



DEF Département de l'enseignement  
et de la formation professionnelle  
DGEO Direction générale de l'enseignement  
obligatoire et de la pédagogie spécialisée

# Description of Cycle 3

## Information for parents

### Secondary school

Years 9S and 10S

Compulsory schooling lasts for 11 years. It aims to help pupils acquire knowledge and skills, develop and exercise their intellectual, manual, creative and physical faculties and develop their judgement and personality. School helps pupils to integrate into social, professional and civic life by gaining an understanding of themselves and the world around them and by respecting other people.

This leaflet describes cycle 3, and in particular years 9 and 10 of secondary education I. Among other things, it describes the organisation of divisions and levels laid down in the Swiss Compulsory Education Act (LEO). This document sets out, in chronological order, the conditions for promotion and reorientation for each division.

Cycle 3 lasts for three years and ends with the school certificate, which marks the completion of compulsory education. At the end of year 11, various access classes are also available.

[www.vd.ch/scolarite](http://www.vd.ch/scolarite)

Sources: Loi sur l'enseignement obligatoire (LEO)  
Règlement d'application de la LEO (RLEO)  
Cadre général de l'évaluation (CGE)

This information is for guidance only; the legal and regulatory framework and the General Assessment Framework (CGE), which deals with various scenarios in detail, should be taken as authoritative.

# Organisation and timetable

Secondary education I is made up of two divisions: pre-matura (*voie prégyrnasiale*, VP) and general (*voie générale*, VG).

In cycle 3, pupils continue their learning based on the objectives set out in the curriculum for French-speaking Switzerland (*Plan d'études romand*, PER) and cantonal programmes. The timetable consists of 33 periods per week for pupils from years 9 to 11. Working methods, learning strategies and the ability to cooperate and communicate are developed in the teaching of all subjects.

## Assessment

Assessments of the pupil's work are communicated via their diary in the form of marks from 1 to 6 (including half points) for core tasks (TS) and associated tasks (TA). A mark of 4 is deemed satisfactory. The highest mark is 6 and the lowest mark is 1.

The average marks achieved by the pupil are included in a double-weighted system: the decisions about their future pathway are based on the total number of points achieved in both the Main group, consisting of all the subjects, and in the Restricted group subjects.

A report is issued halfway through and at the end of the school year. This records the pupil's marks and attendance, along with their averages for each subject to the nearest half-point. A report at the end of the school year and when there is a change of division or level at the end of the 1st semester records the pupil's average marks and the decision made about their future pathway. This is added to their school report book.

## Pre-matura division (VP)

The pre-matura division is aimed at pupils who will have direct access to high school if they obtain their school certificate.

Pupils choose a special option (OS) from one of the following subjects: economics and law, Italian, Latin, or mathematics and physics. The average mark includes both the Main group, consisting of all the subjects, and in the Restricted group subjects.

Restricted group	French + mathematics + German + special option
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### The curriculum for French-speaking Switzerland (PER)

[www.plandetudes.ch](http://www.plandetudes.ch)

The PER sets out what should be learned during the period of compulsory education in French-speaking Switzerland. It describes the subjects pupils should be studying during their 11 years of schooling.

**Core tasks (*travaux significatifs*, TS):** pupils' school work is assessed regularly throughout the year, based on their completion of core tasks. These are the key elements used for assessment. Each core task relates to at least one learning objective set out in the curriculum for French-speaking Switzerland (PER) with one or more components having been taught.

**Associated tasks (*travaux assimilés*, TA):** a series of tasks designed solely to check the acquisition of specific knowledge or skills. Together, these tasks are used to produce an overall assessment for each subject. For each subject, the number of associated tasks cannot exceed a quarter of all the tasks selected.

Years 9 and 11: 33 periods	
Periods per subject (VP)	French
	German
	English
	Mathematics
	Natural sciences
	History - Ethics and religious cultures
	Geography - Citizenship
	Visual arts
	Music
	Creative and manual activities
	Physical education
	Special option (OS)
Media, images and information and communications technologies (MITIC)	

# General division (VG)

The general division is aimed at pupils who are likely to move on to vocational training (apprenticeships), or general and commercial school, or a vocational baccalaureate school.

In the general division, there are two levels for French, mathematics and German. Level 1 teaches basic knowledge, while learning requirements are higher in level 2. Pupils may find they are at different levels in these three subjects, and can be taught accordingly based on their aptitudes.

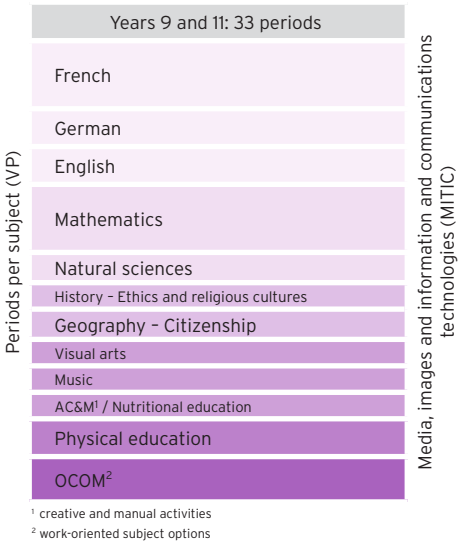
The pupil takes classes in work-oriented subjects (OCOM): two periods for the general education group are taught to the whole class; for the other two periods, the pupil chooses an artisanal, artistic, commercial or technological (AACT) subject. The only OCOM assessed is the AACT option. The average mark includes both the Main group, consisting of all the subjects, and the Restricted group subjects.

Restricted group	French + mathematics + German + artisanal, artistic, commercial or technological option
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Depending on their future plans and under certain conditions, pupils may be entitled to replace their OCOM with a special option (OS) - economics and law, Italian, Latin, or mathematics and physics - and/or take a class from the pre-matura division in French, mathematics, German or English.

Pupils can be moved from one division to another at the end of the first semester of year 9, and at the end of years 9 and 10. Pupils can be moved from one level to another at the end of each semester, the end of the first semester of year 9 and the end of the first semester of year 11. Changes of division and level are decided on the basis of school results. Reorientation decisions are taken by the school board after consulting with the pupil and their parents.

Pupils who are taught at level 1 in all three subjects (French, mathematics and German) are entitled to special support (*enseignement consolidé*). The school board decides what type of support should be offered.



## Optional courses in Greek and Italian (years 10 and 11)

An optional course in Greek is offered to pupils in years 10 and 11 in both divisions who are interested in an introduction to Greek language and culture.

An optional course in Italian is offered to pupils in year 11 in the general division who would like to join the level 2 access classes with a special option in Italian. The course is also offered to other pupils in Year 11 in both divisions, who are interested in learning the language.

Both subjects are assessed and the results communicated to pupils and their parents. However, the results of these assessments are not taken into account for decisions on promotion, reorientation or certification.

## Work-oriented options (OCOM) in the general division

An explanatory leaflet about OCOM options is available on our website:  
[www.vd.ch/scolarite](http://www.vd.ch/scolarite) > Déroulement de l'école obligatoire dans le canton de Vaud.

# Pathways in secondary school divisions

## Promotion and possibilities for reorientation to another division or level

### Pre-matura division

Reorientation  
to general division

Promotion  
Reorientation  
to general division

Promotion  
Reorientation  
to general division

### General division

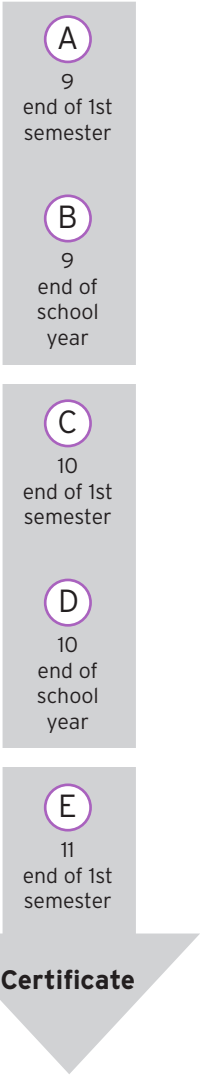
Switch from one level to another  
Reorientation  
to pre-matura division

Promotion  
Switch from one level to another  
Reorientation  
to pre-matura division

Switch from one level to another

Promotion  
Switch from one level to another  
Reorientation  
to pre-matura division

Switch from one level to another



### Certification at the end of year 11

A leaflet explaining the certification criteria for pupils in year 11 and the conditions for admission to access and Year 12 certification classes, and post-compulsory education, is available on our website: [www.vd.ch/scolarite](http://www.vd.ch/scolarite) > Déroulement de l'école obligatoire dans le canton de Vaud

### Access classes

An explanatory leaflet about access classes is available on our website: [www.vd.ch/scolarite](http://www.vd.ch/scolarite) > Déroulement de l'école obligatoire dans le canton de Vaud.

# Pre-matura division (VP) pathway

## A End of 1st semester

### Conditions for reorientation to the general division

VP → VG In certain situations, a pupil in the pre-matura division may be reoriented to the general division. This may be in response to a parental request or on the recommendation of the class council. The final decision is made by the school board. Changing divisions at the end of the 1st semester is only possible in year 9.

## B D End of the school year

### Conditions for promotion (years 9 and 10)

In order to move up, pupils must achieve the following total points for both groups:

Main group	French + mathematics + German + special option + natural sciences + geography + history - ethics and religious cultures + English + visual arts + music + creative and manual activities/nutritional education <sup>1</sup>	44 points and over (year 9) 40 points and over (from year 10)
Restricted group	French + mathematics + German + special option	16 points and over
Borderline cases	<i>maximum 0.5 point below the threshold in one group.</i>	
<sup>1</sup> Creative and manual activities or nutritional education, only in year 9		

### Repeating a year (years 9 to 11)

In principle, a pupil in the pre-matura division who does not meet the criteria for promotion must repeat the year.

### Reorientation to the general division (years 9 and 10)

In certain situations, a pupil who is failing may be reoriented to the general division without repeating a year. This applies when the pupil has already repeated the current school year once, when they have repeated a school year twice during their schooling, or if it is requested by the parents or recommended by the class council. In principle, pupils who are reoriented to the general division join the three subjects divided into levels at level 2.

In general terms, **borderline cases** relate to situations where the results of the pupil concerned are very slightly lower than those required to meet the conditions for moving up to the next class, reorientation from one division to another, or certification. The concept of a borderline case does not apply to decisions about switching from one level to another. Borderline cases are decided by the school board.

At the parents' request, the school board will consider any **mitigating circumstances** (for example, if schooling has been seriously disrupted over a long period because of a prolonged absence, or if the child has recently arrived from another canton or from abroad). Success in the future must be considered likely for mitigating circumstances to be taken into account.

# General division (VG) pathway

## **(A) (C) (E) End of 1st semester**

### Conditions for switching from one level to another (years 9 to 11)

- N1 → N2** Switching from level 1 to level 2 is possible for pupils who achieve an average for the semester in a subject divided into levels of:
- 5.5 and over;
  - 5, on the recommendation of the subject teacher.
- N2 → N1** A pupil may switch from level 2 to level 1 at the parents' request or on the recommendation of the subject teacher concerned.

### Conditions for reorientation to the pre-matura division (year 9)

- VG → VP** In year 9 only, pupils may be reoriented to the pre-matura division if they are taught three subjects divided into levels at level 2 and a special option, and if they achieve the following total points for both groups:

Main group	French + mathematics + German + special option + English + natural sciences + geography + history - ethics and religious cultures + visual arts + music + creative activities and manual activities/nutritional education	50.5 points and over
Restricted group	French + mathematics + German + special option	19 points and over
Borderline cases	<i>maximum 0.5 point below the threshold in one group.</i>	

If a pupil changes level or division at the end of the semester, only the results for the second semester are taken into account when calculating the annual average for the subjects concerned.

## **(B) (D) End of the school year**

### Conditions for promotion (years 9 and 10)

In order to move up, pupils must achieve the following total points for both groups, regardless of the levels at which they have studied French, mathematics and German:

Main group	French + mathematics + German + artisanal, artistic, commercial or technological option (or OS) + English + natural sciences + geography + history - ethics and religious cultures + visual arts + music + creative and manual activities/nutritional education	44 points and over
Restricted group	French + mathematics + German + artisanal, artistic, commercial or technological option (or OS)	16 points and over
Borderline cases	<i>maximum 1 point below the threshold in one group.</i>	

**Decisions on promotion, reorientation and switching from one level to another can be appealed** by writing to the Department: *Instruction des Recours, Département de l'enseignement et de la formation professionnelle, rue de la Barre 8, 1014 Lausanne*. Appeals must be submitted in writing, with reasons, within 10 days of notification, including a copy of the decision concerned.

## Conditions for switching from one level to another (years 9 and 10)

- N1 → N2** Switching from level 1 to level 2 is possible for pupils who achieve an annual average in a subject divided into levels of:
- 5.5 and over;
  - 5, on the recommendation of the subject teacher.
- N2 → N1** A pupil will be switched from level 2 to level 1 if they obtain an annual average in the subject concerned of:
- 3 or less;
  - 3.5, on the recommendation of the subject teacher.

## Conditions for reorientation to the pre-matura division (years 9 and 10)

### VG → VP by repeating a year

A pupil may be reoriented to the pre-matura division by repeating a year if they are taught three subjects divided into levels at level 2 and OCOM options, and if they achieve the following total points for both groups (excluding OCOM):

Main group	French + mathematics + German + English + natural sciences + geography + history - ethics and religious cultures + visual arts + music + creative and manual activities/nutritional education	46.5 points and over
Restricted group	French + mathematics + German	15 points and over
Borderline cases	<i>maximum 0.5 point below the threshold in one group.</i>	

### VG → VP without repeating a year

A pupil may be reoriented to the pre-matura division, in principle without repeating a year, if they are taught three subjects divided into levels at level 2 and a special option, and if they achieve the following total points for both groups:

Main group	French + mathematics + German + special option + English + natural sciences + geography + history - ethics and religious cultures + visual arts + music + creative activities and manual activities / nutritional education	50.5 points and over
Restricted group	French + mathematics + German + special option	19 points and over
Borderline cases	<i>maximum 0.5 point below the threshold in one group.</i>	

## Repeating a year (years 9 to 11)

A pupil in the general division who does not meet the criteria for promotion must repeat the year. They will change level in the following cases.

- N1 → N2** A pupil will be switched from level 1 to level 2 if they obtain an annual average in the subject concerned of:
- 5 and over;
  - 4.5, on the recommendation of the subject teacher.
- N2 → N1** A pupil will be switched from level 2 to level 1 if they obtain an annual average in the subject concerned of:
- 3 or less;
  - 3.5, on the recommendation of the subject teacher.

# Relationship between school and family

Schools are mainly concerned with children's formal instruction and acknowledge that their parents have primary responsibility for their broader education. These roles are not mutually exclusive, however: schools seek to cooperate with families with regard to instruction and support families on other aspects of education.

The class teacher and school management team are parents' primary point of contact for any issues around their child's schooling, since they are in close contact with the child and their situation.

Parents receive regular updates about what their child is learning at school and how they have performed in assessments. Their opinion is sought before any important decisions are taken concerning their child's schooling. Final decisions are made by the school board.

A joint information session for parents is held at least once a year, in principle at the start of the school year. Among other things, this explains what happens in school, the objectives of the curriculum and how pupils will be assessed.

School information is communicated regularly in the pupil's school diary, which parents are asked to sign at the end of each week. This is the main means by which parents and teachers can request a meeting. Meetings can take place at any time during the school year and ensure positive cooperation.

Additional educational support can be provided if necessary, to help the pupil make progress. Other services can be provided by psychologists, psychomotor specialists or speech and language therapists (PPLS) according to the procedures in place in the particular school.

Information about extracurricular provision or other services can be requested from the school management team.

		Rac1 and Rac2 Year 12 certification class		secondary school I
14-15 years	11S	third cycle general division	third cycle pre-matura division	
13-14 years	10S			
12-13 years	9S			
11-12 years	8P	second primary cycle		primary school
10-11 years	7P			
9-10 years	6P			
8-9 years	5P	first primary cycle		
7-8 years	4P			
6-7 years	3P			
5-6 years	2P			
4-5 years	1P			

Structure of compulsory schooling  
in Vaud canton



[www.vd.ch/scolarite](http://www.vd.ch/scolarite)



[www.vd.ch/page/2020664](http://www.vd.ch/page/2020664)