**System of Education in the United Kingdom**

Compulsory education in Great Britain begins at 5 and ends at 16. Education is provided by state and private schools.

Great Britain has schools for young children (nurseries, kindergartens, play groups); primary schools (infant and junior departments); middle schools; secondary schools (grammar, technical, secondary modern, special); independent (private) schools, public schools, preparatory schools.

At nursery schools children spend their time in some sort of play and educational activity. Primary schools take children from 5 to 11. Middle schools are a compromise between primary and secondary education. Secondary schools take children from 11. And education is compulsory up to 16.

Grammar schools provide academic education and prepare pupils for higher education. Secondary modern schools provide education with practical bias up to 16. The level of education is low. Boarding schools are fee-charging. Children are instructed on the advanced curricula and go home only for the holidays. Public schools are very expensive. They accept pupils at about 12 or 13. Their standards for entries are very high. They are Eton, Harrow, Rugby and Winchester.

The principal examinations at about 16 lead to the General Certificate of Secondary Education.

The post-school institutions of higher education are about 50 universities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (Cambridge, Oxford, Edinburgh, London, Essex, Aberdeen, etc.) and about 30 polytechnics.

The university is like a federation of colleges. It arranges courses, lectures, exams; and awards the degrees. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge each have over 10000 full-time students. Admission is based on the old trial patterns.

University degree courses extend for 3 or 4 years, in medicine 5 or 6 years are required. They award Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctor’s degrees. Teaching combines lectures, practical classes (in scientific subjects) and small group teaching in seminars or tutorials.

At Oxford, a Tutor is a member of staff (professor) who supervises students’ work individually. The tutor can help with general problems (choice of courses, difficulty in keeping up with their fellow students) and practical problems (family matters, finding accommodation).

Most adequately qualified British students can obtain awards from public funds to attend full-time at a university. The amount of these awards depends on the income of the student and his parents.