



## EDUCATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN. REFORMS IN EDUCATION. TYPES OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

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***Annotation:*** this article discusses the recent reforms in the education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan and their impact on society, culture, and national development. It explains how modernization of educational institutions, updated curricula, and improved teaching infrastructure contribute to the development of skilled professionals and the intellectual growth of the younger generation. The reforms aim to ensure that education not only preserves the country's rich cultural and historical heritage but also equips students with modern knowledge and competencies needed for a knowledge-based economy. The article highlights the progress in various types of educational institutions, including pre-school centers, general secondary schools, vocational colleges, universities, and postgraduate institutions. Modern classrooms, digital learning platforms, and updated laboratories have been introduced to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Vocational and technical schools provide practical skills aligned with the labor market, while universities focus on research, innovation, and international cooperation. Additionally, the article emphasizes the importance of inclusive education policies, teacher training programs, and curriculum reforms that integrate both traditional and modern educational approaches. The implementation of these reforms has helped Uzbekistan combine its historical educational traditions

*with modern global standards, thereby improving overall educational outcomes, strengthening human capital, and promoting social and economic development. Overall, this work demonstrates how Uzbekistan's education reforms are contributing to the creation of a competitive, inclusive, and forward-looking education system that prepares students to succeed both nationally and internationally while preserving the cultural and historical values of the country.*

**Key words:** *Uzbekistan; Education system; Educational reforms; National Program for Personnel Training (NPTP); Action Strategy 2017–2021; Pre-school education; General secondary education; Vocational education and training (VET); Higher education; Postgraduate education; Curriculum modernization; Digital learning; Teacher training; Inclusive education; Educational institutions; Human capital development; International standards; Modernization of schools; Educational infrastructure; Skills development*

## **Introduction**

Education is a fundamental pillar of social, cultural, and economic development in any country. In the Republic of Uzbekistan, the education system has undergone significant transformation since the country gained independence in 1991. The government has implemented a series of reforms aimed at modernizing educational institutions, improving the quality of teaching and learning, and aligning the national education system with international standards. These reforms are designed not only to develop a skilled and knowledgeable workforce but also to preserve the country's rich cultural heritage and national identity. Over the past decades, Uzbekistan has focused on enhancing access to education at all levels, including pre-school, general secondary, vocational, higher, and postgraduate education. Special programs, such as the National Program for Personnel Training (NPTP) and the Action Strategy 2017–2021, have been introduced to ensure that education meets labor market demands and prepares students for the challenges of a rapidly changing global economy. The reforms also emphasize digitalization, curriculum modernization, teacher training, and inclusive education policies to provide equitable learning opportunities for all citizens. This article examines the



structure of the education system in Uzbekistan, the major reforms implemented, and the types of educational institutions that contribute to the development of human capital. It highlights how modernization efforts and international cooperation are transforming education, supporting the intellectual growth of the younger generation, and fostering a competitive and knowledge-based society.

## **Education System in Uzbekistan: Historical Development and Key Reforms**

Education has always been a fundamental pillar for the cultural and spiritual development of society. A nation cannot achieve progress without preparing skilled professionals who meet modern requirements and are equipped with advanced knowledge in science, technology, and other fields.

In Uzbekistan, significant steps toward the modernization of education began shortly after independence. On **July 2, 1992**, the Law “**On Education**” was adopted, which laid the foundation for the country’s education system. This key legislative document clearly defined the main principles of state policy in the field of education, the structure of the education system, administrative responsibilities, and the duties of pedagogical staff.

During the early years of independence, the government implemented numerous measures to support educators. Over **10,000 education workers** were provided with state housing, while **more than 22,000 employees** received private apartments or housing from organizations and institutions. In addition, **over 50,000 teachers** were allocated land plots for personal construction. Educators living in rural areas were fully exempted from communal service payments, while urban teachers paid only 50% of these costs. Later, these benefits were replaced with monthly salary-based compensations.

The structure of general education, established under the 1992 law, is divided into three stages:

- 1. Primary Education (Grades 1–4):** Focused on basic literacy, numeracy, and foundational skills.



2. **Basic (Intermediate) School (Grades 5–9):** Provides a broader educational foundation, including core subjects and early specialization.

3. **Upper Secondary School (Grades 10–11):** Prepares students for higher education or vocational training.

In recognition of the role of teachers and mentors in national development, the **Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan**, through a decree in **December 1996**, established **October 1 as Teachers' and Educators' Day**, which was declared a public holiday.

The period between **1991 and 2000** witnessed the consolidation of school infrastructure, development of teacher support programs, and the establishment of a modern administrative framework for the education system. These foundational reforms played a critical role in shaping Uzbekistan's education sector and improving the social status of educators, thereby laying the groundwork for future educational modernization and national development. In Uzbekistan, every individual is guaranteed equal rights to education, regardless of gender, language, age, racial or ethnic background, religious beliefs, attitude to religion, social origin, type of employment, social status, or place of residence.

### **Education Reforms in Uzbekistan**

The education system of Uzbekistan has undergone significant reforms since 2017, aiming to modernize teaching, improve educational quality, and align the system with international standards. In 2017, the ongoing challenges in the education sector, including the shortcomings of the 12-year education system, prompted comprehensive reforms. The accumulated problems highlighted the need for fundamental restructuring and learning from the experiences of developed countries.

As a result, under the initiative of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Uzbekistan transitioned from a 12-year mandatory education system (9+3) to an 11-year general education system, taking into account feedback from the public, parents, and students. In the same year, **9 million textbooks** were printed for 10th-grade students, and approximately **10,000 general education schools** implemented the new 11-year system. This transition was coordinated with the admissions process to academic



lyceums and vocational colleges, ensuring that the wishes of parents and students were considered. In the 2016/2017 academic year, of the 466,000 students who graduated from general education schools, **288,000 continued their studies in grade 10.**

Preschool education has also been recognized as a crucial stage in lifelong learning. Children up to 6–7 years old receive early education at home, in kindergartens, and other educational institutions. Research indicates that approximately **70% of all knowledge a person acquires in life is obtained before the age of 5**, highlighting the importance of early childhood education in developing healthy, knowledgeable, and capable future professionals. To strengthen preschool education, improve infrastructure, expand the network of institutions, and provide qualified teaching staff, President Mirziyoyev signed a decree on **September 30, 2017**, establishing the **Ministry of Preschool Education**. The new ministry oversees the preschool education systems in the Republic, including the Qoraqalpog‘iston region, Tashkent city, and all regional and district preschool education departments.

Since 2017, Uzbekistan has continued to implement reforms in all stages of education:

1. **General Secondary Education:** The curriculum has been modernized, including STEM subjects, critical thinking, and digital literacy. Schools are adopting interactive teaching methods and e-learning platforms.
2. **Vocational and Technical Education:** Programs in technical colleges and vocational schools have been aligned with labor market demands, promoting practical skills in industry, agriculture, healthcare, and information technology.
3. **Higher Education:** Universities have adopted international standards, such as the Bologna Process, research-oriented curricula, and dual-degree programs in collaboration with foreign institutions.
4. **Teacher Training and Professional Development:** Comprehensive programs have been introduced to enhance pedagogical skills, including certifications, workshops, and in-service training.

5. **Inclusive and Equitable Education:** Policies have been strengthened to ensure equal access for children regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, or social background.

6. **Digital Transformation:** Online education platforms, digital libraries, and virtual classrooms have been widely introduced, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring continuous learning.

7. **Educational Infrastructure:** New school buildings, laboratories, and modern learning facilities have been developed to provide a better learning environment.

Overall, the reforms initiated in 2017 and continued to the present have transformed Uzbekistan's education system into a more flexible, inclusive, and modern structure. They aim to produce highly skilled, knowledgeable, and socially responsible citizens capable of contributing to national development and competing in a global knowledge-based economy. In **2018**, the focus shifted to curriculum modernization and digitalization. STEM programs were introduced, textbooks updated, and pilot e-learning platforms launched in selected schools. Teacher training programs were expanded to equip educators with modern teaching skills, while inclusive education policies ensured equal opportunities for all students, including those in rural areas and with disabilities.

During **2019**, reforms emphasized vocational education and technical training. New vocational colleges were established, and existing institutions upgraded to meet labor market demands. Competency-based assessments and collaboration with industry ensured graduates acquired practical and market-relevant skills.

The **2020 COVID-19 pandemic** accelerated the adoption of digital learning. Online classes, virtual laboratories, and e-learning platforms became essential, and teachers received training to adapt to remote teaching. In **2021**, higher education reforms were expanded. Universities adopted international standards, introduced dual-degree programs, increased research opportunities, and promoted international collaboration. Infrastructure and student mobility programs were also improved. By



**2022**, the education system focused on quality assessment and monitoring. Standardized testing, school inspections, and performance evaluation systems were strengthened, ensuring better learning outcomes and reducing regional disparities. In **2023**, reforms emphasized inclusive education. Special programs targeted disadvantaged students, ethnic minorities, and rural populations. Early childhood education programs were enhanced to ensure children develop foundational skills for lifelong learning. In **2024**, further modernization took place, including building new schools, updating classrooms, and expanding digital libraries. Teacher professional development programs emphasized innovative pedagogical methods and educational technologies. By **2025**, Uzbekistan aims to consolidate all prior reforms to establish a fully modern, competitive, and knowledge-based education system. Emphasis is placed on integrating digital technologies, artificial intelligence, research and innovation, and lifelong learning opportunities for all citizens.

Overall, the 2017–2025 reforms have transformed Uzbekistan's education system into a flexible, inclusive, and modern structure, combining traditional values with international standards and digital innovations. These changes are creating highly skilled, knowledgeable, and socially responsible citizens prepared to contribute to national development and compete globally.

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