



Gustav Adolf Grammar School

The school

Gustav Adolf Grammar School is the oldest secondary school in Estonia as well as one of the oldest in Europe. The school was established in 1631 by Gustav II Adolf, king of Sweden. The school locates in the Old Town of Tallinn and has premises dating back to the 13th century.

Being among well-established schools in Estonia it specializes in Natural Sciences and Mathematics as well as the English, French, and Swedish languages and culture. The school is characterized by its academic ambience and traditions, but also by embracing new ideas and putting them into practice. Gustav Adolf Grammar School works in close cooperation with other educational establishments through various international projects and spearheads initiative for educational innovation.

Gustav Adolf Grammar School provides education according to the Estonian educational system: elementary school (Years 1–4), middle school (Years 5–9) and secondary school (Year 10–12). To enter the secondary school students need to pass an entrance exam in Estonian, English, Mathematics and Physics, and an interview. In the school year of 2017/2018, a record of 1,508 students applied for a place at Gustav Adolf Grammar School, with only 144 admitted. The school has thus its competitive edge: 10.5 students apply for one place to enter the secondary school.

The staff, students and parents acknowledge the main values of Gustav Adolf Grammar School, being history, professionalism, motivation, security, creativity, patriotism, a healthy lifestyle, emotional intelligence, and good relationships.

Academic standards

To complete the three years of secondary school, students are required to take three national exams in Estonian, Mathematics, and a foreign language. In the academic year of 2018/2019, the national exam scores were among the TOP 3 in the country.

The school has zero-tolerance for cheating in tests. Students who are caught cheating fail the test, their test will be marked with “F” and it is not possible for them to retake it.

Gustav Adolf Grammar School prepares its students for B2–C2 international language tests Delf Scolaire, CAE, IELTS and TOEFL. In the academic year of 2019/2020, 45% of the graduating students achieved level C2, 51% level C1, and 2% level B2 in the CAE test.

Every year Gustav Adolf Grammar School is nominated for the best school to take part in the city and national Olympiads in Estonia. Furthermore, the students of Gustav Adolf Grammar School have been selected to represent Estonia in international and European Olympiads.

Likewise, students of Gustav Adolf Grammar School participate in PISA tests. In 2018, Estonian students were ranked first in Europe and fifth in the world.

The students

Gustav Adolf Grammar School is a municipal school with about 1,400 students aged 7 to 19, 433 of whom study in the secondary school.

About 90% of the graduates continue their studies after finishing secondary school. Alumni of Gustav Adolf Grammar School can be found in the best universities in Estonia as well as at universities in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Denmark, France, the USA, etc. Numerous alumni have successfully graduated from Ivy League universities.

The staff

There are about 90 professional teachers in Gustav Adolf Grammar School, being among the best in Estonia. Annually about five teachers are nominated for the best teacher award in Tallinn or in Estonia.

15% of the teachers have an undergraduate qualification, while 83% have a postgraduate degree and 2% a PhD. All the teachers continually attend ICT and coaching courses, they also take additional courses in their subject.

The curriculum

In the secondary school, students can specialize in four areas: French-English, Science, Swedish, and Mathematics-English.

Students in years 10, 11 and 12 must complete the minimum of 96 courses, each of which normally comprises 35 lessons. Students receive a grade for each course. In Gustav Adolf Grammar School, 91 courses are based on the national and the school's curricula leaving five optional courses. More sophisticated and ambitious students can attend more courses than 96 as the maximum number is not limited.

The courses based on the national curriculum include Estonian, Literature, Mathematics, English, Russian/French/Swedish, Physical Education, Physics and Geography, Chemistry, History, Music, Arts, Biology, Human Science, Social Studies, and a Research Paper.

The courses students specialize in are the following: Advanced Mathematics, Scientific English, Programming, English/French/Swedish History and Guiding, English/French/Swedish Culture, Practical Chemistry and Physics.

The optional courses include Debating, Economics, Philosophy, Russian/French/Swedish, Guiding, additional Chemistry, Human Physiology and Genetics, Biochemistry, National Defense, Theology, History of the 21st Century, Choir, Orchestra, Calligraphy, and online courses by the Youth Academy, University of Tartu.

Co-curricular activities

Gustav Adolf Grammar School provides its students with comprehensive knowledge and opportunities for personal fulfilment. It is a school that has highly motivated students, who achieve remarkable results at national and international levels in different fields: state exams, Olympiads, student contests, sports, music, ICT, contests for student businesses, and various projects.

As for sports, Gustav Adolf Grammar School has been one of the most successful schools in Tallinn involving 30 different sports.

Finally, Gustav Adolf Grammar school has a deep-seated tradition requiring its students to do 8–10 hours of voluntary work per year, which might include organizing school events, volunteering in NGOs, etc.