number of teachers.

As of 1.10.2016 there were 75 active private general education schools in the country. Out of these there were 8 primary schools, 31 basic, 22 secondary schools and 14 secondary general schools. In there were total 8 493 students or 1.4% from the total number of students in general education.

In 2016/2017 school year in schools and classes for students with special educational needs were enrolled 3.2 thousand pupils or 5.4% less in compassion with the previous school year. 738 specialist teachers and 267 educators were taking care of their education and upbringing.

### **Vocational education and training (VET)**

Vocational education and training during the school year 2016/2017 was carried out in 22 art schools, 24 sport schools, 373 vocational gymnasiums and 35 vocational colleges with enrolment after secondary education. The total number of students in there was 131.4 thousand and in comparison with the previous year decreased by 4.1 thousand or by 3.1%.

Boys were predominant in vocational education and training and were 60.0% of the total number of students in this educational level.



The highest relative share in programmes for attainment of a third level professional qualification was for students who studied specialties in the field<sup>1</sup> of 'Engineering and engineering trades' - 28.5%, followed by share of those in the 'Personal services' - 17.7%.

In the programmes for attainment of a second level professional qualification leading fields of education was the 'Engineering and engineering trades' (25.4%) and 'Personal services' (24.2%).

During the present school year the total number of teachers working in VET schools was 11.5 thousand, of which 94.8% were high educated with education-qualification degree 'Bachelor' or 'Master'.

In the past 2016, 20.6 thousand persons graduated with attainment of diploma for secondary education in art schools, sport schools, vocational gymnasiums and vocational schools. Level of professional qualification was acquired by the following number of student in the respective programmes:

- 1 011 students acquired first level of professional qualification in vocational schools and classes with enrolment after VI, VII and VIII grade;
- Second and third level of professional qualification in 2016 were acquired respectively by 2.9 and 13.1 thousand;
- 711 students acquired fourth level of professional qualification in colleges with enrolment after secondary education.

During the 2016/2017 school year 1 265 students were enrolled in 46 private VET schools, which was 1.0% of the total number of students in the vocational education.

In programmes for vocational training against payment in Vocational Training Centres, vocational gymnasiums and vocational colleges the number of enrolments aged 16 or more years was 11.0 thousand. According to the level of professional qualification, their distribution was the following: first level - 5.9 thousand, second level - 2.8 thousand, third level - 2.3 thousand and forth - 36 persons.

## **Tertiary education**

The total number of the students in Bulgaria enrolled in the four educational-qualification degrees ('Professional bachelor', 'Bachelor', 'Master' and 'Doctor') in the academic year 2016/2017 was 249.9 thousand, which is 16.8 thousand, or 6.3% less compared to the previous academic year.

### ***Colleges ('Professional bachelor' educational-qualification degree)***

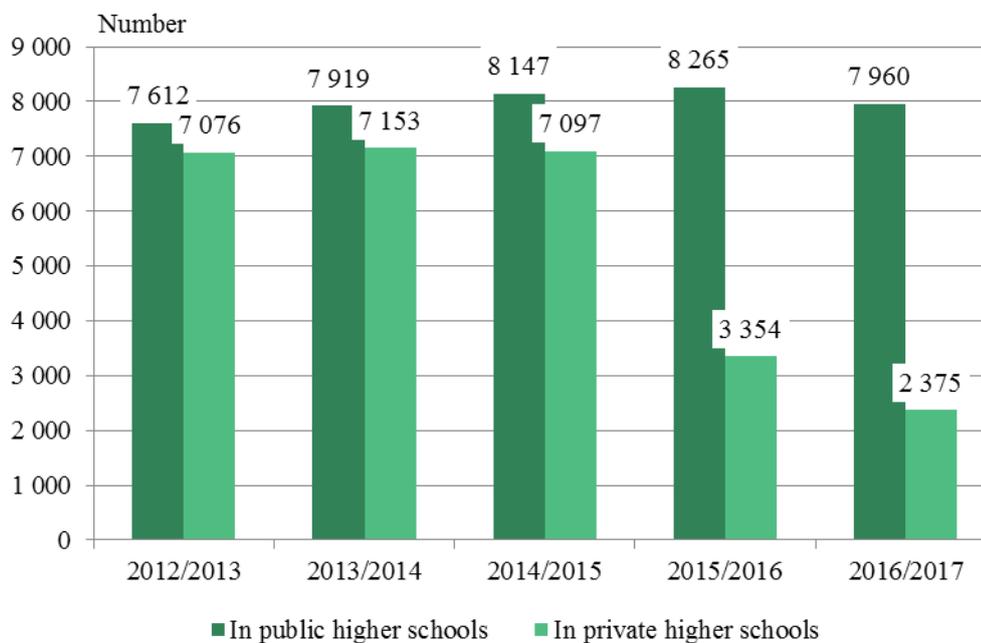
During the 2016/2017 academic year, for acquiring of the degree 'Professional bachelor', in colleges were enrolled 10 335 students totally. In comparison with the previous year their number decreased with 1 284 or with 11.1%. From the total number of the students in colleges, 2 375 or 23.0% were enrolled in private colleges.

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<sup>1</sup> Field of education - narrow field according to the Classification of the fields of education and training 2008.



**Figure 3. Students in colleges<sup>1</sup>**



In the structure of the students by fields of education, the highest relative share was found in the field of Health - 26.3%, followed by Personal services - 21.1%, Engineering and Engineering Trades - 20.3% and Business and Administration - 18.6%.

In 2016 the degree 'Professional bachelor' was acquired by 2 418 students. Among graduated students the highest number was found in the field of Health - 674 persons, or 27.9% of the total, followed by the field of Business and Administration - 540 persons, or 22.3%, Personal Services - 466 persons, or 19.3%, and Engineering and Engineering Trades - 430 persons or 17.8%.

The number of the teaching staff in colleges was 768 persons, of whom 393 or 51.2% were on a full time employment.

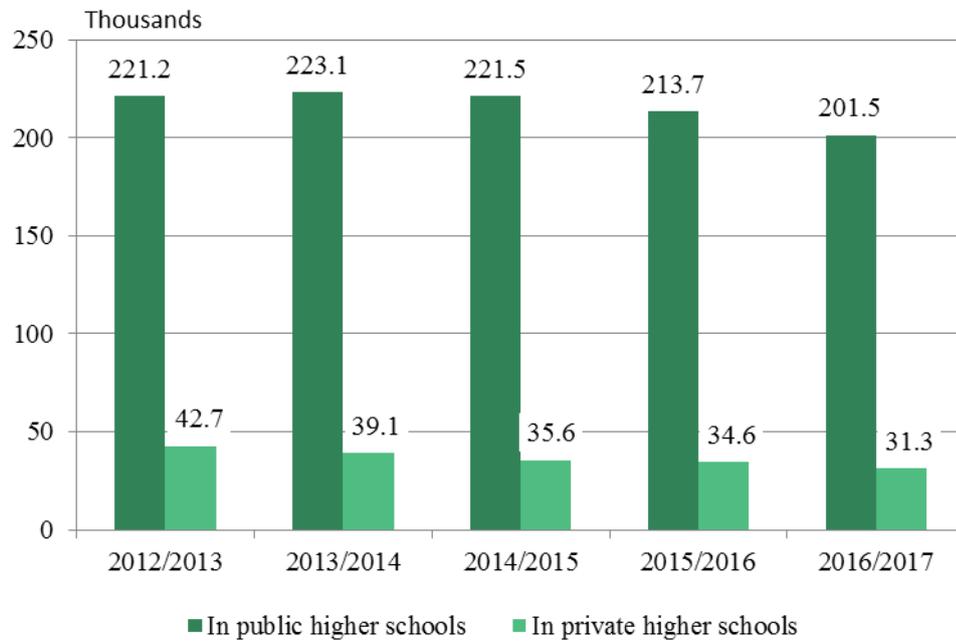
#### ***Universities and equivalent higher schools ('Bachelor' and 'Master' educational-qualification degrees)***

During the 2016/2017 academic year the number of students, in the two educational-qualification degrees 'Bachelor' and 'Master', in universities and specialized higher schools was 232.9 thousand. Of them in private higher schools were enrolled 31.3 thousand students or 13.5% of the total number. The number of enrolled students in private higher schools declined with 3.3 thousand or 9.5% in comparison with the previous academic year.

<sup>1</sup> In 2015/2016 school year the number of students studying in colleges decreased significantly due to the conversion of three independent private colleges in specialized higher schools and the transition of part of the students from educational-qualification degree 'Professional Bachelor' to educational-qualification degree 'Bachelor'.



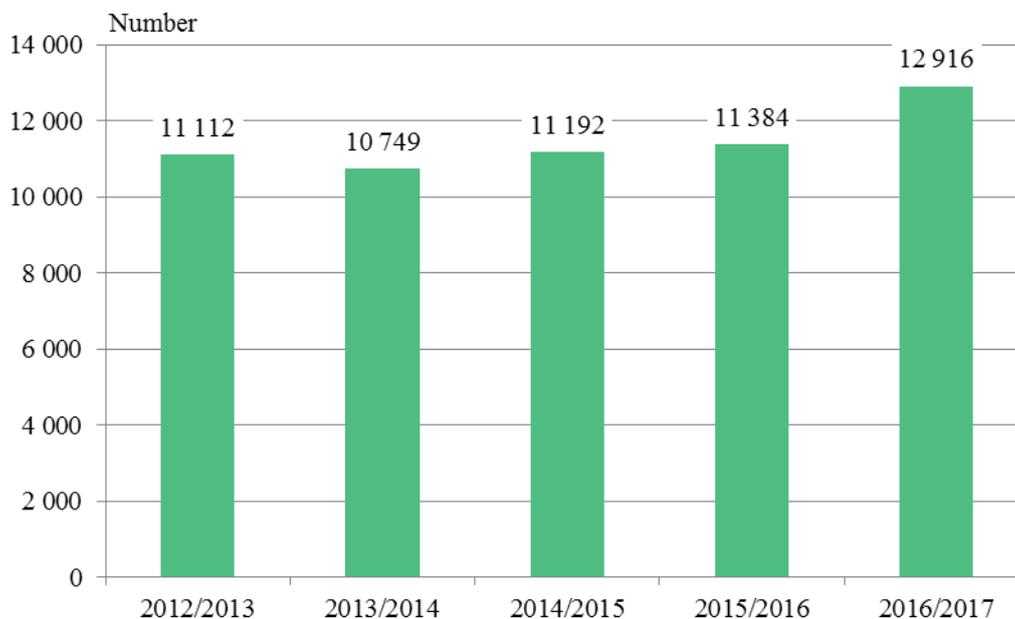
**Figure 4. Students in universities and specialized higher schools**



In the 2016/2017, students - Bulgarian citizens in universities and specialized higher schools were 219.9 thousand or 94.5%. Their number had decreased by 17.0 thousand in comparison with the previous academic year or by 7.2%. The number of the foreign students in the country was 12 916 persons, which is 13.5% more in comparison with 2015/2016 academic year.



**Figure 5. Foreign students in universities and specialized higher schools**



The largest share of foreign students came from Greece - 26.9%, followed by Turkey - 14.3%, United Kingdom - 11.9% and Germany - 8.1% of the total number of foreign students.

The number of mobile students<sup>1</sup> enrolled in universities and specialized higher schools had increased from 11 147 persons in 2012/2013 to 13 042 persons in the current 2016/2017, or by 17.0%.

In 2016/2017 the number of the academic staff in universities and specialized higher schools was 21.5 thousand, of whom 13.5 thousand or 62.8% were on a full time employment.

#### *'Bachelor' educational-qualification degree*

During the 2016/2017 academic year the number of students enrolled in the educational-qualification degree 'Bachelor' was 155.2 thousand, of whom 52.0% were women. From the total, 14.4% were enrolled in private higher schools.

The structure of students by narrow fields of education showed that the highest proportion of students were studying in the field of Business and Administration (22.2%), followed by the field of Engineering and Engineering Trades (15.1%) and Social and behavioural science (11.6%). The lowest shares were registered in the fields Life sciences (0.8%) and Mathematics and Statistics (0.3%).

In the academic year 2016/2017, the number of newly enrolled students for acquiring the educational-qualification degree 'Bachelor' was 38.5 thousand. Out of them 19.5 thousand, or 50.5%, were women.

<sup>1</sup> According to the Eurostat methodology the student mobility is measured by 'country of prior education' which means that mobile student is a student who has graduated secondary education abroad.



In the past 2016, in the country 30.9 thousand students graduated with the degree 'Bachelor', of which 18.4 thousand or 59.5% were women.

The relative shares of graduated students were highest in the fields: Business and Administration (29.9%), Social and Behavioural Sciences (15.7%) and Engineering and Engineering Trades (11.6%).

18.0% of all graduates in the degree 'Bachelor' had graduated in private universities.

#### *'Master' educational-qualification degree*

During the 2016/2017 academic year the number of students in the educational-qualification degree 'Master' in universities and equivalent higher schools was 77.6 thousand of whom 57.6% were women. Bulgarian citizens represented 88.6% of all enrolments and 9.0 thousand or 11.6% of students enrolled in this educational-qualification degree were in private higher schools.

The structure of students by narrow fields of education showed that the highest proportion of students were studying in the field of Health (23.8%), followed by the field of Business and Administration (18.6%) and Law (12.8%). The lowest shares were registered in the fields of Journalism, mass communication and information (0.4%), Life sciences (0.3%) and Mathematics and Statistics (0.1%).

In the academic year 2016/2017, the number of newly enrolled students for acquiring the educational-qualification degree 'Master' after completed secondary education was 6.5 thousand. Out of them just over two-thirds (69.2%) were Bulgarian citizens.

New entrants in master programmes after graduations of educational-qualification degree 'Bachelor' were 20.7 thousand of which 4.0%, were enrolled after graduation of level 'Professional Bachelor'.

In 2016, in the country 25.6 thousand students graduated with the degree 'Master', of which almost two-thirds (64.2%) were women.

The relative shares of graduated students were highest in the fields: Business and Administration (32.1%), Social and Behavioural Sciences (11.0%) and Teacher training and education science (10.2%). The lowest relative shares were found in the fields: Environmental protection (0.7%), Journalism, mass communication and information (0.6%), Veterinary (0.3%) and Mathematics and statistics (0.1%) of the total number of graduates in Master degree.

13.2% of all graduates in the degree 'Master' had graduated in private universities.



### *Educational and scientific degree 'Doctor'*

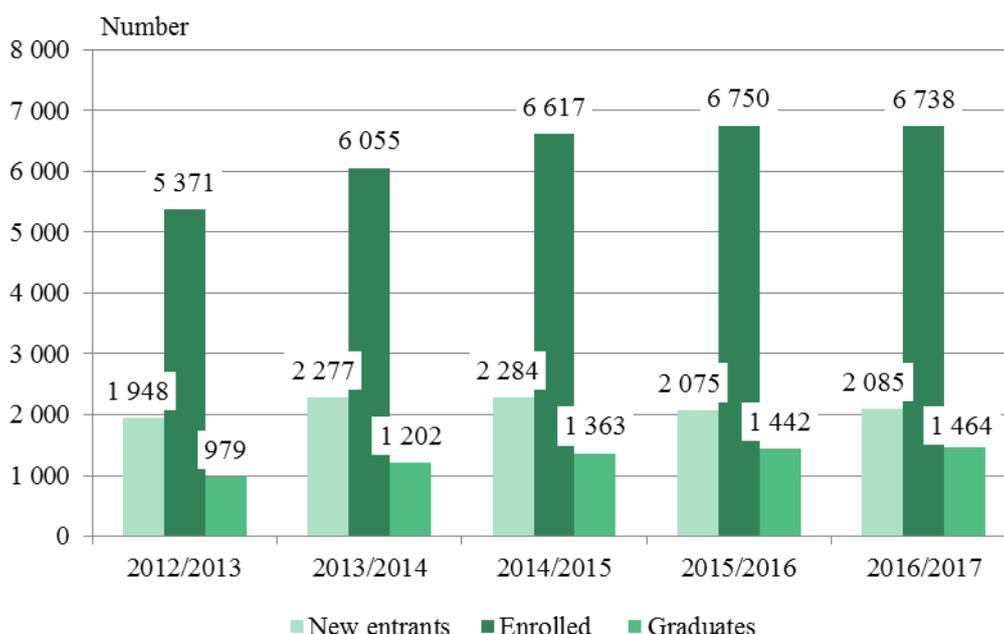
As of 31.12.2016, 6 738 Ph.D. students were enrolled in Bulgaria, of which 51.9% were women.

In 2016 in private institutions were trained 3.9% of the Ph.D students.

Out of the total number of the Ph.D. students trained in Bulgaria, the foreign citizens were 503 persons which is 4.4% more in comparison with the previous year. The largest share of foreign students came from Greece - 26.0%, followed by those from Turkey (18.5%), Kazakhstan (9.5%) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (5.6%).

Number of newly enrolled Ph.D. students in 2016 was 2 085, of which 1 094 or 52.5% were women.

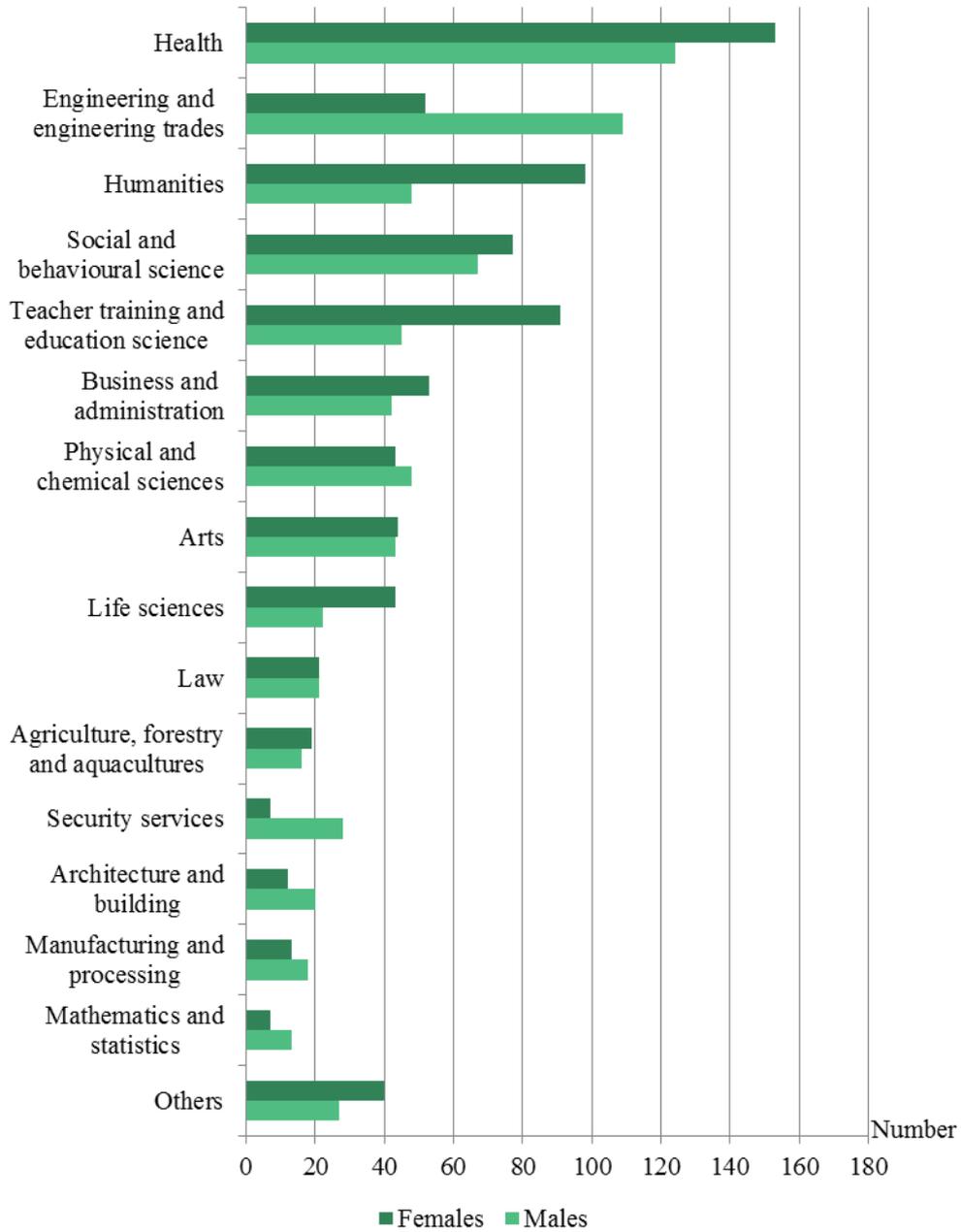
**Figure 6. New entrants and enrolled in Ph.D. degree**



In 2016, a 'Doctor' degree was acquired by 1 464 persons of whom 773, or 52.8%, were women. A considerable difference in the structure of the graduated males and females by fields of education is observed.



**Figure 7. Ph.D. students by narrow fields of education and sex in 2016/2017 academic year**





## Methodological notes

Education statistics is developed on the basis of the Regulation N 452/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the production and development of statistics on education and lifelong learning, the current legal basis in Bulgaria in the area of education, the International Standard Classification of Education - revision 2011 (ISCED 2011) and the concomitant methodological instructions.

ISCED is designed to serve as a framework to classify educational activities as defined in programmes and the resulting qualifications into internationally agreed categories. The basic concepts and definitions of ISCED are intended to be internationally valid and comprehensive of the full range of education systems. The classification rests on three components: internationally agreed concepts and definitions; the classification systems and mappings of education programmes and related qualifications in countries worldwide. ISCED 2011 was adopted at the 36st session of the General Conference of UNESCO and the current year was defined as the first year for obligatory dissemination of statistical data distributed by the revised classification.

The National Statistical Institute conducts yearly exhaustive surveys that characterize the activity of the educational institutions.

Educational institutions - directly conduct teaching via educational programmes to the enrollments in organized classes (groups) or via distance mode of learning. Those programmes lead to attainment of the educational degree and/or level of professional qualification.

Non-formal training and informal learning are not covered by the scope of the educational system according to the used definitions in ISCED 2011.

NSI with its surveys is aiming to determine the number of students in the educational system as of a given date of observation. This is the basis for calculating the internationally accepted indicator 'Participation Rate of the Population in the Educational System', which represents the relative share of students enrolled from a certain age group in relation to the number of the constant population of the country in the same age group.

For more information and data on education, visit NSI's webpage (<http://www.nsi.bg/en>), section 'Education and Lifelong Learning' and IS 'Infostat' ([https://infostat.nsi.bg/infostat/pages/module.jsf?x\\_2=42](https://infostat.nsi.bg/infostat/pages/module.jsf?x_2=42)).



## Annex

**Table 1**

### Educational institutions by type

(Number)

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
<b>Total</b>	<b>5067</b>	<b>5060</b>	<b>4975</b>	<b>4964</b>	<b>4778</b>
Kindergartens	2070	2051	1991	2002	1894
General and special schools	2112	2097	2087	2078	2051
Primary (I - IV grade)	153	150	150	152	146
Basic (I - VIII grade)	1402	1393	1386	1381	1345
Lower secondary (V - VIII grade)	11	8	7	7	4
Upper secondary (IX - XIII grade)	140	140	137	133	128
Secondary general (I - XIII grade )	406	406	407	405	428
Vocational schools	494	488	481	469	454
Art schools	22	23	23	22	22
Sport schools	19	24	24	24	24
Vocational gymnasiums	416	402	394	387	373
Vocational colleges	37	39	40	36	35
Vocational Training Centres <sup>1</sup>	338	371	362	361	325
Higher schools <sup>2</sup>	53	53	54	54	54
Independent colleges	8	8	8	4	4
Universities and equivalent higher schools	45	45	46	50	50
Colleges, at the universities	20	19	19	18	18

<sup>1</sup> Centres conducting programmes for attaining of professional qualification.

<sup>2</sup> Includes universities and equivalent higher schools and independent colleges.



**Table 2**

**Pupils and students by level of International Standard Classification of Education  
(ISCED 2011)**

	(Number)				
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
<b>Total</b>	<b>1294682</b>	<b>1303836</b>	<b>1284910</b>	<b>1249109</b>	<b>1225703</b>
Pre-primary education (ISCED - 0)	235015	240622	241123	232025	224380
Primary education (I - IV grade, ISCED - 1)	253675	258840	261793	261969	264503
Lower secondary education (V - VIII grade, ISCED - 2)	221839	220934	217155	216451	217553
Vocational training for adults - first level professional qualification (ISCED - 2) <sup>1</sup>	13637	11176	6509	4593	5851
Vocational training - first level professional qualification, after VIII grade (ISCED - 3)	1011	831	988	992	1036
Upper secondary education (IX - XIII grade, ISCED - 3)	272487	268395	267540	260515	256009
Vocational training for adults - second level professional qualification (ISCED - 3) <sup>1</sup>	4272	7300	3789	2109	2834
Vocational training for adults - third level professional qualification (ISCED - 3) <sup>1</sup>	6323	10278	5417	2427	2303
Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED - 4)	2381	2001	1618	1308	1261
Vocational training for adults - fourth level professional qualification (ISCED - 4) <sup>1</sup>	83	165	25	13	36
Tertiary education (ISCED - 6, 7, 8)	283959	283294	278953	266707	249937
Education in colleges - Professional bachelor degree (ISCED - 6)	14688	15072	15244	<sup>2</sup> 11619	10335
Education in universities and equivalent higher schools - Bachelor degree (ISCED - 6)	180949	176344	171458	166746	155237
Education in universities and equivalent higher schools - Master degree (ISCED - 7)	82951	85823	85634	81592	77627
Educational and scientific degree 'Doctor' (ISCED - 8)	5371	6055	6617	6750	6738

<sup>1</sup> Incl. students in vocational gymnasiums and colleges.

<sup>2</sup> The number of students decreased significantly due to the conversion of independent colleges in specialized higher schools and the transition of part of the students in educational-qualification degree 'Bachelor'.



**Table 3**

**Teaching staff by level of International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011)**

	(Number)				
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<b>Total</b>	<b>102925</b>	<b>102488</b>	<b>101828</b>	<b>102799</b>	<b>101294</b>
Pre-primary education (ISCED - 0)	19729	20015	20269	20542	20420
Primary education (I - IV grade, ISCED - 1)	14666	14565	14767	14940	15050
Lower secondary education (V - VIII grade, ISCED - 2)	19504	19315	19277	19179	19125
Upper secondary education (IX - XIII grade, ISCED - 3)	25539	24684	24121	23968	23735
Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED - 4)	532	453	382	427	260
Tertiary education (ISCED - 6, 7)	22955	23456	23012	23743	22604
Education in colleges (ISCED - 6)	1079	1091	1070	1018	725
Education in universities and equivalent higher schools (ISCED - 6, 7)	21876	22365	21942	22725	21879