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Virtual School and College Provision

Education and Culture DG
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1. The brief

This is Deliverable 2.2 of Work Package 2. The Deliverable Title is:

Interim Country/Region Reports

The Work Package Title is:

Field Research

It runs from month 1 (January 2011) until the end of the project (December 2012).

Deliverable 2.2 is summarised in the work plan as follows:

This Deliverable is required by the beginning of June 2011 in order that the conference season can open with public displays of brand new "schools and college" content on the wiki. This date will be a strong discipline on the country report analysts, encouraging them to focus on a first pass across the required countries, with a good set of links to background reports from other agencies, rather than polished narrative. (It is felt by us to be one of the key requirements for a global analysis.).

The more specific descriptions have to be dug out of the work plan especially section F.3 of workpackage 2 which describes what the various partners were to do. The material below is extracted from that, with the descriptions reordered so as to be in order of partner number.

This Deliverable will also report on the changes in allocations of countries that took place over summer 2011.

1.1 Partner 1: Lambrakis

Specific studies on countries:

- *Greece* and *Cyprus*
- the federal country *India*
- regions *Middle East* and *North Africa* as well as *non-Commonwealth Oceania* (those countries in Oceania not in the Commonwealth of Nations)
- a small "float" of days held for the *Rest of the World* (all countries not covered as countries or in regions) in case some become important.

1.2 Partner 2: Sero

Specific studies on countries:

- *UK* (England and other home nations)

- *Ireland*[1]
- *US*
- *Canada*
- *Brazil*
- *Hispanic America*
- *Anglophone Africa*
- *New Zealand*
- *Commonwealth LAC* (Latin America/Caribbean including UK colonies).

1.3: Partner 3: EFQUEL

EFQUEL is a specialist partner contracted mainly for Workpackage 4. No work was to be done on country studies.

1.4 Partner 4: ATiT

Specific studies on countries:

- *Belgium* (Flanders and Wallonia) and *Netherlands*
- *Kenya*[2]
- *South Africa*
- *Turkey*
- *Australia*
- *Commonwealth Oceania* (those countries in Oceania in the Commonwealth of Nations – such as Samoa and Tonga).

1.5 Partner 5:MENON

Specific studies on:

- region *EU* (apart from countries studied separately)

[1] This was later transferred to ATiT.
[2] This was later transferred to Sero.

- *Francophone Africa* (Sub-Saharan)
- *East Asia* (excluding India)
- *French/Dutch LAC* (Latin America and Caribbean – French-speaking and Dutch-speaking countries including Overseas Departments and Territories of France – plus entities within the Kingdom of the Netherlands).

1.6 Partner 6: University of Leeds

Leeds is a specialist partner contracted for evaluation. No work was to be done on country studies.

1.7 Partner 7: EITF

Specific studies on:

- Baltic countries *Estonia*, *Lithuania* and *Latvia*
- regions *Eastern Europe* (former CIS) and *Central Asia* (former CIS)
- and also *Yugosphere* (countries of former Yugoslavia – thus not Albania)

1.8 Partner 8: Tensta

Specific study on:

- country *Sweden*

Adding “local nuances” to reports on other countries where there are students originally from such countries in Tensta Gymnasium.

1.9 Partner 9: Aarhus University

Specific studies on countries:

- *Denmark* and *Norway*

1.10 Partner 10: TIEKE

Specific study on country:

- *Finland*.

Advice to other partners' country/region reports based on prior international experience (outside Europe) – in particular for *East Asia* and for *Nordic Council* and *Baltic* countries.

2. The templates

The templates used were reported on in Deliverable 2.1.

3. Changes in the work plan

At the kick-off meeting in Brussels in February 2011 there was some discussion over the allocation of countries. This was continued at the WP2 meeting in Brussels in April 2011. After that meeting a table was issued containing the agreed amendments to the allocation of countries to partners. This table is summarised below.

Partner	*Country/supra-region*	*Countries within that*	*Regions within country*	*Fruitfulness (1>2>3)*
P1 LRF	Greece	-	no	1
P1 LRF	Cyprus	-	no	2
P1 LRF	India	-	yes	1
P1 LRF	Middle East	lots		2
P1 LRF	North Africa	Morocco, Algeria etc		3
P1 LRF	Non-Commonwealth Oceania	-		3
P1 LRF	Rest of World	-		3
P2 Sero	UK	-	EWNI (England, Wales, and Northern Ireland) and Scotland	1
P2 Sero	Kenya	-		2
P2 Sero	US	-	Yes (States)	1
P2 Sero	Canada	-	Yes (Provinces)	2
P2 Sero	Brazil	-	Yes	1
P2 Sero	Hispanic America	(13) Mexico, Chile, Argentina etc		2
P2 Sero	Anglophone Africa	> 10		2
P2 Sero	New Zealand		no	2
P2 Sero	Commonwealth LAC	>10 but small ones		3
P3 EFQUEL				
P4 ATiT	Belgium		Flanders, Wallonia	2
P4 ATiT	Eire			3
P4 ATiT	South Africa			1
P4 ATiT	Turkey		no	3
P4 ATiT	Australia			1

Partner	*Country/supra-region*	*Countries within that*	*Regions within country*	*Fruitfulness (1>2>3)*
P4 ATiT	Commonwealth Oceania	Samoa, Tonga etc		2
P5 MENON	EU (rest of)			3
P5 MENON	Francophone Africa	Not North Africa		2
P5 MENON	East Asia	Not India		1
P5 MENON	French/Dutch LAC	several		2
P6 Leeds				
P7 EITF	Estonia		no	1
P7 EITF	Lithuania		no	2
P7 EITF	Latvia		no	3
P7 EITF	Eastern Europe	Former CIS		3
P7 EITF	Central Asia			3
P7 EITF	Yugosphere	Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, etc		2
P8 Tensta	Sweden		no	1
P9 Aarhus	Denmark		no	3
P9 Aarhus	Norway		no	1
P10 TIEKE	Finland		Aland	2

The changes are small – essentially one sway of countries. They are listed as follows:

1. LRF: no change
2. Sero: gain Kenya from ATiT; lose Ireland to ATiT (Sero has an expert on Africa)
3. EFQUEL: no change (no countries)
4. ATiT: gain Ireland from Sero; lose Kenya to Sero (ATiT has an Irish national)
5. MENON: no change
6. Leeds: no change (no countries)
7. EITF: no change
8. Tensta: no change
9. Aarhus: no change
10. TIEKE: no change.

4. Execution of the country/region reports

The task split into the creation of country reports for countries listed in the work plan; and the creation of region reports for regions listed in the work plan.

4.1 Country reports

Partner	*Country*	*Remarks*	*Fruitfulness*
	EU	(11 out of EU 27 countries studied in detail)	
P4 ATiT	Belgium	Flanders and Wallonia studied separately	2
P1 LRF	Cyprus		2
P9 Aarhus	Denmark		3
P4 ATiT	Eire		3
P7 EITF	Estonia		1
P10 TIEKE	Finland	plus Åland studied separately	2
P1 LRF	Greece		1
P7 EITF	Latvia		3
P7 EITF	Lithuania		2
P8 Tensta	Sweden		1
P2 Sero	UK	four home nations studied separately	1
	Rest of Europe	(two countries studied in detail)	
P9 Aarhus	Norway		1
P4 ATiT	Turkey		3
	Africa	(two countries studied in detail)	
P2 Sero	Kenya		2
P4 ATiT	South Africa		1
	Asia	(one country studied in detail)	
P1 LRF	India	plus brief overviews of each province	1
	Americas	(three countries studied in detail)	
P2 Sero	Brazil	plus brief overviews of some provinces	1
P2 Sero	Canada	plus separate entries on each province	2
P2 Sero	US	plus separate short entries on each state	1
	Australasia	(two countries studied in detail)	
P4 ATiT	Australia		1
P2 Sero	New Zealand		2
	Island continents	(no countries studied in detail)	

As can be seen from the table above, there is, as expected, a focus on the EU specifically and one the wider Europe, but each mainland continent has at least one country studied in detail and most (except Asia) have at least two.

The countries were chosen originally when the bid was written to represent those countries where prior work (especially but not only for Re.ViCa) had shown that virtual schools or virtual colleges had been found, or were likely to be found, or (in some cases) had been found in the past.

4.2 Region reports

4.2.1 Overview

An early decision was taken not to use the word "region" to denote groups of countries – instead, the word "supraregion" was coined. The wiki defines this as follows:[3]

> *A* supraregion *is a collection of countries with geographic and sometimes political and cultural coherence. VISCED has chosen a number of these to study as well as specific countries – see VISCED supraregions.*
>
> *Where possible we try and maintain compatibility with the UN geoscheme – http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UN_geoscheme*

The list of supraregions and their final assignment to partners is below.

Partner	*Country*	*Remarks*	*Fruitfulness*
	EU		
P5 MENON	EU (rest of)	the 16 countries not specifically studied	3
	Rest of Europe	(two supraregions studied)	
P7 EITF	Yugosphere		2
P7 EITF	Eastern Europe		3
	Africa	(three supraregions studied)	
P1 LRF	North Africa		3
P5 MENON	Francophone Africa		2
P2 Sero	Anglophone Africa		2
	Asia	(three supraregions studied)	
P1 LRF	Middle East		2
P7 EITF	Central Asia		3
P5 MENON	East Asia		1
	Americas	(one supraregion studied)	

[3] See http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Supraregion

Partner	*Country*	*Remarks*	*Fruitfulness*
P2 Sero	Hispanic America		2
	Australasia	(no supraregions studied)	
	Island continents	(four supraregions studied)	
P4 ATiT	Commonwealth Oceania		2
P1 LRF	Non-Commonwealth Oceania		3
P2 Sero	Commonwealth LAC		3
P5 MENON	French/Dutch LAC		2

With many of these regions there were many issues of definition. In the end a good deal of responsibility was left to the individual partner – but the WP2 management did add clarificatory descriptions on the wiki – in many but not all cases.

4.2.2 Definitions

Following the order of the last table:

Yugosphere

The original short definition of the *Yugosphere* was "those countries not (yet) in the EU which made up the former country of Yugoslavia". This has now been expanded into a regional overview as follows:

> *The* Yugosphere *is a category used to describe the present day states which succeeded the collapse of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. For its members see Category:Yugosphere. The territory of the former Yugoslavia is roughly coterminous with the geographical region of the Western Balkans; in the EU's definition of the term, the Western Balkans excludes Slovenia but includes Albania.*
>
> *Slovenia is the only country of the former Yugoslavia in the EU. Croatia, Macedonia, and Montenegro are official candidates, while Serbia has submitted an application for membership and have been recognized as a "potential candidate". Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republic of Kosovo have not submitted an application but are nevertheless recognized as "potential candidates" for a possible future enlargement of the European Union. All states of the former Yugoslavia, with the exception of the disputed Autonomous Province of Kosovo, have subscribed to the Stabilisation and Association Process with the EU.*
>
> *The CIA Factbook has estimates for the populations of Yugoslavia's successor states as of July 2011 which amount to a total population of 23.0 million. Net population growth over the three decades between 1981 and 2011 was thus practically zero (below 0.1% p.a. on average). Ethno-linguistically, the majority of the former Yugoslavia is South Slavic,*

speaking a dialect continuum clustered around the Serbo-Croatian, Slovene and Macedonian. Other larger ethnic groups include Albanians (mostly in Kosovo), Hungarians (mostly in Vojvodina), Roma and other minorities.

Eastern Europe

The original short definition of *Eastern Europe* was "those countries formerly part of the USSR which are culturally part of Europe". This has now been expanded into a regional overview as follows:[4]

Eastern Europe *is defined for VISCED purposes as the countries of the former Commonwealth of Independent States that are mainly or partially in Europe, as judged by cultural as well as geographic frontiers. Thus in particular the countries of Transcaucasia are all included but Kazakhstan is not.*

The complete list (including partially recognised countries) is: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine

For other groupings of some or all of these countries see Transcaucasia[5] *and CIS.*

See also the Re.ViCa categories Category:Transcaucasian countries and Category:European former CIS.

North Africa

This is defined as the mainly Arabic-speaking countries in the (or north east or north west) of Africa, mainly (but not all) along the Mediterranean coast of Africa, including Egypt, plus also Sudan (but not South Sudan). In more detail, the supraregion page notes:[6]

North Africa comprises the seven countries of Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia and Western Sahara. We also include the autonomous part of Western Sahara called Sahrawi.

The term is used in the precise UN sense (not the wider geographical sense) as described at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Africa

Not included are: The Spanish exclaves of Ceuta and Mellila on the Mediterranean coast but surrounded by Morocco; The Spanish Canary Islands and Portuguese Madeira Islands in the North Atlantic Ocean northwest of the African mainland; Mauritania; Azores

Note that the new (2011) country of South Sudan is not in North Africa.

[4] See http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Eastern_Europe
[5] This covers Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.
[6] See http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/North_Africa

Francophone Africa

There is some considerable debate[7] about the precise or at least the most appropriate definition of Francophone Africa. In the end VISCED opted for a pragmatic definition excluding any countries in North Africa, whatever their history. This leads to the following:[8]

> Francophone Africa *is the supraregion consisting of those countries in Africa where French is both a widely-spoken language and an official language, where the country was a former colony of France or Belgium, and where the educational infrastructure is or until recently was organised along "French" lines.*
>
> *This leads to the following list: Benin; Burkina Faso; Burundi; Cameroon; Central African Republic; Chad; Comoros; Côte d'Ivoire; Djibouti; Equatorial Guinea; Gabon; Guinea; Madagascar; Mali; Niger; Republic of the Congo; Senegal; Seychelles and Togo.*

Anglophone Africa

Anglophone Africa is the supraregion consisting of those countries in Africa that are predominantly English-speaking. The definition states:[9]

> Anglophone Africa *is in theory the supraregion consisting of those countries in Africa that are predominantly English-speaking.*
>
> *All such countries are members of the Commonwealth of Nations – see Category:Commonwealth_countries.*
>
> *A pragmatic list would be Botswana; Gambia; Ghana; Kenya; Lesotho; Liberia; Malawi; Mauritius; Namibia; Nigeria; Rwanda; Seychelles; Sierra Leone; South Africa; South Sudan ; Swaziland; Tanzania; Uganda; Zambia; and Zimbabwe.*
>
> *For related concepts see Category:Africa and Category:English-speaking countries.*
>
> *For background information on ways of categorising Africa see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_regions_of_Africa*

In VISCED we treat Kenya and South Africa separately even though they are in Anglophone Africa.

Middle East

In general terms, the Middle East defines a geographical area, but does not have precise defined borders. According to Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East), the modern definition of the region includes: Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, the

[7] For some examples of this see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_regions_of_Africa and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_where_French_is_an_official_language

[8] See http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Francophone_Africa

[9] See

Palestinian territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Egypt, with its Sinai Peninsula in Asia, is considered part of the Middle East, although most of the country lies geographically in North Africa. According to international media, North African nations without Asian links, such as Libya, Tunisia and Algeria, are increasingly being called North Africa.

For the countries that Re.ViCa regarded as Middle East – see Category:Middle East. VISCED takes a stricter view:[10]

> *For the purposes of VISCED, it is more convenient to think of a somewhat stricter definition with more geographic and ethnic coherence – the Arab Middle East, consisting of Bahrain; Iraq; Jordan; Kuwait; Lebanon; Oman; Palestine; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; Syria; United Arab Emirates; and Yemen.*
>
> *In other words, Egypt, Iran, Israel and Turkey are not included – Egypt in particular being considered by VISCED as part of North Africa.*

Central Asia

Historically, according to Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Asia), Central Asia is a core region of the Asian continent from the Caspian Sea in the west, China in the east, Afghanistan in the south, and Russia in the north. The VISCED definition goes on to say:[11]

> *It is also sometimes referred to as Middle Asia, and, colloquially, "the 'stans" (as the five countries generally considered to be within the region all have names ending with that suffix) and is within the scope of the wider Eurasian continent.*
>
> *Various definitions of its exact composition exist, and no one definition is universally accepted. Despite this uncertainty in defining borders, it does have some important overall characteristics. For one, Central Asia has historically been closely tied to its nomadic peoples and the Silk Road. As a result, it has acted as a crossroads for the movement of people, goods, and ideas between Europe, West Asia, South Asia, and East Asia.*
>
> *In modern contexts, all definitions of Central Asia consensually include these five republics of the former Soviet Union: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan), Turkmenistan), and Uzbekistan, with a total population of 61.5 million as of 2009 – in other words, in total around the size of one of the larger members of the European Union.*
>
> *Other areas often included are Mongolia, Afghanistan, northern and western Pakistan, northeastern Iran, Kashmir, and sometimes Xinjiang in western China and southern Siberia in Russia.*

[10] See http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Middle_East
[11] See http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Central_Asia

For VISCED purposes, Central Asia is defined in the stricter sense above purely as the countries of the former Commonwealth of Independent States that are mainly or partially in Asia, as judged by cultural as well as geographic frontiers.

The complete list is: Kazakhstan (pop. 16.0 million); Kyrgyzstan (5.5 million); Tajikistan (7.3 million); Turkmenistan (5.1 million); and Uzbekistan (27.6 million).

This corresponds exactly to the definition of the Central Asia subregion in the UN geoscheme (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_geoscheme_for_Asia). It is thus a subset of the countries in the wider supraregion of Category:Asian former CIS which includes Transcaucasia also.

East Asia

This is one of the hardest regions to pin down. The VISCED definition has a lengthy section of reasoning, ending in quite a short list of countries:[12]

East Asia or Eastern Asia (the latter form preferred by the United Nations) is a subregion of Asia that can be defined in either geographical or cultural terms. Geographically and geo-politically, it covers about 12,000,000 km^2 (4,600,000 sq mi), or about 28 percent of the Asian continent, about 15 percent bigger than the area of Europe.

Background and scope

More than 1.5 billion people, about 38% of the population of Asia or 22% of all the people in the world, live in geographic East Asia, about twice Europe's population. The region is one of the world's most populated places, with a population density of 133 inhabitants per square kilometre (340/sq mi), being about three times the world average of 45 /km^2 (120/sq mi), although Mongolia has the lowest population density of a sovereign state. Using the UN subregion definitions, it ranks second in population only to Southern Asia.

Historically, many societies in East Asia have been part of the Chinese cultural sphere, and East Asian vocabulary and scripts are often derived from Classical Chinese and Chinese script. Sometimes Northeast Asia is used to denote Japan and Korea.

The UN subregion of Eastern Asia and other common definitions of East Asia contain the entirety of the People's Republic of China (including all SARs and autonomous regions), Republic of China (commonly known as "Taiwan"), Japan, North Korea, South Korea, and Mongolia.

Chinese-speaking regions (including the cultures of mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan), Japan, Korea, and Vietnam are commonly seen as being encompassed by cultural East Asia.

[12] See http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/East_Asia

There are mixed debates around the world whether these countries or regions should be considered in East Asia or not. Vietnam (considered either East Asia or Southeast Asia—here the primary question is geographic due to it being part of the Sinosphere)

Siberia in Russia is considered either East Asia or North Asia – here the primary question is political, with culture and geography also at issue.

In business and economics, East Asia has been used to refer to a wide geographical area covering ten countries in ASEAN, People's Republic of China, Japan, South Korea, and the Republic of China (Taiwan) for the purpose of economic and political regionalism and integration.[citation needed] United States foreign policy under the Obama administration considers Southeast Asia a part of East Asia. The tendency of this usage, perhaps, started especially since the publication of World Bank on The East Asian Miracle in 1993 explaining the economic success of the Asian Tiger and emerging Southeast Asian economies (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand).[citation needed]

In addition, this usage has also been driven by Asia-wide economic interconnectedness since the co-operation between ASEAN and its three dialogue partners was institutionalized under the ASEAN Plus Three Process (ASEAN+3 or APT) in 1997. The idea of East Asian Community arising from ASEAN+3 framework is also gradually shaping the term East Asia to cover more than greater China, Korea, and Japan. This usage however, is unstable: the East Asian Summit, for instance, includes India and Australia. East Asia is considered to be a part of the Far East, which describes the region's geographical position in relation to Europe rather than its location within Asia. However, in contrast to the United Nations definition, East Asia commonly is used to refer to the eastern part of Asia, as the term implies.

Observers preferring a broader definition of 'East Asia' often use the term Northeast Asia to refer to the greater China area, the Korean Peninsula, and Japan, with Southeast Asia covering the ten ASEAN countries. This usage, which is increasingly widespread in economic and diplomatic discussion, is at odds with the historical meanings of both 'East Asia' and 'Northeast Asia'.

Hispanic America

Hispanic America is very clearly defined as the supraregion comprising the American countries inhabited by Spanish-speaking populations. For related concepts see Category:Central America, Category:South America and Category:Spanish-speaking countries. The VISCED definition goes on to say:[13]

Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hispanic_America lists these countries as: Argentina; Bolivia; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; Cuba; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; El

[13] See http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Hispanic_America

Salvador; Guatemala; Honduras; Mexico; Nicaragua; Panama; Paraguay; Peru; Puerto Rico; Uruguay; and Venezuela

It is a debatable point whether in cultural/political terms, Puerto Rico should be included – since it is effectively a colony of the US.

Most mainland countries of Central America and South America thus belong to Hispanic America, with the major exception of Brazil and the minor exceptions of some former colonies of Netherlands, France and UK.

Commonwealth Oceania

Commonwealth Oceania consists of all those countries in Oceania which are members of the Commonwealth of Nations or British Overseas Territories of the UK. The definition goes on to list the specific countries:[14]

Commonwealth members in Oceania: Kiribati; Samoa; Solomon Islands; Tonga; Nauru; Fiji Islands; Tuvalu; and Vanuatu

Realm of the UK – British Overseas Territories: British Indian Ocean Territory; and Pitcairn Islands

While reviewing this definition at the end of 2011 it seems worthwhile to extend this definition in 2012 to include dependencies of the UK and other Commonwealth countries. This would add the following 10 territories to the list. All of these have small populations or in some cases[15] are unpopulated.

1. Ashmore and Cartier Islands
2. Christmas Island
3. Cocos (Keeling) Islands
4. Coral Sea Islands
5. Heard Island and McDonald Islands
6. Norfolk Island
7. Cook Islands (NZ)
8. Niue (NZ)

[14] See http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Commonwealth_Oceania
[15] See e.g. http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Ashmore_and_Cartier_Islands and http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Heard_Island_and_McDonald_Islands

9. Pitcairn Islands (UK)
10. Tokelau (NZ)

Non-Commonwealth Oceania

Rather obviously, Non-Commonwealth Oceania comprises the territories that are not in Commonwealth Oceania. This may explain why up to the time of writing this report there was no definition on the wiki.

A list of countries comprises:

1. Palau
2. New Caledonia (France)
3. French Polynesia (France)
4. Federated States of Micronesia
5. Marshall Islands
6. Northern Mariana Islands (USA)
7. Wake Island (USA)
8. American Samoa (USA)
9. Easter Island (Chile)
10. Guam (USA)

The US state of Hawaii is also geographically within Oceania.

Commonwealth LAC

The Commonwealth LAC consists of all those countries in Central America, South America and the Caribbean which are members of the Commonwealth of Nations or British overseas territories of the UK. The definition on the wiki goes on to list the members as follows:[16]

> ***Commonwealth members in LAC***
>
> *The Commonwealth Caribbean consists of: Antigua and Barbuda; Bahamas – east of the Caribbean Sea; Barbados; Dominica; Grenada; Jamaica; St Kitts and Nevis; St Lucia; St Vincent and the Grenadines; and Trinidad and Tobago*

[16] See http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Commonwealth_LAC

The Commonwealth Mainland Caribbean consists of: Belize – in Central America; and Guyana – in South America

All of the above are full members of CARICOM.

Realm of the UK – British Overseas Territories

These are the British West Indies Territories: Anguilla; British Virgin Islands; Cayman Islands; Montserrat; Turks and Caicos Islands

And also: Bermuda – north east of the Caribbean Sea out in the Atlantic

All of the above are Associate Members of CARICOM – with Montserrat being a full member.

French/Dutch LAC

The French/Dutch LAC is the supraregion comprising those nations in Central America (none), South America (two) and the Caribbean (several) which are former French or Dutch colonies, and also the current DOMs/TOMs of France and the "special municipalities" of the Netherlands and autonomous countries in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The definition on the wiki lists the countries as follows:[17]

Islands

1. *Aruba – a country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands*
2. *Guadeloupe – French LAC*
3. *Martinique – French LAC*
4. *the constituent parts of the former Netherlands Antilles:*
   - *Curaçao and Sint Maarten – now countries of the Kingdom of the Netherlands*
   - *Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba – now special municipalities of the Netherlands*
5. *Saint Barthélemy – French LAC*
6. *Saint-Martin – French LAC*

On the mainland – of South America

1. *French Guiana – French LAC*

[17] See http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/French/Dutch_LAC

2. *Suriname – a Dutch-speaking sovereign state*

Rest of the World

This is not a coherent supraregion, rather it is all the countries not covered by other supraregions studied. Some of the countries in the Rest of the World are:

1. Europe: Albania and the smaller European countries within the EU boundaries but not in the EU (Monaco, Isle of Man, etc)
2. Africa: Hispanic Africa and Lusophone Africa; Ethiopia
3. Asia: South East Asia especially Vietnam and Indonesia; and Pakistan
4. Australasia: Papua New Guinea
5. Americas: (all countries covered)
6. Islands in the Indian Ocean and in the Atlantic Ocean

5. Some statistics and reflections

5.1 Contributors to the wiki from among the partners

Lambrakis

1. Nikos Zygouritsas: major updates to countries in EU (Greece and Cyprus), Middle East (Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen), North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia) and India – and several virtual school/college entries[18]

Sero

2. Paul Bacsich (User:Pbacsich), user since 12 November 2007: entries for Northern Ireland and Wales; updates to New Zealand and many Caribbean countries; many entries and corrections for US states, Indian provinces, Spanish autonomous communities and German Länder; vast amount of regional definition, recategorisation, reorganisation, etc – and many virtual school entries[19]

[18] http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php?limit=500&tagFilter=&title=Special%3AContributions&contribs=user&target=Nikos+Zygouritsas&namespace=&year=&month=-1

[19] http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php?title=Special:Contributions&offset=20110806174407&limit=500&contribs=user&target=Pbacsich

3. Giles Pepler: new entry on Scotland; minor updates to England; major updates to countries in Hispanic America (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Mexico Colombia, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay) – and several virtual school/college entries and a report on Latin America[20]

4. Barry Phillips: major update to Canada; minor updates to Australia – and many virtual school entries[21]

5. Sara Frank Bristow (User: SaraFrankBristow), user since 16 August 2008: massive entry on United States – and entries on almost every virtual school in the US and many in other countries[22]

6. Nick Jeans: new entry on England; updates on South Africa and nearby countries in Southern Africa (Botswana, Lesotho) and West Africa (Gambia and Sierra Leone)[23]

7. Graham Clarke: updates to almost every country in Africa with especial focus on non-Anglophone countries (in chronological order: Guinea, Togo, São Tomé and Príncipe, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Djibouti, Eritrea, Chad, Mauritania, Benin, Burundi, Central African Republic, Comoros, Ivory Coast, Mauritius, Morocco, plus entries on over 30 US states and all provinces in India[24]

8. James Kay: minor updates to most Anglophone Africa entries and many Caribbean entries; also major update to New Zealand – and many virtual school entries[25]

9. Andreia Inamorato dos Santos (contractor for Brazil report): major update of Brazil, entries on three Brazil provinces[26]

10. Gabriela Job Di Laccio (contractor for Lusophone report): updates to Angola, Cape Verde, East Timor, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe.[27]

[20] http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php?limit=500&tagFilter=&title=Special%3AContributions&contribs=user&target=Giles+Pepler&namespace=&year=&month=-1
[21] http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php?limit=500&tagFilter=&title=Special%3AContributions&contribs=user&target=Barry+Phillips+&namespace=&year=&month=-1
[22] http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php?limit=500&tagFilter=&title=Special%3AContributions&contribs=user&target=SaraFrankBristow&namespace=&year=&month=-1
[23] http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php?limit=500&tagFilter=&title=Special%3AContributions&contribs=user&target=Nick+Jeans&namespace=&year=&month=-1
[24] http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php?title=Special:Contributions&dir=prev&offset=20110424113822&limit=500&contribs=user&target=Graham+Clarke
[25] http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php?limit=500&tagFilter=&title=Special%3AContributions&contribs=user&target=James+Kay&namespace=&year=&month=-1
[26] http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php?limit=500&title=Special%3AContributions&tagFilter=&contribs=user&target=Andreia+Inamorato+dos+Santos+&namespace=&year=&month=-1
[27] http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php?limit=500&tagFilter=&title=Special%3AContributions&contribs=user&target=Gabriela+Job+Di+Laccio+&namespace=&year=&month=-1

EFQUEL

None so far.

ATiT

11. Sally Reynolds (User:SallyReynolds), user since 1 February 2008: two virtual school entries/updates
12. Nikki Cortoos (User:NikkiCortoos), user since 1 February 2008: large amount of organisation, coordination and updating work on Australia, EU countries and countries in Oceania – and many entries, updates and corrections on virtual schools[28]
13. Tom Levec: major work on Australia, Belgium, Turkey, South Africa, and Kiribati plus many other islands in Oceania[29]

MENON (SCIENTER)

14. Daniela Proli: major updates to eight EU countries (Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain) – and many virtual school entries[30]
15. Cristina Brecciaroli: minor updates on Aruba, Benin, Madagascar, and Mali – plus some virtual school entries[31]

University of Leeds

None so far.

EITF

16. Jüri Lõssenko (User:Jyri): major updates to Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia; and regional reports on Central Asia, Eastern Europe and Yugosphere – and some entries on virtual providers[32]

Tensta

17. Mats Öström: major update to Sweden

[28] http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php?limit=500&tagFilter=&title=Special%3AContributions&contribs=user&target=NikkiCortoos&namespace=&year=&month=-1
[29] http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php?limit=500&tagFilter=&title=Special%3AContributions&contribs=user&target=Tom+Levec&namespace=&year=&month=-1
[30] http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php?limit=500&tagFilter=&title=Special%3AContributions&contribs=user&target=Daniela+Proli+&namespace=&year=&month=-1
[31] http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php?limit=500&tagFilter=&title=Special%3AContributions&contribs=user&target=Cristina+Brecciaroli&namespace=&year=&month=-1
[32] http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php?limit=500&tagFilter=&title=Special%3AContributions&contribs=user&target=Jyri&namespace=&year=&month=-1

Aarhus

18. Asger Harlung: major updates to Denmark and Norway – plus entry on VUC Flex[33]

TIEKE

19. Merja Sjöblom: massive update to Finland and minor update to Åland Islands - and several virtual schools entries.[34]

5.2 Contributions to the wiki from other sources

As of 22 December 2011, there are 118 users registered on the wiki. A few of these are duplicates or for specialist system purposes but there are over 115 distinct users. Of these 36 have been created on or after 1 January 2011, so can be assumed to be interested in VISCED. Most of these have not created or edited any pages but four have done so:

20. Gareth Simpson (Created on 6 June 2011): minor update to a list of e-learning publications
21. Jacqueline Daniell (Created on 27 July 2011) – edited her user page
22. Ignaty (Created on 3 September 2011) – updated the entry on Periplus Home Education
23. Connie Swiderski (Created on 3 November 2011)): updated the entry on Texas Virtual School

This is a rather small number but at least it is a start. We hope that now that we have identified most of the virtual schools in the world, staff from some of them will take a more active role in updating and improving their entries.

The number is also an underestimate. Since the virtual colleges area of VISCED continues what was started in Re.ViCa, a number of contributors to Re.ViCa remain active and are creating material of relevance to VISCED. In particular Ilse op de Beeck (User: IOpdebeeck) of EuroPACE/KU Leuven has updated a number of project entries (e.g. SVEA) of relevance to VISCED.[35]

5.3 Number of accesses

Now follow some simple statistics.

1. The Main Page has been accessed 121,453 times. This is in the four years that the wiki has been active.

[33] http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php?limit=500&tagFilter=&title=Special%3AContributions&contribs=user&target=Asger+Harlung+&namespace=&year=&month=-1
[34] http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php?limit=500&tagFilter=&title=Special%3AContributions&contribs=user&target=Merja+Sj%C3%B6blom&namespace=&year=&month=-1
[35] http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php?limit=500&tagFilter=&title=Special%3AContributions&contribs=user&target=IOpdebeeck&namespace=&year=&month=-1

2. More pertinently to VISCED, the page on Virtual school has been accessed 2,508 times. The entry page VISCED to the VISCED part of the wiki has been accessed 1,958 times. The informative and likely to be popular page on Hispanic America has been accessed 240 times.

5.4 What is envisaged for 2012 in WP2

This issue will be taken up thoroughly in the Progress Report for 2012, but highlights are likely to include:

1. A greater focus on finding more virtual colleges, now that it is believed that the majority of virtual schools have been found.
2. An internal peer review and then an external quality review of the main country reports (i.e. Tier 1), followed by an edit and update of those considered to be valuable to be so improved.
3. A similar but more expeditious analysis of the value of having supraregion reports
4. A reality check across Tier 2 countries so far neglected by the team (e.g. Japan), and in the more developed Tier 3 countries[36] in the Rest of the World to see if virtual schools could be lurking there.

[36] See the "High-income" and "Upper-middle-income" countries

Appendix A – Selected Tier 1 country reports

As a reminder, Tier 1 is the set of countries named specifically in the VISCED proposal as being worthy of study. They include 11 EU countries and 10 countries from the rest of the world, with at least one per continental region.

Each country report on the wiki is quite long and the formatting does not transfer automatically to an elegant Word document. Thus rather than enclose every single Tier 1 report in this Deliverable, we have made two selections:

1. A set of seven EU countries, each the home country of a partner active in WP2
2. A set of four more countries, representing key countries from other continents.

Production note

The production process for creating a Word version of each country report was as follows:

1. First ensure that you are not logged in to the wiki (so that you cannot edit pages)
2. Find the relevant country page.
3. Click on “Contents [hide]” if the Contents list is visible.
4. Click on “Printable version” to avoid including the left-hand column with menus.
5. Save as an HTML page.
6. Now Open the HTML page in Word and Select the Cell in the Table which contains the body of the country report.
7. Copy that Cell and Paste it into the Deliverable.
8. Now Select that Cell again (in the Deliverable) and (in the Layout menu) Select “Convert to Text”, but unclick the option “Convert nested tables” before clicking to Convert.

Not an easy process.

A1. EU home countries of partners

See the following pages. The countries are essentially in alphabetical order as follows:

1. Belgium – from ATiT
2. Denmark – from Aarhus
3. Estonia – from EITF

4. Finland – from TIEKE
5. Greece – from LRF
6. Sweden – from Tensta
7. UK: England – from Sero

Belgium

From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

You can go directly to the Virtual Campuses in Belgium wiki page.

by Nikki Cortoos and Ilse Op de Beeck

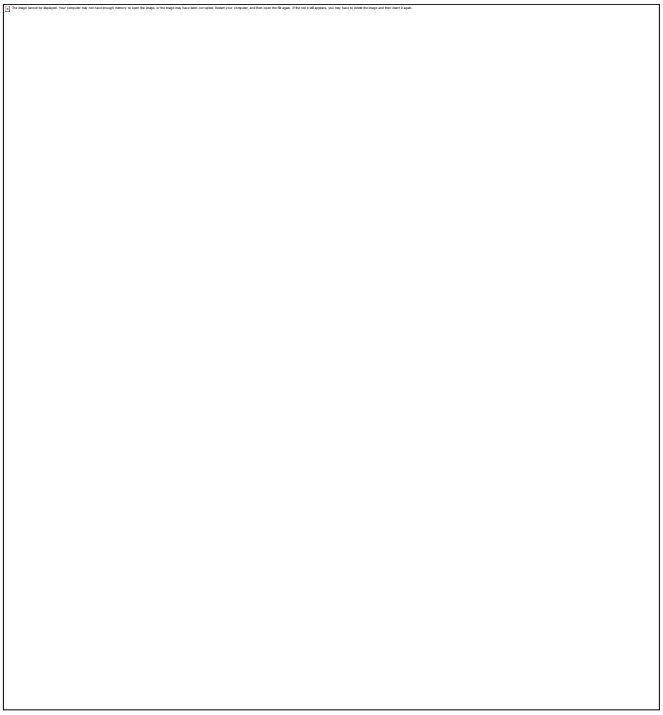
Contents

Partners and Experts in Belgium

AVNet - K.U.Leuven
EuroPACE
Audiovisual Technologies, Informatics and Telecommunications bvba (ATiT)

Note: One of the universities in Belgium is K.U.Leuven.

Belgium in a nutshell



Source: Original gif on: the CIA's "The World Factbook" / Belgium

The Kingdom of Belgium is a country in northwest Europe. It is a founding member of the European Union and hosts its headquarters, as well as those of other major international organizations, including NATO. Belgium covers an area of 30,528 km2 (11,787 square miles) and has a population of about 10.5 million. Belgium is a federal state in Europe with a constitutional monarchy, founded in 1830, and its capital is Brussels.

The citizens of Belgium are called Belgians. Straddling the cultural boundary between Germanic and Latin Europe, Belgium is home for two main linguistic groups, the Dutch speakers/Flemings and the French speakers, mostly Walloons, plus a small group of German speakers. Belgium's two largest regions are the Dutch-speaking region of Flanders in the north, with 59% of the population, and the French-speaking southern region of Wallonia with 31% of the population. The Brussels-Capital Region, officially bilingual, is a mostly French-speaking enclave within the Flemish Region and near the Walloon Region, and has 10% of the population. A small German-speaking Community exists in eastern Wallonia. Belgium's linguistic diversity and related political and cultural conflicts are reflected in the political history and a complex system of government.

This Belgium page is a merger of the information found on the Flanders and Wallonia pages, but you can still visit those separate pages for your convenience.

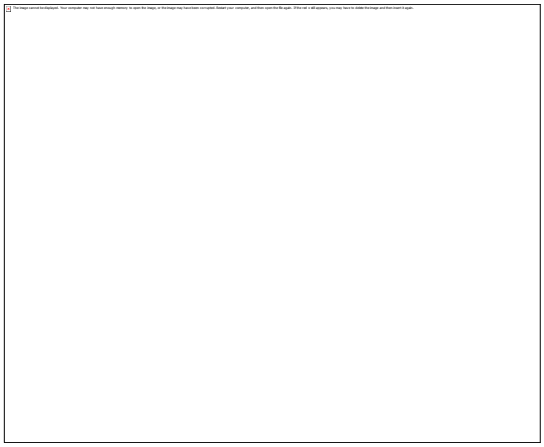
History

The name 'Belgium' is derived from Gallia Belgica, a Roman province in the northernmost part of Gaul that was inhabited by the Belgae, a mix of Celtic and Germanic peoples. Historically, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg were known as the Low Countries, a somewhat larger area than the current Benelux group of states. From the end of the Middle Ages until the 17th century, it was a prosperous centre of commerce and culture. From the 16th century until the Belgian revolution in 1830, many battles between European powers were fought in the area of Belgium, causing it to be dubbed "the battlefield of Europe" and "the cockpit of Europe" - a reputation strengthened by both World Wars. Upon its independence, Belgium eagerly participated in the Industrial Revolution. Its King privately possessed the "Congo Free State" in Southern Africa until it was later annexed by the Kingdom of Belgium as the Belgian Congo" until it became independent as the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The second half of the 20th century was marked by the rise of communal conflicts between the Flemings and the Francophones fuelled by cultural differences on the one hand and an asymmetrical economic evolution of Flanders and Wallonia on the other hand. These still-active conflicts have caused far-reaching reforms of the unitary Belgian state into a federal state. There is constant speculation by observers that this process of devolution might lead to the partition of the country.

Source Wikipedia's page on Belgium

Regions and Communities

Belgium is a double federation of:



Source: Original png on: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Belgium_provinces_regions_striped.png

3 Communities which are responsible for the person-related issues such as education, welfare, public health and culture:

- the Dutch-speaking Community / Vlaamse Gemeenschap: Government, Ministry and Parliamant
- the French-speaking Community / Communauté Française: Government, Ministry and Parliamant
- the German-speaking Community / Deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft: Ministry and Parliament

3 Regions which are responsible for the territorial issues such as economy, infrastructure, agriculture, environment and employment

- the Flemish Region
- the Walloon Region
- the Brussels-Capital Region (officially bilingual)

There are four language areas:

- the Dutch area: the provinces* in Flanders: Antwerp, Limburg, Flemish Brabant, West Flanders, East Flanders
- the French area: the provinces* in Wallonia: Hainaut, Walloon Brabant, Namur, Luxembourg, Liège
- the bilingual area in Brussels-Capital with 19 municipalities
- the German area: the 9 municipalities of the "East Cantons" / Eupen-Malmedy

* The most important or most frequent optional responsibilities of the provinces are education (the provinces organise educational institutions, secondary or higher), culture, social welfare, heritage sites and assets, etc.

Source: The Education System in the Flemish Community of Belgium (PDF - EN - 5 pages), 2006/07

Education in Belgium

Article 24 of the Belgian Constitution (p. 11/60 - EN - PDF lays down the principle of the freedom of education and provides for the existence of state-organised teaching. Within this constitutional framework, two networks of institutions of higher education have developed extensively:

Public institutions set up by the state and administered by the (linguistic) communities, or by the provincial or municipal authorities.
Private institutions of which the majority is *denominational* (such as Roman Catholic) and which receive financial aid from the state, subject to certain conditions. The minority is not affiliated to a particular religion: the Freinet schools, Montessori schools or Steiner schools, which adopt particular educational methods and are also known as '*method schools*'.

For details about education in belgium, visit
http://www.expatarrivals.com/belgium/education-and-schools-in-belgium

Such as referenced in Article 24, "Access to education is free until the end of compulsory education". In Belgium, both primary and secondary education is obligatory.

Level	Age	Year	Compulsory	stages and cycles*	Additional information
	2				
Kindergarten/Nursery/pre-primary / *maternel* (FR) or *kleuteronderwijs* (NL)	3	1		stage 1, 1st cycle	children that are 2 years and 6 months on 30 September can enter Kindergarten
	4	2			
	5	3			
Primary education / *primaire* (FR) or *basisschool/lagere school* (NL)	6	1	c	stage 1, 2nd cycle	*Note*: in the French Community, the schools where Kindergarten and primary education are combined are called *les écoles fondamentale*
	7	2	c		
	8	3	c	stage 2, 3nd cycle	
	9	4	c		
	10	5	c	stage 2, 4nd cycle	
	11	6	c		
Secondary education / *secondaire* (FR) or *secundair/middelbaar* (NL)	12	1	c	stage 3, 5th cycle	general (G) / *algemeen (ASO)* (NL) ; technical (T) / *technisch (TSO)* (NL) ;
	13	2	c		
	14	3	c		

	15	4	c		artistic (A) / *kunst* (KSO) (NL) vocational (P) / *professionnel* (FR) or *beroeps (BSO)* (NL) ; special needs / *buitengewoon (BuSO)* (NL)
	16	5	c		
	17	6	c		
Higher Education / *supérieur* (FR) or *hoger* (NL)	18	1		cycle1: Bachelor (3 yrs)	in Wallonia: Universities, Colleges, Colleges of Arts and Higher Education Institutions of Architecture in Flanders: Universities, University Colleges and Colleges (*Hogescholen*)
	19	2			
	21	3			
	22	4		cycle 2: master (1-2yrs)	
	23	5			

*: stages and cycles

Pre-primary Education

Dutch Speaking Community: kleuteronderwijs
French Speaking Community: enseignement maternelle
German Speaking Community: Kindergarten

Free pre-primary school facilities are provided for children who have reached age two and a half. Where places are limited, priority is given to mothers working full-time. These pre-schools are often attached to a primary school. Attendance is not compulsory but it is very

popular (it is clearly cheaper than other childcare alternatives, for example) and more than 90 percent of children in this age bracket attend. By age five 99 percent of children are in school.

There are few formal lessons. As children get older there are supervised tasks and specialised lessons in subjects such as music, a second language and gym, and everything is done with an emphasis on play.

Special needs education is also provided on this level.

Primary Education or in the:

Dutch Speaking Community: lager onderwijs
French Speaking Community: enseignement primaire
German Speaking Community: Grundschule

Primary school education begins on the 1st September of the year in which a child reaches the age of six (although some children are admitted at age five if they are considered ready) and is free to all. It lasts for six years and a whole range of academic subjects are studied. There is a strong language emphasis. For example schools in the German community must teach French from the first or second year and in Brussels Dutch schools must teach French and French schools must teach Dutch – commune schools start this during the last year of pre-school.

Primary education consists of 3 cycles:

First cycle (years 1 and 2)
Second cycle (years 3 and 4)
Third cycle (years 5 and 6)

Homework is given from an early age and a high level of parental involvement is encouraged.

Special needs education is also provided on this level. Pupils can then go to special needs primary schools or follow integrated education (*geïntegreerd onderwijs (GON)*) in which primary schools and special needs primary schools work together. The pupils that, although they have special needs, are able to take part in ordinary primary schools, can follow some or all lessons and activities there, and this either permanently or for a period of time.

Secondary Education or in the:

Dutch Speaking Community: secundair onderwijs
French Speaking Community: enseignement secondaire
German Speaking Community: Sekundäre Erziehung

Secondary education is also free and begins at around age 12. It lasts for six years and consists of three cycles each lasting two years. Parents may be expected to make a contribution towards the cost of text books.

In the first year of secondary education all pupils follow the same programme. From the second year onwards a range of options can be chosen according to preference and ability. These will lead to education of a general nature or with a more technical, artistic or professional slant. Often schools will specialise in one of these streams or will have different sections for different streams. Within the streams pupils continue to choose from further options throughout secondary school resulting in a broad education weighted towards their preferred subjects or career.

Assessment is ongoing throughout secondary education and students receive a diploma at the end of their studies. For those who have followed a general range of subjects the next step is normally higher education.

Technical students often go to university or college to study related subjects or may start working straight after school. Vocational students typically begin working part-time to complement their studies from age 16 and then move into full-time employment.

Those who have followed the artistic options usually go on to higher education, for example to art colleges or specialist music conservatories but may go to university or college, depending on the options they choose. Some art colleges have a secondary section starting from the third year of secondary school and pupils study for the first two years in a general school.

Special needs education is also provided on this level, pupils then follow special needs secondary education (*buitengewoon secundair onderwijs (BuSO)*.

Doubling (repeating a year)

Children are tested at the end of each year of pre-school, primary and secondary school to decide if they are ready for the next year. The testing takes the form of assessment and supervised tests for younger children and exams for older children. If they are not ready to move up, they repeat the year or "double". The system continues in secondary school, although students are also given an alternative to doubling, which is to go to another study or school form (for instance: from ASO to TSO, ...). Because "doubling" is common, there is usually very little stigma attached to it.

A broad view of the educational landscape in the flanders including general education principles, levels of education, support and quality control, education policies and social developments, as well as useful addresses can be found via the following link: http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/publicaties/eDocs/pdf/107.pdf

More information on legal documents for the French Community can be found on the portal of the circulars, issued by the French Community (FR).

Education Policy in Belgium

The Belgian Constitution stipulates in Article 24 that everyone has the right to education and therefore established compulsory education for children between 6 and 18 years old. Belgium also provides that access to education is free of charge up to the end of secondary education.

Source: the Belgian Constitution (EN - PDF - 60 pages), 2009, - Article 24, p. 11

Primary and secondary education is compulsory for all children that are living on Belgian territory, which includes:

> foreign children must attend school from the 60th day after they are registered in the "aliens' register" (vreemdelingenregister) or the citizen's register (bevolkingsregister) of the city or town they live in
> children without a fixed residence (children living on boats or travel trailers, children of fair or circus organisers or artists, gypsies, ...)

--> sourced from
http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/gidsvoorouders/specifiekesituaties/default.htm#migr

To respect their right to education, special care is also taken that long-term ill children can still follow their lessons, from home or from their hospital.

Two groups organise the educational structure: the public sector (the communes, provinces and communities) and the private sector. In the public sector there are 3 educational networks:

> community schools: neutral on religious, philosophical or ideological convictions
> subsidised publicly run schools: organized by communes and provinces
> subsidised privately run schools: denominational schools and schools which are not affiliated to a particular religion: the Freinet schools, Montessori schools or Steiner schools, which adopt particular educational methods and are also known as 'method schools'.

Education that is organised for and by the government (community education and municipal and provincial education) is known as publicly run education. Recognised education organised on private initiative is called privately run education.

Use of languages in education

As a result of the constitutional reform in Belgium the Dutch-speaking and the French-speaking higher education systems were separated. The Parliaments of the Flemish and French Communities regulate, by federate law, education, with the exception of the setting of the beginning and of the end of compulsory education, minimum standards for the granting of diplomas, the pension scheme (according to Article 127, p. 37). And they regulate by federate law, the use of languages for education in the establishments created, subsidised or recognised by the public authorities (according to Article 129, p. 38). This is the same for the

Parliament of the German-speaking Community (according to Article 130, p. 38). The language of education is mostly conformant to the language area.

Sources:

> the Belgian Constitution (EN - PDF - 60 pages), 2009: Article 127, p. 37 and Article 129 and Article 130, p. 38
> The law of 30 July 1963 (PDF) concerning use of language in education

Objectives of Education

The primary and secondary education missions were stipulated in the Decree of 24 July 2997 (FR).

The Higher Education Acts in Belgium states that the three main tasks of higher education are: cooperation with society; education and research.

Source "The organisation of the academic year in higher education - 2008/09". Chapter 2: Structures of Higher Education Governance ([1] – EN)

Education policy in Flanders

As a result of the constitutional reform in Belgium the Dutch speaking and the French-speaking higher education systems were separated. The Flemish government wanted to do things 'differently and better'. This led to a new higher education legislation in the early 1990s and to a policy based on the principles of deregulation, autonomy and accountability.

The Flemish government wanted to treat all institutions on an equal basis. In general, there are two types of institutions: universities and university colleges or "*hogescholen*". New legislation made the former state universities autonomous and gave them almost the same responsibility as the 'free' universities. In terms of deregulation, autonomy and accountability the same principles were introduced for the hogescholen. This led in conjunction with the merger operation in 1995 to a fundamental change in the relationship between the government and the hogescholen. Former centralised and detailed regulations were replaced by a management regime aimed at achieving a balanced combination of broad autonomy and responsibility for the hogescholen. The higher education regulations as a whole – universities and hogescholen – became more integrated. The previous government wanted to bring the decree on universities (1991) and the decree on the hogescholen (1994) into line with each other without affecting the nature of the university and college education. This integration process has been stimulated even more by the 2003 legislation on the restructuring of higher education in order to implement the Bologna Process.

In terms of policy preparation the following organisations play an important role in Flanders:

> The Flemish Education Council (Vlaamse Onderwijsraad - VLOR), founded in 1991, is the advisory and consultative body for all educational matters. All draft decrees in the field of education must be submitted to the VLOR. Furthermore, the VLOR can give advice to the

Flemish government on its own initiative. The VLOR consists of separate councils for primary, secondary, higher and adult education and a general council, which is composed of representatives of the organising bodies, school staff, parents and socio-economic organisations, university experts and Education Department representatives.

The Flemish Socio-Economic Council (Sociaal-Economische Raad van Vlaanderen - SERV), composed of representatives of employers and employees, gives advice on all draft decrees, including those in the field of education. The SERV plays an important role in the relationship between education and the world of work.

The Flemish Interuniversity Council (Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad - VLIR) is an autonomous body of public utility with its own corporate status. It acts as a defender of the universities and as an advisor to the Flemish government on university issues (consultation, advice and recommendations).

Similar for the institutions of non-university HE there is the Flemish Council for hogescholen ([VLHORA), founded during the academic year 1996-1997, represents the hogescholen and gives advice and makes proposals to the Flemish government with regard to the education in the hogescholen. At the same time it can provide consultation among the hogescholen.

The National Union of Students in Flanders (VVS), the umbrella organisation of student unions at Flemish universities and hogescholen, gives advice at the request of the Flemish government.

Education policy in Wallonia

The HEIs in the Flemish Community of Belgium are free to draft long-term strategic or development plans and they are free to take the governmental priorities into account or not, as they decide.

The decree defining higher education in the French Community of Belgium provides the higher education objectives and the mission of the institutions.

In the German-speaking Community of Belgium, the mission and strategic priorities of the *Autonome Hochschule* were not established by the institution, but by official decree in 2005.

Source “The organisation of the academic year in higher education - 2008/09”. Chapter 2: Structures of Higher Education Governance ([2] – EN)

In terms of policy preparation the following organisations play an important role in Wallonia:

The Federation of the French-speaking Students in Belgium / *Fédération Des Etudiants Francophones* (FEF) represents local student unions. It engages in debates and defends ideas around the central concept of the democratization of HE. This concept includes free access, participation of students in the decisions regarding them, adequate public financing, a reflection about pedagogy and the quality of teaching in HE. Source European Students’ Union (ESU) web site (EN)

The Council of Rectors of the French-speaking universities of Belgium / *Conseil des Recteurs des universités de la Communauté française de Belgique* (CREF)

The Council of the Organising Powers of Official Public Funded Education / *Conseil des Pouvoirs organisateurs de l'Enseignement Officiel Neutre Subventionné* (regional and local level)] (FR)
The Federation of the Independent subsidized "Free" Schools / *La Fédération des Etablissements Libres Subventionnés Indépendants* (FELSI) (FR), including HEIs
The Federation of Catholic Higher Education / *Fédération de l'enseignement supérieur catholique* (FédESuC) (FR)
The Inter-University Council of the French Community of Belgium / *Le Conseil Interuniversitaire de la Communauté française de Belgique* (CIUF), created by the Decree of 9 January 2003, is a public agency comprising all nine universities and university faculties of the French Community. CIUF's main missions are to:

- submit opinions on any matter related to university education;
- organize the dialogue between academic institutions and vis-à-vis students and other institutions of higher education;
- promote inter-university and inter-faculty collaboration;
- ensure the representation of the higher education institutions of the French Community in various national or international institutions.

Schools in Belgium

A list of all schools in in Belgium can be found via
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_schools_in_Belgium

Schools in the Brussels Region

A list of all schools from nursery schools to universities in the region of Brussels can be found via the link below. The educational opportunities in Brussels are unlimited since Brussels is a bilingual city with both Dutch and French as the official languages. All schools in Brussels teach in either one or the other and each one teaches the basics of the other language. A center of international presence in the post-war period, Brussels has a number of international schools, among them the International School of Brussels and the three European Schools for children of parents working in the EU institutions. These provide education along British, American, French, German, Dutch, Scandinavian and even Japanese lines. Brussels is home to several universities and two drama schools. In addition, there is a choice of nine major Business Schools where students receive a quality training and education. For more information and list of all pre-schools, primary schools, secondary schools, universities, colleges, polytechniques, art schools and other vocational institutions, go to: http://www.europe-cities.com/en/588/belgium/brussels/schools/

Nursery Schools in Wallonia

In the French speaking Community, kindergarten or nursery education is for children between the age of 2.5 to 5 years old. This period of education is not compulsory but it helps to develop social skills in the children and also allows the identification of potential difficulties and disabilities in children before they become older and get into primary school.

In Wallonia, the nursery is part of the pedagogical continuity of the three stages of learning objectives included in developing core skills from kindergarten, primary and then finally secondary education.

For a list of nursery schools in the French speaking Community, visit the following site:

http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=23836&navi=149

Primary Schools in Wallonia

Both pre-school (nursery) and primary education in Wallonia are seen as very fundamental even though the former is not compulsory. Compulsory primary education is between the ages of 6 and 12 years of age and is based mainly on the teaching of language, reading and mathematics. It culminates with the 'Certificate of Basic Education' (CEB). This certificate gives access to secondary education.

In Wallonia, learning a second language other than French is compulsory from the fifth year. In the Brussels region, learning a second language starts from the third year of primary school.

Some kindergarten and primary schools teach some subjects in another language other than French. This is part of what is known as the 'Language Immersion Programme'. For more information about the immersion programme and a list of schools carrying out the programme, visit the following link:

http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=23801&navi=33

A list of all secondary schools is also available via the following link:

http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=23836&navi=149

You can also find a list of all school and public holidays observed by all nursery, primary and secondary schools in wallonia on the same link as above.

Secondary Schools in Wallonia

For a list of all schools in Wallonia including all French speaking schools in Wallonia, visit the following links:

http://www.liensutiles.org/ecolebe.htm
http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_des_%C3%A9coles_secondaires_en_Belgique
http://www.wallonie.be/fr/citoyens/apprendre-et-se-former-tout-au-long-de-la-vie/enseignement-secondaire/index.html
http://www.enseignons.be/actualites/2011/04/06/secondaire-liste-ecoles-completes/

Independent Private Schools in Belgium

Independent private schools in Belgium are mostly international schools serving the expatriate community. However, some Belgian children also attend the schools. Instruction is usually in English. The schools typically draw students from many countries so that children receive a truly global perspective. Some of the private schools in Belgium include the Antwerp International School, Brussels International School, St John's International School, Brussels Junior Academy, Da Vinci International School, British International School. There are a good number of British International schools. A list of independent private schools in Belgium can be obtained via the following links:

http://www.independentschools.com/belgium/
http://privateschool.about.com/od/belgiumschools/Belgian_Schools_Online.htm

A list of all international schools in belgium is found via the following link:

http://www.expatarrivals.com/belgium/brussels/international-schools-in-brussels

British Schools in Belgium

British schools in Belgium are established as independent international schools with each school developing and following its own mission. Most normally follow British National Curriculum and offer a broad based educational program. The provide education integrated with childcare provision, creating a foundation for individual development and a sound basis for life-long learning. Capitalising on small class sizes, allowing a high degree of individual attention, most British schools in belgium success in an atmosphere where pupils and students feel cared for and valued. There are strong French language and music programs in some of the schools, excellent Information Technology facilities, Special Needs provision and a wide range of extracurricular activities.

They normally admit children of all nationalities, cultures and religions affiliations and is ideal for children who just relocated to Belgium. Most British Schools in Belgium are members of the European Council of International Schools and their programs usually include French, Dutch, English, Information Technology, Art, Music, Swimming, amongst others. The fees are usually very expensive ranging from EUR 6,000 to EUR 17,000.

For a list of all British Schools in Belgium from pre-Kindergarten /toddlers - 18 months to 2½ years, kindergarten nursery - 3 to 5 years, reception - 4 to 5 years, primary - 5 to 11 years, secondary middle school and secondary high school, visit the following link:
http://www.expatica.ru/education/school/british-schools-1427_8454.html

Special Needs Schools

Children with speical needs and disabilities and/or learning difficulties are catered for within mainstream schools. However, there are separate specialist schools available and in the case of severe disability, children may be taught at home or be exempt from compulsory schooling. Both inclusion and equality is Belgium's approach in dealing with the issue of special needs in education and there is an unwavering commitment to giving every child the right to an education which maximises their potential. For a complete information on and list

of special needs schools, visit the following website: http://belgium.angloinfo.com/countries/belgium/specialneeds.asp or visit the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training web page on special needs education

Special Needs School Type 4: education for children with a physical disability (also financed by the government)

An example of such a state-financed school is the physical rehabilitation centre for children and youth Pulderbos where special needs, secondary education is given to patients staying temporarily at the centre - in collaboration with the patient's own school. Nursery and primary education is also given there, but this is financed by the state as a type 5 school:

Special Needs School Type 5: education for children staying in a hospital or institution (also financed by the government)

Hospital Schools: I learn at the hospital is an umbrella non-profit organisation consisting of Belgian hospital schools and specialised institutions that provides education to long-term ill, hospitalised children at nursery, primary and secondary education level. This is subsidised by the government as it provides special needs education type 5 (long-term ill children and hospitalised children).

Video chat session from home to class: Bednet, as mentioned below, is a Flemish virtual initiative in which primary and secondary school pupils that have a long-term illness, can still participate in class and connect with their classmates through video-chat sessions.

1:1 education at home

- Temporary Education At Home (*Tijdelijk Onderwijs Aan Huis (TOAH)* in Dutch) enables temporary primary and secondary education for children that are not hospitalised but absent from school for more than 21 days or on a weekly basis due to illness or an accident. The teacher or a staff member goes to the child's home to teach for 4 hours "class time".
- Permanent Education At Home (*Permanent onderwijs aan huis (POAH)* in Dutch) provides education to children who cannot follow the special needs primary or secondary education on a permanent base and due to their special needs, but can they learn though certain "lesson hours" given at their own home.
- School and Illness (*School & Ziekzijn vzw (S&Z)* in Dutch), provides 1:1 education at home on a voluntary basis (transport costs are charged)

Relevant initatives/organisations are: the Platform for Education for Ill Children in Flanders (or *Platform van Onderwijs aan Zieke Leerlingen in Vlaanderen (PoZiLiV) in Dutch)*, the foundation Ivens-Boons Fonds in Mechelen (Flanders), ...

Initiatives for underprivileged people (young as well as old), prisoners, ... or "those left out"

Auxilia is a volunteer organisation in Flanders and Wallonia that enables 1:1 education for underprivileged people or for people that are being left out by existing literacy courses, primary or for who second-chance education is not within their reach or fit to their specific needs. Students can be young people preparing for an exam for the "central exam commission", special needs students that have specific educational interests, prisoners, ... and volunteer teachers then provide personal and customised lessons (on location if needed but transportation costs are charged). The initiative is also present in Spain and France.

French school in Belgium The Lycée Français International (French International School of Antwerp) is a private school located in Antwerp, Belgium that follows the French curriculum, has a covenant with the French National Education Ministry and pupils graduating from secondary school receive the French degree « baccalauréat ». Instruction languages vary between (combinations of) French, English and Dutch.

Homeschooling

in Flanders
for information on Wallonia, you can read more here

Further and Higher education

In Dutch: hoger onderwijs

In French: enseignement superieure

Higher education in Belgium is organised by the Flemish and French communities via state or private institutions (often linked to religious bodies). German speakers typically enrol in French institutions or pursue their studies in Germany.

There are six universities in Belgium which offer a full range of subjects. In most cases students are free to enrol at any institution as long as they have their qualifying diploma. However, those wishing to continue their studies in medicine, dentistry, arts and engineering sciences may face stricter entrance controls including additional examinations.

The government sets the registration fee for each establishment and reviews it annually. There are three fee levels depending on the student's financial situation and that of their family.

The higher education system in Belgium follows a Bachelor/Master process with a Bachelor's degree obtained after three years and a Master's degree after a further one or two years. Both universities and colleges can award these degrees.

Students from outside Belgium coming to study in one of these establishments will have to prove that they have the appropriate entrance qualifications and that they can financially support themselves during their studies.

In higher education, the academic year begins between mid-September and 1 October, depending on the course.

Universities and Polytechnics in Belgium

Remark: Polytechnics are called University Colleges or "Hogescholen" in Flanders.

On 4 April 2003 the Flemish government approved the Decree on the restructuring of higher education in Flanders. A new qualification structure was introduced. One-cycle programmes have been converted to the level of bachelor's degree. Two-cycle programmes in hogescholen are academic education: academic bachelor courses and master courses in association with a university. The system should be regarded as a binary system: professional higher education at the 'hogescholen' and academic higher education at the universities and at the hogescholen (associations). The 'hogescholen' can award academic degrees in cooperation with a university. Still the universities have the monopoly of awarding doctor's degrees.One of the consequences is that co-operation between universities and hogescholen is increase considerably with the development of associations. Universities and university colleges cooperate intensively, especially in the field of research, in the Associations. These are formed by one university and at least one university college. As a third kind, the Flemish government has recognised a number of "registered" institutes of higher education, which mostly issue specialised degrees or provide education mainly in a foreign language. The educational provision in Flemish tertiary education is laid down in the Higher education register that contains all the accredited higher education programmes in Flanders. There are 39 recognised Higher Education Institutions. The Universities and Colleges are divided into 5 associations. The registered Institutions are not a member of an Association. A few tertiary education institutes are not regulated by the corresponding laws on tertiary education. The Faculty of Protestant Theology in Brussels and the Evangelical Theological Faculty (in Heverlee award degrees in Protestant Theology. They are recognised as private institutes. Whatever their origin, all institutions mentioned above are officially recognised by the Flemish authorities. The following postgraduate institutions have the same status:

Institute of Development Policy and Management,
Institute of Tropical Medicine,
Vlerick Leuven-Gent Management School

We refer to the overview of all Flemish HEI's to get a complete overview.

In Flanders, the following higher education courses are provided:

Bachelor courses(Professional bachelor courses and Academic bachelor courses)
Master courses
Further training programmes
Postgraduates and updating and in-service training courses
Doctoral programmes

Higher professional education exclusively consists of professionally oriented bachelor courses, which are only organised at colleges of higher education. Academic education comprises bachelor and master courses, which are provided by universities. Also colleges of higher education belonging to an association are allowed to provide academic education.

Adult Education In Flanders there are several publicly funded education, training and developmental provision schemes for adults. Within part-time adult education, 3 different actors can be distinguished:

1. continuing education (OSP): with more than 250,000 course participants, continuing education is the most important pillar in adult education. Continuing education is provided in centres for adult education which are recognised and funded by the authorities.
2. supervised individual study (BIS): BIS has discontinued. It is however published in our research list.
3. adult basic education: the 29 centres for basic adult education try to provide a broad and varied range of basic education programmes: languages, mathematics, social orientation, ICT, introduction in French and English and stimulation and student counselling activities.

In contrast with continuing education and BIS, courses in basic education are free of charge.

Lifelong Learning

On 31 March 2003, the Training and Alignment Information Service /Dienst Informatie Vorming en Afstemming (DIVA) was launched. DIVA co-ordinates the educational provision for adults in Flanders. DIVA facilitates the co-operation between the policy fields Education and Training, Employment, Culture and Economy. DIVA's partners are the educational networks, Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Agency (VDAB), Flemish Institute for the Self-Employed (VIZO) and Support Centre for Socio-cultural Work (Socius). These partners represent respectively adult education (including further higher education, OSP, basic education, BIS and DKO), the training courses set up by VDAB, by Syntra and socio-cultural adult work. An awareness-raising campaign was launched: http://www.wordwatjewil.be ("Become what you want")

Universities and Polytechnics in Wallonia

In Wallonia distinctions are made between:

> University education at Universities (*Universités*) & University-Faculties (*Facultés Universitaires*). Scientific research is an important aspect of university education. The universities, recognised and subsidised by the French Community of Belgium, are grouped together in the form of university academies or associations.
> Non-university education at Colleges (*Hautes Ecoles*), which are equivalents of the Flemish "Hogescholen", Institutes of Higher Education, Colleges of Art/Art Academies (*Les écoles supérieures des arts*) and Higher Institutes of Architecture (*Les Instituts Supérieur d'Architecture*).

We refer to the overview of all Walloon HEIs to get a complete overview.

A list of all art schools in both the Flanders and Wallonia is available via the following link:

http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_des_%C3%A9coles_d'art_en_Belgique

Education reform

Schools

Post-secondary

The language partition in Belgium is still apparent to this day. The language, used in education in **Belgium** today, depends on the language area the institution is located in, as mentioned in Belgium in a Nutshell / Communities & Regions: you have the obvious division of the 3 language-defined communities and the capital Brussels, which is bilingual. The dominant languages in the HEIs in these separate entities are accordingly.

Higher education reform in Wallonia

Recent mergers in 2007-2008 created the The University-College of the Province of Liege / La Haute Ecole de la Province de Liège (HEPL) from Rennequin Sualem, Léon-Eli Troclet and André Vésale, as well as the new The University-College of Namur / La Haute Ecole de Namur from The Catholic University-College of Namur / Haute école namuroise catholique (HENAC) and University-College of Teaching of Namur / la Haute école d'enseignement supérieur de Namur (IESN). In 2008/2009, 29 University-Colleges became 25: La Haute Ecole libre mosane (HELMo) was the result of the merger of la Haute Ecole mosane d'Enseignement supérieur (HEMES) and la Haute Ecole ISELL. Future mergers are also being planned.

Source http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=23811&navi=2537

The Bologna Process in Belgium

The Decree of 31 March 2004 defined the Higher Education for Belgium and promoted its integration into the European area of higher education and universities refinancing.

The Bologna Process has stimulated Flanders in a move towards greater internationalisation. The concept of internationalisation has changed from a focus on the individual to a focus on the 'system level', namely the formal structures of higher education. A Flemish credit system based on the ECTS and a Diploma Supplement were already implemented in the early 1990s. More recent changes are:

implementation of a bachelor and master structure,
accreditation system in co-operation with the Netherlands,
more flexible study paths.

The Bologna Process lead to some significant changes in the Belgian educational system, including in the French Community:

The ECTS (European Credit Transfer System), in which a "credit" is a unit corresponding to the time spent by the student on a learning activity within a programme of studies in a given discipline (a study year is reference point@: 60 credits)..

Bachelor-master structure or *"baccalauréat-maîtrise"* structure:

- First cycle - the bachelors with a minimum of three years of study (180 credits)
- Second cycle - the master degree with one to four additional years after obtaining a bachelors degree.
- Third cycle: the doctorate, which only applies to university education and is accessible to students who have completed at least 300 credits.

Cooperation to ensure the quality of higher education etc.

Mobility of the students and academic staff

As mentioned earlier, the French Community now distinguishes between universities (offering bachelor, master and doctoral courses) and higher education outside the universities (offering only bachelor courses): colleges (Hautes Ecoles), arts colleges, and institutes of architecture.

Sources

Information and presentations on The Bologna Declaration at the Enseignement.be web site
The Wallonia-Brussels Community and the European Higher Education Area", 1 web page (English) by StudyInBelgium.be.

Relevant Documents

Re.ViCa wiki page on the Bologna Process
The Bologna Process - State of the art in the French Community of Belgium (DOC)
Towards the European Higher Education Area - Bologna Process - National Reports 2004 – 2005 - Belgium -Flemish Community (PDF)

Administration and finance

Schools

Post-secondary

For Belgian and European students, higher education is financed to a very large extent by the public authorities.

Funding in Flanders

The Flemish higher education system is predominantly a public funded system. The Ministry of Education and Training directly funds the HEIs. There is no intermediate independent statutory body.

The public funding system distinguishes three main funding streams:

- the first flow: a core recurrent funding for teaching and research which covers costs of staff, material, equipment, buildings and social facilities of students;

- the second flow: an additional funding for basic research and a funding for basic research allocated by the research council and a funding allocated by the federal state (research networks of universities of both linguistic communities);

- the third flow: public funding for specific research programmes developed by the government, other public organisation, EU, cities and the provinces: such as for justice, social security, energy, sustainability, …. There are also funds for policy oriented research linked to the main policy domains.

Tuition Fees in Belgium

Every year, students must pay a registration fee. University enrolment fees were laid down in a clause in the Law of 27 July 1971 on the financing and supervision of university institutions. Subject to fulfilment of certain educational and financial conditions, students can benefit from student grants or loans. This assistance is supplemented by other benefits such as low-priced meals, assistance granted by welfare services linked to the universities, season tickets for transport, etc.

Source French Community - Structures of education, vocational training and adult education systems in Europe, 2003 Edition – PDF – EN

Tuition fees in Flanders

In Flanders, the tuition fees are low compared to many other countries: - maximum 100 euro for students from the lower socio-economic background (students who are eligible for a grant – about 25% of the student population); - maximum 515 euro for the other students; there is a deduction for students whose parental income is a little bit above the eligible income limit).

The HEIs can raise tuition fees for non-EU students and for advanced master study programme in order to cover the costs of attracting specialists (these programmes are also internationally oriented).

Every student who qualifies for study financing can be supported financially for two bachelors, a master, a preparation programme, a bridging programme and a teacher training programme. As study paths have become more flexible, so too has study financing been made more flexible. A system of study credits has replaced the study year system. The study financing amount is linked to the number of study credits for which the student is enrolled. The new decree extends the possibilities of taking study financing beyond Flanders into the wider Higher Education Space. In the past funding could only be taken across the border if students opted for foreign studies that were not provided in Flanders.

Relevant source on the legal framework is the Decree of 5 August 1995 (FR) established the general organisation of Higher Education in the University-Colleges and was amended by the

[3] Decree of 30 June 2006 which modernised the operation and the finances of the University-Colleges.

Tuition Fees in Wallonia In the French Community of Belgium the amounts of tuition fees are determined by the central education authorities. Donations made to HEIs may be the object of tax relief for donors.

Source "The organisation of the academic year in higher education - 2008/09" Chapter 4: Private Funds Raised By Higher Education Institutions (PDF – EN)

The amount of the registration fee varies depending on the higher education establishment and the type of programme followed. For example, for the academic year 2008-2009, the registration fee for Belgian and EU students is set as follows to register with:

> A university HEI: € 811.00.
> An non-university HEI: from € 165,03 to € 428,56, depending on the duration of the course and if a degree will be obtained during the academic year.
> Non-EU students are required to pay additional annual fees, of which the sum amounts to around € 1,500.00 for the first cycle and € 2,000.00 for the second and third cycles.

Sources

> Study in Belgium - Registration fees (EN)
> minerval rates 2007-2008 (FR)

Costs

In the French Community, the unit costs established per student correspond to a normative cost per student, which is established by considering various factors such as, for example, optimal student/staff ratios and other standardised efficiency measures used to calculate what the costs per student ought to be, rather than what they are on an actual or average basis. The French Community of Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany and Malta use an approach based essentially on input in the award of basic funding for research.

While in the German-speaking Community of Belgium, a new funding system for operational costs at the only HEI (Autonome Hochschule) is being prepared and will be applied from 2009/10. Initiatives in the fields of training and research, taken by this HEI since 2005, can be taken into account for the annual lump sum.

Source "The organisation of the academic year in higher education - 2008/09." Chapter 3: Direct Public Funding Of Higher Education Institutions (PDF - EN)

Students who enrol in higher non-university education must pay fees (the minerval). The minimum payment is set by regulations (there are special fees for certain foreign students). Subject to certain pedagogical and financial conditions, students can be awarded study grants or loans. The forms of assistance offered also include other benefits, such as low-cost meals,

assistance by the social services connected with hautes écoles, season tickets for transport, etc.

Grants

1. The Wallonia-Brussels Community grants: grants can be awarded by the French Community of Belgium and by the universities. Web site: Wallonia-Brussels International (WBRI)
2. The European Union grants: grants are also awarded within the framework of European programmes :
    1. The SOCRATES/ERASMUS and LEONARDO programmes
    2. The ERASMUS MUNDUS programme
    3. The ALBAN grant programme for students from Latin America. In 2002, the European Commission adopted this programme.
3. The Grants of the University Agency of Francophony targeting students, teachers and researchers

Source StudyInBelgium: Financial aspects

Relevant Sources for Wallonia: Financial aspects](FR) on Enseignement.be, with subpages on school fees (FR), social benefits (FR), discount on public transport subscriptions (FR)

Quality assurance, inspection and accreditation

Schools

Post-secondary

In Flanders

Assessing the quality of the services that universities provide has become an overriding priority. The Quality Assessment is different in Wallonia and Flanders.

Quality assessment in Flemish higher education is organised at different levels

1. The decretal internal self-evaluation.

2. An external assessment of a particular programme (or cluster of programmes), starting from those self-evaluation reports, carried out by external assessment panels which are coordinated by the Council of Flemish University Colleges, (Vlaamse Hogescholenraad – VLHORA) (www.vlhora.be) and the Flemish Interuniversity Council (Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad – VLIR) (www.vlir.be).

Accreditation by the Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation (Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie – NVAO), which starts from the assessment carried out by the quality-assurance agency. When positively assessed, programmes are accredited for a period of eight academic years. However, when the NVAO issues a negative decision, institutions

may apply for temporary accreditation which is valid for a period of one year and which can be extended twice (research.

In exchange for greater autonomy Flemish universities and hogescholen have implemented a system of internal and external quality assessment. The aim is to improve the quality of study programs. The government has made the institutions themselves responsible for creating the appropriate means for doing this. The so-called "visitations" consist, firstly, of a very important self-assessment (on the basis of a detailed guide) and secondly, the visit and assessment (on the basis of interviews) by an external commission which draws up the final report. As laid down by decree, a visitation for each study program must take place at least once every 8 years. For universities, the first round was completed in 2001; a new round started in 2002 (for non-university tertiary education, a new round started in 2004). Recommendations are, generally speaking, acted upon quite well by the individual institution in question.

At the institutional level, the quality assessment with regard to teaching primarily concerns the evaluation of the individual courses.

The students' assessment of teaching performance takes the form of a standardised questionnaire, to be filled in anonymously, which provides information regarding, for example, the teaching materials and methods used, the match between the content and the final objectives of the course, the teaching style, etc. Finally, the students may add general comments (such as suggestions, strengths and weaknesses of the course) by means of open questions.

Although the educational authorities in Flanders are greatly in favor of collective research assessments,quality assurance with regard to research is at present mainly the responsibility of the individual universities. The Department of Education has, however, recently commissioned an evaluation of the universities' research management and quality assurance processes, while the universities themselves were asked to report on their experiences with regard to the research policy management of the authorities.As laid down by decree, a systematic research assessment by each individual university, resulting in a public report, must be carried out at least once every 8 years. From 1999 onwards, most universities have been carrying out bibliometric studies on research output on the basis of publications and its visibility in the natural and (bio)medical sciences. Recently, pilot studies have also been commissioned in some domains of the humanities and social sciences (linguistics, economics, law). Furthermore, self-assessment reports at the level of individual research teams, supplemented by data on commissioned research and output of the teams, are regularly used in internal and external peer reviews. Only one university (Free University of Brussels – VUB) is at present running a systematic research assessment program consisting of complementary bibliometric studies and on site peer review.

In Wallonia

Quality Assessment in the Walloon Higher Education is arranged by The Decree of 8 March 2007, which created a Pedagogical Support and Advice Service for the education organised by the French Community. On 1 September 2007 the decree was enforced, reforming the

General Inspectorate Service, which is headed by a General Coordinator under the authority of the Director General of the General Administration of Education and Scientific Research. Some of its Inspection Services are also for Higher Education (Enseignement supérieur) such as the Inspection Service of Social Welfare Education (FR) and the Inspection Service of the Arts Education (FR). On the web site Enseignement.be you can find an overview of the several inspection divisions: The annual administration: inspection (FR). Sources

http://www.restode.cfwb.be/pgens/sup/superieur.htm?i=mEtsitem_4
http://www.restode.cfwb.be/pgens/org_cf/insp/inspection.htm

The Agency for the Evaluation of the Quality of Higher Education (*l'Agence pour l'Evaluation de la Qualité dans l'Enseignement supérieur*) was created by the Decree of 14 November 2002 and is organised or subsidised by the French Community.

Information society

In Belgium, the development of the e-learning knew a notable evolution since the beginning of the years 2000, under the impulse of several public funding, of regional, national or European origin. The large universities of the country have all internal teams in charge of stimulating and adapting existing course to e-learning platforms; some of them have even created innovating platforms now used worldwide; others play an important part in the definition of public policies related to e-learning use, especially concerning training for the unemployed and workers in activity. Common research projects, carried on by public authorities and research centres aim at exploring specific dimensions of e-learning practices, such as the motivation of the participants to continue a course, barriers to the adoption, etc., and to draw some the conclusions useful for the general diffusion of the tools. Their exists a very differentiated uses of e-learning between institutions, reflecting both particular internal dynamics, and choices of platforms and, therefore, training strategies. We refer for the complete list to the "Virtual campus Initiatives list beneath this page.

Contributing to the development of e-learning is also very present in other universities, such that of Universiteit van Gent and Vrije Universiteit Brussels which collaborate very narrowly in the development of the open source e-learning platform called “Dokeos”. This platform has been based initially on the Claroline source code but is now having its own way. The Dokeos solution is currently used in many institutions, and is controlled at the present time by a private company based in Brussels. The software is targeted either to university and high schools uses but also other diversified customers (administrations, companies, projects, etc).

If the e-learning forms now part of the life of all the Belgian universities, this mode of training also gradually penetrated the activity of other training operators, such as the organizations of vocational training. Those are often helped by the university research centers to develop their strategies, to conceive and coordinate projects, to provide support in the development of contents.

The principal actors on the matter are the public organizations in charge of training for the unemployed. The practice of self-tuition indeed constitutes a traditional tool often used

historically as a mean of training. Since the end of the year 2006, the Walloon Agency of Telecommunication (AWT), became the public authority in charge of the global coordination of the e-learning offer for the Walloon region. The AWT carry on this activity within the framework of a regional program (program Prométhée II), whose objective is to develop economic activity through the ICT appropriation by the greatest number. This program gathers the DG of the research of the Walloon region (DGTRE), Forem and the Centers of competences specialized in ICT.

Similar strategies are also pursued by the VDAB – Vlaasmse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling in Beoepsopleiding – and the ORBEM – Office Régional Bruxellois de l'Emploi –, both in charge of training for the unemployed for the Flemish and Brussels region, although their specific contexts (in particular the kind of grid of centers of competences) differ. The platforms of development selected are also different (Lotus CMS for the VDAB; NetG for ‚Brussels Formation (ORBEM)), which makes the exchange of contents difficult.

Connectivity

BELNET is the Belgian national research network that was established in 1993 as part of the Federal Science Policy Office. With its network, that has an extremely high capacity, BELNET guarantees Belgian universities, recognised research centers, and educational establishments the very best possibilities with regard to Internet connection and use of the research network. Since 1995, Belgian public bodies and departments can also make use of the services of BELNET.

At present, approximately 625.000 end users in more than 185 Belgian institutions have a high-speed Internet connection via BELNET.

In addition, BELNET manages the Belgian Internet exchange BNIX ("Belgian National Internet Exchange"). This node is a centralised infrastructure that enables Internet Service Providers (ISPs) active in the Belgian market to exchange traffic between one another. Thanks to BNIX, the traffic between Belgian Internet users does not have to make a detour over any foreign countries.

Relevant organisations

RESTODE is the pedagogical server/portal, organised by the French Community of Belgium. It is the acronym for (in French) *RÉSeau Télématique de l'Organisation Des Études* (Telematic resources for the organisation of education) and contributes, through its own resources and the Internet, to the realisation and implementation of educational and pedagogical projects in the French Community's educational field. One of its objectives is to encourage the development and use of ICT applied to education. It proposes among others to provide a data base with pedagogical documentation (pedagogical resources such as articles, a list of pedagogical servers by country and notebooks for different subject matters).

Source http://www.restode.cfwb.be

ICT in education initiatives

ICT Initiatives in the French Community - 'The WIN Project'

The Walloon government in June 1996 passed the Win Project (Wallonie Intra Net), initiated by the Ministry of National and Regional Development, Equipment and Transport. In July 1997, its implementation phase agreement was signed. In November of the same year, the telecommunications chapter of the 'Complementary Regional Political Declaration', published by the Walloon government in November 1997, introduced a very precise program of action, which aimed to develop the use of telecommunication services as well as the cultural integration of ICT into the social and economic life of Wallonia.

In February 1998, the Walloon Region signed an agreement of cooperation with the French Community and the German Community. The agreement was based on the following principles:

Belgium is intent on boosting its economy;
The development of telecommunications is a major objective of this policy;
The effective implementation of this policy requires young people to be trained in the use of ICT;
The use of ICT by students, within different schools, is a new resource for learning and a necessary condition for a policy of equity.

The agreement was thought to require the following to meet the imminent changes:

Active support to be given to providing computer equipment throughout schools, so allowing each student to be trained in the use of ICT;
The training of personnel, including one resource-person for each school;
The establishment of educational servers so that each school has access to Internet;
The establishment of one organization to supervise the deployment of equipment, and to ensure the development of this equipment. This work also required re-evaluating and renewing materials intended for teaching and learning purposes.

ICT in Primary and Secondary Schools in Wallonia

In 1998, Minister/President of the French Community both in Wallonia and in the Brussels Region finalised a plan to provide ICT facilities and the training of young people in the use of new information and communication technologies, through the famous Win Project (Wallonie Intra Net). A resource person for this purposes was appointed for each school in the both regions (Wallonia and Brussels) not only as a priority in boosting the economy, but also as compulsory incorporation into the education system. Therefore, the main aim is the determination to develop a policy that guarantees equal opportunities and ensuring that all pupils and students can secure access to ICT during the time of their education.

The strategy used is quite innovative. It is not the introduction of ICT as a core subject, but rather the incorporation of ICT into the vary many different subjects and disciplines, teacher

training and other professional and vocational trainings, as well as the provision of multimedia equipments.

Each region, Wallonia and Brussels, provides computers and telecommunication equipments to their respective schools and the idea was that they were also going to maintain and provide insurance for them for three years against theft, damage and deterioration.

In Wallonia, this scheme was originally managed by the Ministry of Technical Equipment and Transport (MET) while in Brussels it was controlled by the Computer Center for the Region of Brussels (CIRB). The private partner in this initiative, Belgacom, offers preferential rates for internet access to schools via I-line.

The French Community continues to implement a scheme to provide all primary and secondary schools with enough multimedia and e-learning equipments. Since 2001, almost all primary and secondary schools in Wallonia have ICT and multimedia equipments. All secondary schools have also been able to secure free access to the internet via the Information Processing Centre's intranet network and with the major help through a partnership with Belgacom. In 2000, there was an agreement between the French Community and Belgacom which sought to provide 1665 schools with an I-line for two years at an annual cost of EUR 245 and similar initiatives have continued to date making internet connection in secondary schools permanent.

An official training programme of computer science for primary school teachers already existed as far back as 1985 for teachers of grades 7 to 9 because the implementation of ICT programs in Belgium-French schools was given a high priority. Today, there is almost a 100% teacher computer knowlege for teachers in primary and secondary schools making the implementation and incorporation of ICT in teaching methodology for various subjects easier.

The Cyber Media Center (CMC) Concept

The Win Project supported the creation within each school of a Cyber Media Center fully equipped for individual and collective use for both students and teachers. The CMC is also equipped with projectors, video conference cameras to aid e-learning and distance education, a TV set, an Internet decoder as well as servers allowing access to the common internal network. It also made available a bank of CD-ROMs and other softwares including a web navigator and e-mail access for all students and teachers. The Win Project asked the schools in return to ensure that teachers are trained in the use of ICT and other multimedia equipments so that they can carry out ICT technical responsibilities within their respective schools. By the year 2000, most primary and secondary schools within Wallonia and the Brussels region already had an operational Cyber Media Center.

More information on ICT initiatives in schools can be found via the following links:

http://www.namsmat.is/ranns/sites_ensk/chapter2.doc
http://ddi.cs.uni-potsdam.de/HyFISCH/Informieren/politik/ICT_EN.pdf

Virtual initiatives in schools

In Flanders:

- Bednet is a regional project in Flanders, Belgium, in which 6 to 18 year old children who are suffering from long term and chronic diseases can follow lessons and interact with their class through videoconferencing (from home or the hospital). Its predecessor is the ASCIT project.

In Wallonia:

There have been numerous traditional virtual initiatives in the French-speaking part of Belgium since 1960. Interest in Open and Distance Education (ODE) in the French Community of Belgium is based on great importance that is place on education and training, especially on self-directed learning, where different objectives apply to both learners and trainers. Direct transmission of knowledge in physical campuses is no longer the most efficient way of training. Rather, self-learning has become a necessary innovation that infers cultural, social, organizational and technological levels of organization and companies. This self-learning process takes place in virtual schools and campuses with the use of sophisticated softwares and hardwares (telematics), traditional mail conveyed handbooks, internet and intranet blackboard learning systems, video/audio conferencing, etcetera.

Open and Distance Education is not new in Belgium, since as early as 1959, the Ministry of Education Le Service de L'Enseignement à Distance (SED) in the Belgian French Community, had already initiated self-learning through ODE. The aim is to democratize studies and life-long education and to prepare learners for examinations equivalent to the diploma of secondary education. The Open and Distance Education centre also offers services to children living outside of Belgium for the primary school level and to teachers continuing professional development. Courses also include computer literacy and languages. Special courses are also offered to address different target public special needs such as patients in hospitals and prisoners.

Learners are drawn from a variety of different categories of people including the unemployed, students, workers, teachers, military, prisoners, patients in hospitals, persons with disabilities and overseas Belgian citizens. About 200 courses are being offered by the institution. The center is involved also with a number of universities in research into the use of telematics for ODE. Examples of the partnership include the TELERGON project providing a course on management. The center also participates in the LEARN-NETT project. Current initiatives can be found via the following links:

http://www.cfwb.be/

For more information about distance education in wallonia, check the following link:

http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=24335&navi=72

Virtual initiatives in post-secondary education

Go to the Virtual Campuses in Belgium wiki page.

Lessons learnt

General lessons

Notable practices

References

Belgium:

1. Wikipedia on Belgium
2. Wikipage on the communities, regions and language areas of Belgium
3. Information about Higher Education on Belgium.be
4. Wikipedia's page on Belgium Universities and Colleges
5. Studies in the Context of the e-learning Initiative: Virtual Models for European Universities Final Report to the EU Commission, DG Education & Culture (PDF - EN - 228 pages), Annex F Country profiles (PDF - EN - 200 pages)

Flanders:

1. The web site for the Ministry of Education and Training
2. "EDUCATION IN FLANDERS - The Flemish educational landscape in a nutshell", PDF
3. Publications in English on the website of the Ministry of Education and Training
4. Higher Education in Flanders Register
5. Study in Flanders
6. Introduction to (initial) accreditation (EN)
7. Accreditation (EN)
8. Accredidation Framework for Flanders (EN)
9. Automatic recognition of qualifications (EN)
10. Joint declaration automatic recognition qualifications December 2005 (PDF) (EN)

Other:

1. For corporate e-learning there's the Belgian network for Open & Distance learning (BE-ODL)
2. Interesting country reports concerning e-learning: State of the art of e-learning in Belgium

Wallonia:

Quality Assurance Relevant documents

Quality Criteria As A Powerful Tool For Training, Awareness Raising And Evaluation – Ilustrations Through Contrasted Use (PDF – EN), 2003, by Marianne POUMAY, University of Liège.
Higher Education in the French Community of Belgium (PPT), Statistics observatory; Higher Education Quality Evaluation Agency
Comparative analysis of validation policies in France, Wallonia (PPT), Higher Education, education for adults – comparison Flanders, Wallonia and France

Relevant sites

Initiative de Mise en Partage des Expériences Qualité dans l'Enseignement Supérieur (IMPEQES)
PublicQuality.be offers a Common Assessment Framework for public office which can be used as a self-assessment. (documentation in English)
AngloInfo (expat network): Education & Schooling in Belgium

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Denmark

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From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

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The Virtual Campuses in Danish Higher Education are listed on a separate Re.ViCa wiki page called Virtual Initiatives in Denmark.

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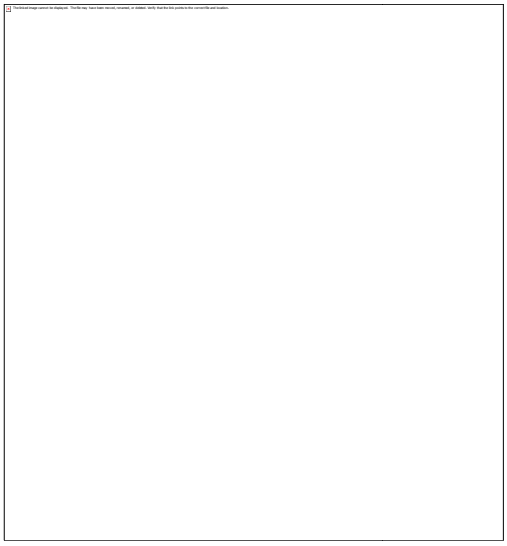
Aarhus University

Denmark in a nutshell



Map of Denmark, originally from the CIA's World Factbook

The **Kingdom of Denmark** (Danish: Kongeriget Danmark), commonly known as Denmark, is a country in the Scandinavian region of northern Europe. Its capital is Copenhagen, it is 43,098 km² or 16,639² sq mi wide with a population of 5,564,219* people) , who we call the Danish or the Danes. The official language is Danish, which is close to Swedish and Norwegian with which Denmark has strong cultural and historical ties.

Denmark is a **constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of government**. Denmark's Constitution originated in the chieftain rule of the Viking Age, it was Absolute Monarchy, followed by Enlightened Absolutism 1660-1848. In 1848, the new King Frederik VII abolished Absolutism and the following year a free Constitution was codified.

Source: Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs > Denmark - an Overview

Relevant Documents:

- Wikipedia's page on Denmark's Constitution
- Danish Constitution (EN - PDF), 1999
- Denmark.dk > Denmark: an Overview

Denmark has a state-level government and local governments in 98 municipalities. Denmark has been a member of the European Union (EU) (formerly European Economic Community) since 1973, although has not joined the Eurozone (the zone of countries which use the Euro). Denmark is a founding member of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

According to official statistics from January 2011**, 80.4% of the population of Denmark are members of the Lutheran state church, the Danish National Church (Den Danske Folkekirke),

also known as the Church of Denmark. According to article 6 of the Constitution, the Royal family must belong to this Church.

*: April 2011 estimate according to the Statistics Denmark

**: January 2011 statistics from the Danish Church Ministry

Adapted from: the Wikipedia page on Denmark and Denmark.dk > About Denmark

Note: also available is an interactive map of Denmark where you can hover over the cities and make the public transport routes visible

Regions and municipalities

Denmark consists of 443 islands and in 2007 the country created the division of five regions and a total of 98 municipalities, which mostly have a population of at least 20,000 people. This division was a part of the 2007 **Danish Municipal Reform** to replace the country's traditional thirteen counties (*amter*). At the same time, smaller municipalities (kommuner) were merged into larger units, cutting the number of municipalities from 270 to 98. The most important area of responsibility for the new regions is the national health service.

The Five Regions of Denmark (descending order of population):

1. Hovedstaden / the Capital Region of Denmark
2. Midtjylland / Region Central Jutland
3. Syddanmark / Region South Denmark
4. Sjælland / Region Zealand
5. Nordjylland / Region North Jutland

The Faroe Islands and Greenland/Grønland are autonomous provinces of Denmark with home rule, but are not members of the European Union (EU).

Adapted from:

- Wikipedia's page on Denmark
- Wikipedia's page on Denmark's Regions

Education in Denmark

Danish education policy

- The Church Law of 1539 contains Denmark's first educational legislation with a formal requirement for schools in all provincial boroughs.
- New acts in 1937, 1958, and 1975 reflected the demands of a new age in terms of **equal access** to all forms of education.

- Another act that came into force in 1994 stipulated that the *Folkeskole* give a student the opportunity to develop as many of their talents as possible. One of the watchwords of the new act is differentiated teaching, or that teaching should be adapted as much as possible to the individual student.

We can say that the key values in Danish education are intellectual liberty, equality and democracy.

In 2007 the Danish government decided to strengthen the public's knowledge of the democratic values on which the Danish society is founded by creating a democracy canon. The canon has now been translated into English." --> The Danish Democracry Canon (EN). Read the complete Danish Democracry Canon (EN).

A. Primary and secondary education

Danish primary and lower secondary education is based on the **Danish Education Act**. In its introduction, it states the following about the aims of primary and lower secondary education:

Section 1.

Together with parents, primary and lower secondary school shall provide pupils with knowledge and skills *that: prepare them for further study and give them the desire to learn more, make them familiar with Danish culture and history, provide them with an understanding of other countries and cultures, contribute towards their understanding for man's interaction with nature and promote the individual student's all-round development.*

Section 2.

Primary and lower secondary school must develop working methods and create a framework that promotes experience, absorption and enterprise so that students ***develop their imagination, sense of recognition and self-belief****, thus enabling them to take a position and act.*

Section 3. *Primary and lower secondary school shall* ***prepare the students towards participation, joint responsibility, rights and duties in a free and democratic society****. School activities must thus be characterised by* ***intellectual liberty, equality and democracy****.*

Source: New to Denmark - School and education

The ***Folkeskole*** is the Danish municipal primary and lower secondary school and consists of:

- one year of pre-school class
- nine years of primary and lower secondary education --> **compulsory education**
- one-year 10th class

Education is compulsory in Denmark for everyone between the ages of 6-7 and 16: so nine years of basic education. It is important to note that education itself is compulsory, not

schooling: whether the education is received in a publicly provided school, in a private school or at home is a matter of individual choice, as long as accepted standards are met.

Sources: Danish Ministry of Education - The Folkeskole (EN)

As a result, 13% of the children are taught outside the public school system in private independent schools - which receive up to 70% government subsidy – or at home. Practically all education is a free benefit as part of the welfare system.

Source: Denmark.dk > Denmark: an Overview > Education

The Ministry of Education is responsible for setting up the framework for curricula at primary and secondary level. However, the contents of the courses are finalised by the teachers themselves, with their students. The Ministry of Education oversees the 1-year pre-school class and the Folkeskole ***in collaboration with the municipal councils****.* **Source**: Danish Ministry of Education - The Folkeskole (EN)

B. Higher Education

Institutions of higher education in Denmark have a long tradition of ***academic freedom and autonomy****. The Ministries lay down the overall regulations for all institutions of higher education. These include regulations concerning the admission of students, the structure of studies, programmes offered, awarding of degrees and appointment of teachers and academic staff. The individual institutions draw up and update their study programmes, indicating the aims, scope and duration, form and contents of the courses, as well as a description of the syllabus.*

Technical colleges, business colleges and agricultural colleges are ***independent institutions*** *under the overall authority of the* ***Ministry of Education****. Social and health care colleges are run by the county authorities. The labour market training centres (AMU-centre) are administered by the Ministry of Education.*

As of December 2001, the ***Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation*** *is responsible for university education except for certain higher education programmes, which fall under the responsibility area of the* ***Ministry of Cultural Affairs*** *(e.g. architecture, music, fine arts, librarianship). The Ministry of Education oversees short- and medium-cycle higher education, in most cases.*

Source: CIRIUS Online - General organisation of the Danish education system

The **Act on Tertiary Artistic Education Institutions under the Auspices of the Ministry of Culture** stipulates which institutions the Ministry of Culture has authority over, their missions, their programmes and management. (The Act No. 289 of April 27, 1994 was amended by Act No. 142 of March 17, 1999. and consolidated by Consolidation Act No. 889 of September 21, 2000 (in force))

Source: Act on Tertiary Artistic Education Institutions under the Auspices of the Ministry of Culture

The **Act on Universities and Other Institutions of Higher Education / *The University Act*** about degrees:

1. *Within its academic fields, a university can award the bachelor's degree, the master's (candidatus) degree, the PhD degree and the doctoral degree. In addition to the master's degree (candidatus), the university can also award the degree of master under a continuing education scheme.*
2. *The Minister lays down the rules concerning the acquisition of the doctoral degree.*

Source: VTU - Act on Universities - Part 2. Degree Programmes, Paragraph 6 (EN - PDF), p.2

Relevant Documents:

- Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (VTU)- Act on Universities (EN)
  - VTU - Act on Universities (EN - PDF)
  - VTU - Explanatory Notes to the Draft Bill on Universities (EN - PDF)
  - VTU - Proposal for Bill to amend the legislation governing universities (EN - PDF)

C. Lifelong learning

The strategy for lifelong learning includes the following objectives:

1. *A coherent education system from pre-school to higher education must provide the opportunity for everyone to acquire excellent basic skills, a qualifying education and a solid foundation for lifelong learning. There must be equal opportunities and room for all.*
2. *The education programmes must be worldclass. The education system is to foster talent and be more accommodating to weak learners. Quality is given pride of place, and education must match the needs of the labour market and the society.*

Source: Danish Ministry of Education - Objectives for lifelong learning

In spring 2007 the Government drew up a report concerning Denmark's strategy for lifelong learning as part of European cooperation on education. This constitutes the Government's contribution to the realisation of the common goals in the Lisbon strategy. The strategy *covers the development of all forms of education, learning and lifelong skills upgrading for all – in the education system, in adult education and continuing training, at work and in the many other settings in which people learn and develop their knowledge, skills and competences.*

The Government's globalisation strategy focuses in particular on training and lifelong skills upgrading. A high level of educational attainment and good opportunities for lifelong learning are among the most important preconditions for strong competitiveness and for everyone to be able to actively participate in the labour market and in society.

It is the Government's aim that Denmark shall have world-class education and that everyone shall participate in lifelong learning.

Sources:

- Denmark's strategy for lifelong learning – Education and lifelong skills upgrading for all, Report to the European Commission (EN, PDF, 37 pages, April 2007.
- Danish Ministry of Education - Denmark's Strategy for Lifelong Learning

The government also set up the **Tripartite Committee on lifelong skills upgrading and education and training for all in the labour market** / *Trepartsudvalget om livslang opkvalificering og uddannelse for alle på arbejdsmarkedet*. **Related Documents**:

- Tripartite's report (DK)
- Framework of Actions for the Lifelong Development of Competencies and Qualifications - Denmark
- News release *Tripartite committee issues report on continuing training* (EN), 2006

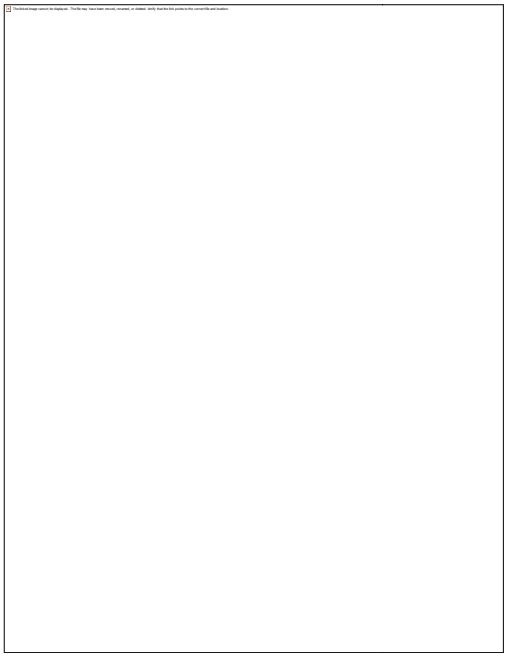
D. Special Needs

Legislation on education, building, employment and public transport today includes provisions laying down the responsibility of the sector for people with disabilities. The principle of sector responsibility is part of the parliamentary resolution on equal opportunities of 1993 (B43). **Source**: The Equal Opportunities Centre for Disabled Persons) / *Center for Ligebehandling af Handicappede* - Danish disability policy (EN - online)
Relevant Documents:

- The Equal Opportunities Centre for Disabled Persons) / *Center for Ligebehandling af Handicappede* wrote the Danish disability policy, ([www.clh.dk/pjecer/danskhandicappolitik/disabilitypolicy.doc EN - DOC]) and published the The Principles of Danish Disability Policy (EN - PDF / online)
- The Danish Disability Council / *Det Centrale Handicapråd*

Relevant document: Denmark (2007/08) - Legislation (EN), also in PDF, containing references to educational Acts in Denmark.

Danish education system



Map of the Danish educational system

The Danish education system provides access to primary school, secondary school, and most kinds of higher education. Attendance at "Folkeskole" is compulsory for a minimum of 9 years, and a maximum of 10. About 99% of students attend compulsory elementary school, 86% attend secondary school, and 41% pursue further education. **All college education in Denmark is free.**

Primary school in Denmark is called "den Danske Folkeskole" ("Danish Public School"). It runs from 1st to 10th grade, though 10th grade is optional, as is the introductory "kindergarten class" ("børnehaveklasse"). Students can alternatively attend "free schools" ("Friskole"), or private schools ("Privatskole"), i.e. schools that are not under the administration of the municipalities, such as Christian schools or Waldorf Schools. The Programme for International Student Assessment, coordinated by the OECD, ranked Denmark's education as the 24th best in the world in 2006, being neither significantly higher nor lower than the OECD average.

Following graduation from Folkeskolen, there are several other educational opportunities, including Gymnasium (academically oriented upper secondary education), Higher Preparatory Examination (HF) (similar to Gymnasium, but one year shorter), Higher Technical Examination Programme (HTX) (with focus on Mathematics and engineering), and Higher Commercial Examination Programme (HHX) (with a focus on trade and business), as well as vocational education, training young people for work in specific trades by a combination of teaching and apprenticeship.

Gymnasium, HF, HTX and HHX aim at qualifying students for higher education in universities and colleges.

Denmark has several universities; the largest and oldest are the University of Copenhagen (founded 1479) and Aarhus University (founded 1928).

Folkehøjskolerne, ("Folk high schools") introduced by politician, clergyman and poet N.F.S. Grundtvig in the 19th century, are social, informal education structures without tests or grades but emphasising communal learning, self-discovery, enlightenment, and learning how to think.

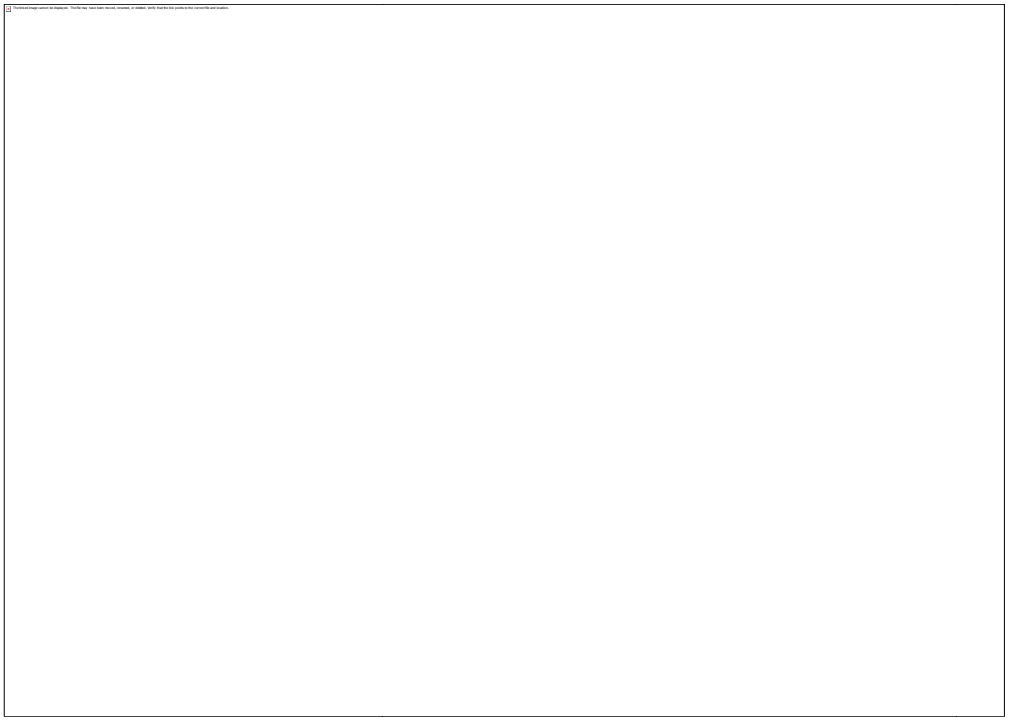
Source of these excerpts: Wikipedia page on Denmark's Education

Students receive points according to a **7-point grading scale**:

- 12: For an excellent performance.
- 10: For a very good performance.
- 7: For a good performance.
- 4: For a fair performance.
- 02: For an adequate performance.
- 00: For an inadequate performance.
- -3: For an unacceptable performance.

Source: Ministry of Education - 7-point grading scale and the Marking Scale in the Danish Education System

Higher education



A diagram to Higher education

Following a so-called binary structure, the higher education institutions can be grouped into two different sectors:

Higher education institutions in Denmark can be divided into 2 categories (university and non-university) or into three main categories:

- **Universities** or university level institutions offering research-based undergraduate and post-graduate programmes (Bachelor's, Master's and PhD)
- **University Colleges** (Professionshøjskoler) offering 3-4½ years undergraduate programmes (Professional Bachelor's programmes)
- **Academies of Professional Higher Education** (Erhvervsakademier) offering 2 - 2½ years Academy Profession programmes and joint Bachelor's programmes in co-operation with universities.

Source: Study in Denmark

Background

- **University Colleges / *Professionshøjskoler* offering professional bachelor and diploma programmes**

  - In 2000 most colleges offering Professional Bachelor's degrees merged into more comprehensive **Centres for Higher Education**/*centre for videregående uddannelse* (CVUs) which were merged in **University Colleges** in 2005.

- **Vocational colleges offering short-cycle programmes, mainly 2-year Academy Profession degrees** .
  - Most colleges offering Academy Profession degrees have formed **Academies of Professional Higher Education** (erhvervsakademier) as a framework for regional cooperation. This was made possible by the 1998 reform of short-cycle higher education. In order to obtain the status of Academies of Professional Higher Education the participating colleges must fulfil a number of quality requirements in terms of scope and level.

Professionally oriented higher education programmes are offered at colleges. Whereas in other countries, similar programmes may be offered by universities, in Denmark they have traditionally been offered by **specialised colleges**. Very often these institutions are engaged in theoretical and practical developmental work, and many of them participate in international cooperation, e.g. through the EC mobility programmes.

Source: CIRIUS Online - Higher Education – The College Sector and **Source**: CIRIUS Online - Higher Education – College Education

Council / Network

Universities Denmark / *Danske Universiteter* is the association of the Danish research universities and its purpose is to enhance their collaboration and the visibily of the university sector in Denmark and abroad.

Source: their web site (DK) with English Publications.

Universities in Denmark

8 Universities:

1. Aalborg University
2. Copenhagen Business School
3. The IT-University of Copenhagen
4. University of Aarhus
5. University of Copenhagen
6. University of Southern Denmark
7. Roskilde University – (EN)
8. Technical University of Denmark

Source: Study in Denmark, Universities by The Danish Agency for International Education.

Polytechnics in Denmark

The word "polytechnic" is now no longer used in Denmark. This subsection will instead list university colleges, academies of professional higher education, and university level schools of arts.

University Colleges in Denmark

10 University colleges:

1. Copenhagen University College of Engineering
2. Danish School of Media and Journalism
3. Engineering College of Aarhus
4. Metropolitan University College
5. University College Capital
6. University College Lillebaelt
7. University College of Northern Denmark
8. University College Sealand
9. University College South Denmark
10. VIA University College

Source: Study in Denmark, University Colleges by The Danish Agency for International Education.

Academies of Professional Higher Educations in Denmark

9 Academies of Professional Higher Education:

1. Business Academy Southwest
2. Business Academy Aarhus
3. Business Academy Copenhagen
4. Copenhagen Technical College
5. Danish Academy of Business and Technology
6. Erhvervsakademi Midtvest
7. International Business Academy
8. Lillebaelt Academy of Professional Higher Education
9. Zealand Institute of Business And Technology

Source: Study in Denmark, Academies of Professional Higher Education by The Danish Agency for International Education.

University Level Academies and Colleges of Arts in Denmark

13 University level academies and colleges of arts:

1. Designskolen Kolding

2. Shcool of Theatre, Aarhus
3. The Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts, Southern Denmark
4. The Danish Design School
5. The Danish National School of Theatre and Contemporary Dance
6. The Funen Academy of Fine Arts
7. The Jutland Art Academy
8. The Rhythmic Music Conservatory
9. The Royal Academy of Music, Aarhus/Aalborg
10. The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture, School of Conservation
11. The Royal Danish Academy of Music
12. The Royal School of Library and Information Science
13. Aarhus School of Architecture

Source: Study in Denmark, University level institutions of fine and performing arts, design and architecture by The Danish Agency for International Education.

Other Higher Educational Institutions

HEIs not listed by The Danish Agency for International Education on the Study in Denmark homepage:

1. The National Film School of Denmark
2. The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Schools of Visual Arts
3. Aarhus tekniske Skole
4. CELF, Center for Erhvervsrettede uddannelser Lolland Falster
5. Danish Institute for Study Abroad
6. The Danish Meat Trade College / Uddannelsescentret i Roskilde - Slagteriskolen
7. ErhvervsUddannelsesCenter Lillebaelt
8. ErhvervsUddannelsesCenter Sealand
9. Holberg School of Film and Theater
10. Niels Brock Copenhagen Business College
11. Kold College
12. South Denmark Business College
13. Sealand Business College
14. University College North Jutland

*This division was made according to **Study in Denmark – Institutions page***

Higher education reform

Bachelor – Master – PhD degrees

1. As a result of reforms in the late 1980s, Danish higher education has switched **from a one-tier qualification structure to a two-tier structure** with Bachelor's, Master's (candidatus) and PhD degrees. Before then, all university study programmes lasted between 4 and 6 ½ years, and led to the award of the candidatus (candidata) degree (Master's degree).

2. From 1988, students completing 3 years of a candidatus programme were awarded the Bachelor's degree and could use the title B.A. (Humanities, Theology, Social Science) or B.S. (Natural Science, Health Science).
3. The **1993 university reform** introduced a general bachelor degree structure. As a result, almost all university programmes now consist of a bachelor programme (BA/BSc), a candidatus programme and a PhD programme. The bachelor programme constitutes a complete programme in itself, but most students still continue in a candidatus programme. As a result of this new degree structure, the 4-year cand.phil. degree within the Humanities was abandoned in 1995/96.
4. **Act on the short-cycle higher educations, 2000**
    - In August 2000, a new act on the short-cycle higher educations (Act no. 1115 of 29 December 1997) was implemented, **making the access routes broader and more transparent**, with better possibilities for the students of being awarded credits in a medium- or long-cycle higher education programme.
    - 13 study programmes were set up in the following fields: Agriculture, Textile, Clothing and Design, Food Industry, Hotel and Tourism, Finance, Construction, Technology and Energy, IT and Electronics, Media and Communication, Industrial Production, Laboratory Technician, Retail Trade, International Marketing. The programmes in Computer Science (datamatiker) and Transport Logistics were continued. These 15 programmes replaced the previously existing 70 short-cycle programmes of varying lengths between 1 and 3 years. In many cases, this meant extending the course from 1½ to 2 years.
5. **Act on medium-cycle higher education, 2000**
    - In 2000, the Act on medium-cycle higher education created a common framework for all of these programmes. One of the main features of this reform was **the creation of the title of professional bachelor** (professionsbachelor) indicating, in relation to university bachelor's degrees, a similar level of education combined with a stronger focus on professional practice.
    - Colleges may award the professional bachelor titles on completion of programmes that have been approved to meet a number of criteria. Among other things, the teaching must be rooted in the profession and its development and it must include links to national and international research.
6. As a result of a government initiative, the number of universities was reduced from 12 to 8 through a series of **mergers** that took effect on 1 January 2007.

Source: CIRIUS Online - Higher Education

The Bologna Process

Subsequent legislation has established the structure based on two main cycles in all university disciplines. The most recent arrangements in this context and linked to the Bologna process are specified in the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation's Order No. 338 of 6 May 2004 on university Bachelor's and Master's programmes, which was issued under the Universities Act of May 2003, and the June 2004 Ministry of Culture Order on education in the academies of music and the Opera Academy.

Source: CIRIUS Online - Higher Education - Background

The Bologna Follow-up Group

In Denmark, the Bologna Process covers education programmes and institutions under several ministries, each of which are responsible for the implementation of the process within their ministerial jurisdictions. It has also been a goal to fully include the ministries' professional agencies, education institutions and organisations in the implementation process. Therefore, the implementation process is led by a steering group – **the Bologna Follow-up Group** –, which has the following members: Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (chairmanship), Danish Ministry of Education, Danish Ministry of Culture, Danish Evaluation Institute (quality assurance agency for international education programmes), CIRIUS Danmark (including Assessment of Foreign Qualifications), Danish Rectors' Conference "Universities Denmark", Danish Association of Institutions in Higher Education (DAN-EURASHE), Danish Confederation of Professional Associations and the National Union of Students in Denmark

The Bologna Follow-up Group has had the following **three functions**:

1. Contact forum for the parties involved in the process
2. Steering group for the projects initiated
3. Reference group for international activities

Source: Implementation of the Bologna Goals in Denmark (PDF, EN, 6 pages), 2003

Relevant Documents:

- Focus on the structure of higher education in Europe. National trends in the Bologna Process - Denmark - 2006/07 Edition (EN)
- National summary sheets on education systems in Europe and ongoing reforms - Denmark (EN) (PDF)
- Bologna Process (DK)

Administration and finance

A. Funding for HEI

The self-governing HEIs have two sources of revenue for financing their educational programmes: state grants and their own income from income-generating activities, participant fees and fees paid for unemployed people in activation programmes, etc. The state grants amount to approximately 80 per cent of the total funding and are thus the primary source of revenue for the institutions. Of this amount, ***activity-level determined grants*** *(teaching, building and maintenance, or collective expenses taximeters) total approximately 92 per cent, so that by far the greatest part of state funding consists of* ***taximeter funding****. The Ministry of Education is responsible for supervising institutions with income-generating activities.*

Source: The Taximeter System (EN), Danish Ministry of Education.

The taximeter system has some advantages as it states direct demands on quantity and indirect requirements on quality in higher education, but it could be improved as *the basic rates have been repeatedly cut during the last decade and secondly the system has been criticised for lack of balance and a clear rationale in the allocation of resources between the different educational areas.*

The second component of the funding system, the **basic grants**, is perceived as being of great importance to the budget security of institutions and to enabling them long-term planning, enabling flexibility and important for the quality and outcome of basic research. However, there is a *lack of use of performance parameters which weakens incentive mechanisms and limits quality assurance, while a large share of basic grants is tied to co-financing of external projects which makes that the factual amount of free funds at HEIs is more limited than assumed.*

Finally there is also the third major component of the funding system, the external research grants. Criticism on this component is that it is often focused on areas that are too narrow in scope which makes that the grant does not promote originality, creativity and novelty..

Source: Funding Systems and Their Effects on Higher Education Systems - Country Study – Denmark (EN, PDF, 25 pages), November 2006

B. Bursaries for students

State Education Grant and Loan Scheme

All Danes over the age of 18 are entitled to public support for his or her further education thus tuition at public and at most private educational institutions is free. Support for the student's living cost is awarded by the **State Educational Grant and Loan Scheme (SU)**, which is a system managed by the Danish Educational Support Agency / *Styrelsen for Statens Uddannelsesstøtte* which operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Education.

The purpose of the State Education Grant and Loan Scheme Act (danish acronym SU) is to make sure that as many young people as possible quickly receive a sound education. The State Education Grant and Loan Scheme is the Agency's oldest and largest area of activity, with some 300,000 beneficiaries.

The Statens Uddannelsesstøtte *is up to DKK 4,852 (approximately 651 EUR) per month, so that no one is precluded from further education because of social or economic status. .. As part of the efforts to increase the workforce, the state educational grant will be adapted to encourage quicker completion of studies. Local authorities and political educational associations offer extensive evening education opportunities for adults.*

Source: Denmark.dk > Denmark: an Overview > Education

There are two main support programmes:

1. one for people over 18 following a youth education programme. Until pupils are 20, their grants depend upon their parents' income.
2. one for students enrolled in higher education programmes. Students are entitled to a number of monthly grants corresponding to the prescribed duration of the chosen study programme, plus 12 months.

Inside a maximum of 70 monthly grants, students can change from one programme to another. In combination with both types of grants, students are offered supplementary state loans and about half of all students make use of these state loans. For more information, visit www.su.dk.

Students must start paying back state loans no later than one year after the end of the year in which they graduate or give up their studies. The loan must be repaid within 15 years.

About half of all students make use of state loans.

There is also the **Act on Transportation Discount for Students Attending Institutions of Higher Education** reduces transportation expenses for students who live far from the educational institution; they receive a Discount Transportation Card.

Sources and related documents:

- CIRIUS - State Educational Grant and Loan Scheme
- the Danish Educational Support Agency / *Styrelsen for Statens Uddannelsesstøtte* (EN)

Equality

Folkeoplysning" (liberal education) and folk colleges - Special Needs:

- *In Denmark, many people receive instruction through youth and adult activities during their leisure time. Participants pay themselves, often, however, with a small subsidy from the State.*
- ***The Danish Act on liberal education** permits to grant extended financial support to courses for people with disabilities. To obtain support, a person must sign in on a course that is specifically designed to meet the needs of a whole group of people.*
- colleges may grant compensatory measures to people with disabilities, but the colleges are not subject to any accessibility requirements.

Special needs education for adults: ***The Act on Special Education for Adults** forms the legal basis for compensatory special education for adults with physical or intellectual disabilities. The programmes aim to compensate for the consequences of functional difficulties, by learning how to use certain tools or methods in every-day life.*

Source: "Folkeoplysning" (liberal education) and folk colleges

There are different references to an Act regarding Special Needs, but according to the web site of the Agency, 800 people benefit from the compensations through an Act called the**Act on Special Educational Assistance in Higher Education** (Danish acronym *SPS*).

Source: the Danish Educational Support Agency / *Styrelsen for Statens Uddannelsesstøtte* (EN)

Relevant Documents:

- The Equal Opportunities Centre for Disabled Persons) */ Center for Ligebehandling af Handicappede'* *wrote the Danish disability policy, ([www.clh.dk/pjecer/danskhandicappolitik/disabilitypolicy.doc EN - DOC]) and published the The Principles of Danish Disability Policy (EN - PDF / online)*
- The Danish Disability Council */ Det Centrale Handicapråd*
- http://www.su.dk Statens Uddannelsesstøtte / State Educational Grant and Loan Scheme]
- Universities Denmark network > statistics of Danish universities (DK) with list of tables linking the statistical preparations for the years 2004/2005/2006/2007 with information about: Incomes / Costs / Personnel / Equity and balance / Buildings / Activity - and marketing information (Students) / Internationalization / Research / Cooperation with the world
- Universities Denmark network > English Publications.

Quality assurance

The Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA)

In 1999, the **Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA)** / *Danmarks Evalueringsinstitut* was established "*as an independent institution under auspices of the Ministry of Education. It assesses and develops education and childcare and is the national knowledge center in the field of evaluation. From an international point of view, this institution is quite unique, as it has been given the task to undertake systematic and mandatory evaluations of teaching and learning at all levels of the education system from pre-school to postgraduate level. In order to develop the quality of teaching and learning and to examine whether the educational sector lives up to the objectives laid down, the Evaluation Institute systematically examines the education programmes separately as well as the relations between different programmes. The institute also develops and innovates evaluation techniques and methods and compiles national and international experience with educational evaluation and quality development.*"

In 1999 the Act on The Danish Evaluation Institute was enforced, which empowers the Institute to initiate evaluations on its own initiative as well as at the request of the Ministry of Education, other ministries, advisory boards, local authorities and education institutions. Requested evaluations are conducted as revenue-generating activities.

In spring 2005, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education / *Högskoleverket* was entrusted with the task of externally evaluating EVA.

More information on EVA: fact sheet **The Danish Approach To Quality Assurance**.

CIRIUS Online - Qualifications frameworks

CIRIUS is an authority within the Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation responsible for supporting the internationalisation of education and training in Denmark. It is the national agency for two EU education programmes, Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action, as well as for other similar programmes, including Nordic and Danish education programmes and initiatives. Furthermore, CIRIUS is also the central institution in Denmark where persons with foreign qualifications can get these assessed and recognised and the information centre concerning **internationalisation of all the educational sectors**.

Denmark has had a **national Qualifications Framework for Higher Education** since 2003: Qualifications Framework 2003 (PDF). The framework has been widely implemented and used by institutions of higher education. In 2006, the relevant ministries took the initiative to begin a revision of the Qualification Framework (QF).

Relevant Documents:

- European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) (EN - PDF), 2008
- New QF *Kvalifikationsrammen for videregående uddannelser* (PDF - DK), 2006.
- Framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (PDF), 2005
- The previous Danish Qualifications Framework (EN - PDF), 2003
- CIRIUS Online - Quality assurance
- CIRIUS Online - Qualifications frameworks

The University Act prescribes internal evaluations at the universities, initiated and supervised by the Study Boards of the respective departments. The frequency of the internal evaluation is not regulated by law, but in overall terms the particular subjects/courses are evaluated by the end of each semester. Self-completion questionnaires to be filled in by the students represent the predominant way of collecting data for the internal evaluations. Foreign Qualifications are also handled by CIRIUS where students can find information on two different pages: *How to get an assessment of your qualifications* and *Use your Danish qualifications abroad*.

Source: Eurybase - The Database on Education Systems in Europe - 9. Ealuation of Educational Institutions and the Education System (EN), also in PDF

Denmark's HEIs in the information society

Towards the information society

"In Denmark two initiatives have been taken to encourage the use of ICT in education in general, and in open education in particular:

- **1. The Danish Electronic Research Library**
  - Denmark's Electronic Research Library (DEFF) is an organisational and technological partnership between research libraries co-financed by the Ministry of Science,

Technology and Innovation, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education. DEFF's purpose is to advance the development of a network of electronic research libraries that make available their electronic and other information resources to the patrons in a coherent and simple way.
    - E-learning is on of the six DEFF Programme areas
- **2. The Danish Virtual University**
    - Denmark's Virtual University (DVUNI) was a co-ordinating body for Danish universities and higher further-going educational institutions which offer qualifying, academic programmes and post-graduate courses and additional training via flexible, net-based distance learning. (This is also mentioned in the Re.ViCa's wiki page on Virtual Initiatives in Denmark)

Source: FLUID – national report Denmark 2003, PDF - 36 pages, which also lists the main features and the obstacles of ODL in Denmark: Discussion of the main features, Blended Learning, Action Learning , Group/team work, The tutor/teacher in ODL – an obstacle of the mind, The Learners, Drop-out rates, The lack of support from the management, Learning materials.

Information society strategy

The National IT and Telecom Agency is responsible for central parts of the Government's IT and telecommunications policy (EN) and is part of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (VTU). It published the Danish report: National strategy for ICT-supported learning - Efforts to promote the use of ICT-supported learning (DK), 2007 (news article or whole online publication (DK)): "*The aim of the strategy is to increase the use and quality of e-learning to reinforce skills development broadly and to make Denmark a leading country in e-learning.*"

Web connectivity

The National IT and Telecom Agency published Key figures on Information society Denmark (EN) from 2005 onwards including Key Figures on the Danish Information Society 2007 (EN - PDF - 74 pages, 2007) which tells us that in 2006, about 83 per cent of the population had access to the Internet from home. The Key figures report also shows a graphic of the private use of the Internet for courses and education was 19% as a maximum.

Relevant documents:

- National IT and Telecom Agency and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (VTU)'s page on the Agency
- Wikipedia's page on Internet in Denmark
- The OECD Broadband Statistics with the Total broadband subscribers by country (XLS - June 2008)

Virtual Campus Initiatives in Higher Education

Please view the separate Re.ViCa page called Virtual Initiatives in Denmark.

Lessons learnt

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8. The Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA)
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Estonia

From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

by Jüri Lõssenko

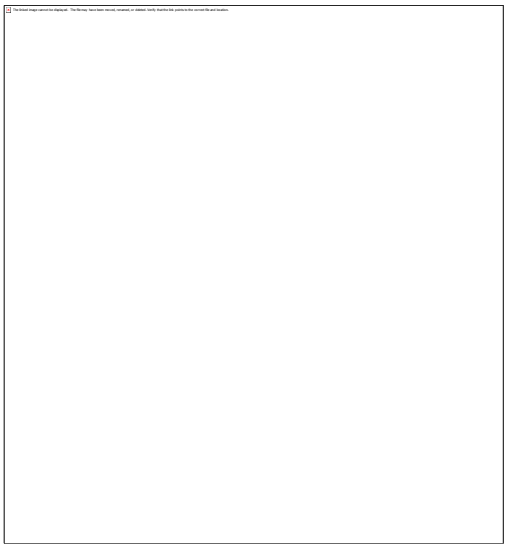
Contents

Partners situated in Estonia

Estonian Information Technology Foundation

Estonia in a nutshell

(mainly sourced from: Wikipedia and *OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education – Country Background Report for Estonia.*)



Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Atlas_of_Estonia

Estonia, officially the Republic of Estonia is a country in Northern Europe in the Baltic region. Its territory covers only 45,227 km² and is divided into 15 counties. Estonia is a

democratic parliamentary republic. Its capital and largest city is Tallinn. Estonia was a member of the League of Nations from 1921, has been a member of the United Nations since 1991, of the European Union since 2004 and of NATO since 2004. With only 1.4 million inhabitants, Estonia comprises one of the smallest populations of the EU countries.

In 1918, the Estonian Declaration of Independence was issued, to be followed by the Estonian War of Independence (1918-1920), which resulted in the Tartu Peace Treaty recognizing Estonian independence in perpetuity. During World War II, Estonia was occupied and annexed first by the Soviet Union and subsequently by the Third Reich, only to be re-occupied by the Soviet Union in 1944. Estonia regained its independence in 1991 and it has since embarked on a rapid program of social and economic reform. Today, the country has gained recognition for its economic freedom, its adaptation of new technologies and as one of the world's fastest growing economies.

The official language in Estonia is Estonian, which belongs to the Finno-Ugric language family and is closely related to Finnish. Along with Finnish, English, Russian and German are also widely spoken and understood. The major minority language is Russian with its speakers making up about 30 % of the population. Russian-language education is provided in public and also in private schools at all levels: pre-school, basic and secondary schools, as well as vocational schools higher education institutions. About 24 % of all Estonian school children attend Russian-language basic and secondary schools. Some 10 % of higher education students study in Russian.

Estonian education policy

(mainly sourced from: The Estonia Page and *OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education – Country Background Report for Estonia.*)

The Estonian Constitution states that everybody has the right to an education. Attending school is compulsory for all school-age children to the extent established by law, and is free in general education schools established by state and local governments. In order to make education accessible, the state and local governments are financially responsible for maintaining the necessary number of educational institutions. The law allows the establishment and operation of other types of educational institutions, including private schools.

Everybody has the right to an education in the Estonian language. In an educational institution in which minority students predominate, the language is chosen by the educational institution. Education is under the supervision of the state.

The Education Act has established that the objective of education is:

> creating favorable conditions for the development of individuals, family, the Estonian nation, national minorities and Estonian economic, political and cultural life in the context of the world economy and culture;
> developing a law-abiding citizenry;

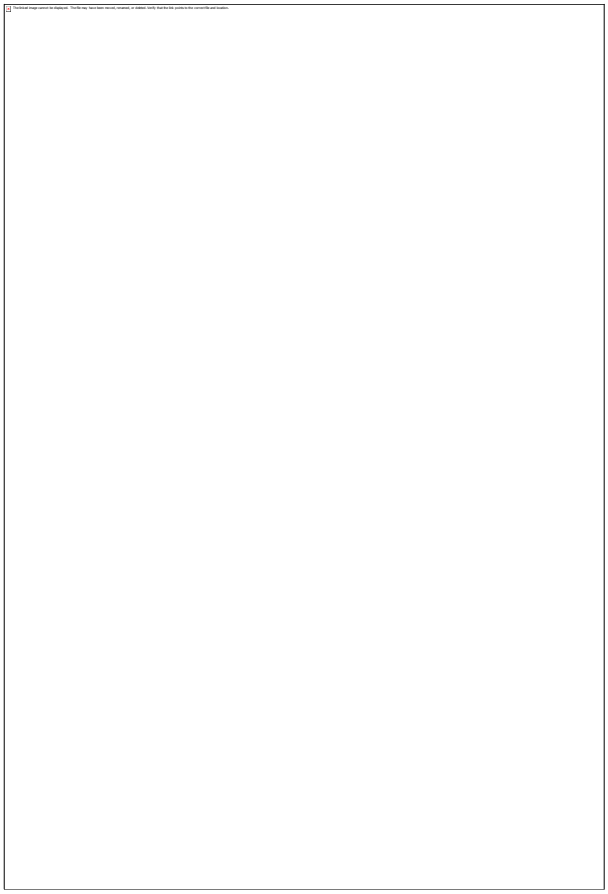
providing conditions for continuing education.

A wide network of schools and supporting educational institutions has been established in Estonia. The Estonian educational system consists of state, municipal, public and private educational institutions. The Education Act states that in accordance with the UNESCO international standard of education classification, education has the following levels: pre-primary education, basic education, secondary education and higher education.

Each level has its established requirements, which are called the state educational standards and are presented together with state curricula. The curricula contain the mandatory study programs, time scheduled to cover the programs, and descriptions of compulsory knowledge, skills, experience and behavioral norms.

Estonian education system

(mainly sourced from: The Estonia Page and *OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education – Country Background Report for Estonia.*)



Basic education is established by a national curriculum of basic and secondary education. On the basis of the national curriculum, schools compile their own curricula. Basic education covers grades from one to nine. Basic education in Estonia is compulsory. Basic education is

mainly taught at municipal schools (basic school classes at primary, basic and secondary schools). Local governments determine a service area for each school where it is obliged to guarantee all school-age children the opportunity to study.

Secondary education is voluntary and free at state and municipal educational institutions. General secondary education is acquired at upper-secondary schools (grades 10-12), and vocational education at vocational education institutions. Secondary education is governed by a national curriculum of basic and secondary education (general secondary education) or by a national vocational education curriculum and national curricula of vocations (vocational secondary education).

Access to higher education is regulated by the Universities Act and the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act. Students having either a general secondary school-leaving certificate (12 years of schooling) or a secondary vocational school-leaving certificate (based on qualifications of different length) and the State Examination Certificate have access to higher education. In addition, those having a corresponding foreign qualification can gain access. But access for all students is subject to discretion of higher education institutions. Merit plays the dominant role in the access to the specific programs.

There are three types of educational institutions that provide higher education: universities (*ülikool*) - institutions of research, development, study and culture at all higher education levels in several fields of study; professional higher education institutions (*rakenduskõrgkool*) - educational institutions of professional higher education and Magister-study; and vocational education schools (*kutseõppeasutus*) - institutions of secondary vocational.

The different legal forms of HEIs are: public, state and private. Private institutions can be owned by a public limited company or private limited company entered in the commercial register or by a foundation or non-profit association entered into the non-profit associations and foundations register. Both public (or state) and private higher education institutions are authorized to operate.

Higher education in Estonia

(mainly sourced from: *OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education – Country Background Report for Estonia.*)

See also the following OECD reports for more information about the Estonian higher education:

Thematic Review of Tertiary Education - Country Reviews;

Thematic Review of Tertiary Education - Country Background Reports.

In the period since the restoration of independence in 1991, remarkable changes took place in the system of Estonian higher education. This was visible not only in the rise in number of HEIs, but also in the development in the areas of funding, human resources management,

quality assurance, research and innovation, equity, links to the labor market and internationalization.

The universities offer Bachelor (three years, 180 ECTS – or exceptionally 240 ECTS credits), Master (one-two years, 60-120 ECTS) and PhD programs (three to four years). Medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, veterinary medicine, architecture and civil engineering are exempted from the Bachelor-Master structure. These programs (still) have integrated tiers, leading directly to the Master degree (300-360 ECTS).

State professional higher education institutions offer mostly four-year Bachelor programs, but some programs are three years, some others four-and-a-half. Students can continue their studies at universities but often need bridging courses. The state institutions are allowed to offer Master programs (under some conditions) but, as of 2006 - 2007, there were only six Master programs registered by three state professional higher education institutions (Tartu Aviation College, the Estonian Maritime Academic and the Estonian National Defence College). Private professional higher education institutions offer mostly three-year programs, some offer Master programs as well.

Vocational education schools offer professional higher education programs. However, the recent Estonian Higher Education Strategy 2006-2015 envisages to close down most of these programs or to have the schools upgraded to professional higher education institutions.

In academic year 2005 – 2006, there were 39 HEIs in Estonia. Although the number of institutions seems high for a country the size of Estonia, this number has already been reduced due to the increase of quality and financial requirements in the legislation. In the course of the academic year 2006 - 2007, the number was further decreased to 35. The highest number of HEIs that the country has had was 49 in academic years 2001 – 2002 and 2002 – 2003.

There are six public universities in Estonia: Tallinn University (with 7,350 students in 2005), the University of Tartu (18,536) – the oldest in the country (created in 1632), Tallinn University of Technology (10,700), the Estonian University of Life Sciences (4 752), the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre (567) and the Estonian Academy of Art (962). Although these institutions already existed in 1991, significant changes in their operation have occurred since then. Additionally, several of them have established a number of semi-independent (regional) colleges in the past 15 years. The public universities together catered for about two-thirds of the 68,287 students enrolled in Estonian HEIs in 2005.

There are five, relatively small private universities, most of which offer programs in just a few disciplines. The most important fields offered are business administration, law, media, arts and humanities and information technology. Their number of students in 2005 ranged from 116 to 2,547, in total they had 6,467 students. Eight professional higher education institutions constitute the public part of this sector catering for 7,142 students in 2005. Their size ranges from 166 to 2,111 students. Additionally, there are thirteen private professional higher education institutions (with a total of 7,452 students), all of very small size, although the largest of the privates is bigger than the largest public professional higher education institution (i.e. 2,538 students). Like private universities, also the private professional higher

education institutions focus mostly on business administration, information technology, arts and humanities, but also on theology.

The third sector, vocational education schools, consists of six public institutions and one private institution. The total number of students in this sector is 4,359. They range in size from 30 to 1,322 students. These institutions offer not only tertiary education but also secondary-level education.

The governance of HEIs is under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Research with three exceptions – The Estonian National Defense College (Ministry of Defense) and the Public Service Academy (Ministry of Interior Affairs). The Baltic Defense College (situating in Tartu) is operating under the agreement of three Baltic Ministers of Defense and is not part of the formal higher education system.

General education in Estonia

General education is divided into two parts: basic education (9 years: age 7 to 16) which is compulsory for all children in Estonia and secondary general education. Since 1993, the Basic School Leaving Certificate, obtained at the end of basic education, provides a student with the right to continue at the next level which offers two streams (in three further years): 1) Secondary general school/gymnasium education and 2) vocational education. Upon graduation of secondary general education, students obtain the Gumnaasiumi loputunnistus (Secondary School Leaving Certificate) which gives access to higher education.

Basic education is established by a national curriculum of basic and secondary education. On the basis of the national curriculum, schools compile their own curricula. Basic education covers grades one to nine. Basic education in Estonia is compulsory. According to the Education Act, every child reaching seven years of age on 1 October must attend school until basic education is acquired or until he or she is 17 years old. Basic education is mainly taught at municipal schools (basic school classes at primary, basic and secondary schools). Local governments determine a service area for each school where it is obliged to guarantee all school-age children the opportunity to study. In exceptional cases, basic education can also be acquired at home.

Secondary education is voluntary and free at state and municipal educational institutions. General secondary education is acquired at upper-secondary schools (gümnaasium, grades 10-12), and vocational education at vocational education institutions. Secondary education is governed by a national curriculum of basic and secondary education (general secondary education) or by a national vocational education curriculum and national curricula of vocations (vocational secondary education). Generally, about 95 % of those who graduate from day basic school go on to secondary schools; about 70 % of them to upper-secondary schools (gümnaasium); and 25 % to vocational schools.

Education reform

Higher education reform

(mainly sourced from: *OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education – Country Background Report for Estonia.*)

Major developments in the Estonian higher education policy may be outlined in three phases. The first phase (1989 – 1995) implied separating from the Soviet system and building up a new legal framework. Much effort was also put in realizing the 1995 University Act, paving the way for the 1996 Standard of Higher Education. The second phase (1996 – 1999) saw the expansion of the higher education system in combination with the development of legal frameworks and quality assurance mechanisms for the different sectors. The third phase (2000 – 2004) indicated the next wave of reforms, hallmarked by the higher education reform plan 2002.

The most recent strategy document (2006 – 2015) was approved by the Government in June 2006. This *Estonian Higher Education Strategy 2006-2015* addresses three main challenges for the sector in the coming years. First, the number of students entering higher education is expected to diminish by about 60 % by 2016. Second, there is a clear need to strengthen the international dimension of higher education institutions. Third, additional funding – both for infrastructure and human resources – is of vital importance for the sustainability of the system. Estonia was also among the countries that signed the Bologna Declaration in 1999.

General education reform

Large majority of the school reform has centred around gradual shift in proportion of instruction in Russian language. After Estonia regained its independence in 1991, the number of pupils in Russian schools had risen to 35%. The Law on Basic and Secondary School, approved in September 1993, foresaw the transfer to Estonian-language instruction in all state and municipal gymnasiums by the year 2000, a target that quickly became unrealistic. The basic Russian-language schools had to give their students sufficient knowledge of Estonian for that purpose as well as facing an additional task of integrating other language speakers into the Estonian society.

As of the 2011/2012 academic year, Estonian will be the language of instruction in all upper secondary schools in Estonia. The schools can choose the Estonian curriculum or Estonian as a second language curriculum as the basis for teaching Estonian, and organize the state examination necessary for graduation according to the curriculum they have chosen (either a composition in Estonian or an examination in Estonian as a second language). The upper secondary school curriculum contains a minimum of 57 courses where Estonian is used as the language of instruction (one course equals 35 lessons).

The transition of compulsory subjects to Estonian language instruction in upper secondary schools where Russian has heretofore been used as the language of instruction has been gradual with each subsequent stage of the transition concerning pupils who start the 10th

grade in the given academic year. Pupils starting the 10th grade in 2011 or later will have to study 60% of school subjects in Estonian.

There are 62 upper secondary schools with Russian as the language of instruction in Estonia, all of which will switch to Estonian language subject study in accordance with the schedule and procedure established in the regulation of the Government of the Republic. In basic schools, the owner of the school (generally the local government) will choose the language of instruction.

Administration and finance

Higher education

(mainly sourced from: The Estonia Page and *OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education – Country Background Report for Estonia.*)

Estonian HEIs receive funding from the public budget for the provision of graduates (so-called state-commissioned places), for capital investment and for other expenditure (foreign aid projects, education allowances for students, library expenditure, etc.). Finance from the public budget is provided primarily in the form of the state commission: approximately 80 % of public funding over the period 1995 - 2004. Both public and private institutions receive funding through the state commission. However, private institutions are allocated a very small number of state commissioned places, in a restricted range of disciplines. In some cases, this allocation occurs in areas where supply by public institutions is deemed lacking, while in other cases it is intended to reflect public recognition of the quality of the programs.

Both public and private institutions gain income for their teaching activities from student union fees. Public institutions may charge tuition fees to students, who do not gain access to state-commissioned places and, are free to set the level of fees. The one restriction on public universities is that they may mot increase fees by more than 10 % each year.

Students in Estonia fall into one of two distinct groups. Either they occupy state-commissioned places and pay nothing for their tuition or they do not and pay the full costs of their tuition. A third group is emerging: students admitted free of charge at the expense of tertiary institutions. This trend is especially visible at the PhD level.

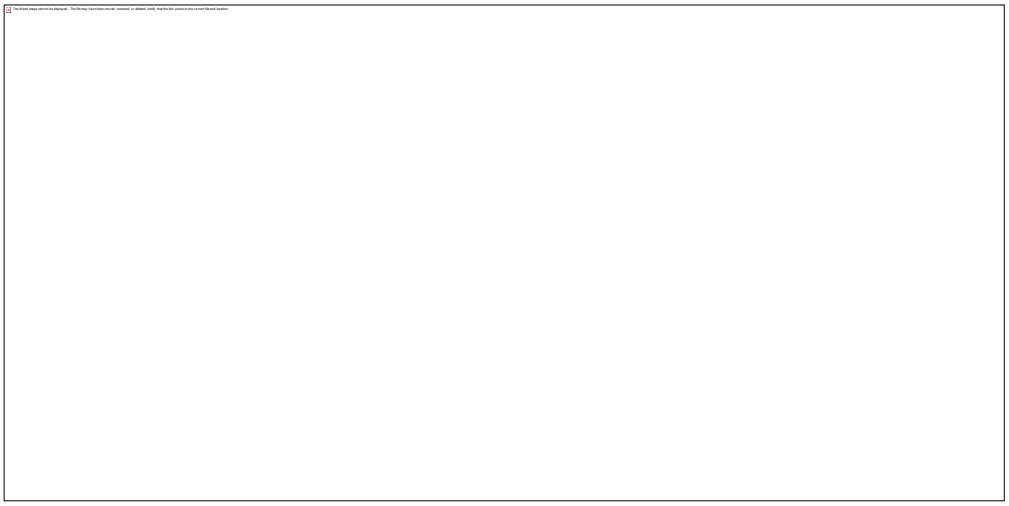
State-commissioned places are allocated by higher education institutions to students studying full-time on the basis of academic performance. Places are allocated to commencing students on the basis of their performance in relevant entrance exams (essentially the state exams at the end of secondary school). Should a student in a state-commissioned place fail to meet the requirements of full-time study he or she loses the right to occupy such a place and may be replaced by a better performing student undertaking study at the same level. The tuition fees paid by students in fee-paying places vary by type of course and institution.

Schools and post-secondary

The majority of general education schools – 517 of 582 schools in 2008 – are municipal schools, while 31 schools are state schools and 34 are private schools. Of the state schools, 27 are for pupils with special needs and 4 are ordinary schools. This means that general education schools are mainly funded from the budgets of local governments.

Local governments have the competence to establish, reorganize and close general education schools and to organize the transportation of pupils to and from schools, catering during study periods, etc. Support for covering education expenditures is allocated to rural municipalities and cities from the state budget. Funds for ensuring the minimum wages and continuing education of teachers as well as allocations for investments1, school lunches and expenditures associated with textbooks and study aids constitute the majority of the support. Support is also provided on the same principles for private general education schools. The funds allocated to local governments for covering education costs in 2008 amounted to 3.274 billion EEK. Allocations for education expenses increased 14% when compared to 2007. In 2009, 3.049 billion EEK was allocated, marking a 7% decrease in the funding provided for education expenses compared to 2008. The cost of providing school lunches for basic school pupils in the 2008/2009 academic year amounted to 225 million EEK.

The total public expenditure on general education in 2007 amounted to 6.5 billion EEK, which demonstrates a considerable increase over the years of 2006 and 2007 (12% and 14%, respectively). The high growth rate is largely the result of the coalition's endeavours to raise the minimum salary of teachers2 to the same level as the national average salary within four years. As a result of this, the minimum salary of teachers in general education schools increased by approximately 20% a year from 2006 to 2008 (23%, 18%, and 22%, respectively).



State budget allocations to the budgets of local governments constitute more than a half (57% in 2007) of the total expenditure in the area of general education. At the same time, the general education expenditure of local governments makes up 34% of their total expenditure. The relative importance of local governments in the public sector's expenditure on general

education has decreased over the years – the contribution of local governments to the funding of general education schools constituted more than half of the total expenditure until the end of the 1990s.

Quality assurance

Higher education

(mainly sourced from: *OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education – Country Background Report for Estonia.*)

The growth of the system has led Estonian society to the realisation that the quality of higher education varies both by the type of institution and by field of study. Estonia started to build its national quality assurance system in the mid 1990s, in answer to the rapid expansion of the higher education sector. Its goals were to increase the information on higher education offerings and to provide the academic community with support for selfimprovement

Since 1996, by governmental decree, the Standard of Higher Education regulates the establishment of higher education institutions and determines the requirements they and their programmes must meet in order to obtain an education license. This licensing process is carried out by the Ministry of Education and Research.

Quality assurance arrangements are based on an accreditation scheme, which is voluntary but essential both for having the right to issue officially recognised higher education credentials and to have access to state funding. Evaluation is the responsibility of the Higher Education Quality Assessment Council (HEQAC), established in 1995 and composed of twelve members, appointed by the government on the recommendation of the Ministry of Education and Research (which takes into account the proposal of higher education institutions, academic unions and employers).

HEQAC determines the quality standards, organises external reviews and makes a recommendation to the Ministry regarding universities, professionally- or vocationally-oriented higher education institutions and their operation. The accreditation decision belongs to the Ministry, which normally approves the recommendation of the HEQAC; however, it can reject it, in which case a new review must be carried out.

The Ministry of Education and Research's Strategy for Higher Education 2006 - 2015 places a strong emphasis on quality and the means to assure it. Its objectives focus on the competitive quality of Estonian higher education and the need for it to serve the country's development interests and innovation. Consistent with these objectives, the actions highlight the need to strengthen quality assurance by promoting internal assessment and improvement strategies within educational institutions and establishing quality requirements and supervision of quality by the state.

Schools and post-secondary

The major act regulating schools providing general education is Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act, which has been changed almost every year since it was passed in the Riigikogu in 1993. The act is mainly consisting of authority tools providing municipalities and schools with autonomy in different aspects of organizing basic and upper secondary schools in Estonia. It also divides the responsibilities for funding matters and regulates different requirements or states who and where regulates different requirements for students and their parents, teachers and management of school, municipalities and other involved bodies.

There have been two major regulations directed to the quality of general education that have been imposed on the system in last decade. The first one is downsizing the maximum number of students in the class and the second one is setting the qualification requirements for teachers. The upper limit of class size for 1-9th grade was changed in 2004 from 36 to 24. The second important regulation concerns the qualification requirements for teachers. Since the deficit of qualified teachers is an important issue in rural areas, which tend to be poorer as well, it is commonly believed that the students in these areas are most disadvantaged. The teacher qualification requirements were set by the regulation of the Minister of Education in 2002.

Estonia has participated in several international comparative studies, e.g. the PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) survey comparing the academic performance of students was conducted in Estonian schools by the OECD for the first time in April 2006. According to average performance, Estonian pupils ranked fifth on the science scale after Finland, Hong Kong (China), Canada and Taiwan (China), in reading they ranked thirteenth and in mathematics they were fourteenth. According to the percentage of pupils at each proficiency level on the science scale, Estonian pupils ranked second after Finland, twelfth in reading and ninth in mathematics.

Estonian information society

(mainly sourced from: *ICT Infrastructure and E-readiness Assessment Report: ESTONIA.* and *Estonian Information Society Strategy 2013.*)

When regaining independence in August 1991, Estonia was a relatively backward country technologically. State infrastructure (institutions and people) had to be built up almost from scratch, monetary reform in 1992 established the stable currency. Heavy industry machinery and infrastructure established during the Soviet era found almost no use after the privatization and technological upgrading by the new owners. The access to Russian market was increasingly more difficult due to the politically set trade barriers by the Russian Federation, and the quality of Estonian products was not good enough to compete in the Western markets.

In spite of these unfavorable conditions, Estonian industrial structure started to depart from the factor-driven stage into the investment-driven economy in the early 1990s. The main

reasons behind this development most probably were (1) the proximity of technologically advanced Finland and Sweden, (2) large amount of foreign direct investments into Estonian companies, (3) a population with high level of technical education (in the Soviet era, only hard sciences were ideologically free), and (4) a large part of the population ready to consume and adopt modern technology as a part of one's lifestyle. Additionally, the number of computer and Internet users in Estonia was growing heavily. In recent years, also ICT equipment and services have become much more affordable.

So in light of all these developments, what have been the crucial factors supporting the development of Estonian information society and the growth of ICT centered activities both in public and private sector? According to Krull, 1) building up modern infrastructure; 2) Tiger's Leap Project in computerizing schools and universities; 3) adopting regulations for information society; 4) government IT-programs; 5) collaboration between the government, private sector and non-governmental initiatives; and last but not least 6) luck have been these main drivers.

In the educational sector, the Tiger Leap program has played an important role in the virtuous circle of making IT popular first among children and through them among the whole society. Almost all children (93 %) have access to the Internet either at school, in the neighborhood or at home. Pupils use the Internet mainly at school (79%). In 2000, there were no basic or upper secondary schools without computers in Estonia, 75% of schools also had online Internet connections.

Additionally, the overall impact of governmental actions has been crucial in the development of Estonian information society. From creating favorable legal environment and leading the way with computerizing the whole public administration, some of the major e-services for the public sector were also developed. Principles for the development of the information society in Estonia were first set out in 1998. However, the first strategic document was established only in 2006.

In Estonia, the development of the information society is, indeed, based on the Principles of Estonian Information Policy, adopted by the Estonian Parliament in 1998. A follow-up to the document, the Principles of Estonian Information Policy 2004 – 2006, was elaborated and approved by the Government of the Republic in 2004. The Estonian Information Society Strategy 2013, in turn, entered into force in January 2007. It is a sectoral development plan, setting out the general framework, objectives and respective action fields for the broad employment of ICT in the development of knowledge-based economy and society in Estonia in 2007 – 2013.

Estonian developments to the direction of information society have been adequate concerning the initiatives started by the public sector. The level and quality of ICT infrastructure and the access to it has gone through a major improvement during the last decade. The role of ICT in the society and Internet's growing role in providing information, business transactions, interaction between the state and citizens allows to assume that the e-readiness of Estonia is improving with every essential application and service delivered through the Internet. An emphasis made on computerizing the schools and providing vocational education to grownups has been essential.

ICT in education initiatives

Open Estonia Foundation

The Open Estonia Foundation (OEF), a charitable foundation established in 1990 with the help and funding of Georg Soros, made a remarkable contribution to eLearning especially in the early stages during the 1990s. OEF funded several extensive educational projects promoting ICT infrastructure in schools and universities as well as teacher training with a budget of about € 300,000.

Today however, the main responsibility of implementation of services for eLearning is in the hands of non-profit organisations – Estonian Information Technology Foundation and Tiger Leap Foundation. The activities of both institutions are based on special programs with respective budgets.

Estonian Information Technology Foundation

Estonian Information Technology Foundation (EITSA) is a non-profit organization founded by the Estonian Republic, University of Tartu, Tallinn University of Technology, Eesti Telekom and the Association of Estonian Information Technology and Telecommunications Companies. The 5-member Council of EITSA is made up of the representatives of the aforementioned founders. They appoint the 3 members of the Executive Board. The Foundation is annually audited by a sworn auditor.

EITSA's aims are to assist in preparation of the highly qualified IT specialists and to support ICT-related development in Estonia. For these purposes the Foundation established and manages the Estonian IT College, administers the National Support Program for ICT in Higher Education "Tiger University" and coordinates the activities of the Estonian e-Learning Development Centre

Estonian e-Learning Development Centre

(sourced from Estonian e-Learning Development Centre)

The Estonian e-Learning Development Centre (ELDC) operates as a department under the umbrella of the Estonian Information Technology Foundation and coordinates the activities of two consortia – Estonian e-University and Estonian e-Vet. The main objectives of these two consortia are to instigate and facilitate cooperation in universities and vocational schools respectively, to implement e-learning solutions and support e-learning related activities based on the principles of lifelong learning. ELDC was also responsible for porting process of the Creative Commons licenses in Estonia.

In year 2010, the virtual learning environments managed centrally by the ELDC included some 5500 courses with approximately 120 000 unique people enrolled in different e-courses, most of them being university students. Most courses were in Estonian, with the exception of a few English courses. There are still no curricula that one could study fully via the internet.

Estonian e-University

(mainly sourced from: Estonian e-University and The UNIVe Project)

The Estonian e-University (EeU) was officially founded in February 2003. The EeU is a consortium of universities and applied universities and it consists of (as of 2011):

Estonian Ministry of Education and Research
Estonian Information Technology Foundation
University of Tartu
Tallinn University of Technology
Tallinn University
Estonian University of Life Sciences
Estonian Business School
Estonian Information Technology College
Estonian Academy of Arts

Other Estonian HEIs can also apply for the e-University membership. All decisions (including questions of membership, strategy, budget, allocating of tasks to board) are done by the e-University council that consists of representatives of all members. The board of e-University is the body that fulfils the tasks set up by the e-University council.

The Estonian e-University is a member of EIfEL, EFQUEL, EDEN and Baltic Sea Virtual Campus. Its functions are:

of profound studies,
increasing the availability of quality education for students and other people willing to learn, for example adults, handicapped people, Estonians abroad and foreign students,
educating lecturers of universities to compile and practice quality and efficient e-courses,
providing lecturers with necessary technical equipment, as well as improving the reputation of university education in Estonia and creating contacts for cooperation between foreign universities and business circles.

The history of Estonian e-University dates back to the beginning of 1990s when first enthusiastic people in universities started using email and web-pages as the first e-learning initiatives. Videoconferences over ISDN and web-based courses in a specially designed environment followed in 1998. However, there can be seen three main reasons for the actual establishment of Estonian e-University. Firstly, e-learning had been rather widely used in Estonian universities, but in most cases it was a low financed and not well coordinated initiative of a few enthusiastic people in a few faculties and open universities. Secondly, need for coordinated and institutionalized interuniversity cooperation in the field of open and distance learning had been perceived and discussed for years. And thirdly, similar initiatives in neighboring countries (Finland and Sweden) a few years earlier had given good examples.

The cooperation between universities needs, perhaps, an explanation on a slightly wider background. Estonian universities are very independent institutions, and there are very few initiatives or procedures in the area of HE coordinated by the state. The limited state control

and liberal rules in HE resulted in the emergence of numerous private universities and applied HEIs in the 1990s when also the student numbers increased rapidly. The rapid growth in student numbers was by large due to the increasing number of adult students.

There were several reasons for vastly increasing interest for HE among adults. The reasons could simply be classified into two groups. Firstly, great need for new skills arising from enormous changes in the labor market and society – many people did not manage with 'an old education' obtained in the 1960 – 1980s in 'the new society'. The second group of reasons why more adult students came to universities was most likely related to opportunities, i.e., increasing openness of the HE system and curricula. Besides the increased number of different HE providers, public universities adopted a third mission of providing services to the society – they considerably diversified their forms of tuition, opened numerous new (mainly master-level) curricula oriented to adult students, made major efforts in regional development by opening colleges in regions far distant from the two biggest cities Tallinn and Tartu.

Thus, rather than relying on state-coordinated program to bring in more adults to the universities, universities themselves independently and also slightly differently responded to the needs of the changing society and introduced flexible, part-time adult education curricula for training and retraining of adults. Many of them did it under the name of *open university* that included all kind of university level Lifelong Learning activities ranging from special initiatives and courses for secondary school students, university continuing education, summer schools, part-time degree education or degree education given in the form of distance learning, public lectures, regional development initiatives, etc. As a rule, the open universities were also responsible for the development of ICT-based teaching in universities.

First open universities were launched in 1996, and in 1998, the first project tackling the need for interuniversity cooperation in this field initiated (Tempus project for 'Developing Open University Infrastructure in Estonia' 1998 – 2001) with three biggest public universities as partners. Another cooperation initiative started by the universities was the establishment of the Estonian Network for University Continuing Education (ENUCE) in January 2001. Several seminars discussing different open university models culminated in January 2002 where conference titled 'Estonian Open University – interuniversity cooperation for the development of open distance learning in Estonia' was held with representatives from seven universities and the Ministry of Education and Research. This conference decided to make a concrete action plan for further development of the idea.

In summer 2002, Rectors' Council approved the general idea, already called Estonian e-University at that time. In autumn 2002, the Minister of Education and Research summoned a working group for agreeing on activities and financing principles of the e-University. The process culminated in February 2003 when the Estonian e-University was officially launched by signing the *Protocol of Good Will* by the rectors of six universities, the Minister of Education and Research and the chair of the board of the Estonian Information Technology Foundation. By that time, plenty of work had already been done including e.g. submitting the first international project of Estonian e-University (the UNIVe) to Socrates Minerva program.

The target groups of Estonian e-University can be identified at different levels:

Students

The final target group for all activities is, of course, the current and potential students and learners of the universities of e-university members, both full-time and part-time students, learners at retraining programs and shorter continuing education courses. However, as widening access to high quality education is one of the main aims, the main target group among all students is adult students who live outside of bigger centers or who due to work obligations cannot participate in ordinary university studies. E-university also aims its activities at disadvantaged groups, including people with disabilities, for whom e-learning can make higher education more accessible. E-university also aims its activities at foreign students, thus, supporting the strategic aim of internationalization of several universities. Most e-University activities are not directly aimed at students but rather at teachers and universities. An e-course database is directly aimed at students that should become (1) a gateway to Estonian universities e-learning opportunities.

Universities

Although students are the final target group of the e-University activities, the latter does not offer tuition itself. Therefore, its activities are mainly aimed at helping universities, i.e. supporting and facilitating them in e-learning initiatives. This said, it does not mean that the e-University has a passive role in relation to universities. E-university is, and aims also to be in the future, the initiator and developer of e-learning initiatives taking into account the interests of the state, universities and students. Initiating and supporting interuniversity cooperation in e-learning initiatives is one of the strategic aims of e-University. From the HEIs' perspective, e-University is (2) the developer and provider of a necessary technological environment needed for e-learning:

portal (including a database for courses and learning objects),
learning environment,
exchange system for courses,
necessary infrastructure for e-learning (incl. regional centers);

(3) support and development centre for e-learning:

initiation of research,
innovation and development activities,
initiation and management of projects,
financial etc. support for realising e-learning initiatives,
international marketer of e-courses/curricula in the future.

Academic staff

Besides developing infrastructure and procedures, plenty of e-University activities are directly or via support to universities aimed at academic staff support and development. From the university teachers' point of view, e-University is primarily (4) an e-learning support centre:

information and training to conduct e-courses,
database for learning objects,
contests and grants for developing e-learning.

State

NB! Up to date state of the art and the latest figures and facts can be found at the Estonian e-Learning Development Centre page.

Better usage of limited financial and intellectual HE resources, better and more equal access to higher education, better cooperation between universities, clear and unified trademark of Estonian higher e-education initiatives at international arena, competence when realizing state initiatives in e-learning etc. are, of course, of value for each particular university, but these can firstly be seen as the benefits of e-University for the state and society.

The Estonian e-University is financed by the membership fees, projects, and direct funding. The budget for the first year was nearly 4.5 million EEK (€ 300,000), whereas the budget for year 2010 was over 32 million EEK (over € 2 000 000). Every member covers its costs related to e-University initiatives within its own university by itself. Membership fee is divided to fixed and proportional parts. The last is calculated on the basis of full-time equivalent student numbers.

Estonian e-Vocational School

The Estonian e-Vocational School was founded in 2005 in cooperation of six professional education institutions, 31 vocational education institutions, the Ministry of Education and Research and the Estonian Information Technology Foundation to promote lifelong learning under the principles of regional development and in the framework of ten thematic networks. It functions under the Estonian e-Learning Development Centre and is financed by the membership fees, the state budget and by Measure 1.1 of the EU's Social Fund.

Together with the Estonian e-University, it is one of the two main consortia of EITSA. The e-Vocational School consortium accounts for 68 % of the total number of students of the e-Learning Development Center member schools.

Tiger University Program

The Nations Support Program for the ICT in Higher Education "Tiger University" was approved by the Estonian Government in January 2002. Its administration was delegated to the Estonian Information Technology Foundation.

The Tiger University Program goals are to:

Support for the development of the ICT infrastructure at higher educational establishments,
Support for the development of ICT academic staff and degree courses' infrastructure.

The priorities are:

development of ICT infrastructure (upgrading the academic backbones and networks, PC procurements, equipping the labs, providing software),
development of ICT-related curricula (new curricula, creation of study materials, e-University, e-learning, literature and electronic resources),
motivating the academic staff (mentoring PhD students, academic sabbaticals, lecturers' and PhD students mobility scheme, internships, visiting lecturers).

Program Council has been set up to coordinate and run the program. Together with the staff it announces the competitions, appoints experts, reviews submissions, is authorised to make allocations, and later monitors and follows up on the results.

University of Tartu

The University of Tartu is said to have been the alma mater for the entire educational system and the scientific research in Estonia. It was founded already in 1632. However, it became a national university - *Tartu Ülikool* - only in 1919. Nowadays, the university has some 11 faculties, 3 reasearch institutes and 6 colleges with more than 70 departments, institutes and clinics. The number of students is over 18,000 and the number of teaching staff some 1,300.

Open University

The Open University was established in 1996. The mission of the Open University was:

to improve access to education;
to diversify study opportunities;
to make the education more student-centred, taking the student's needs into greater account;
to provide high quality education under maximum flexibility, with course offerings being independent of time and place.

Today the Open University is a successful hallmark of the University of Tartu, covering both degree education and continuing education programs through distance education or other "unconventional" learning environments. Training under the trademark of Open University is provided by the faculties and colleges at University of Tartu. The activities, in turn, are coordinated by the Open University Centre and the Academic Affairs Office.

E-learning at University of Tartu

Year 1995 may be considered the beginning of e-learning at University of Tartu. It was the year, when the first e-mail based course was delivered in the Faculty of Mathemathics, and only three years later (1998), the Multimedia Center obtained videoconference facilities with the support of the PHARE Multi-country Project in Distance Education. In 1998, also first web-based course in the WebCT environment was developed and delivered at the university. And since then, the number of web-based courses has indeed increased. At the end of year

2007, the number of web-based courses was approximately 600. However, entirely web-based curricula did not yet exist.

In January 2000, the University Council gave priority to ICT-based learning acclaiming that it should be important to inculcate ICT-based learning in all study moulds, to start the development program of ICT-based courses and assigning the Distance Education Centre as a structural unit with the responsibility for developing ICT-based learning at the University of Tartu.

In 2001, the Multimedia Center started to create CDs for study purposes. In November 2002, the Multimedia Center launched a project of video lectures that received financial support from EITSA (Estonian Information Technology Foundation) in 2003. They used both real time video streaming as well as storage and archival of lectures. The project was continued in 2004 by replacing the outdated video conference equipment with the support from EITF.

In February 2002, the E-University portal of University of Tartu was opened. Besides offering learning opportunities and support for learners, this portal provided both technical and methodological help for academic staff (professors and tutors) for elaborating ICT-based courses, etc.

In February 2003, the University of Tartu initiated in cooperation with other universities, the Ministry of Education and Research and the Estonian Information Technology Foundation, the Estonian e-University, which has since grown into a consortium under EITF to support the universities and coordinate the development of e-learning.

The university's first education technologist was employed in year 2000 (and seven more a few years later) to assist the teaching staff in the development of web-based courses. At the end of year 2005, the University of Tartu then approved its first e-learning strategy (E-learning strategy 2006-2010), which sets the tasks of developing e-learning in 3 categories:

> I Support high-quality studies centred on the student and involvement of new target groups;
>
> II Increase the e-learning competence of teaching staff, students and assistance personnel and develop the cooperation models for e-learning;
>
> III Ensure the high level of infrastructure and support services for e-learning.

Tallinn University

Tallinn University is the third largest university in Estonia, consisting of 18 institutes and 4 colleges. It has more than 8,500 students as well as more than 400 faculty members and research fellows. It is the fastest growing university in Estonia.

Tallinn University, like any other public university in Estonia, uses the 3+2 system (i.e. three years of bachelor studies + two years of master studies). There are 49 specialist areas at the bachelor level, 70 at the master level and 12 at the doctoral level. The university and its

curricula have been accredited by the Estonian Higher Education Quality Assessment Council.

The university's programs are unique in Estonia for the high degree of academic freedom they allow. One quarter to one third of the subjects at every level are freely available and a significant number of specialist subjects are also included as electives. Thus, students are able to design their own study plan quite independently.

Tallinn University is one of the main providers of web-based courses in Estonia. It has a great role in developing LMSs, CMSs and ICT-supported learning methodology. Tallinn University has also developed teachers' support system in the field of web-based learning and several digital learning materials for general schools.

Tallinn Virtual University

Tallinn Virtual University is a new initiative at the Tallinn University. It was opened in December 2008 and its aim is to make recordings of different open lectures, interviews with lecturers and university visitors, materials of seminars, summer schools, conferences among other things available to everyone. The materials can be watched online or downloaded to one's computer. The Web environment of Tallinn Virtual University is based on Toru technology and it is administered by Nagi OÜ. All videos are located in the Toru video site and can also be found through Toru search.

Tallinn University of Technology

Founded in 1918 as an engineering college (university status was granted in 1936), Tallinn University of Technology (TUT) has now become one of the largest universities in Estonia.

The University is structured into eight faculties, three colleges and six research and development institutions. The faculties are: Civil Engineering, Power Engineering, Humanities, Information Technology, Chemical and Materials Technology, Economics and Business Administration, Science and Mechanical Engineering. The application oriented bachelor-level programs in different technical and economic fields of study are offered in the three colleges - Business College, Kuressaare College and Virumaa College.

TUT has over 13,000 students and personnel of 1,970 (incl. affiliated institutions). Instruction is conducted in Estonian, however, during the first two years, Russian-based general studies are also possible. Selected courses are delivered in English. Tallinn University of Technology is also one of the main providers of ICT education in Estonia. The share of e-courses within total courses is aimed at 15 % in 2010 (4 % in 2005).

Virtual initiatives in schools and post-secondary

Tiger Leap Foundation

(mainly sourced from: Tiger Leap Foundation)

The Tiger Leap Foundation (TLF) has been the initiator and funder of several research activities on ICT in education since 1997. The mission of the foundation is to help to improve the quality of education in Estonia through application of ICT. Focusing mainly on three areas – computers and internet connections for schools, educational software development and teacher in-service training - TLF has been the main driving force of change in Estonian schools. With the help of TLF, all schools in Estonia are connected to the Internet and have original educational software available for most subjects, 75 % of teachers have been trained twice in ICT skills. The foundation also operates the Estonian Schoolnet website www.koolielu.ee.

Since 2004, Tiger Leap Foundation, a partner in the European Schoolnet, is coordinating and funding several EC educational programs: eTwinning, Springday Europe and Netdays Europe among others. New challenges for the foundation are promoting design and technology as well as media studies in Estonian schools. TLF is a non-profit organisation funded by the Estonian Ministry of Education and sponsors.

Audentes e-Gymnasium

The e-gymnasium is part of Audentes Private School and provides its enrolled learners the possibility to cover the secondary education curricula in a blended format with 16-20 hours of contact hours per month. The e-gymnasium uses Moodle as its e-learning platform. The curricula is divided into "subjects > topics > lessons", where each lesson chunk provides learner an activity for about 20 minutes.

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Estonian e-Learning Development Centre
Estonian Information Society in Facts and Figures
The Estonia Page
MegaTrends in E-Learning Provision
Open Estonia Foundation
Tallinn University
Tallinn University of Technology
Tallinn Virtual University
Tiger Leap Foundation
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Finland

From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

by Merja Sjöblom, Finnish Information Society Development Centre
original general and HE-related material by Ulla Rintala, Aalto University

For university-related material see also Finland from Re.ViCa

For entities in Finland see Category:Finland

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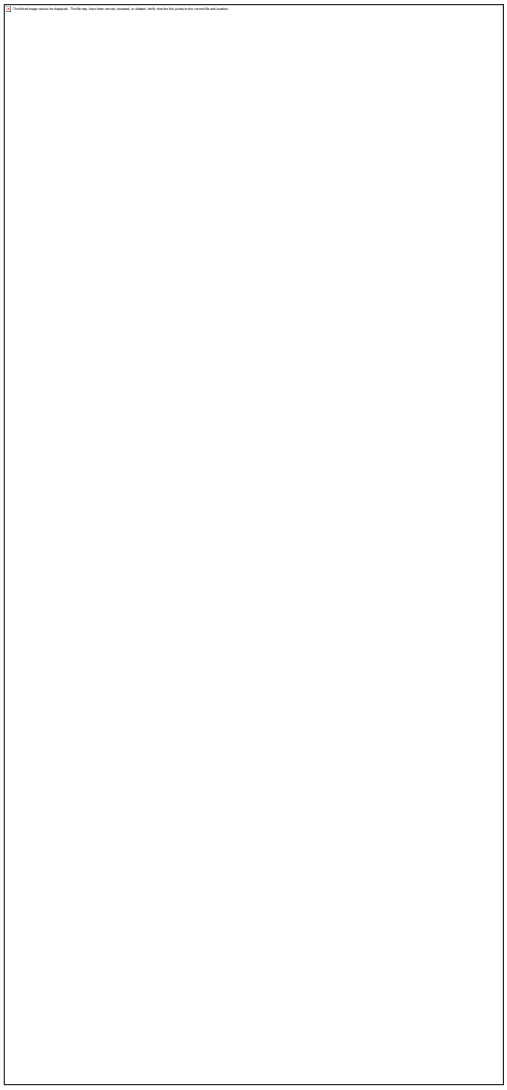
Partners situated in Finland

Finnish Information Society Development Centre

Finland in a nutshell

(mainly sourced from: Wikipedia)



Source: original picture on https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/fi.html

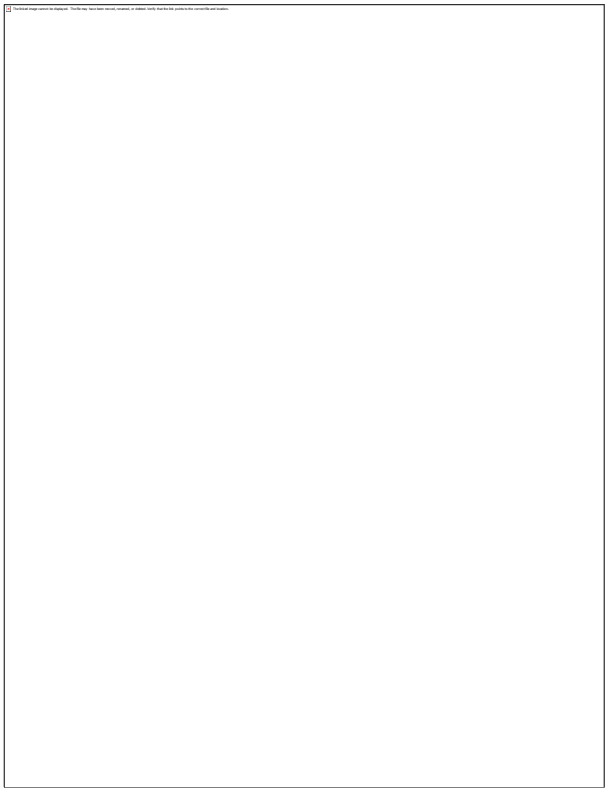
Finland, officially the Republic of Finland, is a Nordic country situated in the Fennoscandian region of Northern Europe. The capital city of Finland is Helsinki. The population of Finland is about 5.4 million people, the majority concentrated in the southern region. It is the eighth largest country in Europe in terms of area and the third most sparsely populated country in the Europe. Finland is a parliamentary republic with a central government based in Helsinki and local governments in 336 municipalities.

Finland has been a member of the European Union since 1995, independent since 1917 and autonomous since 1809. Finland has two official languages: Finnish and Swedish. Finnish is

spoken by 92 % and Swedish by 6 % of the population. The Sami language is an official language in northern Lapland and it is the mother tongue of about 1,700 people.

Education in Finland

(mainly sourced from: Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education)



Source: origial jpg on: Finnish Education System

Finnish education and science policy stresses quality, efficiency, equity and internationalism. It is geared to promote the competitiveness of Finnish welfare society. Sustainable economic development will continue to provide the best basis for assuring the nation's cultural, social and economic welfare. The overall lines of Finnish education and science policy are in line with the EU Lisbon strategy.

In Finland, the basic right to education and culture is recorded in the Constitution. Public authorities must secure equal opportunities for every resident in Finland to get education also after compulsory schooling and to develop themselves, irrespective of their financial standing. Legislation provides for compulsory schooling and the right to free pre-primary and basic education. Most other qualifying education is also free for the students, including postgraduate education in universities.

Parliament passes legislation concerning education and research and determines the basic lines of education and science policy. The Government and the Ministry of Education and Culture, as part of it, are responsible for preparing and implementing education and science policy. The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for education financed from the

state budget. The Government adopts a development plan for education and research every four years.

The Finnish education system is composed of nine-year basic education (comprehensive school), preceded by one year of voluntary pre-primary education; upper secondary education, comprising vocational and general education; and higher education, provided by universities and polytechnics. Adult education is available at all levels.

Schools in Finland

(mainly sourced from: Ministry of Education, the National Board of Education and Statistic Finland)

Children permanently living in Finland have a statutory right and obligation to complete the comprehensive school syllabus. Nearly all children (99.7%) do this. The principle underlying pre-primary, basic and upper secondary education is to guarantee basic educational security for all, irrespective of their place of residence, language and economic standing.

All children have the right to participate in voluntary pre-primary education during the year preceding compulsory schooling. Nearly all 6-year-olds do so. A Finnish child usually starts schooling at the age of seven. The nine-year basic schooling is free for all pupils. Local authorities arrange voluntary morning and afternoon activities for first- and second-year pupils and for special-needs pupils.

General upper secondary education commonly takes three years to complete and gives eligibility for polytechnic and university studies. At the end of the upper secondary school students usually take the national matriculation examination.

Basic education in a nutshell

- a nine-year comprehensive curriculum for the whole age group
- teaching is provided by schools near the home
- no degree; a final certificate will be given for completing the syllabus
- teaching, text books and teaching materials, school transport and school meals are free
- basic education includes a one-year long voluntary pre-primary education in a school or day-care centre
- local authorities can also provide voluntary morning and afternoon activities for pupils in basic education
- provides the necessary prerequisites for all upper secondary education

See also National Core Curriculum for Basic Education

Pre-Primary education

Pre-primary education is available free of charge for children one year before they start actual compulsory schooling. Its aim is to develop children's learning skills as part of early childhood education and care. Local authorities have statutory duty to arrange pre-primary education, but for children participation is voluntary and decided by parents. About 96% of the six-year-olds go to pre-primary school.

The Ministry of Education recommends that a pre-primary teaching group only include 13 children, but if there is another trained adult in addition to the teacher it may have up to 20

children. Pre-primary instructors have either a kindergarten teacher qualification or a class teacher qualification.

Basic education

Basic education is free general education provided for the whole age group. After completing the basic education syllabus young people have finished their compulsory schooling. It does not lead to any qualification but gives eligibility for all upper secondary education and training.

Basic education in brief:

Basic education is free nine-year education provided in comprehensive schools.
The local/school curriculum is based on a national core curriculum.
Education is provided in neighborhood schools or other suitable places which make school travel as short and safe as possible.
Schools cooperate with pupils' homes.
A pupil is entitled to special-needs education, if necessary.
It is possible to continue basic education on a voluntary basis (for a tenth year).
A school-leaving certificate is issued on the completion of the syllabus, but it does not give any actual qualification.
The certificate gives access to all upper secondary education and training.
Teachers are highly educated.
Nearly all children complete their compulsory schooling.

Compulsory schooling starts in the year when children turn seven and ends after the basic education syllabus has been completed or after ten years.

The post-compulsory level

The post-compulsory level is divided into general education and initial and further vocational education and training. After basic education, 95.5% of school-leavers continue in additional voluntary basic education (2.5%), in upper secondary schools (54.5%) or in initial vocational education and training (38.5%).

General upper secondary education

General upper secondary education usually takes three years and gives eligibility for higher education. About 55% of school-leavers opt for the general upper secondary school. The upper secondary school is based on courses with no specified year-classes and ends in a matriculation examination. It does not qualify for any occupation. After the upper secondary school, students continue in universities, polytechnics or vocational institutions.

The admission requirement for general upper secondary education is a school-leaving certificate from basic education. Students apply to general and vocational education in a joint

application system. If the number of applicants exceeds the intake, the selection is based on students' school reports. The drop-out rate is low.

See statistics: Students in upper secondary general education by region in 2010

Vocational education

The aim of vocational education and training (VET) is to improve the skills of the work force, to respond to skills needs in the world of work and to support lifelong learning. VET comprises initial vocational training and further and continuing training.

The largest fields of vocational education in Finland are Technology and Transport (c. 36%), Business and Administration (19%) and Health and Social Services (17%). The other fields are Tourism, Catering and Home Economics (13%), Culture (7%), Natural Resources (6%) and Leisure and Physical Education (2%).

VET is intended both for young people and for adults already active in working life. They can study for vocational qualifications and further and specialist qualifications, or study in further and continuing education without aiming at a qualification.

Initial VET

The vocational qualification has been designed to respond to labor market needs.
The qualification is 120 credits, which takes three years of full-time study, unless prior learning can be counted towards the qualification.
The qualification is based on working life occupations and the competencies required.
The qualification includes at least 20 credits of on-the-job learning.
The training is built on the basic education syllabus.
Prior learning acquired in training, working life or other learning environments can be counted towards the qualification.
Matriculated students can also study in initial VET. Their prior studies are equivalent to some 30 credits, which are counted towards the vocational qualification.
A vocational qualification gives general eligibility for polytechnic and university studies.

See statistics: Students in curriculum-based basic vocational education numbered 133,800 in 2010

Further and higher education

(mainly sourced from: Ministry of Education and Statistics Finland)

The Finnish higher education system consists of two complementary sectors: polytechnics and universities. The mission of universities is to conduct scientific research and provide instruction and postgraduate education based on it. Polytechnics train professionals in response to labor market needs and conduct R&D which supports instruction and promotes regional development in particular.

The higher education system is being developed as an internationally competitive entity capable of responding flexibly to national and regional needs.

Universities in Finland

The mission of Finnish universities is to conduct scientific research and provide undergraduate and postgraduate education based on it. Universities must promote free research and scientific and artistic education, provide higher education based on research, and educate students to serve their country and humanity. In carrying out this mission, universities must interact with the surrounding society and strengthen the impact of research findings and artistic activities on society.

Under the new Universities Act, which was passed by Parliament in June 2009, Finnish universities are independent corporations under public law or foundations under private law (Foundations Act). The universities operate in their new form from 1 January 2010 onwards. Their operations are built on the freedom of education and research and university autonomy.

Universities confer Bachelor's and Master's degrees, and postgraduate licentiate and doctoral degrees. Universities work in cooperation with the suspending society and promote the social impact of research findings.

There are 16 universities in Finland and the military field which is provided by the National Defence College operating within the Ministry of Defence sector.

At universities students can study for lower (Bachelor's) and higher (Master's) degrees and scientific or artistic postgraduate degrees, which are the licentiate and the doctorate. It is also possible to study specialist postgraduate degrees in the medical fields.

In the two-cycle degree system students first complete the Bachelor's degree, after which they may go for the higher, Master's degree. As a rule, students are admitted to study for the higher degree. Studies are quantified as credits (ECTS). One year of full-time study corresponds to 60 credits. The extent of the Bachelor's level degree is 180 credits and takes three years. The Master's degree is 120 credits, which means two years of full-time study on top of the lower degree.

The system of personal study plans will facilitate the planning of studies and the monitoring of progress in studies and support student guidance and counseling.

University postgraduate education aims at a doctoral degree. In addition to the required studies, doctoral students prepare a dissertation, which they defend in public. The requirement for postgraduate studies is a Master's or corresponding degree.

Universities select their students independently and entrance examinations are an important part of the selection process. An admitted student may only accept one student place in degree education in a given academic year. Universities also offer fee-charging continuing education and Open University instruction, which do not lead to qualifications but can be included in a undergraduate or postgraduate degree.

See statistics: University students numbered 169,400 in 2010

Polytechnics in Finland

The system of polytechnics is still fairly new in Finland. The first polytechnics started to operate on a trial basis in 1991−1992 and the first were made permanent in 1996. By 2000 all polytechnics were working on a permanent basis. Polytechnics are multi-field regional institutions focusing on contacts with working life and on regional development. There are 25 polytechnics in the Ministry of Education and Culture sector: four are run by local authorities, seven by municipal education consortia and 14 by private organizations. In addition there is the Åland University of Applied Sciences in the self-governing Province of Åland and a Police College subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior.

Polytechnics offer

- education for polytechnic degrees
- education for polytechnic master's degrees
- professional specialization and other adult education
- open polytechnic education
- vocational teacher training

Degree studies give a higher education qualification and practical professional skills. They comprise core and professional studies, elective studies and a final project. All degree studies include practical on-the-job learning. There are no tuition fees in degree education, and the students can apply for financial aid.

Polytechnic education is provided in the following fields:

- Humanities and Education
- Culture
- Social sciences, business and administration
- Natural resources and the environment
- Technology, communication and transport

Natural sciences
Social services, health and sport
Tourism, catering and domestic services

The extent of polytechnic degree studies is generally 210−240 study points (ECTS), which means 3.5 - 4 years of full-time study. This education is arranged as degree programs. The entry requirement is a certificate from an upper secondary school or the matriculation certificate, a vocational qualification or corresponding foreign studies. The requirement for Master's studies in polytechnics is a Bachelors' level polytechnic degree and at least three years of work experience. The polytechnic Master's, which is 60-90 study points and takes 1.5-2 years, is equivalent to a university Master's in the labor market.

Each student has a personal study plan, which facilitates student guidance and the monitoring of progress in studies. Polytechnics also arrange adult education and open education geared to maintain and upgrade competencies. The teaching arrangements in adult education are flexible and enable mature students to work alongside their studies. Some 20% of polytechnic students are mature students.

See statistics: A total of 21,900 polytechnic degrees were attained in 2010

Education reform

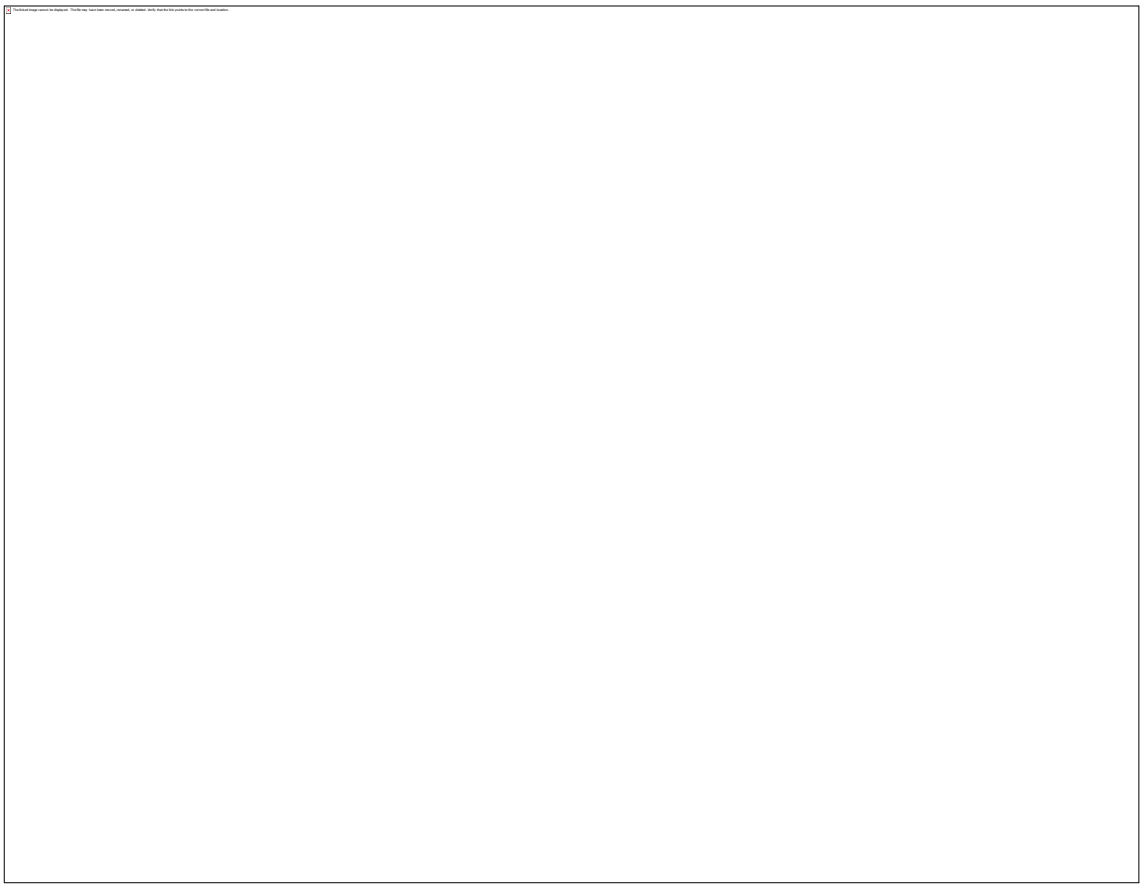
The Finnish education reform is very much based on a top-down comprehensive school. This development started in 1968 and was based on the idea that education has an impact on both well-being of citizens and economic competitiveness.

Education reform principles in Finland:

1. A compulsory primary school for children from 7 years on, lasting for nine years. Socio-economic background has no relevance - the aim of compulsory primary school is to learn the basic knowledge, skills and attitudes of lifelong learning.
2. Basic education is free for all so that the focus can be held on teaching and learning.
3. All teachers have master´s degree in order to qualify for a permanent position in teaching. The public education is based on excellent teachers and investing in supporting them.
4. Schools plan their own curricula, based, of course, on national guidelines and teachers have pedagogical freedom in classrooms.
5. Education is seen as key to survive in the modern competitive world. Political decision makers understand that education is a critical driver to economic growth.
6. No mandatory tests and examinations are required (except Matriculation Examination for the upper secondary school students). Descriptive feedback is recommended and validation is based on student´s individual development rather than comparison to other students.
7. For higher education universities and polytechnics together create competitive education model for increasing technology implementation and entrepreneurship in education.
8. Cooperation between teacher unions, educators, researchers, enterprises and other experts has worked excellently over the years. This cooperation enables experimental and pilot projects and research to help develop educational solutions.
9. Regional development and networking create new ways to manage and develop both school and teacher´s skills.
10. Political consensus: government, trade unions and employer´s organizations share a same goal and are able to communicate act together.

Read a blog entry on this from Bert Maes blog, 2010

Picture of Educational Reform in Finland



source: https://www.msu.edu/user/frassine/EAD845%20-%20Educational%20Reform%20in%20Finland.pdf

Schools

A municipal education system was built in the early 1970´s and a nine year compulsory primary school was instituted. With this solution the same education could be provided for all students regardless of their background, economic status, gender or language. Compulsory school is free of charge for all students - there are no costs for education, materials, food or anything else either. There is also a possibility to choose which school to attend to.

Teachers in Finland have university-level education. For a permanent teaching position one has to have a master´s degree. Every year only 10 % of applicants who want to become teachers are accepted to Finnish Universities. For teachers there are also plenty of life-long learning opportunities throughout their teaching careers. Further education nowadays is often based on up-to-date researches and cover areas like virtual learning environments, changes in work and effective usage of information technology also from the pedagogic view.

Schools have a possibility to plan their own curricula based of course on national core curriculum by the National Board of Education. In the same way schools can choose teaching material and teaching methods independently. Also the testing methods and actual tests are being planned locally by schools or individual teachers. This makes is possible to grade

students based on their individual development rather than comparing students with one another. Only in the upper secondary level there is a nationally equal testing system, The Matriculation Examination.

Reforms in Finnish Basic Education

(source Basic Education Reform in Finland - presentation in 2010)

Divided parallel education system with consequent achievement gap until 1970
1970 first national curriculum – strongly centralized
Teacher education to universities in mid-1970s – research-based teacher education
Higher standards for all – ability grouping discontinued in 1985 curricular reform – individualisation
Decentralisation of steering powers especially during 1990s
National Core Curriculum reformed 1985, 1994 and 2004
Recent emphasis on developing quality of basic education
Reform of early intervention strategies 2010
Proposal for the Reform of Finnish Basic Education 2020

Administration and finance

(mainly sourced from: Ministry of Education and Statistics Finland)

In Finland everyone has the right to free basic education, including necessary equipment and text books, school transportation, where needed, and adequate free meals.

Post-compulsory education is also free. This means that there are no tuition fees in general and vocational upper secondary education, in polytechnics or in universities. At these levels of education, students pay for their text books, travel and meals.

In general and vocational upper secondary education, school meals are free, and students can get subsidy for school travel. In continuing vocational education and in liberal adult education, it is possible to charge modest fees. Those studying in post-compulsory education and training can apply for financial aid. There are special support schemes for mature students

See statictics

Current expenditure on regular education system by type of expenditure 1995–2009 and
Current expenditure on regular education system increased in 2009

See pictures in pdf-format

Administration of basic and upper secondary education
Administration of the higher education system and research

Schools

The network of comprehensive schools covers the whole country. The majority of pupils attend medium-sized schools of 300-499 pupils. The smallest schools have fewer than ten pupils and the largest over 900 pupils. Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide education for children of compulsory school age living in their areas. The language of instruction is mostly Finnish or Swedish, but also the Sami, Roma or sign language may be used. Swedish-speaking pupils come to under 6% and Sami-language pupils under 0.1% of all pupils.

Upper secondary

General upper secondary education is provided by local authorities, municipal consortia or organizations authorized by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The central government co-finances education with statutory government grants based on student numbers and unit costs per student. The majority of the 435 upper secondary schools in Finland are run by local authorities.

Vocational Education

The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for the strategic and normative steering of VET and leads national development. The national objectives of VET, the structure of the qualifications and the core subjects included in them are determined by the government. The details of the qualification and the extent of training are determined by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The authorizations to provide VET are granted by the Ministry.

The National Board of Education designs the core curricula and sets the requirements of competence-based qualifications, which describe the aims and key content of the qualifications.

Vocational education and training providers are responsible for organizing training in their areas, for matching provision with local labor market needs, and for devising curricula based on the core curricula and requirements. They also decide independently what kind of institutions or units they run.

A VET provider may be a local authority, a municipal training consortium, a foundation or other registered association, or a state company. There are around 210 VET providers in Finland. The aim is to develop them to meet according to skills needs. To this end, smaller units will be combined to form local, regional or otherwise strong entities.

Quality assurance

(mainly sourced from: Ministry of Education and National Board of Education)

Education and training providers have a statutory duty to evaluate their own activities and participate in external evaluations. Evaluation is used to collect data in support of education policy decisions and as a background for information- and performance-based steering. Education is evaluated locally, regionally and nationally. Finland also takes part in international reviews, for example PISA

Evaluation findings are used in the development of the education system and the core curricula and in practical teaching. They and international comparative data also provide a tool for monitoring the realization of equality and equity in education.

Universities and polytechnics evaluate their own education, research and artistic provision and undertake impact analyses. They are assisted by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC).

Schools

According to the Basic Education Act (628/1998), pupil assessment aims at guiding and encouraging studying and developing pupils' self-assessment skills. Pupil's progress, work skills and behavior are assessed in relation to the objectives of the curriculum.

National guidelines and principles for pupil assessment are given in the core curriculum. In the core curriculum pupil assessment is divided into assessment during the course of studies and final assessment. These two have different roles:

1) During the course of studies, the task of assessment is to guide and encourage studying and to help pupils in their learning process. Continuous feedback from the teacher is very important. It should support and guide pupils in a positive manner. With the help of assessment and feedback, teachers guide pupils in becoming aware of their thinking and action, and help pupils to understand what they are learning. Certificates and reports are one way of giving feedback. Pupils are given reports at the end of each school year; in addition, pupils may be given one or more intermediate reports. In the first seven grades of comprehensive school, assessment in reports may be given either verbally or numerically or in a combination of the two. Later assessment must be numerical (scale 4-10), but it may be complemented verbally.

2) The second task of pupil assessment is the final assessment of basic education, on the basis of which pupils will be selected for further studies when they leave comprehensive school. This assessment must be nationally comparable and it must treat pupils equally. The final assessment is based on the objectives of basic education. For the purposes of the final assessment, assessment criteria have been prepared for the grade "good" (8) in all common subjects in the national core curriculum.

General upper secondary schools

According to the General Upper Secondary Schools Decree (810/1998), the students and their parents or other guardians are to be provided with information concerning the individual students' schoolwork and progress of studies at sufficiently frequent intervals.

Assessment is based on the objectives defined in the curriculum. The purpose of assessment is to give students feedback on how they have met the objectives of the course and on their progress in that subject. The scale of grades used in numerical assessment is 4–10. Some courses are assessed with passed/failed.

At the end of general upper secondary education, students usually take the matriculation examination which consists of at least four tests; one of them, the test in the candidate's mother tongue, is compulsory for all candidates. The candidate then chooses three other compulsory tests from among the following four tests: the test in the second national language, a foreign language test, the mathematics test, and one test in the general studies battery of tests (sciences and humanities). The candidate may include, in addition, as part of his or her examination, one or more optional tests.

The matriculation examination tests are initially checked and assessed by each upper secondary school's teacher of the subject in question and finally by the Finnish Matriculation Examination Board. The Latin grades and the corresponding points given for the tests are laudatur (praised), eximia cum laude approbatur (passed with exceptional praise), magna cum laude approbatur (passed with much praise), cum laude approbatur (passed with praise), lubenter approbatur (satisfactorily passed), approbatur (passed), and improbatur (failed).

Vocational schools

The Government decides on the general goals of vocational education and training, the structure of qualifications, and the core subjects. The Ministry of Education decides on the studies and their scope. There are 53 vocational upper secondary qualifications and 119 study programs in them.

The curriculum system of vocational education and training consists of the national core curricula, each education provider's locally approved curricula and the students' personal study plans.

Assessment is conducted by the teachers and, for on-the-job learning periods and vocational skills demonstrations, the teacher in charge of the period or demonstration together with the on-the-job instructor, workplace instructor appointed by the employer or the demonstration supervisor. The assessment must guide and motivate the students as well as develop their abilities in self-assessment.

Finnish Information Society

From 2003 to 2007 The Finnish Government Information Society Programme was acting to improve competitiveness and productivity, to promote social and regional equality and to improve citizens' well-being and quality of life through effective use of information and communications technologies. The Programme consisted of seven sub-sectors:

telecommunication infrastructure and digital television
citizens' ability to utilise the information society and security
training, working life, research and development
utilisation of ICT in public administration
electronic commerce and digital contents
legislative measures and
international dimension

Work of the The Government Information Society Programme was continued by Ubiquitous Information Society Advisory Board from 2007 to 2011. The Board had around 40 members from the involved Ministries, public administration, NGOs and business life. The Advisory Board aimed to transform Finland into an internationally recognized, competitive, competence-based service society with a human touch.

The Advisory Board had the duty to:

draw up an action plan for the national information society strategy
monitor and coordinate the implementation of the action plan
accommodate the measures of the action plan and ensure that they are consistent with one another
maintain cooperation with other players in the information society development
integrate and coordinate information security work in the information society
promote the introduction and development of reliable electronic identification systems
promote the copyright system from the viewpoint of the information society
take new initiatives to speed up the national information society development
monitor the information society development at international and EU level and
report annually to the Government about the implementation of the action plan.

Read the action plan of Ubiquitous Information Society Advisory Board in pdf-format: http://www.arjentietoyhteiskunta.fi/files/73/Esite_englanniksi.pdf or open a PowerPoint slideshow http://www.arjentietoyhteiskunta.fi/files/29/National_Information_Society_Policy_in_short.ppt

The Advisory Board worked in six working groups to fulfill its aims:

Information security working group
Electronic identification development group

Near Field Communication working group
Media forum for children and young people
Utilizing the benefits of ICT in teaching and studying working group (this group crew up to be a major project, read a brief description from a word document http://www.arjentietoyhteiskunta.fi/files/220/paivitys_arjentietoyhteiskunta_engl_191109.docx)
working group on opening public information of the Finnish public sector

Statistics

For a number of years Statistics Finland has been describing evolvement of the information society in Finland. Compilations have been published on the topic and annual statistics are produced on the use of information and communications technology.

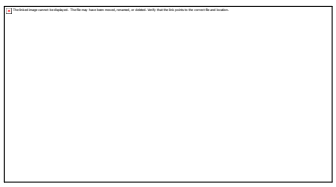
There are for example following statistics:

Use of information and communications technology
Use of information technology in enterprises

Finnish Information Society 2020

source: Sitra, the Finnish Innovation Fund

The following vision of the Finnish information society was developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Transport and Communications as a contribution to the information society strategy process. Discussion on the vision continues.



Source: http://www.clubofrome.at/events/2006/helsinki/ahonen.html

The foundation for the Finnish information society in 2020 is humanity, with a focus on developing new services and technologies that are meaningful, safe and accessible. Ease of use ensures that the digitized culture includes all citizens. Climate change makes electronic services even more important: it pays to prefer bits to atoms.
The quality of services is measured by ease of use and relevance. High-quality services are personalized and predictable. The focus in healthcare, for example, is on holistic promotion of health, which includes social factors as well as medical viewpoints.
Virtual is real, and reality is virtual. High-quality information networks have become vitally important, as have securing maintenance and support for these networks. Automation and artificial intelligence have freed employees from routine tasks, but technology can never

replace meaningful human contact. This is particularly true of sectors such as the care-giving industry.

In the information society, innovation springs from sharing information in networks across organizations, beyond traditional hierarchies and information silos. Business can no longer be based on control, but on joint efforts to improve and evolve. A multidisciplinary innovation environment has already boosted Finland's position in global competition, providing opportunities for big and small businesses alike.

Important and productive work involves global interaction and collaboration. Success results from a commitment to shared values—from having reached an understanding of common goals through discussion. The ability to collaborate is measured by what are known as collaboration credits, and collaboration is managed across organizational borders.

Communication skills across professional, linguistic and cultural barriers are crucial.

Information work and global partnerships require new practices that differ from those in the industrial society, where work was tied to a certain place and certain hours. Play and creativity are important for both individual well-being and the common good, generating something genuinely new.

The importance of digital materials and networks is stressed in learning, as are learning styles and strategies—in other words, learning to learn. A good, well-rounded education allows for equal citizenship in an information society. Learning takes place at all ages in schools, at the workplace, during free time. Schools emphasize a culture of shared improvement, which is based on sharing information and skills and learning from mistakes. Game-like elements aid learning.

In the information society, public administration assumes the role of enabler, which allows people and businesses more influence. Public administration consistently promotes open operating models and practical use of information, creating new opportunities for everyone.

Publicly produced content—including maps, statistics and public service media content—are under an open licence, and raw data are available for anyone to use and develop further, as long as privacy and public safety are not compromised. All personal information is the property of the individual and easily available when needed. All relevant health information, for example, is available regardless of place of care. This is achieved through open information interfaces.

The line between the public and the private sectors becomes meaningless as a result of cooperation. The public sector is efficient and flexible, and businesses contribute to the common good. The right to services and opportunities to participate and contribute no longer depend on regional borders. The growing importance of natural resources and the countryside supports this trend.

The information society increases direct democracy and work toward common goals. Administrative processes are preceded and supported by citizen discussions and by experimental projects that provide information about new phenomena and processes before they are implemented on a larger scale. Citizens, organizations and businesses have the right to propose new legislation.

National and municipal facilitators and the media, among others, break down extensive and difficult issues into smaller topics for discussion, without taking a position. Materials related to decision-making are available to citizens and policy-makers alike in easily comparable and understandable formats. Discussions focus on presenting the premises for decisions in concrete and comprehensible terms.

ICT in education initiatives

The National Board of Education in Finland has a new strategy that is looking towards 2020. In this strategy ICT has a clear role: in basic education students must have opportunities to use ICT effectively. In upper secondary schools ICT will be used in The Matriculation Examination and ICT will also become part of evaluation during upper secondary school education. According to the new strategy the National Board of Education will become a centre of expertise covering areas like eLearning, ICT in teaching and digital learning environments.

ICT skills, ICT examinations and eLearning life have been TIEKE´s key role for a long time. The Finnish innovation, Computer Driving Licence (origin for ECDL and ICDL) has been developed and maintained by TIEKE for more than 15 years. The newer Knowledge Work Examination enhances collaboration and both individual and organizational versatile ICT skills. These days more than 30.000 new students start taking one of these examinations every year.
The Association of Finnish eLearning Centre is an independent national association that promotes sharing of knowledge, best practices and quality in eLearning. The Centre distributes information and performs as a contact surface for partner finding, such as experts and service providers, in Finnish eLearning market. It is a networking organisation for the numerous Finnish eLearning projects and regional clusters. It also participates in national eLearning policy making and in the work of the both Finnish eLearning programmes in the Finnish Centres of Expertise Programme.
Social media supporting learning (Sometu) is a unique network for everybody interested in promoting social media in learning. Sometu is an open network offering discussion channels, information on events, seminars, training and projects. Collaboration and sharing are key points to join this network when looking for new ideas and information on social media solutions and inventions.

Virtual initiatives in schools

Coordination project for distance learning, City of Turku

Coordination project for distance learning aims to collect and spread good practices of distance learning, collaborate with different distance learning projects, developers and creators, form new kinds of networks and create new operation models to support different distance learning needs. The project also does research on how different learning materials suit distance learning and distribute data nationally and to the extent appropriate internationally.

In this project distance learning is defined as ICT supported learning, where student and teacher are physically in different places. Distance learning can be a part of other education (multiform education). Interaction can be simultaneous or happen at different times.

The project covers all general education and collects also good practices from vocational education and basic education of arts. Within the project together with the University of Turku nationally valid reports on distance learning solutions are obtained.

The project started in September 2010 and continues until the end of 2012. It is mainly financed by the National Board of Education and coordinated by educational system of City of Turku.

The project web pages http://etaopetus.wordpress.com/ are available in Finnish.

Virta - virtual regional resources - a project in Tampere region

Virta project is a development project for learning environments. The project aim is to create a regional model for virtual classes, using web conference solutions. These solutions are especially targeted to secure equal opportunities for small groups to learn mother tongue and religion. During the school year 2011-2012 subjects are Arabic, Somali and Russian as mother tongue, German as A2 language and Islam and catholic religions. The model can also be used in other education, such as optional subjects or preparatory education. Fourteen schools from Tampere region are participating in this project.

The project started in 2008 and continues to the end of 2012. It is financed by the National Board of Education and the City of Tampere.

Virta project´s web pages http://koulut.tampere.fi/hankkeet/virta/index.html are available in Finnish.

ENO-Environment Online

ENO is a global virtual school and network for sustainable development and environmental awareness. Environmental themes are studied within a school year on a weekly basis. Thousands of schools from 124 countries have taken part.

The ENO programme has been running since 2000. It is coordinated by ENO Association based in the city of Joensuu, Finland. ENO has received funding from the National Board Of Education and municipalities in the Joensuu region.

ENO web pages http://eno.joensuu.fi/basics/briefly.htm

Virtual schools in Finland:

Kulkuri (”Tramp”) is a distance school for Finnish children living abroad. In the distance school they study together with students from other counties. The main subject is Finnish language, but if needed, students can complete the whole comprehensive school syllabus.

Kulkuri´s web pages http://www.peda.net/veraja/kulkuri are available in Finnish.

Verkkoperuskoulu (Virtual comprehensive school) is a comprehensive school for adults, young people who no longer belong to the compulsory education age group and for people that cannot study full time.

The school web pages http://www.lahdenkansanopisto.fi/fi/opintolinjat/peruskoulu/verkkoperuskoulu are available in Finnish.

Nettiperuskoulu is a distance learning school maintained by Otava Folk High School. Its purpose is to offer a possibility to accomplish basic education curriculum that for some reason has not yet been completed. Main target group are adults and younger people, who are beyond compulsory education age group and do not have a graduation certificate from basic education.

The school web pages http://www.nettiperuskoulu.fi/fi/sisalto/01_etusivu are available in Finnish.

Virtual initiatives in post-secondary education

There are at least 76 upper secondary schools in Finland that arrange distance learning. Many of them work closely together with local vocational schools.

The vocational and upper secondary schools offering distance learning also form networks with each other. One upper secondary or vocational school can also be a partner in several distance schooling networks.

Distance learning networks (most links contain information only in Finnish)

- ISOverstas
- Lapin toisen asteen verkkokoulu
- Lukioiden virtuaaliverkosto
- Länsi-Suomen läänin aikuislukioiden reaalirengas
- Opinlakeus
- Pirkanmaan etälukio
- Pohjois-Pohjanmaan eLukio-verkosto
- Satakunnan etälukioverkosto

Virtual learning using lectures from business sector

Asiantuntijaverkosto (Network of experts) allows specialists from different trades of industry and business, NGO's, politics and universities contribute to learning. Experts bring practical experience to theory-based lectures in upper secondary schools. Experts participate in classes using web conference technology. The system is easy to use and the visit does not require much preparation neither of the teacher nor the expert. This is also an economical and ecological way to transfer know-how.

Games and virtual worlds to support education

OVI project is short for “Learning games and virtual world solutions supporting the quality and reforming of education”. The project aim is to promote virtual learning environments,

especially virtual worlds, and games as learning solutions towards pedagogically meaningful education. The project is financed by the National Board of Education.

The OVI project web pages http://www.peda.net/veraja/konnevesi/lukio/ophhanke2010 are available only in Finnish.

Lessons learnt

Within the VISCED project has been defined categories for different levels of virtual schooling:

a fully virtual school (no compulsory attendance): in Finland at least six (6) schools (Verkkoperuskoulu, Nettiperuskoulu, Etäkoulu Kulkuri, Nettilukio, Sotunki Distance Learning Centre and eLukio). There are also at least 76 upper secondary schools and several compehensive schools where studying is possible also virtually although most students attend normal classes.

a partly virtual school (attendance is less than the norm, for example each Wednesday is a "study at home" day): in Finland this does not seem to be a typical solution

a school with virtual classes (taken outside school), possibly for special subjects (such as subjects where teachers are scarce, e.g. science in rural schools) or special categories of students (in hospital, teenage mothers, in institutions, school-phobic etc): in Finland this is widely used form of virtual learning, in both comprehensive and upper secondary schools - especially because of long distances and small groups in certain subjects, like some languages and religions.

a school with virtual classes (taken inside school) - in such classes there would be no teacher but there could be a supervisor to handle the "in loco parentis" aspects for under-age children: in Finland this is also a method used, especially with small groups in certain subjects, again for example some languages and religions.

a school which offers virtual classes at special time of year - e.g. easter holidays for exam revision, virtual summer schools for remediation, etc: in Finland this is not really used.

General lessons

Notable practices

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Education and Reserch 2007-2012, Development Plan
Key competences for lifelong learning in Finland; Education 2010 – interim report
The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment
Policy Development and Reform Principles of Basic and Secondary Education in Finland since 1968, May 2006
Strategy of Ministry of Education and Culture (available in Finnish)
Learning and Competence 2020 – Strategy of the Finnish National Board of Education
Tieto- ja viestintätekniikka opetuskäytössä - Välineet, vaikuttavuus ja hyödyt (ICT in education - facilities, effectiveness and advantages (publication available only in Finnish))
Twenty- five Years of Educational Reform Initiatives in Finland
Oppimisen tulevaisuus 2030 (Future of Learning 2030 (publication available only in Finnish))
National Plan for Educational Use of Information and Communications
E-learning Nordic 2006
Second Information Technology in Education Study. SITES 2006 user guide for the international database
The school of opportunities - towards every learner´s full potential
Osaava ja luova Suomi, Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriön tulevaisuuskatsaus (Future survey 2010, Ministy of Education and Culture (available in Finnish))

Relevant websites

European Commission
The Government Program
Finnish Ministry of Education (MINEDU)
The Finnish National Board of Education
This is Finland
Finnish Online University of Applied Sciences
Finnish Virtual University
Statistics Finland
Ubiquitous Information Society Advisory Board
European Schooling Finland
The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC)
KOTA statistical data on universities and fields of education
The Eurostudent Report
http://www.opiskelupaikka.fi/In-English
PISA
The Finnish Government Information Society Programme 2003-2007
Surveys and reports commissioned by FICORA
Statistics and other data on Finnish science and technology
Finnish Information Society 2020
The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement

Retrieved from "http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Finland"
Categories: VISCED | Finland | Europe | European Union | Nordic countries | OECD | Country reports | Countries with Programmes

Greece

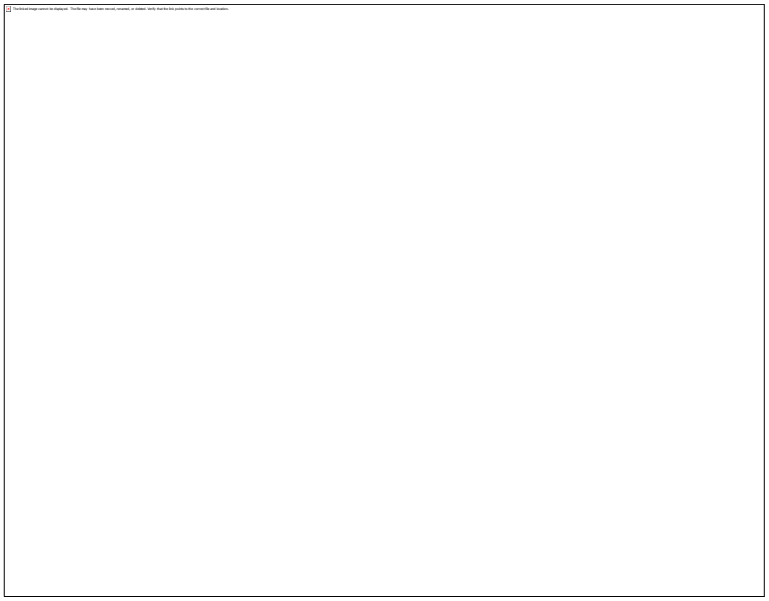
From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

Contents

Partners situated in Greece

Lambrakis Foundation

Greece in a nutshell



GREECE (Ελλάδα – Elláda) officially the Hellenic Republic, is a country in southeastern Europe, situated on the southern end of the Balkanic Peninsula and it includes more than 2000 islands situated in Ionian and Aegean Seas and it has a total surface area of 131,957 km2. Greece is a parliamentary republic and it's considered as the cradle of the western culture and thought. Greece is a member of the European Union since 1981, of the Economic and Monetary Union of the European Union since 2001 and also a member of NATO from 1952.

Athens is the capital of Greece and Thessaloniki, Patras, Heraklion, Volos, Ioannina, Larissa e Kavala are some of the most important cities of the country.

As of January 2008, the population of Greece is estimated at 11,262,000 by Eurostat : the 58,8% lives in the urban areas and only the 28,4% in rural areas.

The official language is the Modern Greek that is spoken by the 98.5% of population; moreover, there are some Slavic and Turkish minorities.

The widespread religion is the Orthodox Christian and the relationship between State and Church are regulated by the Third Article of the Greek Constitution.

Greece is divided in 13 perifereies (περιφέρειες) – Attica, Central Greece, Central Macedonia, Crete, East Macedonia e Thrace, Epirus, Ionian Island, North Aegean, Peloponnese, South Aegean, Thessaly, West Greece, West Macedonia – subdivided into a total of fifty-one prefectures called nomos. Greece is a Parliamentary Republic thanks to the Referendum of the 8th December 1974.

The President of the Republic, who is considered the edge of the state, is elected by the Parliament for a five-years terms, only for two mandate. The Greek Constitution, formed by 120 articles, foresee the separation of the three powers: executive, legislative and judiciary. The executive power is exercised by the President of the Republic and by the Government. The President of the Republic is the commandant in chief of the armed forces and he presides over the Defense Council. The civil authority of the armed forces is the Ministry of the national defence. The President of the Republic appoints the Prime Minister and the other Cabinet members. Legislative power is exercised by a The legislative power is exercised by a 300-member elective unicameral Parliament (Vouli ton Ellinon) : elections are held every four years by universal suffrage through a complex proportional system, with barrage at 3%. The judiciary power is independent from the executive and legislative and it comprehends three Supreme Court: the Court of Cassation (Άρειος Πάγος), the Council of State (Συμβούλιο της Επικρατείας) and the Curt of Auditors (Ελεγκτικό Συνέδριο). Greece has a multiparty system, dominated by two principles political party: the liberal-conservative New Democracy (ND), actually in power, and the social-democratic Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK).

Greece education policy

During the 19th century, have been implemented in Greece, many reforms in the education field, in relation to the structure of the system, the national curriculum and the language used for education. In 1975 the Constitution has established the new paradigm of education legislation that was introduced through the reform of the education system, one year later, in 1976. The reform in question has established a common language for education, has reformed the education division between primary, secondary and tertiary education and emphasized the modernization of curricula and the improvement of the administration and monitoring of education. The second period of reforms of the education system began in the mid-nineties and the third period in early 21 century, between 2004 and 2006. This reform, introduced

important changes, like the creation of the Foundation of International University of Greece, the reform of secondary vocational training, the introduction of a new law for the assessment of education and legislative actions in relation to lifelong learning area.

In the Greek Constitution, education is identified as a responsibility of the state. The majority of Greek citizens attend public schools, in fact, there are few private schools that are supervised by the Ministry of Education. The Minister has a centralized control on state schools, sets educational curricula, he manages the staff and monitors the funds. At regional level the role of supervisor of the Minister is done through the Regional Councils for Primary and Secondary Education that operate in every prefecture. The tertiary institutions are almost totally autonomous, even if the Minister is responsible for funding. In accordance with Article 16 of the Greek constitution, education, both moral, intellectual, occupational and physical, is a basic mission for the state, with the aim of developing a national and religion conscience and provide adequate training to the future citizens.

The basic legislation is included in the following:

Constitution 2001 (Article16).
Law 682/1977: “About the private schools and boarding houses”.
Law 1566/1985: “Structure and Operation of Primary and Secondary Education and other Stipulations”.
Law 2817/2000: “Regional Directorates of Education”.
Law 2916/2001: “Structure of Higher Education and settlement of issues in the Technological Sector”.
Law 2986/2002: “Organisation of Regional Services of Primary and Secondary Education, assessment of teaching task and staff, teachers’ in service training and other stipulations”.
Law 3027/2002: “Regulations concerning the Organisation of School Buildings for Higher Education and other stipulations”.
Ministerial Decisions 21072α/Γ2/ Official Journal 303 v.Β’/13-3-2003 and 21072β/Γ2/ Official Journal 304v.Β’/13-3-2003, “Cross-Curricular Thematic Framework and Curricula of Primary and Secondary Education”.
Law 3255/2004: “Regulations for Issues of all Educational Levels”.
Law 3369/2005: “Systematisation of Lifelong Learningand other stipulations”.
Law 3467/2005: “Selection of primary and secondary education teachers, regulations for Administration and Education issues and other stipulations”.
Law 3475/2006: “Organization of secondary vocational education and other provisions”.
Law 3549/2007: “Reform of the institutional framework concerning the structure and function of the higher education institutes”.

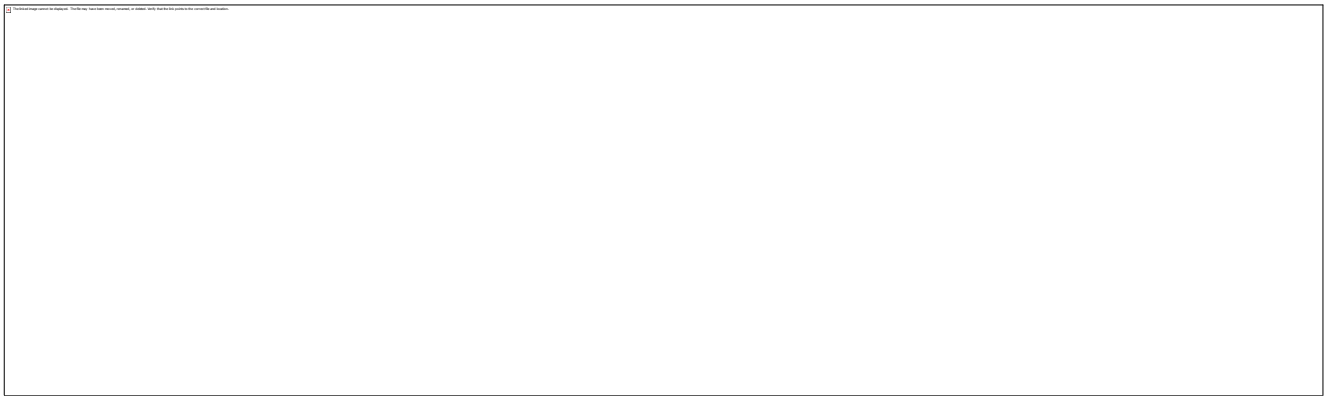
More recently legislation interventions made in the period 2000-2001 include :

1. Improvements have been made to the 1997/98 reform, regarding the access system to Higher Education and the hiring of educators. In the case of the first one notes a less rigid textbook based assessment system which exhibits features of analysis, association, critical thinking etc. in this regard one can claim that attempts are made to reach congruency between the curriculum and its contents and the assessment for access to higher education system.

2. Legislation regarding the fields of Special Education, decentralisation of education, training and evaluation of educators has been reformed (Law 2986/2002).
3. Technological Education Institutes have been upgraded by being incorporated in Higher Education which now consists of two parallel sectors namely: the University and the Technological ones. (Law 2916/2001).

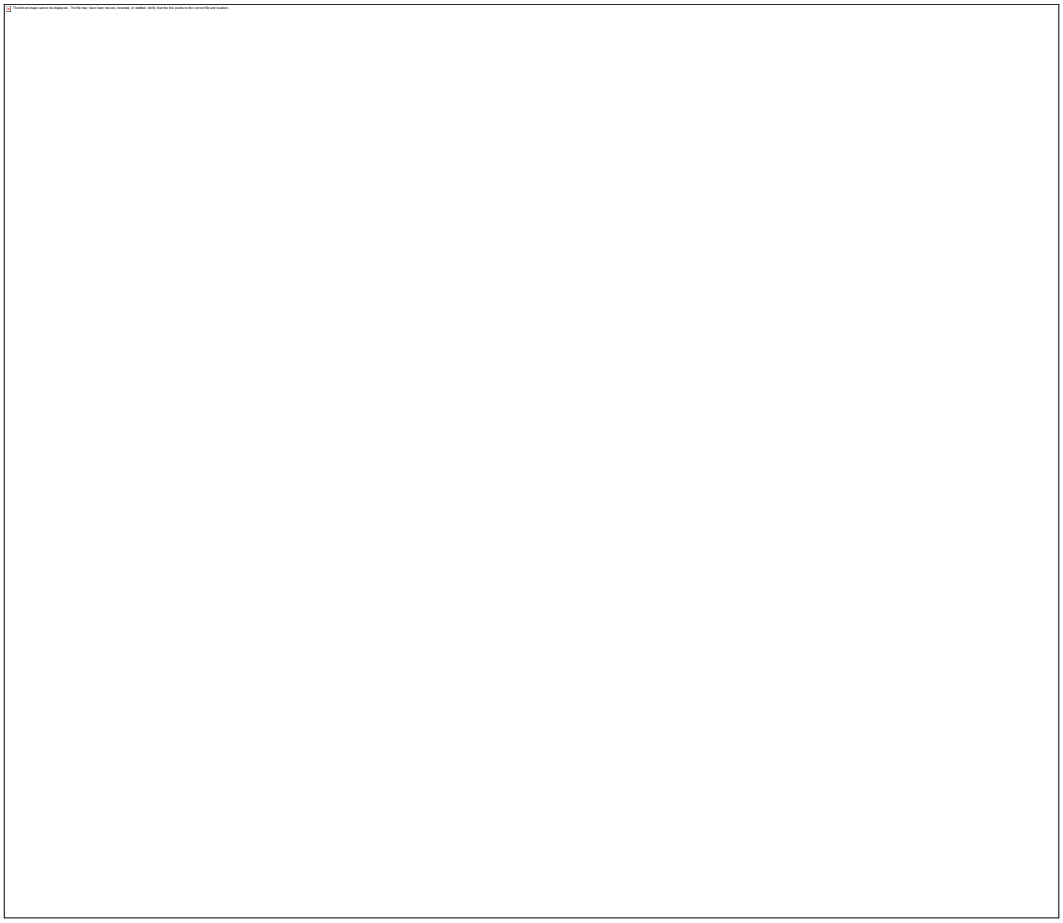
The specific changes introduced into the education system with the Greek Reform of 2007 include: The establishment of Unified Upper Secondary School (Eniaio Lykeio) which is gradually replacing all other existing types of upper secondary school (lykeio); The procedure for admission to higher education has been changed, with emphasis on the assessment of pupils in the second and third degree of lykeio; The duration of kindergartens and primary schools has been stretched because it will gradually move to full-time; Second Chance Schools have been created specifically for teens who have already completed 18 years and have not yet completed the compulsory school; The design of a common curriculum for both primary and secondary education

A focal point of educational policy is the idea that education is a social resource and a right for every citizen. Based on laws passed by Parliament for each educational level, the State intends to render more democratic the whole process of education, decentralizing it, ensuring the participation of those who are directly involved in the process, raising the quality level provided and applying the principle of merit principle in the recruitment of specific staff . Compared to European data Greece isn't investing many resources to fund educational projects: in fact, the percentage of GDP granted to education in 2005 was 3.98% . Also the other percentage rates are lower than the European average.



The current reform (Law 3549/2007: "Reform of the institutional framework concerning the structure and function of the higher education institutes") will be discussed extensively later, in paragraph "Higher Education Reform".

Greece education system



Education system in Greece is subdivided in 4 levels:

Pre-primary Education: nipiagogeio (preschool);
Primary Education: dimotiko Scholeio (primary school);
Secondary Education: gymnasio (Lower Secondary School), geniko lykeio (General upper Secondary School), epaggelmatiko lykeio – EPAL (Vocational Lyceum/ EPA.L), TEE (Technical Vocational Schools / TEE) and epaggelmatiki scoli – EPAS (Vcational Educational Training Schools / EPAS);
Higher Eduation: Panepistimia/AEI (University), Technologika Ekpaideftika Idrymata / TEI (Technological Education Institutes) and the School of Fine Arts (ASKT) .

The education system in Greece ranges from 6 to 16 years old and normally include the primary school (demotiko) and secondary (Gymnasio).

Pre-primary Education

Law 1566/1985 determines all the details concerning the structure and organization of primary and secondary education. The same law provides that the pre-school education

depends on the primary system and in this sense follows the regulations in place for Dimotiko Scholeio (primary school). In particular, the pre-school education is provided by Nipiagogeia (Kindergartens) that operate independently or in specialized centres together with the state nursery school (children's centers). The frequency of nipiagogeio lasts 2 years and after the changes introduced in 2006, was made compulsory from 5 years of age. The issues concerning the organization of nipiagogeia are governed by decisions N° F27/148/G1/160/14-2-95 of the Minister of Education. Since 1997 has been set up full time: Oloimero nipiagogeio (All-day kindergarten) was introduced by Law 2525/97. Finally, in relation to Article 73 of Law 3518/2006, the frequency at nipiagogeio begins from 4 years of age, becoming compulsory from 5 years onwards. The nursery school (Παιδικός σταθμός, Paidikós Stathmós) starts at the age of two and a half years, in institutions both public and private. They are very popular, but attendance is not mandatory.

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Primary education

The Elementary school belongs to the Compulsory Education. Attendance is compulsory and lasts six years, from the age of 6 to 12.

The basic goal of the Elementary school is to ensure the children's all-round, harmonious and balanced mental and physical development. Such that, regardless of sex or origin, they have an opportunity to develop their personalities and live a creative life.

The Elementary school emphasizes and fosters the link between creative activity and the study of specific subjects, situations and phenomena, while also developing mechanisms to promote the acquisition of knowledge. The Elementary school helps children grasp basic concepts and gradually familiarise themselves with abstract thought and master the written and spoken language.

In Greece, all-day Elementary schools with longer hours and an enriched curriculum are gradually being put in place. Priority is given to children of working parents and to remedial teaching for pupils with learning difficulties and foreign pupils. Besides there are special schools and induction courses for children with special education needs. Finally, since 1996 is adopted Multicultural Education designed to meet the educational needs of social groups with a particular social, cultural or religious identity.

Pupils in Elementary school are promoted from one class to the next without examinations, provided they have attended at least half of the classes and, in the teacher's judgment, have acquired the level of knowledge appropriate to their class. At the end of each year the pupils are given a progress certificate. Elementary school comes to an end on completion of the sixth class and the pupils are given a study certificate which is forwarded to the local Gymnasium by official channels so that they can continue their education there.

Primary education is provided within the primary schools (scholeio), whether public or private. The primary schools are distributed all over the country, even in the remotest regions. Attendance is mandatory and there are no additional costs for school and for textbooks. The frequency in Dimotiko Scholeio lasts 6 years and includes levels 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. The access is possible after having completed 6 years of age. Oloimero Scholeio (All-day School) operate in parallel to the ordinary primary school, with an extended timetable and an enriched curriculum. The current primary and secondary school structure was established in 1985 with the Law 1566: this law has instituted new procedures for the designing of new curricula and textbooks. This framework has been modified and enriched with new laws and presidential decrees. There are also Idiotika nipiagogeia (private kindergartens) and idiotika scholeia operating under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and controlled by regional administrative bodies, just as in the case of public schools. They have the same organization and structure of state schools and qualifications equivalent to those issued in public.

Elementary schools are called "Dimotiká" (demotic, meaning municipal), a carryover term from a time when such schools were run by local communities. The name remains although it has been obsolete for decades. In the first two years pupils are not officially graded, and parents obtain feedback about their performance via oral communications with teachers. Grading begins in Year 3, and written exams are introduced in Year 5. Graduating from one year to the next is automatic, and pupils with deficient performance are given remedial tutoring. Years are called "classes", from first to sixth:

Year 1 (Πρώτη δημοτικού): age 6 to 7
Year 2 (Δευτέρα δημοτικού): age 7 to 8
Year 3 (Τρίτη δημοτικού): age 8 to 9
Year 4 (Τετάρτη δημοτικού): age 9 to 10
Year 5 (Πέμπτη δημοτικού): age 10 to 11
Year 6 (Έκτη δημοτικού): age 11 to 12

Enrollment to the next tier of compulsory education, the Gymnasium, is automatic. A normal school-day starts at 8.15 and finishes from 12.30 to 16.15 depending on the class and the school. The classes last between 30 and 80 minutes. The school year always starts in the second week of September and ends in the second week of June. The students have summer vacation (3 months), Christmas vacation (2 weeks) and Easter vacation (2 weeks). Furthermore, students take usually another four days off in order to celebrate their two national holidays (28/10 and 25/3).

Basic subjects:

Modern Greek Language (9 hours/week)

Modern Greek Literature (2 hours/week)
Mathematics (5 hours/week)
Environmental Studies (2-4 hours/week)
Physical Education (4 hours/week)
Music (2 hours/week)
Art (2 hours/week)
Computer Studies (2 hours/week)
Theatrical Studies (1 hour/week)
Flexible Zone (3 hours/week)
English (2-4 hours/week)

Additional Subjects:

Physics (2 hours/week and only for years 5 and 6)
Geography (2 hours/week and only for years 5 and 6)
History (2 hours/week and for years 3-6)
Religion (2 hours/week and for years 3-6)
Social & Political Studies (2 hours/week and only for years 5 and 6)
Second Foreign Language (2 hours/week and only for years 5 and 6)

Secondary education

Secondary education in Greece is divided into two levels: Compulsory Education and Higher Secondary Education.

Types of Institution This subdivision describes the main types of educational institutions that are included in secondary education.

Compulsory Secondary Education – Gymnasio
Upper Secondary non-Compulsory Education - Geniko Lykeio
Vocational Lyceum – EPAL (epaggelmatiko lykeio) | Vocational School – EPAS (epaggelmatiki scholi) | Technical Vocational Educational School - TEE (Technika Epangelmatika Ekpedeftiria) (secondary non-compulsory education)
Post-Secondary non Tertiary Education – IEK (Institouta Epaggelmatikis Katartisis)

The compulsory secondary education is provided in Gymnasio, which lasts for 3 years: from 12 to 15 years of age. The Gymnasium covers the three final years of compulsory education and constitutes the lower level of secondary education. As mentioned in the relevant law, education at Gymnasium level is designed to promote the pupils' all-round development with reference to the abilities which they have at that age and the demands which life puts on them. Specifically, it helps pupils to widen the scope of their values, to supplement and combine the acquisition of knowledge with the corresponding social problems, to cultivate their powers of verbal expression, to achieve normal physical development, to familiarise themselves with the various forms of art, to develop aesthetic judgment, and to become aware of their abilities and skills, inclinations and interests. The Gymnasiums are day schools, but some operate during the evenings. Evening Gymnasiums are open to working pupils over 14

years old. Besides, there are also Music Gymnasiums, Multicultural Education Gymnasiums and Gymnasium sport departments. Remedial teaching is available for Gymnasium pupils with learning difficulties and for foreign students. They attend special courses in the problem subjects. In parallel, there are Special Gymnasiums and induction classes for children with special education needs. Finally, since 1996 is adopted Multicultural Education designed to meet the educational needs of social groups with a particular social, cultural or religious identity. Assessment is based on day to day oral tests and the general involvement of the pupil in the learning process, on short written tests, on written tests given without warning during the school year and, finally, on written examinations at the end of the school year. At the end of the school year pupils who fail certain subjects must take a repeat examination in September. Those who fail again must repeat a year, while pupils in their final year have the right to re-sit the regular examinations. Pupils leaving the Gymnasiums are given a leaving certificate which entitles them to move on to higher-level secondary education. Besides, Gymnasium leavers of over 18 years of age may enrol at Vocational Training Institute (IEK) departments in certain specialisations, where they study for two semesters and obtain Vocational Training Certificate Level 1. There are 6 types of gymnasiums in Greece:

General Gymnasium (entering there from the primary school is automatic)
Athletic Gymnasium (to enter this type of school students must pass certain exams on a sport like basketball, football, volleyball, gymnastics, polo, swimming etc)
Musical Gymnasium (to enter this type of school students must pass certain exams on a musical instrument)
Art Gymnasium
Experimental Gymnasium
Church Gymnasium

Subjects in the Greek Gymnasiums:

Modern Greek Language (2 hours/week)
Modern Greek Literature (2 hours/week)
Ancient Greek Language (3 hours/week)
Ancient Greek Literature (Homer Odyssey-1st Year, Homer Iliad-2nd Year, Euripides Helen-3rd Year), (2 hours/week)
Mathematics (4 hours/week)
Physics (2 hours/week and only for years 2 and 3)
Chemistry (1 hour/week and for years 2 and 3)
Biology (2 hours/week and for years 1 and 3)
Social and Political Studies (2 hours/week and for year 3)
Physical Education (2 hours/week)
Art (1 hour/week)
Music (1 hour/week)
History (2 hours/week for years 1&2 and 3 hours/week for year 3)
Religion (2 hours/week)
Computer Studies (1 hour/week)
Technology (1 hour/week and for years 1&2)
English (2 hours/week)

2nd foreign language (German, French and Italian 2 hours/week)
School Vocational Guidance (1 hour/week)
Economics (1 hour/week for year 1 and 2 hours/week for year 2)
Geography (2 hours/week)

The upper secondary education (not compulsory) is provided through two types of institutions: Geniko lykeio (General Lyceum / GL) and epaggelmatiko lykeio - EPAL (Vocational Lyceum). The frequency in both types of school lasts 3 years. There are also epaggelmatiki Scholar - EPAS (ΕΠΑΣ / SS), professional schools, the frequency of which lasts for 2 years.

General Lyceum (isced level 3) The General Lyceum was set up under the educational reform of 1997 by Act 2525 and replaces the old-style Lyceum. Its goal is to develop the pupils' all-round skills and abilities and to prepare them for a responsible role in modern society. The system's main characteristics are the emphasis on general education and the wide opportunities it offers for horizontal and vertical transfer to other equivalent or higher levels of the education system. The General Lyceum consists of three classes and study lasts three years. Holders of a Gymnasium leaving certificate are admitted to the first class of the General Lyceum without examinations. Educational curricula Class 1 of the General Lyceum includes general knowledge subjects, which constitute a common core for all pupils. During Class 2 the pupils must choose one of the following orientation lessons: theoretical orientation, practical orientation, or technological orientation. However, they are free to switch from one orientation to another after mid-October each year. There are three orientation lessons in Class 2 lasting six hours a week. In Class 3 there are four orientation lessons lasting 12 hours a week. In parallel, pupils in Classes 2 and 3 attend core classes lasting 24 and 16 teaching hours a week respectively. Elective lessons are provided to all the classes of the General Lyceum lasting at least 2 teaching hours. Examination At the end of Classes 2 and 3 the pupils take examinations both at school and national level with a view to moving on to Class 3 or to obtaining the General Lyceum Leaving Certificate respectively. Holders of the General Lyceum Leaving Certificate have the following opportunities:

They may seek employment in the public or private sector.
They may seek admission to the Universities or the Technological Educational Institutes (TEIs), by sitting the annual national examinations in five general knowledge subjects and in four orientation subjects.
They may attend public or private Vocational Training Institutes (IEKs) to obtain a Training Certificate equivalent to a post-secondary vocational training qualification.

Besides day schools there is also evening General Lyceum offering four-year courses for young workers. There are also General Musical Lyceums, General Ecclesiastical Lyceums, General Lyceums with a sports department and General Lyceums for multicultural education, as well as Special General Lyceums and integration classes for pupils with special education needs.

With the Law 3475/2006 , it is determined that training is provided within the Vocational Lyceums (EPAL) and Vocational Schools (EPAS), which replaced the State Technical Vocational School (TEE), under the supervision of the Minister of Education and Religious

Affairs. The change from the TEE to EPAL / EPAS was gradual and started in the academic year 2006-2007. The duration of the course is 3 years and is divided into 3 levels of employment: The first level includes 3 levels: I) Technology, II) Services, III) Naval; The second includes Mechanical Engineering, Electrician, Electronics, Building Works, Information Science, Economics and Management, Health and Welfare, Agronomy, Food and the Environment. The third level includes: General mechanical engineering, Car engineering, Electrical facilities, computer systems & networks electronic experts, Economics and Management employees, Tourist enterprises employees, assistant nurses, Medical & biological laboratories assistants, Pharmacy assistants, Food Technology & Control, Landscaping – Environment & Agro-tourism, Modern Business Agriculture, Merchant Marine Masters, Merchant Marine Engineers.

In addition, there are particular gymnasia and lykeia : religious, minorities, inter-cultural, music experimental and some special classes for pupils who need special education, called Secondary Special Needs Education Schools and Inclusion Classes (ΣΜΕΑ/SMEA). Other alternative secondary education are the School of Fine Arts, Sports Facilities Classes and Second Chance Schools. In state schools the attendance is free and textbooks are distributed free of charge by the state. The post-secondary education (not university) includes Epaggelmatikis Instituta Katartisis-(IEK) - Vocational Training Institutes - which offer qualifications for employment and diplomas that certify the training received. In fact, this type of institutions provides a formal professional education with the possibility to receive a Certificate or a Diploma of Vocational Training, equivalent to that of professional schools (Vocational Lyceums - EPAL). This license allows entry into the working world in both the public and the private sector. These schools accept students both from Gymnasio and Lykeio. The Vocational Training Diploma of the Organization for Vocational Education and Training (OEEK) is now recognized as a formal qualification to apply for jobs, even in the public sector (Presidential Decree 50/2001, Government Gazette 39/A/5-3-2001 on Determination of appointment qualifications in posts of public sector bodies).

Private Education

In Greece there are secondary private institutions such as Gymnasia, Lykeia and TEE, but recently with Articles 9, 13 and 14 of Law 3475/2006 (Government Gazette 146/issue A/2006), were included also private Vocational Lykeia (EPAL) and Vocational Schools (EPAS): private EPAL and EPAS are organized and follow the same schedule of classes in public schools. Furthermore, as established by Law 3475/2006, there are also private Gymnasia and Lykeia, that provide education for foreigners living in Greece, as established by the Act governing foreign schools. These schools may use a foreign education program, a Greek educational program or a mixed program, both foreign and Greek. In addition, there are private Vocational Training Institutes (IEK), which are coordinated by the Organization for Vocational Education and Training (OEEK).

Higher education

Higher education in Greece comprises two parallel sectors (Law 3549/2007, Article 2), university and technology. The university sector, including Universities (Ανώτατα

Εκπαιδευτικά Ιδρύματα, Anótata Ekpaideytiká Idrýmata, "AEI"), Polytechnics and Higher School of Fine Arts (ΑΣΚΤ / ASKT). The technology sector, includes Higher Technological Education Institutes (TEI) and School of Pedagogical and Technological Education. The universities are fully self-administered legal entities of public law that are financed and supervised by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, in accordance with Article 16 of the Constitution. Entry to these institutions depends on the performance of the examinations that are performed in the 3rd grade of secondary school.

Typologies of Greek higher education institutions

The higher education sector, including the AEI Universities, Polytechnics, the Higher School of Fine Arts (ΑΣΚΤ / ASKT) and the Hellenic Open University (EAP). The university sector of the secondary education includes Universities (A.E.I.), Polytechnics, Higher School of Fine Arts (ΑΣΚΤ/ASKT) and the Hellenic Open University (EAP). These educational institutions are funded and under the control of the state: the supervision is exercised by the Minister of Education. In Greece there are 23 universities, including the Polytechnics, the Academy of Fine Arts and the Hellenic Open University (ΕΑΠ / EAP). A particular type of educational institution is the International University of Greece (ΔΙ.ΠΑ.Ε / DIPA), operating in Thessaloniki and it is an independent secondary education institution and completely self-administrated. This University is a legal entity of public law and its mission is to provide higher education to foreigners interested in studying in Greece. To carry out this mission, the International University organizes and promotes graduate and post-graduate programs of study, using distance teaching and learning. The courses last for approximately 4 years, with the exception of certain faculties where the course lasts even 5 or 6 years. The academic year consists of two semesters, with 13 weeks of lessons and three weeks of examinations. Students complete their course of study after 4 years if they pass the examination of both the compulsory and the optional subjects. At the end of the studies they obtain a Diploma or Degree in relation to the Faculty concerned. The Universities issue certificates in the following fields:

Humanities, law and social sciences
Sciences
Health Sciences
Technological Sciences
Economic and Management Sciences.

The technology sector includes Technological Education Institutes (TEI) and Higher School for Teachers of Technological Education (ΑΣΠΑΙΤΕ / ASPA). In this area there is also the Higher Military Education Institute. The Technological Education Institutes (TEI) are under the supervision of the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (ΥΠΕΠΘ / YPEPTH). There currently are 15 TEI and a School for the technology and pedagogy education, in the whole country, and 95 specializations offered by TEI in the following fields:

Graphic arts and artistic studies
Administration and economics
Health and welfare occupations
Technological applications
Food and nutrition technology
Agronomy technology
Music technology.

The studies last for 4 years with a total of eight semesters, which include both periods of lesson and a final semester devoted to the preparation of the thesis. During this final period, students can begin to practice their profession through a training period that will then be evaluated. After the completion of studies, students will receive a Degree.

Secondary non-tertiary education

The higher non-university education includes the Higher Ecclesiastical Schools, Higher Schools of Dance and Drama, Higher Schools of Tourist Professions, Higher NCO Schools and Higher and Police Academies. According to the constitution, vocational training and any other special training is provided by the State in institutions o the higher education level. The duration of studies in these schools can not exceed 3 years. The main types are: the Higher Ecclesiastical Schools, under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs that will be converted to University Ecclesiastical Academies through the Law 3432/2006 and will operate as tertiary education institutions. The Higher Schools of Dance and Drama, under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture, the Higher Schools of Tourist Professions under the supervision of the Ministry of Tourist Development, Higher Schools for Petty-Officers who are managed by the Ministry of Defense and the Higher Police Academy, supervised by the Ministry of Public Order.

Academies and schools The following academies offer higher education with 4 years of studies and their graduates are equivalent to the graduates of universities. However, they operate under different terms from the universities and among other differences they have is that they are not allowed to run graduate programs on their own.

Hellenic Military Academy

Hellenic Naval Academy
Hellenic Air Force Academy
Military School of Corps Officers
Military Nursing School
Hellenic Police Academy
Hellenic Fire Academy
Ecclesiastical Academy of Athens
Ecclesiastical Academy of Thessaloniki
Ecclesiastical Academy of Vellas
Ecclesiastical Academy of Crete

The following schools offer higher education with 4 years of studies and their graduates are equivalent to the graduates of Technological Educational Institutes.

Academy of Mercantile Marine

The following schools offer higher education of up to 2 years of studies

Hellenic Army School of Non-Commissioned Officers
Hellenic Naval Academy of Petty Officers
Hellenic Air Force Academy of Staff Non-Commissioned Officers
Hellenic Air Force Academy of Technical Non-Commissioned Officers
Hellenic Air Force Academy of Air Navigators
School of Police Constables
School of Chief Firemen
School of Tourism Education of Rhodes
School of Tourism Education of Agios Nikolaos

Colleges According to the Constitution of Greece, "education at university level shall be provided exclusively by institutions which are fully self-governed public law legal persons". This prohibits private institutions for post-secondary education, colloquially known as colleges, from operating as independent universities in Greece. However, it does not prohibit colleges from collaborating with foreign universities to offer undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of study in Greece. The vast majority of colleges are offering programmes of study under franchise or validation agreements with universities established in other European Union countries, primarily in the UK, leading to degrees which are awarded directly by those universities. The monitoring of those agreements as well as of additional provisions for the operation of colleges is carried out by the Ministry of Education (Law 3696/2008, 3848/2010), but also by the respective educational authorities of the countries in which the universities are based (e.g. QAA, BAC and NARIC for the UK). Effective May 2010, with the integration into Greek law of EC Directive 2005/36 on the mutual recognition of qualifications, holders of academic degrees by universities in the European Union, including those obtained through studies at a college in Greece, have their professional rights fully recognised.

American Farm School

BCA COLLEGE
ALBA Graduate Business School
American College of Greece
American College of Thessaloniki
CITY College, International Faculty of the University of Sheffield
DEI College, Registered Centre of the University of London International Programmes;
UCLan.DEI College
University of Indianapolis, Athens Campus
Hellenic American University
Hellenic International Studies in the Arts
I.S.T. College/University of Hertfordshire
Mediterranean College Athens-Thessaloniki

Postgraduate Studies

The organization of postgraduate studies is governed by Law 2083/92: universities have full responsibility for the organization and payment of post-graduate courses. All TEI may participate, in the form of consortia with Greek or foreign universities, organizing courses. With the Law 3374/2005 the TEI that have passed the assessment of the prerequisites, have the ability to provide post-graduate courses. There are different degrees of postgraduate courses: the Master and PhD. The programs of post-graduated studies are appointed by the General Assembly of Special Composition of the department and are approved by the Academic Senate. In the proposal, the following are mentioned: the field of study and the objectives of the programme, the type of the awarded postgraduate titles, the categories of the admitted graduates, the duration of the program, the courses, the teaching, the research or any other activities of the postgraduate students, the number of postgraduate students, the prospects and the needs of the relevant university in staff and infrastructure, the operational cost and the financial resources. The Minister of Education gives the final approval of the postgraduate study programmes, issuing a decision published in the Official Journal. For the organization and the operation of a postgraduate study programme the competent bodies are the following: the Senate of a Special Composition, the Committee for Postgraduate Study Programmes which operates at HEI level, the General Assembly of a Special Composition, the Coordinative Committee of the postgraduate study programmes and the Director of Postgraduate Studies . Doctoral programs last a minimum of 3 years, as determined by law. Some programs are structured while others are based on pure research. There was an increase in PhD programs due to the interdisciplinary nature of the topics related to research. In fact, both programs include teaching courses with research activities. Doctoral programs may include activities such as discussions, presentations, workshops, attending seminars or publications. The Law gives students the opportunity to create a doctoral program but only for those faculty that do not already have a post-graduate studies program . At the end of the study period there is a written thesis that is discussed publicly in front of a committee of seven academic professors.

Universities in Greece

The University of Athens is the most ancient University of the oriental Mediterranean.

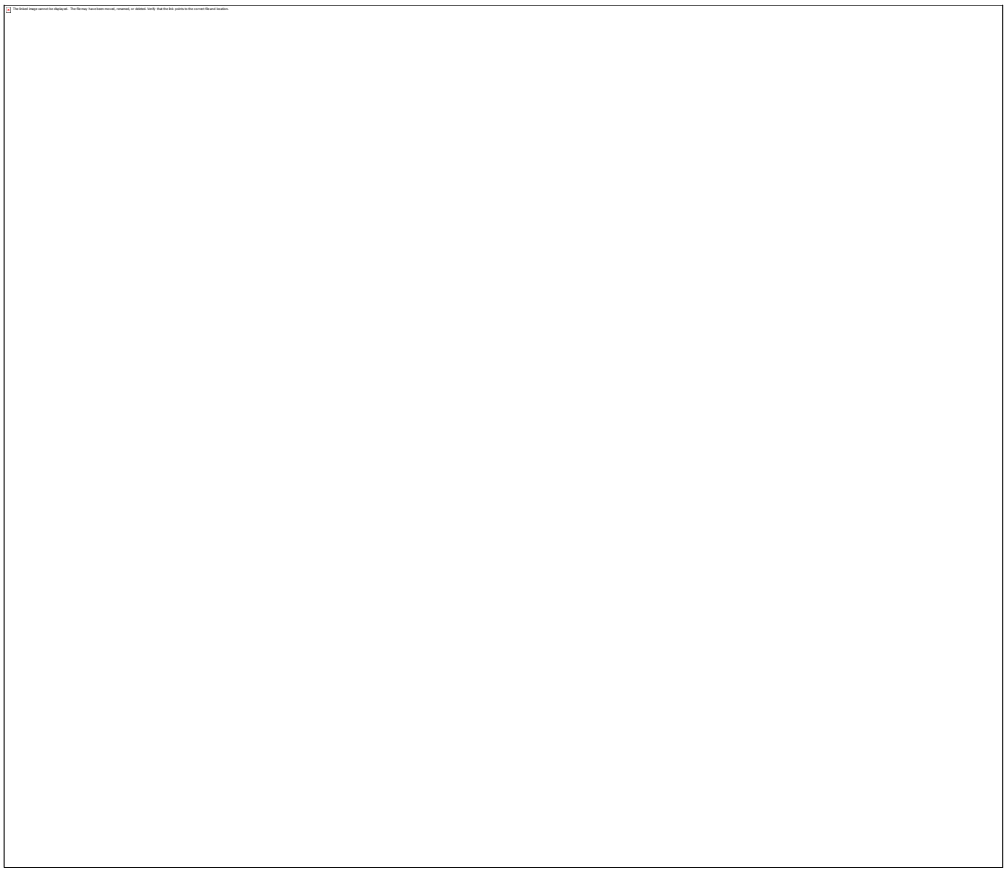
The other main Universities are:

Agricultural University of Athens
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (mirror)
Athens School of Fine Arts
Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB)
Democritus University of Thrace (campuses: Komotini, Xanthi, Alexandroupoli, Orestiada)
Harokopion University of Athens
Hellenic Open University
International Hellenic University
Ionian University
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
National Technical University of Athens
Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences
Technical University of Crete (T.U.C)
University of the Aegean (campuses: Mytilene, Chios, Karlovasi, Rhodes, Ermoupoli)
University of Central Greece (campuses: Lamia, Livadeia)
University of Crete (campuses: Heraklio, Rethymno)
University of Ioannina (campuses: Ioannina, Agrinio)
University of Macedonia (campuses: Thessaloniki, Edessa, Naoussa)
University of Patras
University of Peloponnese (campuses: Tripoli, Korinthos, Kalamata, Nafplio, Sparti)
University of Piraeus
University of Thessaly (campuses: Larissa, Volos, Karditsa, Trikala)
University of Western Macedonia (campuses: Florina, Kozani)

Technological Institutes of Higher Education in Country

Alexander TEI of Thessaloniki (campuses: Sindos, Katerini, Kilkis, Nea Moudania)
School of Pedagogical and Technological Education
TEI of Athens
TEI of Chalkida (campuses: Chalkida, Thiva)
TEI of Crete (campuses: Heraklio, Chania, Rethymno, Agios Nikolaos, Ierapetra, Sitia)
TEI of Epirus (campuses: Arta, Ioannina, Preveza, Igoumenitsa)
TEI of Ionian Islands (campuses: Lefkada, Argostoli, Lixouri, Zakynthos)

TEI of Kalamata (campuses: Kalamata, Sparti)
TEI of Kavala (campuses: Kavala, Drama)
TEI of Lamia (campuses: Lamia, Amfissa, Karpenisi)
TEI of Larissa (campuses: Larissa, Karditsa, Trikala)
TEI of Messolonghi (campuses: Messolonghi, Nafpaktos)
TEI of Patras (campuses: Patra, Aigio, Pyrgos, Amaliada)
TEI of Piraeus
TEI of Serres
TEI of Western Macedonia (campuses: Kozani, Florina, Kastoria, Grevena and Ptolemaida)



Higher education reform

Higher education reform The existent Law 1268/82 governs the operation of tertiary education and was introduced by the Socialist Government (PASOK) in 1982. There were several changes made to this Law, in particular the 1404 Law of 1983 and the 2083 of 1992. The main innovations brought about by Law 1268/82, which drastically changed the operation of universities, are the following:

The old faculties were divided into departments, each of which corresponds to a university discipline area.

The Chair system, which was the focus of the past organisation of universities, was replaced by the scientific sector (tomeas). The tomeas is responsible to a General Assembly in each Department.

All policy decisions related to the various levels are taken by the appropriate General Assemblies which consist of all members of the teaching staff and a considerable number of undergraduate and some postgraduate students.

Undergraduates have equal representation in the electoral bodies for the selection of the administrative heads of the University as the members of the academic staff.

Members of the teaching staff form a single body with four levels: (i) lecturer, (ii) assistant professor, (iii) associate professor and (iv) professor. Only those belonging to the two upper ranks of the academic hierarchy are elected to permanent (tenured) positions. Appointments and promotion of all teaching staff is made by special electoral bodies, which meet together with the General Assemblies of the departments. New categories of auxiliary teacher, technical and administrative personnel has been created.

Each university is administered by: (i) the Rector who is supported by two vice-Rectors, elected for a period of three years by an electoral college. The electoral college consists of all the faculty members, an equal number of undergraduate students and representatives of the technical staff, the administration staff, the graduate students, the teaching assistants and the foreign language teachers. Each of the latter groups has a representation which is 5% of the size of the faculty (total 25%), (ii) the Rectors' Council, which consists of the Rector, the two vice-rectors, one representative of the students and one representative of the administrative personnel and (iii) the Senate consisting of the Rector and the vice-rectors, the deans of the university faculties, the heads of the autonomous departments, one representative of the teaching staff, one representative of undergraduate students from each department, one representative of administrative personnel and a number of representatives of the post-graduates students. All representatives are elected. The Senate is regarded as the top administrative agent of the University. Each faculty, comprising of relevant departments, is administered by: (a) the Dean, who is elected for three years by the General Assembly of the faculty, (b) a Council which comprises the dean, heads of the departments and one undergraduate student from each department and (c) the General Assembly of the faculty which consists of the General Assemblies of the departments.

Each department is administered by: (a) the head, who is elected for two years, (b) the Administrative Council which consists of the head, the directors of departmental sections and representatives of the students and of the technical or administrative personnel, and (c) the General Assembly of the department. The director of each sector, who is elected for one year, and the General Assembly of the sector are the administrative agents.

A National Academy of Letters and Sciences (EAGE) and a National Council of Higher Education (S.A.P.) as already described, were established by the new law, as advisory bodies to the Government and as a co-ordinating supervisory agencies on teaching, research, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, evaluation and appointment of academic personnel, creation of new universities or units in them, allocations of funds etc. However, the National Academy of Letters and Sciences has never functioned because of the negative reaction to it of the professorial body.

The undergraduate studies were reorganised into "semester courses" and a basic structure for the promotion of graduate programmes was set up.

As stated above, Law 2083 in 1992, modified Law 1268 of 1982. The main modifications were the following:

1. The participation of students in the procedures for the selection of administrative bodies of higher institutions and in decision-making bodies was reduced to 50% of the faculty.
2. The election of the Vice-Rectors became a separate procedure from that of Rectors.
3. A four-year plan for the creation and advertisement of teaching staff positions was established.
4. The role of administrative bodies with a small number of members was strengthened.
5. Members of the teaching staff were ranked according to the service they provide (full time or part-time employment).
6. Two cycles of undergraduate studies were established. The first cycle has four semesters. Passing the examinations in all subjects taught during the first cycle is a prerequisite for the continuation of studies in the second cycle.
7. Students who fail to complete their studies within the prescribed period of time, extended by two extra years, were not entitled to any kind of financial aid awarded by the state.
8. Postgraduate studies and the functioning of research programmes was reorganised.
9. Free distribution of academic textbooks was restricted only to students with low annual income.
10. New academic institutions such as the Centre for the Greek Language, the Open University and the Committee for Evaluation of Higher Education were created.

The above measures have been further modified or abolished by Law 2188/94 (Minister of Education D.Fatouros) as follows (retaining the numbering above):

1. The participation of students in the procedures for the selection of administrative bodies of higher institutions and in decision-making bodies was increased to 80% of the faculty.
2. The election of the Vice-Rectors is not a separate procedure from that of Rectors.
3. A one-year plan for the creation and advertisement of teaching staff positions was established.

Points 5, 6, 7 and 9 were deleted; 8, and 10 remained the same Special regulations concerning "guest" students and the mobility of teaching staff and students were also introduced by the new law. This is an attempt to adjust the legal framework of Greek higher education to the context of European Union and to promote co-operation with other countries. Finally, both the organisation and the functioning of the Technological Education Institutions (TEIs) is based on the Law 1404/1983, and Presidential and Ministerial decisions issued in connection with this Law. The TEIs are distinguished from the AEIs, in terms of their purpose, function (including their administration), staff qualifications and hierarchy, the length of programmes and the fact that they offer no postgraduate courses. However, their organisation and operation is similar to those of the AEIs. TEIs are oriented towards the application of recent technological knowledge and practice, while AEIs are more science and research-based institutions. Thus, the TEIs have direct links with various productive enterprises where most of the students' practical work is carried out. TEIs are self-governing bodies enjoying academic freedom and freedom of teaching and research. They are divided into schools and departments similar to those of AEIs. Each TEI together with its schools and departments is administered by members elected by the General Assemblies in which the teaching staff, an

important number of students' representatives and a number of support personnel representatives participate. The permanent teaching staff are grouped according to three scales: laboratory professors, assistant professors and professors. Possession of a doctorate is a necessary prerequisite for appointment to the rank of professor. The new law for TEIs provides for the establishment of two Advisory Services at the MoE to offer TEIs advisory support. They are: (a) the Council for Technological Education (Symboulio Technologikis Ekpedefsis - STE), (b) the Institute for Technological Education (ITE). In addition there are Regional Technological Councils whose role is to facilitate the formation of links between TEIs and productive units for economic and any other support . The legal basis for the organization of university, is the Article 16 of the Greek Constitution which declares that education is a fundamental mission for the State. In addition, it states that higher education can be provided exclusively by institutions which are legal and independent entities under the public law, and it forbids to private institutions to provide university courses. The current situation is changing: in the Greek Parliament there are extensive debates on the amendment of this article, that will enable private non-profit HEI, with some prerequisites for quality . This new Law “The Reform of the Institutional Framework for the Structure and Operation of Higher Education Institutions” was submitted to the Plenary of the Greek Parliament and was approved on 8 March 2007. This law regulates the structure of secondary education and is based on Law 1268/1982 that covers only the university sector. The technology sector has a different legislative framework (Law 1404/1983) and up to 2001 the TEI were not regarded as institutions of higher education. The new Law 3549/2007 specifies that the university education comprises two parallel sectors, university and technology, and refers to both types of institutions. This law wants to transfer more responsibility to the HEI, through the internal regulation. The status of the rector is valued: he can be elected by all students and staff and will have the power to exercise legal control and appoint the academic staff.

The most important innovations introduced by the new Law 3549/2007 obligate HEIs:

- to compile internal regulations in order to ensure their even operation and enhance their autonomy;
- to compile a four-year academic-development programme, where their mid-term and long-term goals will be defined and their strategy will be planned;
- to elect their leadership through immediate and collective participation of the academic community groups in the election procedure. The position of HEI Secretary has been introduced for the better management of administrative and financial matters;
- to redefine the concept of academic immunity (asylum);
- to enhance student support services and assign tutors to students;
- to adopt measures in support of students from weaker financial classes such as: compensative scholarships, interest-free educational loans as well as support provided to disabled students;
- to enhance their libraries;
- to establish social accountability and transparency procedures;
- to enhance the European and international dimension of Greek higher education.

Other issues, which should be defined by the internal regulations, are added in the new Law 3549/2007:

1. the deontological rules for all the members of the academic community as well as the procedures and the control bodies established for their observance;
2. the operation rules of the collective bodies and the obstacles to the participation in those bodies;
3. the participation in research or other programmes;
4. the operation of the student support services and the exercise of a tutor's duties by teaching and research staff members;
5. the general rules for operating libraries, study and reading rooms of an institution;
6. the extent, procedures and requirements for awarding exchange scholarships to students;
7. the procedures and requirements for ensuring the safeguarding of the institution and its property in the most efficient way;
8. the proportion between obligatory and optional courses of the syllabus and the necessary requirements for students' participation in all exams;
9. the procedure for designing and revising the four-year academic and development program as well as the annual report;
10. the specialization of the prerequisites and procedures for the election, advancement or permanent appointment of teaching and research staff members or research staff members;
11. the way representatives of the teaching and research staff members or of research staff members from every section are appointed in the General Assembly of a department;
12. the composition of the support secretariat for the Secretary of the institution, the qualifications, the selection procedures and the competencies of the Secretary of the institution;
13. the way the electoral procedures are conducted for the emergence of the collective bodies of the institution; and
14. the integration of the decision made by the qualified body of the HEI with regard to the designation of the HEI's areas covered by academic asylum.

"*Our aim is to ensure that our HEIs have the necessary resources to continue to fulfill their full range of purposes. Those purposes include: preparing students for life as active citizens in a democratic society; preparing students for their future careers and enabling their personal development; creating and maintaining a broad, advanced knowledge base; and stimulating research and innovation.*" [Ministers for Higher Education, London Communique, 18 May 2007]

A new higher education reform is on the way and the new law is being discussed in the Parliament during September 2011.

The Bologna Process

Greece is a founding member of the Bologna Process (1999). Beginning with 2004, intensive efforts have been made in order to implement everything agreed within the framework of the Bologna Process. While in all the other European countries reforms were rapidly implemented, in Greece delays occurred. Today, 46 countries, including Greece, actively participate in the creation and establishment of the European Higher Education Area; Greece is a member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group and was a member of the Board during 2005-2006. Greece also takes part in the Stocktaking Group and in the External Dimension Group

(2005-2007). As a member of the European Union, Greece participates, within the framework of the Lisbon Strategy, in the effort to "make Europe the most dynamic Knowledge Society worldwide" and can only go along with the decision of the heads of states and governments made in Barcelona in 2002, which sets the Bologna Process as the basis for cooperation in higher education.

The most important legislative reforms and developments relating to the Bologna Process since Bergen are the following:

Quality Assurance, ECTS, Diploma Supplement

Law 3374/2005 regulates quality assurance in higher education, the establishment of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System and the Diploma Supplement. The law establishes for the first time a national system of quality assurance in Greek higher education, which addresses both universities and TEIs. It also realizes the commitments undertaken by the Ministers of Education in Berlin (2003), complies with the European Standards and Guidelines suggested by ENQA and its partners (EUA, EURASHE, ESIB) and adopted by the Ministers of Education in Bergen (2005), fully respects the autonomy of the institutions and ensures student participation. The above law determined the obligatory application of a credit system, fully compatible with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), for all undergraduate and postgraduate study programmes. Moreover, Law 3404/2005 , which regulates operational and study issues, further contributed to the improvement of the quality of TEIs and established new permanent positions for the educational staff.

Recognition of Degrees

Law 3328/2005 for the establishment of a new Agency for Degree Recognition (DOATAP) was created in order to simplify the procedures for recognition of degrees and study periods. DOATAP is a member of the NARIC network.

The European Dimension, Recognition of Joint Study Programmes and Mobility of Students and Staff

Law 3404/20055, Article 23 on Joint Postgraduate Study Programmes and Joint Doctorates, gives universities the possibility to award double, multiple and joint degrees and allows the use of a language other than Greek in postgraduate study programmes. Thus, it enhances the cooperation between Greek and European HEIs, the mobility of students and academic staff and the European dimension of Higher Education. Moreover, Law 3549/2007 also stipulates the possibility to organize undergraduate study programmes in languages other than Greek.

Lifelong Learning

Within the National Strategic Development Plan (2007-2013), an intergraded lifelong learning policy has been planned because Greece has significantly fallen behind compared to the other European countries. Thus, with the cooperation of the Ministers of Education and Employment, the National System of Connecting Vocational Education and Training was

established and the framework for the organization of lifelong learning was created with Law 3369/2005. This law was recently supplemented with Law 3577/2007 . As far as higher education is concerned, Law 3369/2005 on Lifelong Learning enables the universities to establish and run lifelong learning institutes and have additional revenues, since they can charge fees for training courses. The substantial participation of HEIs in lifelong learning places universities at the centre of the social and financial life of the country and of the region where they are located. They provide citizens with new and often innovative and flexible opportunities for regular and distance-learning and, at the same time, they assume a key role for the adaptation of the workforce to the structural and technological changes rapidly taking place in the professional fields today. Moreover, the Hellenic Open University, whose study programmes are mainly addressed to the working population, has been facing a rapid development as new programmes were added in all three cycles and new training programmes were created.

The External Dimension of the Bologna Process

Law 3391/2005 regulates the establishment of the International Hellenic University and aims at enhancing student mobility. Moreover, as a member of the External Dimension Group of the Bologna Process, Greece organized a Bologna Seminar on "Putting European Higher Education Area on the Map: Developing Strategies for Attractiveness", which took place in Athens, on 24-26 June 2006. The participants were mainly higher education stakeholders from the countries participating in the Bologna Process, but also representatives of OECD non-European and Mediterranean countries, representatives of the European Commission, consultative members of the Bologna Process as well as representatives of international and student organisations (ESIB and AEGEE). The Bologna Seminar meant another step forward in defining the external dimension of the Bologna Process, stressed the need to enhance and bring out the quality of the European Higher Education Area and the need for adopting a concrete strategy on the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area, which will be the European answer to global challenges.

Mobility through Cycles, Access and the Removal of Obstacles

A series of legislations resulted in the upgrading of those institutions belonging to the non-university sector and, with the exception of the higher ecclesiastical academies, are under the main supervision of other ministries. Thus, these institutions will issue Bachelor's degrees and their graduates will be able to continue studying in the two next cycles at universities. ─ Law 3432/2006 upgrades the status of the higher ecclesiastical academies supervised by the Ministry of National Education and their degrees become equivalent with those of the higher education institutions. ─ Law 3413/2005 allows higher military schools (supervised by the Ministry of Defense) to participate in consortia with universities for the establishment of postgraduate study programmes and research programmes (degrees are awarded by universities). ─ Law 3450/2006 upgrades the status of the merchant maritime academies (supervised by the Ministry of Mercantile Marine) which are currently able to participate in consortia with universities for the establishment of postgraduate study programmes and research programmes (degrees are awarded by universities). Moreover, Law 3475/200612 regulates, among others, the access of secondary vocational education students to the higher technological sector.

Student Participation

Full participation of students in the governance bodies of HEIs has been ensured. Moreover, student unions participate in the National Council of Education, while Law 3374/2005 on quality assurance has also ensured students' participation in quality assurance procedures. In addition, the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs has signed Law 3443/200613, which enacts local youth councils and their participation in local governance, so that young people can become active citizens.

Administration and finance

The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (ΥΠΕΠΘ/YPEPTH) is responsible for the administration of all the schools in the country: an administration carried out through the Central and Regional Services and through councils of a consultative and scientific nature that have been created and function in the Ministry's Central and Regional Services. Higher Education Institutions (AEI), are self-administered legal entities under public law and the Minister exercises supervision and monitors the legality of their actions and decisions through the Ministry's central services.

National level

The Minister of National Education and Religious Affairs has the main responsibility for the planning and implementation of the education policy. In his/her task is seconded by two Deputy - Ministers who have specific areas of responsibility. Under the Minister of Education also come: the General Secretariat for Youth (ΓΓΝΓ/GGNG) whose task is to secure and promote the rights of young people; the General Secretariat for Adult Education (ΓΓΕΕ/GSAE) responsible for planning, co-ordinating and implementing policies on a national scale and with regard to Greek expatriates, actions related to Lifelong Learning and especially: basic adult education, general adult education and training, socio-cultural training and education, open distance learning, as well as training of trainers. Lastly, under the Ministry of Education also falls the General Secretariat of Religious Affairs that supervises the application of the government policy in the field of religion. The administrative structure of the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (ΥΠΕΠΘ/YPEPTH) includes a vertical structure of Departments, Directorates, General Directorates and Integrated Administrative Sectors. There are six Integrated Administrative Sectors (University Education, Administration of Community Support Framework Programmes, Greeks Abroad and Inter-Cultural Education, Studies, Training and Innovation Issues, Technological Higher Education, Audiovisual Teaching Aids, Education TV, Libraries and Historical Archives) headed by Special Secretaries, appointed by a joint decision of the Prime-Minister and the Minister. The Heads of the General Directorates are Directors General that are selected from among the permanent administrative officials by a Special Service Council. They are responsible for planning activities, coordinating the operation of the Directorates and Administrative Sections under them, evaluating the policy pursued in their sphere of competence and drafting proposals to be sent to the political leadership of the Ministry of Education.

Regional Level

In the context of the education decentralisation policy, Administration is exercised at a Regional Level by the Regional Education Directorates while, at a prefectural level, by the Directorates and the Primary and Secondary Education Offices, Regional Service Councils and Education Committees. For administering and monitoring the operation of Primary and Secondary Education Institutions there is the Regional Education Directorates which relate directly to the Minister of National Education and Religious Affairs. Each Regional Education Directorate consists of the following Departments: a. Administration, b. Scientific-Pedagogic Guidance of Primary Education and c. Scientific-Pedagogic Guidance of Secondary Education.

Local Level

At local level (municipality or community), there are Scholikes Epitropes (School Committees), Municipal or Community Legal Entities, that manage the funds allocated to cover operating expenses for one or more Primary and Secondary schools depending on the local needs as evaluated by the competent local authorities. The School Committees are assigned to manage the budget for the operational costs of Primary and Secondary Schools and to support the administrative operation of school units.

Funding

The sources of funding of Greek university are the regular state budget and the Program of Public Investment, which has two levels, one national, financed with national funds, and the community one, which includes European funds (Operational Programme for Education and Initial Vocational Training – O.P. "EDUCATION", 2000-2006). This second type of funds include the modernization of university education and the creation of new infrastructures, studies and materials and funds for research. The Minister of Economy and Finance, Minister of Education, Universities and TEI are the entities involved in the distribution of funds, both those of the state budget and those of the Program of Public Investment. Although it is an informal process, as a good practice, the Minister of Education along with the Rectors' Conference and the Conference of the TEIs' Presidents agree upon the total amount and the allocation of funds. Then, each individual HEI cooperates with the Ministry of National Education in order to define the annual amount based on the Unified System of Allocation Criteria of the regular state budget. The budget allocated to education is increasing year after year, and a satisfactory rate is assigned to university education. In compliance with the OECD, in 2003 was dedicated to education university the 1,3% of GDP: according to Eurostat data, Greece is the European country to increase their funding for higher education, with a approximately 98% (EU average: 82.8%); on the contrary, the contributions that come from households and private funds are approximately 1% . In fact, Greece is one of six states of the European Union that does not require charging for university education. The funds for universities and TEI come regularly from the national budget and are used primarily for operating expenses that include: the payment of teachers and research staff, students' blackboards and textbooks and teaching materials. In relation to the budget of 2007, about 1.5 billions of euros have been allocated to universities, TEI and to the Academy of Athens,

while 832,000 euros are for the Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency. The funds of the Public Investment Program is intended to infrastructure, studies and educational materials.

Quality assurance

Until 2005 there was no system of quality assurance in university education, until it was enacted with the 3374 Law . This law has established a quality assurance system for the entire university education, which includes both the technology sector and the university one. This law complies with the European standards and guidelines suggested by the European Association of Quality Assurance (ENQA) and its partners (EUA, EURASHE, ESIB / ESU), which were adopted first by the Ministry of Education in Bergen. The Greek Quality Assurance System includes:

internal assessment
external review
publication of results
participation of students
peer review

The university system evaluation is coordinated and supported nationally by an independent and specific authority for the assessment, called the Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency (HQAA) and supervised by the Ministry of Education. The Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency (HQAA), established by Law 3374/2005, also has a consultancy role since it keeps the competent bodies of the state and the higher education institutions informed on current international developments and trends in the relevant issues.

This agency is based in Athens and is made up of 15 members appointed by the Minister of Education who remain in office for 4 years and can not fill this role for more than twice, whether consecutive or not, and are also allowed foreign experts. The President must be an academic with an internationally recognized authority and with a significant research activity, preferably with experience on qualitative issues and on the development of the education system. The other members are representatives of the academic staff of universities and technology institutes, students, researchers and social partners. This agency ensures the transparency of the evaluation procedures and its mission is to support the organisation of the university education through the implementation of procedures: improving the quality of university education by informing the state and HEIs on international developments and trends, promoting research in the area. In particular, some of the major responsibilities for HQAA are:

The HQAA plans, coordinates and supports HEIs' evaluation procedures;
Employs guidelines and standards to specify and review the form of HEIs' evaluation reports, as well as the evaluation criteria and indices;
Compiles, keeps and revises the Register of independent Greek and international experts and specialists in the area of Quality Assurance;
Collects information and maintains a database with data from the evaluation reports of all Greek HEIs;

Performs studies and carries out research in order to develop the methodology, techniques and applications of quality assurance and keeps all competent bodies of the state and the Greek HEIs up-to-date;

Maintains mutual cooperation with corresponding foreign organizations and represents Greece in international quality assurance networks;

Publishes the evaluation results and the measures adopted for quality assurance and improvement of higher education.

The law divides the evaluation process into two levels: the internal and external evaluation. The internal evaluation is the first step for the external assessment and is carried out by each academic unit (that is the subject of the evaluation) and consist of the systematic assessment and recording of instruction, research or other activities in relation to the objectives and mission of the HEI . To take part in this internal evaluation, which lasts two semesters, are research and teaching staff members, scientific and administrative staff member and student representatives. The criteria and evaluation indices concern the quality of teaching and research activities, the quality of study programs and other services provided by HEI. These indices and criteria are standardized and specified under the guidelines of HQAA and depend on the field of studies of each academic unit.

The internal evaluation is being conducted under the responsibility of each academic unit in cooperation with the Quality Assurance Unit, a body found in every HEI to coordinate and support the assessment procedures. An internal evaluation report contains cumulative information with quantitative data on students, teaching-research staff, educational and other scientific staff, administrative staff, infrastructure, student welfare etc. The HEI's Internal Evaluation Report is compiled every two years by the QAU and sent to the HQAA. The external evaluation process is repeated every four years at the latest with the cooperation of HEIs and the HQAA. The external evaluation is carried out by the External Evaluation Committee (EEC), which consists of five members from the register of independent experts kept at the HQAA. One of the members of the EEC may be nominated by the academic unit under evaluation but the remaining members are elected by the HQAA. The participation of at least one foreign expert and one representative from a professional or other scientific union in the External Evaluation Committee is also desirable. The EEC takes into consideration the self-evaluation report and makes an in situ visit to the evaluated academic unit, which has to facilitate as much as possible the committee's work with supplementary information, discussions and contacts with the members of the academic unit. The EEC compiles the draft external evaluation report with the secretarial and administrative support of the HQAA and this draft report is then notified to the academic unit under evaluation, which then has to submit its remarks within a fifteen-day time limit from the date of the notification of the draft.

The external evaluation is completed within four months with the External Evaluation Report which is submitted to the HQAA. After the evaluation processes have been completed the HQAA makes the External Evaluation Report public. The External Evaluation Report includes the independent experts' analyses, findings, and recommendations for the measures that need to be taken in order to improve the quality of the task of the institution. There is only one body with the task of the recognition of foreign degrees and periods of study: the National Academic Recognition and Information Center (Hellenic NARIC – DOATAP): it is

responsible for the recognition of study titles issued by foreign higher education institutions, both universities and foreign technological institutions and for providing information on studying in Greek HEIs. The Hellenic NARIC is located in Athens and is supervised by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs. The Hellenic NARIC also has a consultancy role on issues concerning the recognition of foreign degrees and is the responsible body for the elaboration of the Action Plan for Recognition submitted in the London Ministerial Conference .

Greece's HEIs in the information society

Towards the information society

Today one of the main priorities of Greek educational policy is continuous improvement, with respects to the integration of ICT, into the educational sector. Numerous actions have been implemented and are being further developed in relation to ICT integration; such actions are coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs in the framework of the Information Society Programme . In the framework of this programme, the infrastructure (broadband connections across the country, networks, and computer equipment) is being further developed and maintained, digital content and services (educational software, educational portals, educational services, e-management) are being enriched and expanded and teacher training continues to emphasise the exploitation of new technologies in educational practice. Moreover, the following pilot Actions are being planned and implemented: the distribution of laptops to students, the development of the “ideal school lab”, the development of virtual teacher training, virtual learning environments and virtual content management systems, on-line interactive educational TV. At the same time, the Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs has launched a coordinate effort for the utilization of ICTs and their incorporation into the everyday educational procedure. This effort is implemented in the fields of the third Community Support Framework mainly from the Operational Program of Information Society, (OPIS) under the direct supervision of the General Secretary of the Hellenic Ministry of Education and with the support of the Hellenic Ministry of Education Information Society office and the "Strategy for ICTs in Education" Committee. It is constructed onto four lines of action:

Installation and support of network and computational equipment.
Development of software and digital content for educational and administrative purposes (educational software, information systems, Internet content e.t.c.).
Training of the educational community on ICTs, targeting to the utilization of the above areas.
Modernization of administration areas.

The aims of this Strategy are:

The incorporation of ICTs in the teaching process.
The support of the Informatics lesson taught in high school, senior high school and technical school.
The support of every cognitive area through the use of ICTs.
The elimination of digital illiteracy and variations on ICT skills.

Information society strategy

Since 2002, there are activities targeted to the elaboration of a systematic approach towards :

Compliance with EC directives regarding e-Accessibility
Initiatives related to e-Inclusion in the context of the Operational Programme "Information Society" of the 3rd Community Support Programme (Secretariat for the Information Society, Hellenic Ministry of Economy and Finance) in the domains of: Education and Culture, Health, Employment, Public Administration, Telecommunications.

The Digital Strategy 2006-2013 is addressed to the challenges of the 4th Community Support Programme and i2010:

Infrastructures (broadband access, development of accessible one –stop shops, subsidies for ICT equipment for specific population groups)
Education (incentives for the development of accessible educational content and distant learning)
Health (Accessible regional e-health services, universally accessible health records and other related information)
Public administration (accessible e-services for the regional government, digital content and information services, an important example is the International Call for Tenders conducted by the Greek Pedagogical Institute in 2006. It aims for the development of a digital library and its best practices in certification and implementation of educational software).

The digital strategy 2006 – 2013 replaces the “white paper” for the information society and strengthens the role of the existing Operational Program for the Information Society, by re-examining its goals. At the same time, the new digital strategy meets the challenges of the 4th Operational Period (2007-2013) and is compatible with the new European policy for the Information Society “i2010” and with the “Jobs and Growth” action plan, both of which were outlined in the first semester of 2005.

Virtual Campuses in HE

Interesting Virtual Campus Initiatives

The Hellenic Open University

In 1992, while attempting to reform the institutional framework of higher education the establishment of the Hellenic Open University (Elliniko Anoichto Panepistimio - ΕΑΠ/EAP) was decided. HOU is the only HEI that providing distance education at all three levels (undergraduate, postgraduate and doctorate) as well as training courses. It was finally established in 1997 and began operating in 1998. Like all the other public universities in Greece, the Open University is a legal entity of public law, completely independent and autonomous . It was established by Law 2083/92 and it is seated in Patras but various activities such as consultative meetings and exams are organized in eight Greek cities (Athens, Thessaloniki, Patras, Heraklio, Ioannina, Xanthi, Piraeus and Larissa). HOU’s

overarching characteristics were defined and formed by the first administrative committee's decisions (time period 1995 to1997) and was significantly informed by the British Open University model. This historical legacy significantly influenced the formation and operation of the institution . The model of the tutor-counselor, as employed at the British Open University (Sewart, 1980), has also been adopted by the HOU. HOU's planning and organization of its program offerings are based on explicit goals, clear guidelines, and detailed instructions to guide its students and its tutors. According to its instructional publications, HOU adopted Holmberg (1989) ideas on the central role distance learning materials play in students' mastery of distance learning studies. HOU also faces internal and administrative challenges, some of which do not support or assist in developing its distance learning methods that can be easily delivered via ICT. The HOU, nonetheless, is welcomed and supported by most Greeks, primarily because it offers them a second choice and, sometimes, a chance at accessing the fruits of education. In the academic year 2006-2007, HOU served 15,026 undergraduate and 8,624 graduate students enrolled in six undergraduate and 24 graduate courses .

The mission of the Hellenic Open University (ΕΑΠ/EAP) is to provide distance undergraduate and postgraduate education and adult education, by developing and utilising appropriate educational materials and teaching methods. Among the goals of the HOU is to promote scientific research in a flexible and innovative way and to develop technology and methodology in the field of distance learning and also to offer University studies to those who cannot attend classes or laboratories for whatever reason. The ΕΑΠ/EAP organises:

Undergraduate study programmes leading to a degree.
Postgraduate training programmes that lead to certification of training.
Postgraduate training programmes that lead to a postgraduate specialisation degree or doctoral degree.

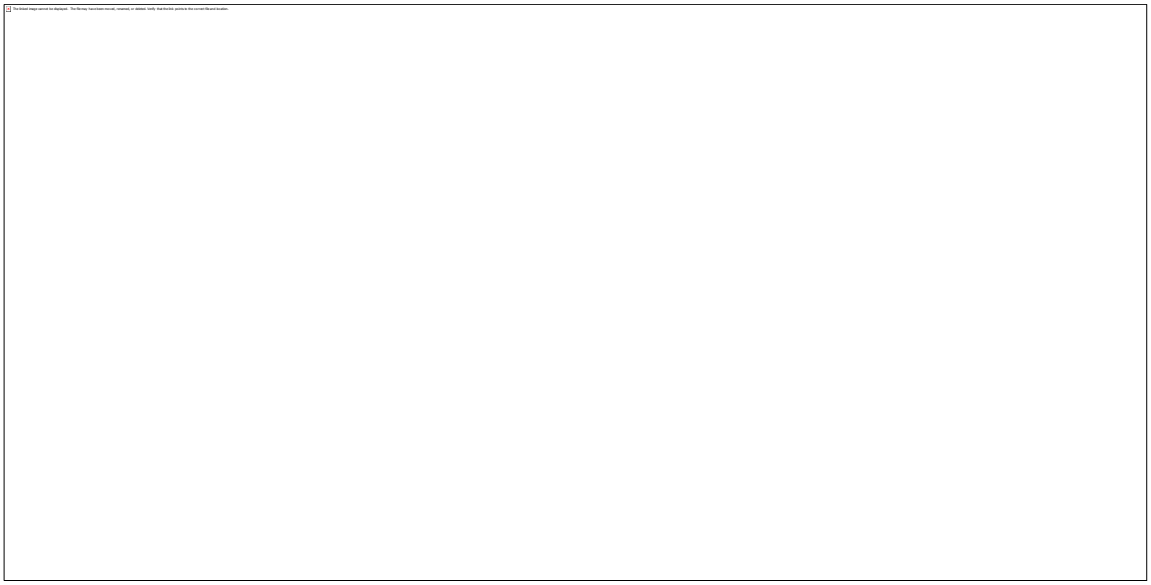
During the process of student selection, priority is given to applicants who are over twenty-three years of age, therefore, most of the students are employed and their average age is of 30-40 years old. Moreover, students with special needs are admitted to the Hellenic Open University and the available places for them amount to an additional three percent of the set number of places for undergraduate study programmes. For admission to an undergraduate programme a high school degree is necessary. The number of applicants is usually much greater than the number of offered places and this why candidates are selected by electronic lot in the presence of a district attorney for ensuring transparency. HOU has introduced some innovations in the Greek higher education system. These are :

1. Studying exclusively through distance learning.
2. The application of a modular system and the replacement of courses by the flexible form of modular courses, which can be easily altered, according to the social and educational needs at the time.
3. Introduction of a five-level educational system that covers all levels from post-secondary vocational training to doctorate level.
4. Foundation of a University Laboratory for Educational Material and Methodology Research.
5. Foundation of a University Evaluation Unit.

6. The simplification of governance structures with the abolition of the Rectors' Council and the establishment of a flexible Senate.
7. The introduction of HOU's basic functional unit, the Course Modules that cover a specific study field at undergraduate or postgraduate level. Each course module is equivalent to three semesters in a Greek university.

HOU consists of four schools: the School of Humanities, the School of Social Science, the School of Science and Technology and the School of Applied Arts. These schools award Bachelor, Master and PhD degrees and certificates of training or of attendance. The average time for studies is six or seven years for the undergraduate studies and four years for the postgraduate studies. HOU is a rapidly developing higher education institution. Only two study programmes in 1998 compare to the thirty-one that operate today (2006-2007).

At the same time, there is a rapid yearly increase in the number of students, and the number of applicants exceeds the offered places of study.



Teaching Method

The objectives of the Hellenic Open University (ΕΑΠ/EAP) are achieved through the use of methods of teaching and learning from a distance. These methods are based on high quality educational material which must be appropriately developed in terms of both form and content in such a way as to guarantee high quality self-education and frequent assessment of students. This material is traditional (books, notes, evaluation forms), audio-visual (sound tapes, videotapes, optic discs) and in any other electronic form (multimedia and Internet). Most educational materials used by HOU are original, that is they are created by a team of experts. This team, for example, determined responsibilities and frames within which each team member operated. Members included: a writer, who wrote the material following particular specifications demanded by form and content; an academic responsible for each program; a reader, who 'fact checked' the study texts for scientific quality; and, finally, a DE expert who ensured that all texts complied with the pedagogical principles needed to support effective DE delivery. Construction of distance pedagogical scientific knowledge, within the

creation of original educational material produced by HOU, reflects: a) strong classification of material based on strict specifications and the involvement of special scientists in the scientific area that ensure the scientific validity and reliability of HOU's learning materials, b) strong framing because the relationship and terms of collaboration are pre-determined and everyone works on specific, known, and irrefutable rules. In certain cases were the writers were unable to adapt their work to the specifications required, projects were cancelled . The pedagogical practices, as formulated in the HOU, with the criterions of the 'power of framing' and 'PECS' are now examined :

1. In the HOU, educational material packages consist of: books, cassettes, videos, CD-Rom, and educational software supported through the use of ICT (Act 1/7-11-1995). The creation of an electronic bank of educational material (i.e., learning objects) is currently under consideration (Act 18/11-12-1996).
2. Modules are accompanied by detailed timetables of study and students deliverables in the form of written work and tests (HOU, 2002). Thus, the following are determined:
   - Lock-step sequencing of DE contents provides students a timeline for learning and knowledge acquisition. Students are also given instructions on the applicability of additional learning materials available to them to help them master the subject material on a deeper level (i.e., additional texts, books, and audiovisual materials that are not part of the course per say, but are nonetheless helpful).
   - HOU students learn in a paced environment. HOU's academic year is divided to 32 weeks, beginning the first week of October. Students are made aware of the time they need to spend to study of each chapter (e.g., one or two weeks) and of deadlines and timelines they must meet in handing in their written work and assignments.
3. By regulating all facets of students' studies, evaluative criteria are determined. That is, the questions concerning the rights and obligations of teachers and students in sub-areas such as 'communication' are defined. For example, teachers must be available for student consultations during specific times; moreover, all comments on all written assignments must be returned to students within 15 days of receipt. In terms of quality assurance, HOU evaluates its teachers via a student questionnaire that asks pointed questions as to whether or not teachers failed, met, or exceeded students' expectations on basic criteria such as timeliness, accessibility, and instructional efficacy.

HOU uses a comprehensive regulatory framework to support its students. As such, strong framing exists concerning 'relationships' cultivated inside the institution itself. Indeed, HOU is uses clearly defined hierarchical relations of power on two levels:

1. First, HOU's administrative committee decides the general policy of the institution. The chairman plays a central role in providing direction and guidance to the administrative committee. For example, A. Lykourgiotis, the first chairman of the administrative committee, when taking into consideration the opinions of committee, formally articulated HOU's educative and organizational features (Koustourakis, 2006). This shows strong framing in the rule sequencing/ pacing and criteria and in the regulative rules between academic personnel, tutors, and HOU's administrative committee.
2. The second level concerns the operation of HOU's various programs and modules. In this case, HOU's program directors and module coordinators coordinate and supervise how established instructional policies will guide HOU's various programs and study modules. Sub-committee teams comprised of instructional personnel (i.e., teachers and tutors)

working on specific modules, participate in this process. At first glance, this appears to show relatively weak framing in terms of communication among the teachers/ tutors. The coordinator of each module, however, is typically a member of the HOU's academic personnel, and their decision is central in that this person determines and directs daily the work flow of the overall team that must deal with HOU's day-to-day procedural affairs, such as the formulation and/ or choice of subjects on offer, pedagogical approaches that should be best taken, and the development and administration of final written examinations.

The methodology used for ΕΑΠ/EAP Undergraduate Programmes of Study is that of distance learning, which for each thematic unit includes:

five (5) meetings of tutors with students;
four (4) to six (6) compulsory assignments which are sent to the tutor;
distance counselling communication between the tutor and students;
laboratory practice of students at the laboratories of the EAP at Patras (wherever this is provided in the Curriculum);
final and repeat examinations held for each thematic unit all over Hellas at the same time.

The undergraduate students can attend the programme of studies of their choice from wherever they live in any region of the country or abroad. The tutors' meetings with the students will be held in the following cities: Patras (ΕΑΠ/EAP head offices), Athens, Thessaloniki, Herakleio, Ioannina, Xanthi, Piraeus and Larisa. As regards the ΕΑΠ/EAP Postgraduate Programmes of Study leading to a Postgraduate Specialisation Diploma (ΜΔΕ/MDE) or to a Certificate of Postgraduate Study, the methodology used is also that of distance learning, which for each thematic unit includes:

five (5) meetings of tutors with students;
four (4) to six (6) compulsory assignments which are sent to the tutor;
distance counselling communication between the tutor and students;
final and repeat examinations.

The postgraduate students can attend the programme of studies of their choice from wherever they live in any region of Hellas or abroad. The tutors' meetings with the students will be held in the following cities: Patras (ΕΑΠ/EAP head offices), Athens and Thessaloniki.

Courses offered

Degrees

Studies in the Physical Sciences
Information Science
Administration of Businesses and Organisations
Studies in Hellenic Culture
Studies in European Culture
Spanish Language and Culture

To complete the undergraduate programme and be awarded a degree, the student must successfully complete and be examined in at least twelve (12) Thematic Units. The student selects from one (1) to three (3) Thematic Units per year .

Postgraduate Specialisation Diplomas (MΔE/MDE)

Administration of Tourist Enterprises
Administration of Health Units
Administration of Health Services of the National Health System
Banking
Administration of Cultural Units
Environmental Planning of cities and buildings
Environmental Planning of infrastructure works
Quality Assurance
Postgraduate Specialisation for English Language Teachers
Postgraduate Specialisation for German Language Teachers
Postgraduate Specialisation for French Language Teachers
Studies in Education
Adult Education
Seismic engineering and anti-seismic structures
Technical Works Management
Postgraduate specialization in computer systems
Studies in Orthodoxy
Graphic arts – Multimedia
Waste management
Advanced studies in Physics
Environmental degradation and protection
Postgraduate specialization for Physical Sciences Teachers
Postgraduate studies in Mathematics
Business Administration (MBA)

For students to complete their postgraduate studies and receive their MDE, they must have completed and been successfully examined in four (4) thematic units. Another requirement is a thesis that reflects the content of one or two Thematic Units according to the programme. For students to complete their postgraduate studies and receive their Certificate of Postgraduate Study, they must complete and have been successfully examined in one (1) Thematic Unit (duration of studies at least one academic year).

Comparing the educational practices between HOU and conventional Greek universities, however, is like comparing apples to oranges. While traditional universities operate in a teacher-centered context, HOU students are placed at the epicenter of HOU's educational process. HOU students must learn how to learn at a distance. Clearly, this demands more flexible practices on the part of HOU in terms of providing student support, from writing student-centered educational materials designed to meet the needs of adult learners learning at a distance, to the level and dynamics of online communication between students and tutors, to the support of student-centered learning, to the deployment of Group Advisory Meetings,

and most importantly motivating students to cognitively process and synthesize and learn the course materials by themselves with only a tutor there as a "guide on the side" to help them succeed in their learning journey. In the last case, elements of interpretative epistemology enter the HOU, which is aimed at making the institution friendly and accessible to its students by supporting and encouraging their self-driven effort for education and training. The majority of HOU's students are busy adults juggling family and work responsibilities, while studying part time. HOU's role of the tutor, which is based on the British Open University exemplar, currently shows weak framing in terms of students-tutor relationships. This is why the development and deployment of ICT is helpful for the success of HOU's students. Such technologies not only help build working relationships between tutors and students, but also help students to help themselves to the panoply of online resources and educational materials that can help them learn at a distance. Unfortunately, HOU currently lags behind many other open and distance education institutions in the world, specifically in terms of incorporating and using ICT to support and aid students in their learning. The lack of suitable online educational (digital) materials, coupled with the reality that computer and Internet usage in Greece – primarily due to high cost of access – remains low, means that HOU faces significant challenges in terms of supporting students using ICT. The good news, however, is that this is slowly changing, as reflected in the high-level use of ICT by the HOU for administrative purposes.

Interesting Programmes

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Aristotle University in Thessaloniki is innovative since 1995 where takes place the first pilot applications for the exploitation of new technologies in education within the 1st EE funded project. Since 1997, there is an important effort to transform the bigger university in Greece in dual mode university that can provide a great part of graduate and postgraduate programs with both traditional methods and distance learning, with the creation of 6 virtual tele-classes and one tele-conference room. Academic community members can participate in distance learning activities, educational seminars and conferences with experts. A great number of teleconferences sessions took place within these last 8 years between Aristotle University and other academic units all over the world, where students and faculty from all participating universities had the opportunity to attend lectures, to participate in international conferences and to effectively train through seminars professionals such as teachers in all levels of education in new technology aspect.

University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki

The University of Macedonia, located in Thessaloniki, has a great laboratory with a significant experience and expertise in coordinating and participating in a large number of national and international research projects under FP5/IST, FP6/IST, Interreg. The laboratory has also provided consulting services for the European Commission as well a number of national organizations e.g. Ministry of Interior, Prefecture of Thessaloniki, Region of Central Macedonia etc. and it has collaborated with a large number of major academic institutions, research organizations, private enterprises and public authorities in Europe. There are many completed and running projects in this area, both Greek and European; for example,

Innovative Enterprise Architecture Education and Training Based on Web 2.0 Technologies (EATrain2). The aim of the EATrain2 is to identify the training and educational needs of employees in both public and private sector and of university students and to fulfil these using innovative pedagogies and practices based on Web 2.0 technologies and active, problem-based learning approaches. The main result of the project is expected to be: the empowering of Universities, VET organizations, students and employees through innovative training, teaching methods and practices based on Web 2.0 technologies. EA training and teaching material for students, public employees and private employees and an education and training platform based on Web 2.0 technologies.

The National & Kapodistrian University of Athens

The Asynchronous eLearning Platform is a complete Course Management System that supports Asynchronous eLearning Services via a simple web browser. Its goal is the incorporation and constructive use of the Internet and web technologies in the teaching and learning process. It supports the electronic management, storage and presentation of teaching materials, independently of the spatial and time limiting factors of conventional teaching and creating the necessary conditions for a dynamic teaching environment. The introduction of eLearning into the traditional teaching process provides new capabilities and allows new means of interaction between students and teachers, through a contemporary technological peak environment. The Open eClass platform, used by the University, is a complete Course Management System. It is the solution offered by the Greek Academic Network GUnet to support Asynchronous eLearning Services. It is mainly designed, developed and supported by the GUnet Asynchronous eLearning Group and is distributed for free as open-source software. The incorporation of asynchronous eLearning services offers new possibilities in education, providing interaction and constant teacher-student communication. It is said, at the same time, that electronic organization, storing and presentation of educational material, regardless the limiting factors of place and time of typical teaching, is supported, forming the conditions of a dynamic educational setting. The Open eClass platform is designed with the goal to bring new actions that promote its corporate utility in the already existing educational patterns into effect. The main user role is that of the teacher who can create practical and functional electronic courses easily and quickly, using the educational material provided (note, presentations, texts, pictures, etc). At the same time, students attain an alternative entry channel to the knowledge offered. Finally, the Open eClass platform supports all asynchronous eLearning services without boundaries and limitations, and the platform access is achieved via a simple web browser without any demand of specialized technical knowledge . The adult education modules based on the Distance Learning model were designed in response to increased education requirements in various job environments. They spin around 5 thematic units in the field of finance and last from 5 to 9 months. Upon successful completion of the academic requirements, adult students receive a Certificate of Studies. In particular, the University awards Certificates of Training and Certificates of Specialisation, each reflecting specific programme choices by the students. Eligible candidates to the University's adult education programme are University and T.E.I. graduates and secondary education graduates with previous experience. Candidates are selected on the following criteria: Grade Point Average of Degree or Graduation Diploma (Apolyterio) and priority with respect to application filed. Candidates are required to have access to a personal computer and the Internet. Fees vary with respect to the thematic unit selected .

Pandeion University for Social and Political Sciences

The Pandeion University for Social and Political Sciences in Athens in order to provide complete long life education and training for Social and Political sciences issues has proceeded in the production and development of various educational applications, such as distance learning, telematics and multimedia. These applications aim to educate and train the instructors that are necessary for the implementation of the multiple purpose training and seminar carriers all over the country.

Athens University of Economics and Business

The Tele-education Centre of the Athens University of Ecomomics and Business materializes an application for the development of distance learning environment through the Lab. of Business Information Technology. The pilot web courses in the asynchronous distance learning environment concern web courses for :Internet and E-commerce, Database for Business applications, Principles for the design and Implementation of Information systems and Business Information Systems, specifically created to support the needs of executives. The Teleducation Center is fully operational, serving the current needs of the Institution. The scope of the Tele-education Center is:

- the supply of distance learning services to the University students, either by supporting the courses with additional distance learning material, or by giving the whole course with the use of the tele-education method;
- the continuous education and training of executives, working in Greek organizations, public or private, free lancers and unemployed;
- the export of distance learning services to other countries;
- the operation of the Tele-education Center as a link for gathering the national resources concerning the education technology development and the education service supply;

During the last few years, a real-time multimedia, distance learning classroom has been created. This specially designed classroom can function either independently as a multimedia classroom, equipped with audiovisual and digital devices, which assist and improve educational process or as a virtual, distance learning classroom. The classroom is equipped with state-of-the-art network and audiovisual devices, which allows for full duplex communication among this and other classrooms. The design and the equipment of the classroom enables high interaction among participants of a course delivered simultaneously in different classrooms, by simulating all operations taking place in a traditional classroom, thereby creating a virtual classroom.

University of Piraeus

The University of Piraeus through its Network Center supports a number of WWW course tools, available only for potential students. In order to enter the specific web tutorial page the student has to create a personal account. It is an asynchronous distance learning environment. These specific web courses refer to various issues such as cardiological events and tooth hygiene. The Computer Centre of the University of Piraeus aims at facilitating the educational, administrative and research work of the University. Students of all departments

are having Computer Science courses and practice in four fully equipped laboratories at the Computer Center with 85 workstations. In addition, the Computer Center supports the research work of the University by providing every possible assistance in both the uses of computer applications and equipment. In almost every administrative function of the University there have been applied modern methods of organisation using computer systems. More specifically, many applications have been developed covering the needs in student's records, in the main University library and in the other Administrative Departments (Accounting, Finance, Personnel etc). It should be specially mentioned that modern office automation computer systems and desktop publishing applications are extensively used by the academic and administrative staff thus providing high level services. Most of the research projects are supported by the University Central Computer system (DEC 5810 Risk) in which there have been installed many Relational Data Base Management Systems, programs for economics and statistical analysis, expert systems, computer language compilers etc. This main system is connected through the Ethernet Network with Unix Workstations over 200 PC's used in education, 50 Apple Macintosh systems for office automatic projects and other special devices such aw plotters, scanners etc. The Computer Center also provides communication facilities with other Universities, Institutions and Research Centers all over Greece and abroad, mainly through its Internet Server System DEC Alpha 1000. The Network Management Centre (NMC) of the University of Piraeus is located in its central building and is responsible for:

- The management of the data and voice network
- The design, implementation and evolution of the University network System and user support
- The provision of teleconference services
- The provision of internet and web (www) services
- The provision of dial-up access services

The University continually invests on improving its network structure using up to – date technologies and on developing telematic applications for teaching and research purposes.

University of Ioannina

The University of Ioannina provides a Computer and Media Centre that organises all computer services for teaching and research operations and administers the campus-wide network, which includes access to global computer networks. More than one hundred personal computers are directly accessible to students. Regularly offered information courses and a number of supervisors provide all necessary assistance for users. There are also facilities provided by the Media & Documentation Centre that include a variety of production capacities as well as archive materials in the field of audio-visual media. Among these is a fully equipped broadcasting studio, equipment for electronic editing, and video producing, and a photo lab. Besides lecturers, students do have access to all facilities if they work on supervised projects. In the University of Ioannina there is also a Open and Distance Learning Centre: as regional office of the German Open University, the Centre gives support to students who are enrolled at the Open University by supervising their studies and preparing for exams. A stock of self-learning material (print and audio-visual media) is available to both Open University and University of Lueneburg students.

University of Thessaly

The University of Thessaly Network Management Centre, in cooperation with GUNET, offers the following pilot services: videoconference and tele-education over IP, videoconference, Video on Demand, concerning the live transmission of TV programs and local radio station program through Internet. The Network Centre of the University has already set up a fully-equipped videoconference room in Trikala, for the Department of Physical Training Science. The video teleconference room has already been successfully used for synchronous distance education sessions in physical training science issues for the students and for similar post- graduate courses attendance.

Information Technology Laboratory

Information technology education is a necessity of modern times. The introduction of IT in education is based on two paradigms: • IT as an autonomous knowledge-base that needs to be introduced in the curriculum. • IT as an interdisciplinary research and learning tool.

The availability of instant access to IT allows both teachers and students to familiarize themselves with technology and supports educational needs of the department (demonstration, group work, communication, information database access …).

Network Operation Centre

The aim of this Centre is the creation and maintenance of network of support of unified services that interlink all the buildings of University Thessaly, in all the cities of Thessaly in which the University allocates installations, as well as the offer of high quality of services of telephony, transport of data, and picture. More concretely the work aims in the concretisation:

Structured wiring in all the buildings of University Thessaly, that aims at as the easy connection of any user or with the network of data via computer or with the network of telephony.
System of transport of data of high output, on the connection of all computers of Papenjsti'mjo Thessaly via long distance and urban engaged lines and regional networks of last technology (FDDi, ATM, Ethernet).
Internal telecommunications network for the support of advanced services of digital telephony and multimedias make where it allows the complete and reliable cover of corresponding needs of means of Academic community.
Points of access (Access Point) in the network of Academic institutions (GUNet) Public network ISDN and but national and international networks of communication as well as with the Internet.
Management and extension of Network according to the needs of Academic community.
Benefit of Services of information via the international networks of information and with use PC (WWW USENET News, Ftp, Search Engines etc).
Aid and education of users of University Thessaly for the effective use of Network.

The network of support of unified Services provides in all the members of Academic community the possibility of most rapid connection with the Internet and access in world scale sources of information. It offers the possibility rapid and qualitative communication

between the installations of University Thessaly. It allows the import of new technologies in the education (multimedias, education by distance) research and administration. It upgrades the Programs of Study and strengthens the collaboration with other Academic institutions of country and abroad. It contributes in the interconnection of University with local productive and administrative institutions.

University of the Aegean

The University of the Aegean has been the first Greek University to fully utilise Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)into its everyday activities, and thus implementing the Information Society in Hellenic higher education. The University of Aegean has achieved to connect through the Aegean-net all university units in different islands on the Aegean Sea, the islands of Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Rhodes. The Aegean-net project offers the proper infrastructure and know-how to these remote geographically locations and aims to use for research/educational purposes.

Other Institutions providing online courses

Public Institutions

Research center of the University of Pireas
Centre of professional training of the University of Athens
Research lab of the economic science department of the University of Athens

Private Institutions

Centre of Postsecondary Education - New York College
Centre of Postsecondary Education - Mediterranean College
Centre of Postsecondary Education - Rene Descartes College
Centre of Postsecondary Education - Metropolitan College (International Telematic University Unittuno)
Centre of Postsecondary Education - Centre European Management Studies
Centre of Postsecondary Education - MBS College
Centre of Postsecondary Education - City Unity Cillge
Centre of Postsecondary Education - Aegean Omiros College
Workshop for free studies of media - Antenna
Workshop for free studies - Epi Paedagogiko
Hellenic American Union

Network of School Innovation

The Network of School Innovation (NSI) is the focal activity of “Protovoulia” . The main goal of the NSI is to provide training and support to K-9 teachers and schools in order for them to establish those conditions which favor sustainable educational innovation within the school environment. The NSI addresses many aspects of school education and introduces a state-of-the-art pedagogical approach to instructional, competence-based design and

assessment, deploying the Key Competencies (the new literacies) agenda, while it proposes action on two tracks: the school development and the teacher professional development.

Ministry of Education - Digital School

The official repository of the Ministry of Education, Life Long Learning and Religions providing all the textbooks in digital form (e-books). The visitor can find textbooks for primary, secondary, upper secondary and professional education.
http://digitalschool.minedu.gov.gr

Vocational Training Center of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

The e-Learning programs are being implemented via a user friendly software (educational platform) adjusted to the Distance Learning Principles. The educational platform on use is a portal through which the electronic classrooms are being managed and through which the users can have access in them. The Vocational Training Center of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens has been accredited (accreditation paper) from the National Accreditation Center for Continuing Vocational Training (E.KE.PIS.)

Lessons learnt

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Sweden

From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

by Mats Öström
original general and HE-related material by Ulla Rintala, Aalto University

For university-related material see also Sweden from Re.ViCa

For entities in Sweden see Category:Sweden

Contents

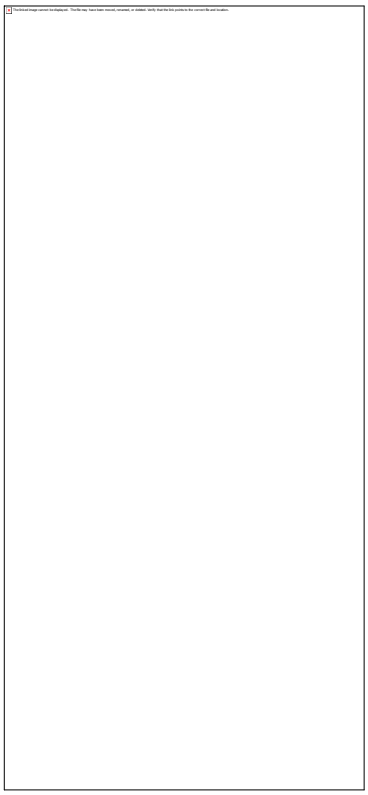
Experts situated in Sweden

Mats Öström Ross Tensta Gymnasium
Seth Norberg Skolverket

Sweden in a nutshell

(mainly sourced from: Wikipedia)

((imported from Sweden from Re.ViCa))



Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Atlas_of_Sweden

Sweden, officially the Kingdom of Sweden, is a Nordic country on the Scandinavian Peninsula in Northern Europe. Area-wise, it is one of the largest countries in Europe. Its population is around 9 million or on average 20 inhabitants per square kilometer. The population is very unevenly distributed: some 84 % live in urban areas, and about one third in the 3 major cities of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö.

Sweden is a constitutional monarchy (parliamentary democracy). It has been a member of the European Union since 1995, but it has not joined the European Monetary Union. The capital and largest city is Stockholm, with a population of around 800,000 and metropolitan area of 2 million. The official language is Swedish.

Sweden has land borders with Norway to the west and Finland to the northeast, and it is connected to Denmark by the Öresund Bridge in the south.

Education in Sweden

Source: Skolverket

The Swedish education system consists of pre-school, school and adult education. They are a part of a goal guided system where:

parliament and the government sets national goals and guidelines, for example, school laws and curriculum
municipalities and other school owners allocates resources and organizes activities based on local conditions so that national goals and requirements can be met
schools accordingly choose an approach that suits them.

Skolverket monitors, evaluates and reviews the pre-school, school and adult education. Skolverket also produces curriculum, grading criteria and general guidelines and more.

Costs 2009 (Source: Skolverket)

Total cost billion SEK

Pre-school: 50,6
Leisure-time center 11,9
Compulsory school 77,4
Comp. intellectual disabilities 4,3
Upper secondary 37,1
Upper sec for intellectual disabilities 2,7
Upper sec for adults 3,7
Swedish for immigrants 1,5

Cost per student

Pre-school: 114000
Leisure-time center 33900
Compulsory school 83000
Comp. intellectual disabilities 367400
Upper secondary 90400
Upper sec for intellectual disabilities 288600
Upper sec for adults 44000
Swedish for immigrants 35200

Total school budget SEK 189,2 billions (2009) Total children/pupils 1 408 005 (2010-2011) Total number of schools 10 516 (2010-2011)

Schools in Sweden

The Swedish School system in .pdf

Source: The Swedish School system in .pdf

Pre-School

Pre-school is a pedagogical group activity for children aged from 1 year until they start school. Children start pre-school at different ages and attend for varying numbers of hours a week.

The job of the pre-school is to provide a platform for lifelong learning. It is to support families in their responsibility for their children's upbringing, development and growth. It is also to be organised so that it enables parents to work or study.

Pre-school combines child care with pedagogical work in an activity that takes day-long responsibility for the whole child. There is great scope for play and creativity as well as for the child's own exploration. Pre-school is to be a fun, secure, learning experience for all the children who attend.

Pre-schools are open all year round. Daily opening hours are adapted to suit the work or studies of parents and the needs of the children.

Pre-school class

The pre-school class is non-compulsory education designed to stimulate each child's development and learning, and provide a platform for their future schooling.

The pre-school class combines the pedagogical methods of the pre-school with those of compulsory school. An important objective is that the pre-school class, compulsory school and leisure-time centre are to be more closely linked. The activities are to be stimulated by the encounter between differing pedagogical traditions.

Compulsory school

Compulsory school is a nine-year compulsory type of school. It is composed of 9 school years and each school year consists of a fall and spring semester.

There is a possibility to go to Basic Adult education if you missed compulsory school.

Upper secondary school

Upper secondary is free, non-compulsory schooling that young people can choose after completing compulsory school. Upper secondary consists of national programmes, specially designed programmes and individual programmes.

There are a total of 17 national upper secondary programmes. Each programme lasts for 3 years and consists of core subjects, programme-specific subjects, optional courses and project work.

Each national upper secondary programme comprises:

> Eight core subjects; English, artistic activities, physical education and health, mathematics, natural science, social studies, Swedish or Swedish as a second language, and religious studies.

A number of programme-specific subjects which are particular to the selected programme.
A special project.
Work-place training in the vocationally-oriented programmes.

The various upper secondary programmes can be seen as preparation for further studies, vocationally-oriented, or a combination of the two.

As an adult you can get a degree from the upper secondary school by attening at Adult education.

Further and Higher education

Folk high schools There are 148 folk high schools - independent adult education colleges - in Sweden. Each folk high school decides independently what courses it provides, and freely designs its teaching. This means that courses can be quite different from each other.

There are several types of course: year-long courses, short courses, summer courses or distance courses. Long courses are of the following types:

1. one General courses, which are an alternative to municipal adult education. They correspond to, and provide the same eligibility as, compulsory comprehensive school or upper secondary school.
2. Special courses can be oriented towards:

- specific areas of interest (such as music, art, the environment, international)
- professions (such as youth recreation leader, treatment assistant, sign language interpreter)
- groups (e.g. people with various disabilities, immigrants)

Information on the range of courses is available at the folk high schools' joint website administered by the Folk High Schools Information Service at Folkhogskola.nu

Universities in Sweden

SourceSweden ranks highly according to several of the indicators used in the OECD:

Funding: Sweden devotes 1.7% of GDP to higher education and research, half of which goes towards research and third cycle (doctoral) programmes.
Expansion: Between 1995 and 2005, the number of students in higher education rose by about 50%. In 2010, there were 433,000 students enrolled in first (undergraduate) and second (Master's) cycle programmes.
Well-educated population: 30% of the Swedish population between 30 and 64 years has taken a minimum of 120 higher education credits, equivalent to two years of full-time study.
Disciplines: Sweden awards a high proportion of qualifications in medicine and health sciences.
Third cycle (doctoral) studies: Sweden awards a high number of doctorates: 2.7% in relation to the size of a typical age cohort.

Total costs for higher level of education: 54498201000 SEK (Source: Högskoleverket)

Source: Högskoleverket In Sweden there are 47 universities and colleges who may issue a Swedish degrees.35 of these are public. 26 educational institutions authorized to award degrees at first, second and third levels, the other has only authorized to award degrees at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Moreover, there are five individual trainers who only has a degree in psychotherapy condition (not on map). Map of all universities and colleges Some universities are known as private education, that colleges run by non-state actors, such as the foundations or associations. The government has given them the right to grant degrees under the Swedish degree structure. Some examples are Chalmers University of Technology, Stockholm School of Economics and Jönköping University, all of which have a wide range of training courses and also has the right to award degrees at the doctoral level. Other private education can only give degrees in a particular area, such as Beckman's College of Design and Örebro Theological Seminary.

List of all universities:

Karlstads universitet

Karolinska institutet

Luleå tekniska universitet

Lunds universitet

Malmö högskola

Mittuniversitetet

Stockholms universitet

Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet

Umeå universitet

Uppsala universitet

Örebro universitet

Polytechnics in Sweden

Colleges in Sweden

Source: Högskoleverket In Sweden there are 47 universities and colleges who may issue a Swedish degrees.35 of these are public. 26 educational institutions authorized to award degrees at first, second and third levels, the other has only authorized to award degrees at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Moreover, there are five individual trainers who only has

a degree in psychotherapy condition (not on map). Map of all universities and colleges Some universities are known as private education, that colleges run by non-state actors, such as the foundations or associations. The government has given them the right to grant degrees under the Swedish degree structure. Some examples are Chalmers University of Technology, Stockholm School of Economics and Jönköping University, all of which have a wide range of training courses and also has the right to award degrees at the doctoral level. Other private education can only give degrees in a particular area, such as Beckman's College of Design and Örebro Theological Seminary.

Beckmans designhögskola

Blekinge tekniska högskola

Center för Cognitiv Psykoterapi och Utbildning i Göteborg AB

Chalmers tekniska högskola

Dans- och cirkushögskolan

Ericastiftelsen

Ersta Sköndal högskola

Förbundet S:t Lukas utbildningsinstitut

Försvarshögskolan

Gammelkroppa skogsskola

Gymnastik- och idrottshögskolan

Handelshögskolan i Stockholm

Högskolan Dalarna

Högskolan i Borås

Högskolan i Gävle

Högskolan i Halmstad

Högskolan i Jönköping

Högskolan i Skövde

Högskolan Kristianstad

Högskolan på Gotland

Högskolan Väst

Johannelunds teologiska högskola

Konstfack

Kungl. Konsthögskolan

Kungl. Musikhögskolan i Stockholm

Kungl. Tekniska högskolan (KTH)

Mälardalens högskola

Newmaninstitutet

Operahögskolan i Stockholm

Röda Korsets högskola

Sophiahemmet högskola

Stockholms Akademi för Psykoterapiutbildning

Stockholms dramatiska högskola

Stockholms Musikpedagogiska Institut

Svenska Institutet för kognitiv psykoterapi

Södertörns högskola

Teologiska Högskolan, Stockholm

Örebro Teologiska Högskola

Higher Vocational Education (HVE)

Copied from Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan

HVE is a post-secondary form of education combining theoretical studies with a strong practical approach embedded in the workplace.

The supply of education offered matches the demand for competences in the labour market.

Combining theory and practice - workplace training forms an integral part of the programmes. More than 1000 programmes nationwide.

The largest number of programmes offered is in the field of business finance and administration, along with sales and manufacturing technology. Other prominent areas include IT, hospitality and tourism, health care and agriculture.

Tuition is free of charge and many students are eligible for financial aid from the Swedish National Board for Student Aid (CSN).

Completing a programme leads to employment. More than 8 out of 10 are either employed or running their own business within six months of graduation (2010 Follow-up Report).

Occupational Entry Level Training Courses Copied from Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan

Occupational entry level training courses are single subject courses primarily within the areas of fine arts, crafts and cultural studies.

In total, there are about 300 of these courses offered.

The majority of the providers charge tuition fees and some courses offer eligibility for financial aid. The occupational entry level courses are largely privately run, many of them by foundations.

Courses are offered at upper secondary as well as post-secondary level. While they are not expressively designed to fulfil the formal entry requirements for further studies, many of the more specialised arts courses are university preparatory.

Education reform

A big reform took place in 1992 when free schools i Sweden could be financed by the state and not by donations as earlier. This led to an increase of free schools in Sweden, espcially around the big citiy areas. They haveto follow the national curriculum. In a way to stand out in the competition schools focus on different subjects and/or methods. Some focus on more digital tools in the pedagogy, other give more hours to different subjects.

Sweden just changed the school law effective from 1st July 2011. Theses are the main changes according to Skolverket

Pre-school get the status school.

The same rules will apply to free school and public schools. It means that free schools, with certain limited exceptions, to follow courses and curricula and to grade.

All students have the right to develop as far as possible best of their ability. This also applies to students who easily achieve learning objectives.

Today there is one individual program for students who are not qualified to a national upper secondary school programs. This program is replaced with five introduction program.

Students must have access to the school doctor, school nurse, psychologist and counselor in the student health and also educational and vocational guidance. All students should have access to school libraries. This also applies to free schools.

More decisions today may be appealed. It increases legal certainty for students and guardians. Among other things, decisions on the action programs and decisions on the right to school bus is going to be appealed.

Teachers and headmasters general powers are clarified. More disciplinary actions to be used against pupils who disrupt other students' safety and the right to study without being disturbed. Written warnings and temporary suspensions in elementary school are some new measures.

The education will be designed so that all students receive a school environment that is characterized by security and the right to study without being disturbed.

In rare cases it is allowed to charge optional fees for school trips and the like.

Skolinspektionen are given the opportunity to sharpen sanctions against the schools that misbehave.

Schools

Pre-schools, compulsory schools and upper secondary schools are affected by the two reforms described above.

Post-secondary

The swedish niversities and colleges has started several virtual courses during the last ten years. Adults have often families and have a hard time move to other towns. The courses and anducation often have a few meetings at the university or college a couple of times during a school year. For example was Karlstads university the first in sweden to start a teacher education programme at distance.

Administration and finance

All schools in Sweden are free except for non Swedish residential students at the universities. The compulsory schools are not allowed to charge the pupils for anything extra and the upper secondary can charge a small fee sometimes, but not on a regular basis. At the universities all material and literature are financed by the student, but there are no fees for studying.

Schools

The schools are financed by the municipalities based on the number of pupils they have. Public and private schools get the same. The municipality gives the money to the schools and they can use them in the way they thinks is the best way to meet the standards from the national government.

Post-secondary

The universities and colleges are financed by the state and based on the number of students during a year.

Quality assurance

Quality assurance is done by Skolinspektionn and The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education

Schools

Skolinspektionen controls that pre-schools, schools and adult education follows the laws and makes sure they maintain good quality. Both on regular basis and when necessary.

Post-secondary

It is the task of Högskoleverket (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education) to review the quality of higher education. This work includes:

Evaluating subject areas (main fields of study) and study programmes
Granting degree awarding powers

’’’Purpose of quality assurance’’’

Individual students have the right to demand that their course or study programme is of a high standard.
Employers in the public, private and voluntary sectors have a need for highly trained graduates.
The general public is entitled to be assured that high levels of taxation result in high standards.
In a global world, Swedish higher education must retain a high standard.

European perspective The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education's quality assurance policy has been developed in accordance with the European Network for Quality Assurance's (ENQA)

Information society

ICT in education initiatives

Virtual initiatives in schools

There are at least 3 virtual upper secondary schools in Sweden:

Värmdö Distans
Korrenspondensgymnasiet i Torsås
Hyper Island (in English)

Virtual initiatives in post-secondary education

Lessons learnt

General lessons

Notable practices

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England

From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

For the information relevant to Re.ViCa see England from Re.ViCa.

By Nick Jeans, Sero

For entities in England see Category:England - and also see Category:United Kingdom.

For an overview of the four home nations of the UK see United Kingdom.

Contents

Partners situated in England

Sero Consulting

University of Leeds

England in a nutshell

England is the largest of the four "home nations" of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, commonly known as the United Kingdom. The whole of the United Kingdom is a parliamentary democracy with its seat of government in London, the capital of England, and a constitutional monarchy with the Queen as the head of state. The United Kingdom is an island country located off the north-western coast of mainland Europe and includes the island of Great Britain, the northeast part of the island of Ireland and many small islands. The Crown Dependencies of the Channel Islands (Guernsey and Jersey) and the Isle of Man, formally possessions of the Crown, are not part of the UK but form a federacy with it.

Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK with a land border, sharing it with the Republic of Ireland. Apart from this land border, the UK is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, the North Sea, the English Channel and the Irish Sea. The largest component country, England, is linked to France by the Channel Tunnel.

The United Kingdom is a political union of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. In the much longer term the total or partial break-up of this union appears inevitable to some commentators but the best evidence is that such a discontinuity is still some years ahead, and further ahead than it was, given the recent global recession. However, already (as in Canada) the various education systems in the four home nations of the UK are significantly different and getting more so. Even the authoritative OECD finds it impossible to provide unified reports on some aspects of the UK educational system.

The population of England is 53 million. The capital city is London - also the capital of the United Kingdom.

For more details on England see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England

Education in England

(mainly sourced from: [2] and [3])

File:.jpg

Source: origial jpg on: [1]

Since it is considerably larger in population than the others combined it is common for observers to equate England with the United Kingdom. In the realm of education, this is a mistake - one has to analyse the constituent home nations.

Schools in England

(mainly sourced from: [4], [5] and [6])

Children must attend school from the ages of 5 until 16. However they will soon have to be in some form of compulsory education or training (at school, college or university) until 19 - and special arrangements are being made for the "14-19 agenda".

Children take two stages of exit examinations; GCSE typically at 16 and (for many but not all) A levels at typically age 18.

Although many children attend publicly funded schools, private schools also exist and cater for a percentage of the population.

There are three levels of school education: primary, secondary and tertiary.

Pre-school in England is relatively unregulated, and is not compulsory. The first exposure many children have to learn with others outside of traditional parenting is day care or a local government run playgroup. This type of activity is not generally considered schooling. Pre-school education is separate from primary school.

Pre-schools are usually run by local councils, community groups or private organizations. Pre-school is offered to three- to five-year-olds. The year before a child is due to attend primary school is the main year for pre-school education. This year is far more commonly attended, and usually takes the form of a few hours of activity five days a week.

Most children in England start school during the Academic Year that they are going to be five. Primary school is from year 1 to year 6 (11 years old), with the emphasis on developing English language and literacy skills, numeracy and basic mathematics as well as health and creative activities.

Secondary education is from year 7 (11 years old) to year 11 (16 years old). Core subjects are taught for the first two years and a selection of electives are introduced thereafter, culminating in GCSEs. Pupils may leave secondary schools at this time or continue to study for A levels. Students generally need at least 5 A*-C GCSE Grades, including English and Mathematics as a prerequiste to start A-levels.

School is compulsory between the ages of five and sixteen, with, in recent years, over three quarters of students staying on until they are eighteen. State schools educate more than 90% of English pupils, with 7% in independent schools, rising to more than 18% of 16+ pupils.

State schools are free, while independent ‘public’ schools charge fees. The pupil/teacher ratio in Independent schools is 9.4:1. This compares with a ratio of 16.9:1 for maintained mainstream state schools (http://www.isc.co.uk/FactsFigures_TeachingStaffTeacherPupilRatio.htm). Regardless of whether a school is state-run or independent, they are required to adhere to the same

curriculum frameworks. Most school students, whether in state or independent school, usually wear uniforms, although there are varying expectations and some schools do not demand this.

Primary education

Most children in England start school during the Academic Year that they are going to be five. Primary school is from year 1 to year 6 (11 years old), with the emphasis on developing English language and literacy skills, numeracy and basic mathematics as well as health and creative activities. There are no formal examination requirements and students progress to secondary education at the completion of primary schooling. National Curriculum assessments are a series of formative assessments, colloquially known as SATs, used to measure the attainment of children attending maintained schools in England. They comprise a mixture of teacher-led and test-based assessment depending on the age of the pupils.

The tests were introduced for 7-year-olds for the academic year ending July 1991, and for 11-year-olds in the academic year ending July 1995. Similar tests were introduced for 14-year-olds for the academic year ending July 1998 but were scrapped at the end of the academic year ending July 2009.

The assessments are completed at the end of each Key Stage and record attainment in terms of National Curriculum attainment levels, numbered between 1 and 8.

The Primary Framework for literacy and mathematics The Primary National Strategy is a set of tools for primary schools, aimed at helping them to raise standards – and to deliver the National Curriculum more effectively.

The Primary Framework for literacy and mathematics is a central part of the strategy. While the focus is on literacy and numeracy, schools can use the approaches it recommends to support teaching, learning and assessment across the whole curriculum.

Developing literacy skills As well as reading and writing, literacy involves the development speaking and listening skills. The framework encourages teachers to use a variety of approaches to teaching literacy. It recommends regular, dedicated literacy lessons, but recognises that pupils can also develop literacy skills while they learn about other subjects in the curriculum.

The framework encourages teachers to put a greater emphasis on using ‘phonics’ (teaching your child to recognise the sounds of parts of words). It also stresses the part parents can play in helping to develop a child’s literacy skills.

Developing maths skills The framework recommends a daily maths lesson, providing guidance for schools on how to develop pupils’ mathematical thinking and number skills.

As with literacy, schools are encouraged to use a variety of approaches. Published in October 2006, the latest version of the framework puts more emphasis on mental maths. It

recommends that children should develop their recall of multiplication tables earlier, with a focus on understanding and application.

The strategy also sets out a suite of catch-up programmes designed to help pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 who have fallen behind. Parents are encouraged to get involved in developing their child's numeracy skills as much as possible.

Secondary education

Secondary education is from year 7 (11 years old) to year 11 (16 years old). Core subjects are taught for the first two years and a selection of electives are introduced thereafter, culminating in GCSEs. Pupils may leave secondary schools at this time or continue to study for A levels, though not all secondary schools offer this option. Students generally need at least 5 A*-C GCSE Grades, including English and Mathematics as a prerequiste to start A-levels.

There are two categories of schools: State Schools and Independent or Private Schools (confusingly known as 'public' schools). Most of the older private institutions predate the availability of general compulsory public education in the 19th century and were "public" in the sense of an "initial public offering": anyone who can afford the tuition and meets the institutional requirements may attend, rather than the normal sense of being public, i.e. state run, institutions.

The post-compulsory level

General upper secondary education

A-levels are part of the tertiary Further Education process, but often studied at secondary schools. A-levels can be studied by students in Years 12 and 13 in a Sixth Form institution, as an optional part of secondary school. This is an integrated part of a Secondary Education institution in many areas of the country, while others have separate Sixth Form Colleges - this is normally done as a direct continuation of the secondary education process and hence most students study for the qualification from ages 16 to 18.

The term Sixth Form has been retained as a vestige of the old system and is used as a collective term for years 12 and 13. The first five years of English secondary schooling were previously known as forms. Pupils started their first year of secondary school in the first form or first year, and this was the year in which pupils would normally become 12 years of age. Pupils would move up a form each year before entering the fifth form in the year in which they would have their sixteenth birthday. Those who stayed on at school to study for A-levels moved up into the sixth form, which was divided into the Lower Sixth and the Upper Sixth.

Sixth form education is not compulsory in England and Wales; however, university entrance normally requires at least 3 A-level qualifications, and perhaps one AS-level. Students usually select four subjects from the GCSEs they have just taken, for one "AS" year, the AS

exams being taken at the end of lower sixth. Three subjects are then carried into the A2 year (the dropped AS being "cashed in" as a qualification) and further exams are taken at the end of that year. The marks attained in both sets of exams are converted into UCAS (Universities & Colleges Admissions Service) points, which must meet the offer made by the student's chosen university.

Vocational education

Further and higher education

Further education in England is provided by FE colleges and work-based training providers. Colleges in the English further education sector are grouped in five categories: General Further Education Colleges (GFE); Sixth Form Colleges (SFC); land-based Colleges (AHC); art, design and performing arts Colleges (ADPAC); special designated Colleges (SD). Many of these colleges also provide work-based vocational training programmes.

Higher education is provided by Universities, University Colleges, Colleges of Education and also in more than half the GFE colleges.

Universities in England

Since it is considerably larger in population than the others combined it is common for observers to equate England with the United Kingdom. In the realm of education, this is a mistake - one has to analyse the constituent home nations.

England is the most complex of the home nations with well over 100 institutions which are universities or of university status and in receipt of HEFCE funding. Only one institution is fully private (University of Buckingham) but all universities seek to maximise their income from other than state sources. In addition some 200 colleges also receive some funds from HEFCE for teaching university-level courses and 29 of these belong to the "Mixed Economy Group" of FE-HE colleges.

Below is a list of 18 which are better known for large-scale e-learning implementation or significant activity (including research) related to this.

University of Bolton
University of Cambridge
Canterbury Christ Church University
University of Derby
University of Leicester
University of Liverpool
Institute of Education
Middlesex University
Northumbria University
University of Nottingham
Open University
University of Oxford
Oxford Brookes University
Sheffield Hallam University
University of Southampton
Staffordshire University
University of Wolverhampton

University of Worcester

For those who want to check against more "official" lists, Universities UK (UUK), the Association of UK universities, has 132 members, but this includes some university colleges also. The HERO web site at http://www.hero.ac.uk/uk/universities___colleges/index.cfm also links to all universities and colleges.

University Colleges

As noted in Wikipedia, the term "university college" is used in a number of countries to denote institutions that provide tertiary education but do not have full or independent university status. A university college is often part of a larger university. Precise usage varies between countries.

In the UK the situation is confused, but not identical to the general situation. Typically, university colleges are independent institutions which are too small to be counted as universities and usually also have some restriction on their ability to grant the full range of degrees especially research degrees (doctorates). In the past, as university colleges grew and developed in sophistication and competence, they tended to become approved as universities - this process is ongoing.

(By tradition, some prestigous institutions that are or were part of the University of London are also called "University College". These are covered above.)

At present (due to many having been upgraded recently) there is a historically low number of university colleges in the UK. Although several are active in e-learning and took part in the UK benchmarking exercise, none are currently engaged in large-scale e-learning activity. Among those of most relevance longer-term are:

University College for the Creative Arts (at Canterbury, Epsom, Farnham, Maidstone and Rochester)
University College Falmouth
St Mary's University College, Twickenham, London
University College Plymouth St Mark & St John

The links given are to their benchmarking activities on the UK wiki covering e-learning.

Colleges of higher education

In the typical British way, there is no definition of a "college of higher education". However, in general terms they consist of institutions which are small and specialised and which do not award their own degrees - but in the typical British way this rule is only a guideline. Areas of specialisation are usually one or more of music, dance, drama, art, teacher training, theology, agriculture or nautical studies.

A very few are innovative in e-learning, but not many. Examples of those who are include:

Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication

Further Education & Sixth Form Colleges in England

There are currently (April 2011) 351 Colleges in the England further education sector. Just under twenty years ago there were around 450 but since 1993, when these colleges were removed from direct local authority control and became autonomous institutions incorporated by Act of Parliament, mergers and closures [mainly the former] have reduced their numbers by over 20%.

Colleges in the English further education sector are grouped in five categories:

227 General Further Education Colleges (GFE)
94 Sixth Form Colleges (SFC)
16 land-based Colleges (AHC)
4 art, design and performing arts Colleges (ADPAC)
10 special designated Colleges (SD)

GFE colleges largely provide vocational education and training for the 16+ age group and training for businesses. Most (but not all) provide some general education courses at GCSE and A/AS Level; many provide limited vocational training for 14-16 year olds by arrangement with local secondary schools and the majority provide some higher education courses in partnership with universities. A small number have contracts to provide prison education, but with internet access restricted in penal institutions, the opportunities for virtual education are limited. Both in size (measured by annual budgets) and numbers of institutions, they form the largest part of the further education sector. Annual enrolments are mostly in the range of 10000-20000 learners; some rural colleges are considerably smaller and the largest few have up to 50000 enrolments per annum. The majority of learners are aged 16-24.

Sixth Form Colleges (SFC) are much more like extensions of schools beyond the compulsory phase. They provide largely academic courses (GCSE and A/AS Level) in preparation for university entrance. Some provide a limited range of vocational courses and adult education programmes, but the bulk of their student population consists of 16-18 year olds, studying full time. They range in size from 650 learners (the smallest) up to 2500, with the majority in the 1000-1750 range.

The sixteen land-based colleges (AHC) focus on vocational training for land-based industries and recreational management, largely, but not exclusively, in the sectots of agriculture, horticulture, equine studies and land and recreation management (e.g. farm management, forestry and golf courses). Most of them include some higher education courses in their portfolio and undertake some distance learning, often with international students. They range in size from around 500 to 3000 annual enrolments, with the largest contingent in the age range 16-24.

The four ADPAC colleges are specialist colleges, focusing on vocational training in art, design and performing arts, although, confusingly, not all cover all three sectors. They are

more akin to small specialised FE colleges than other parts of the sector. They are small in size (smaller than most SFCs) and the majority of 16-24 year old students will be preparing for further vocational training.

The 10 Special Designated Institutions (SD) are largely colleges of adult education, and although they do contain a small number of students under 21 years old, they are relatively peripheral to VISCED.

In addition to the 351 colleges described above, there are some 70 independent colleges which provide learning and vocational training to people with physical and learning disabilities. The majority of their students are aged 16-24 and the colleges are members of NATSPEC, the national association of specialist independent colleges. Many of these (e.g. National Star College have pioneered online learning and virtual education for youg people with disabilities.

Training Providers

Although GFE colleges deliver much vocational training for young people, a significant amount is also delivered by private training providers. These range in size from small, locally based organisations offering 100 training places or less, to large national companies offering over 1000 training places annually. Their 'trade' organisation is the Association of Employment & Learning Providers(AELP) - the linked website gives further details of membership and programmes. These private training providers specialise in offering Apprenticeships.

Education reform

The past twenty years have seen a continuing flurry of changes to all parts of the English education system, most notably in schools and further education. By the early 1990s the vast majority of secondary schools were non-selective comprehensives (though there remained wide variation in social and ethnic composition and academic achievements). Only 146 grammar schools remained, concentrated in a small number of local education authorities, especially Kent and Buckinghamshire. Sixth Form Colleges and FE colleges were still maintained by, and funded via the education authorities of local councils.

From 1993 onwards there have been large scale changes in governance, funding and curriculum in both the schools and further education sectors, resulting in increased diversity and numbers of schools, the removal of an increasing number of schools and all FE sector colleges from council control, and a gradual reduction in the number of colleges, through merger and occasional closure. These changes have not reduced bureaucracy and central control (as has often been sought), but have certainly increased confusion amongst parents and young people and stress levels for staff and managers. The major changes are summarised below and explored in more detail in the sub-sections following

Governance & Management:

- increasing numbers of schools (e.g. Academies) are now governed and managed independent of local authority control
- from 2011 onwards organisations are empowered to apply to set up 'free schools' based loosely on the Swedish free school model. There are very few of these yet
- since 1993, FE sector colleges, including SFCs, have been autonmous independent corporations out of local authority control

Curriculum and qualifications

- a national schools curriculum for the years of compulsory schooling was introduced in 1994 and has been tinkered with and modified several times since then
- separate GCE O Levels and CSEs were replaced by a single combined GCSE examination structure in the late 1980s
- the first year of 2-year GCE A Level courses was separately accredited as a stand alone qualification AS Level from 2002
- a new system of accrediting work-based vocational training NVQs was introduced during the early 1990s. A parallel set of qualifications for school or college-based vocational education GNVQs was introduced at the same time, but these were phased out by 2007 and replaced with Applied GCSE and A Levels
- in an attempt to bridge the academic/vocational divide and provide industry-standard qualifications of high status, Diplomas for 14-19 year olds were introduced in 2008; these may replace Applied GCSEs and A Levels by 2013, but take-up has so far been disappointing
- several attempts to simplify the enormous number of separate vocational qualifications have met with little success

Schools: Governance & Management

There are an increasing number of state school types in the UK – including three different kinds of academies, four major kinds of maintained schools, independent schools, grammar schools and others. Most state schools are 'maintained' by the Local Authority. All maintained schools follow the national curriculum, national pay and conditions, and are overseen and supported by the Local Authority. There are four main types of maintained schools. Their differences are over who employs the staff; who owns the land and buildings; and who controls the admissions arrangements. Community schools are run entirely by the Local Authority which employs the staff, owns the land and buildings and decides on admissions arrangements. Foundation and trust schools are run by a governing body which employs the staff and sets admissions criteria. Land and buildings are usually owned by a charity or by the governing body. Voluntary Aided schools (VA schools) are usually Faith schools run by the governing body which employs the staff and sets admissions criteria. Land and buildings are usually owned by a religious organisation. Voluntary Controlled schools (VC schools) are like VA schools but the Local Authority runs the school, employing the staff and setting admissions, but the land and buildings are usually owned by a charity such as a religious organisation.

Free Schools, traditional Academies and Academy converters all have the same status in law: they are all 'Academies' which means they are all independent schools which are funded by the state, must meet certain requirements set by the state, and are founded and held accountable through a legally binding "funding agreement". They are independent in that they do not have to follow the National Curriculum, though they must be 'broad and balanced' in curriculum and must teach certain subjects including maths, English and science. The differences between free schools, traditional academies and academy converters are over who sets them up; why they are set up; whether there is a predecessor school; and what the 'provider' has to demonstrate in order to be given permission to set one up.

Academies are publicly funded independent schools, free from local authority control. Other freedoms include setting their own pay and conditions for staff, freedoms concerning the delivery of the curriculum, and the ability to change the length of their terms and school days. Academies are usually existing poorly performing state schools which are given to a new provider. They can be set up by Universities, FE colleges, education charities or businessmen. The provider must form a charity and cannot make a profit. Academies are held accountable through a 'funding agreement' – a contract with the Government. The Department for Education (DfE) 'brokers' between academy providers and schools which are underperforming. Academy converters are existing, usually high performing schools which opt out of Local Authority control to gain independence and autonomy. Existing state schools apply for academy status. The school governing body signs a funding agreement with the Government. Outstanding schools go through a rapid approval process, but all schools can apply for academy status. As of 1 June 2011, 1244 schools have applied to be an academy since June 2010. 831 of these applications have been approved. 430 have converted and are now open, an increase of 46 since 1 May 2011. The total number of open academies, including those opened under the previous government, now stands at 704. (http://www.education.gov.uk/academies/a0061176/latest-information-on-academies) The Government will open more sponsored academies (turning around underperforming schools)

this year. 88 schools have now (June 2011) been identified and will open in the next academic year. This 'sponsored academy' programme is in addition to the 1,200 schools that have already applied to convert to academy status ('convertor academies'). The academy programme was previously focussed on underperforming secondary schools. The Government is now using academies to tackle weak primary schools as well and the weakest 200 primary schools in the country will become academies in 2012/13. (http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a0077837/michael-gove-face-reality-reform-urgently)

Free Schools A Free School is a non-selective school that operate independently within the state system. It receives public funding according to the number of pupils it attracts and is independent from the Local Authority. Like all state schools it is subject to inspection by the national inspectorate Ofsted. It is also held to account through the results it achieves. It can be closed down if it underperforms. Free schools are adaptations of the charter school programme in the United States and the Free School programme in Sweden. The Coalition Government allowed groups to apply to set up Free Schools from June 2010. The first schools will be opening in September 2011.

In England Free Schools must: Teach students only from reception to 19 years old age range. Any school teaching nursery or over-19s cannot be funded for those years as a Free School; Abide by the Schools Admissions Code; Have more than 5 pupils over the age of 5; Take account of the SEN Code of Practice; Be run by a Charitable Trust; Provide a broad and balanced curriculum including the core subjects such as Maths, English and Science. Free Schools do not have to follow the National Curriculum; and Achieve good results and do well in inspections.

Independent state schools have existed for several decades. In the 1980s, City Technology Colleges were established in deprived areas. In the 1990s, existing state schools were given more freedom and independence under the status of Grant Maintained schools. In 2000, Academies were established – like City Technology Colleges, they are independent state schools in deprived areas, with sponsors from business and education. In 2005 the government expanded the Academy programme, citing charter schools in the United States and Free Schools in Sweden as a model for the UK. Academies are limited to changing existing schools, and often must rely on local authorities to support their creation. Because free schools are entirely new projects they can be set up where academies have not been established. Free schools mean that new schools can be set up wherever there is parental demand and the pool of providers can be widened. International organisations, new charities, teachers, groups of parents are all allowed to set up independent state schools, subject to government approval of their application. Free schools must submit an application in two stages – a proposal and a business case. The business case must detail all aspects of the school and demonstrate clear demand from parents for the particular provision being offered. The group must form a charity and cannot make a profit. Free schools are held accountable through a 'funding agreement' – a contract with the Government. They are free from Local Authority control.

Independent schools are independent from both national and local government in finances, governance and operations. They are regulated lightly by government and inspected by a

range of bodies. Independent schools vary from those set up by foundations in the middle ages through to new companies and charities running schools. They are funded by school fees, gifts and endowments and governed by an independently elected board of governors.

Grammar schools select their pupils on academic ability, although they can be maintained by the state.

Schools: Curriculum

National Curriculum

The National Curriculum was introduced into England, Wales and Northern Ireland as a nationwide curriculum for primary and secondary state schools following the Education Reform Act 1988.

The National Curriculum sets out the stages and core subjects children will be taught during their time at school. Children aged five to 16 in 'maintained' or state schools must be taught the National Curriculum.

The National Curriculum is a framework used by all maintained schools to ensure that teaching and learning is balanced and consistent.

It sets out:

- the subjects taught
- the knowledge, skills and understanding required in each subject
- standards or attainment targets in each subject - teachers can use these to measure a child's progress and plan *the next steps in learning
- how a child's progress is assessed and reported

Within the framework of the National Curriculum, schools are free to plan and organise teaching and learning in the way that best meets the needs of their pupils.

The purpose of the National Curriculum was to standardise the content taught across schools in order to enable assessment, which in turn enabled the compilation of league tables detailing the assessment statistics for each school. These league tables, together with the provision to parents of some degree of choice in assignment of the school for their child (also legislated in the same act) were intended to encourage a ‘free market’ by allowing parents to choose schools based on their measured ability to teach the National Curriculum.

Public schools are free to choose their own curriculum and examinations and many have opted for the more demanding IGCSEs which are not tied to the National Curriculum. This may be creating a two-tier system with state school pupils losing out. From time to time ministers have suggested that state schools may be given funding to enter pupils for IGCSE examinations but a study was undertaken by QCA which concluded that IGCSEs do not follow the programmes of study required by the Key Stage 4 of the National Curriculum and

therefore could not be offered as a state-funded alternative. This is especially significant for Virtual Schools, which favour IGCSEs because they do not require supervised coursework and are therefore easier to incorporate into a totally online course.

Many schools use the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) Schemes of Work to plan their curriculum. These help to translate the National Curriculum's objectives into teaching and learning activities.

National Curriculum subjects

The National Curriculum, taught to all pupils in state or maintained schools, is made up of blocks of years, known as key stages:

Year 1 and Year 2 of primary school are known as Key Stage 1
Years 3 to 6 of primary school are known as Key Stage 2

Compulsory National Curriculum subjects are the same for Key Stages 1 and 2:

English
Maths
Science
Design and technology
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
History
Geography
Art and design
Music
Physical education

Schools also have to teach religious education, though parents have the right to withdraw children for all or part of the religious education curriculum. In addition, schools are advised to teach personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship, together with at least one modern foreign language.

A school may cover these subjects under different names, and may teach more than one subject together under the same name. This is left up to individual schools, as long as they are covering the National Curriculum.

National Curriculum levels

At Key Stages 1, 2, and 3, the National Curriculum is accompanied by a series of eight levels. These are used to measure a child's progress compared to pupils of the same age across the country.

All schools assess pupils' progress during the school year, though some make more frequent use of the National Curriculum levels than others.

A child is formally assessed at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. At the end of Key Stage 1, the teacher's assessment of a child's progress will take account of performance in several tasks and tests in English and Maths.

At the end of Key Stage 2, children take national tests in English, Maths and Science.

By the end of Key Stage 1, most children will have reached level 2, and by the end of Key Stage 2 most will be at level 4.

From the ages of 11 to 16 children move through Key Stages 3 and 4. There are no national tests in Year 9. During Key Stage 4 most will work towards national qualifications – usually GCSEs.

Key Stage 3

Children attending a state school from ages 11 to 14 (Years 7 to 9) follow Key Stage 3 of the National Curriculum. Key Stage 3 compulsory National Curriculum subjects are:

English
Maths
Science
Design and technology
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
History
Geography
Modern foreign languages
Art and design
Music
Citizenship
Physical education

Schools also have to provide:

Careers education and guidance (during Year 9)
Sex and Relationship Education (SRE)
Religious education

Parents can choose to withdraw their child from all or part of the religious education curriculum and the non-statutory elements of SRE. Depending on the school, children may also have lessons in Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE).

Choices in Year 9 During Year 9 children will choose which subjects they will study at Key Stage 4. Their studies in many of these subjects will lead to nationally recognised qualifications like GCSEs.

Key Stage 4

Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are usually between the ages of 14 and 16 years old. At the end of Key Stage 4 most pupils sit national examinations, usually GCSEs. They can also choose from a range of vocational qualifications.

In Key Stage 4, children study a mix of compulsory and optional subjects. The subjects they have to do are:

English
Maths
Science
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
Physical education
Citizenship

In addition, pupils have to take careers education and work-related learning. Schools must also offer religious education, SRE and at least one subject from each of the four 'entitlement' areas.

The entitlement areas are:

Arts subjects
Design and technology
Humanities
Modern foreign languages

Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) and religious education

SRE is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It involves teaching about sex, sexuality and sexual health, as well as the importance of stable and loving relationships, and of marriage for family life. It is not about the promotion of any particular sexual orientation or of sexual activity. Schools develop their own SRE programmes, taking account of government guidance and statutory requirements. Schools are encouraged to consult parents when developing or updating their SRE programme. A copy of the school's SRE policy must be available for parents to inspect. Parents can withdraw a child from all or part of the SRE programme, but not from statutory elements which form part of the National Curriculum for science.

Religious education

A school's curriculum for religious education is also drawn up locally – either by the school itself, or by a body with representatives from nearby schools, teachers and faith groups. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part the religious education curriculum. Review of the curriculum for 11-16 year olds

In September 2007 a new secondary curriculum was published, intended to give schools more flexibility. The new curriculum aims to:

cut back on the amount of compulsory subject content
give teachers more time and space to personalise their teaching by offering catch up lessons in the basics, and creating opportunities for all pupils to deepen and extend their learning
develop a stronger focus on the development of personal attributes and practical life skills
help teachers to make connections between the subjects and to view the curriculum as a whole

The new Key Stage 3 curriculum is being brought in over a three year period. It became compulsory for Year 7 pupils in September 2008. From September 2009, it applied to all Year 7 and Year 8 pupils, and from September 2010 applied across Years 7, 8 and 9. Changes to the Key Stage 4 curriculum were brought in from September 2009.

New qualifications are being added to the curriculum and existing ones are being updated so that children can find subjects that interest them and ways to learn that suit them. The changes have been introduced to encourage children to continue in education for longer so they have a better chance of finding suitable jobs.

Diplomas for 14 to 19 year olds The Diploma is a new qualification for 14 to 19 year olds, designed to bridge the gap between academic and vocational learning. It offers a more practical, hands-on way of gaining the essential skills and knowledge that employers and universities look for.

From September 2008, selected schools and colleges around the country began offering the new Diploma qualification alongside GCSEs and A levels. By 2013 all children will be offered the full range of 17 Diplomas, if the present government continue the previous government's policy.

Along with the new Diploma qualification, there will be changes to GCSEs and A levels, more Apprenticeship opportunities and a new programme to support young people not achieving their potential.

Changes to GCSEs There have been changes to the way GCSEs are assessed from September 2009:

coursework in most subjects replaced by controlled assessments, supervised by teachers in school
teacher assessments continue in art and design, design and technology, home economics, music and physical education - but with stronger safeguards
from September 2010, GCSE English, Maths and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) put more importance on the essential skills that young people need to prepare them for work and adult life

Changes to A levels From September 2008, the amount of time students have to spend on assessment has reduced. Higher achievers get more opportunities to demonstrate their ability – making it easier for universities and colleges to identify them. There will be:

more open-ended questions, answered through extended essays
a new (optional) extended project

a new A* grade for the top performers

More schools and colleges are expected to provide opportunities to study higher education modules while doing A levels.

Help for those not achieving their potential The new 14-16 programme is aimed at young people who are unlikely to achieve at Level 1 – including those who have the potential to do well, but lack motivation. It shows how learning can create career opportunities and helps develop basic skills like literacy and numeracy, together with the attitude and personal and social skills that are important in learning and at work.

A new framework of qualifications at Entry and Level 1 support this, helping learners to progress towards Level 2 (the equivalent of five good GCSEs). Qualifications recognised under the framework include skills for life and work, vocational and subject-based learning, and personal and social development.

The current government believes that over the years the National Curriculum has come to cover more subjects than it should and wants to slim the curriculum down to cover only essential subjects. To help develop this new National Curriculum for 5 to 16 year olds in England, the review will consider what subjects should be compulsory at what age and what children should be taught in the main subjects at what age. Following public consultation, the aim is to begin teaching the new National Curriculum in maintained schools from September 2013. To begin with this will only cover English, mathematics, science, and physical education, with the new curriculum for other subjects coming in 2014.

Further education: Governance & Management

In 1993 the further education sector (including SFCs) was taken out of local authority control and colleges became independent, autonomous corporations. This major change in governance was accompanied by changes in funding systems, which are described in Administration and Finance below. In GFE colleges one of the main impacts has been an increased search for external funding through providing customised training and business services and a reduction in the total number of colleges - there has been a net loss of almost a third of separate GFE colleges through mergers since 1993.

Private training providers (members of AELP) are private companies, subject to UK company law.

Qualifications and accreditation

General and academic qualifications GCSE is the main qualification taken by school pupils at age 16. English schools are largely judged by the percentage of pupils gaining 5 'good' GCSEs - at grade C or above - including English and Maths. The UK government announced in 2010 that it was extending this judgement into an English Baccalaureate and has publoished DfE Performance Tables to indicate which subjects can be counted in this.

The main general academic qualification for 16-18 year olds remains the GCE A Level. The first year of 2-year GCE A Level courses was separately accredited as a stand alone qualification AS Level from 2002.

Vocational qualifications There are still a myriad of separate accredited vocational qualifications in England, in spite of several attempts to simplify the system. Many of these are highly specialised and industry-specific. Sector Skills Councils oversee qualifications in their industry area.

A national system of accrediting work-based vocational training NVQs was introduced during the early 1990s: this is paralleled by Scotland's vocational qualification framework of SVQs. A range of more general qualifications for school or college-based vocational education GNVQs was introduced at the same time, but these were phased out by 2007 and replaced with Applied GCSE and A Levels.

In addition to GCSEs, school pupils may also take vocational courses, either at their school or a linked GFE college.

Apprenticeships The current UK government is increasing the amount of vocational training provided through Apprenticeships, which are available to young people at three levels:

> Apprenticeships - designed for young people leaving school at 16+ with average levels of attainment, with successful completion equated to 5 'good' GCSE passes
> Advanced Apprenticeships - also available for young people leaving school at 16+, with successful completion equated to 2 GCE A Level passes
> Higher Apprenticeships - leading to qualifications at NVQ Level 4 and sometimes a Foundation Degree

Academic/vocational qualifications In an attempt to bridge the academic/vocational divide and provide industry-standard qualifications of high status, Diplomas for 14-19 year olds were introduced in 2008; these may replace Applied GCSEs and A Levels by 2013, but take-up has so far been disappointing.

QCF GFE colleges have maintained their core business of vocational training, largely for 16-24 year olds, and have absorbed the accreditation and qualification changes described in the section above. They are also currently involved in adapting their programmes and courses to the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), which aims to link the English vocational accreditation framework with European systems.

14-19 and University Technical Colleges

The 14-19 year age range has been the focus of much curriculum reform (both attempted and partially implemented) during the early years of this century, although the end of compulsory schooling at 16 cuts across this age band. The Diplomas have been at the heart of this, following from bolder and more sweeping proposals in the Tomlinson report which have not been implemented.

The most recent attempt to focus on this age group has been the introduction of University Technical Colleges (UTCs). So far (mid-2011) only three are in existence, with a further 12 due to be approved shortly and increased numbers over the next 4-5 years. It seems likely that the UTC curriculum will be centred around a mixture of 14-19 Diplomas and traditional GCSEs and GCE A Levels.

Administration and finance

All schools in England have considerable autonomy in managing their own administration. However, the extent of autonomy varies according to the type of school: the administration of local authority schools is overseen by the relevant local authority, whereas Academies have a greater degree of independence, the degree of independence may vary, depending on whether the Academy is owned by a larger company, or is free standing.

FE sector colleges, including Sixth Form Colleges, are independent autonmous corporations responsible for managing their own affairs.

The funding of schools in England is complex, both for capital and revenue funding and varies according to the nature of the school's governance - whether it is an Academy, or a local authority school.

Most capital funding flows from central government, but with local authority schools this is channelled via the local authority. In the case of Voluntary Aided schools, most of which are faith schools, 15% of capital funding is provided by the sponsoring foundation.

Schools

Education Secretary Michael Gove announced on 5 July 2010 a comprehensive Review of all capital investment in schools, early years, colleges and sixth forms. Led by Sebastian James, Group Operations Director of DSG international plc, the Review team includes Kevin Grace, Tesco - Director of Property Services, Barry Quirk, Chief Executive of Lewisham, John Hood former Vice-Chancellor of University of Oxford and Sir John Egan, former Chief Executive of Jaguar and BAA. The review will guide future spending decisions over the next Spending Review period (2011-12 to 2014-15). It will look at how best to meet parental demand; make current design and procurement cost-effective and efficient; and overhaul how capital is allocated and targeted. The Building Schools for the Future programme (BSF) has been stopped and capital investment in education will be less generous up to 2015, targetting schools in the worst condition. Government focus is now to cut red tape and tackle urgent demand from rising birth-rates.

The DfE is reducing its End Year Flexibility (EYF) requirements by £1bn to help ensure no additional borrowing this year through better financial management and tighter controls. Because of the size of the reduction, however, the Department will have to make £156.5m savings from capital budgets. The £972,000 annual funding for the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) design advice service associated with the BSF programme will also be stopped.

The Schools White Paper ‘The Importance of Teaching’ describes a long term programme of work to reduce bureaucracy and give schools greater freedom to decide how they fulfil their functions in a number of areas, including: inspection and self-evaluation lesson planning

assessing Pupils Progress (APP). financial management qualifications removal of statutory duties cutting guidance and improving communications to schools reviewing data burdens

On inspection and self-evaluation, schools judged outstanding by Ofsted have been free from routine inspection since September 2010. Inspection requirements for all schools will be streamlined from September 2011 and there will no longer be the expectation that schools should fill in a centrally prescribed self-evaluation form (SEF).

Outstanding mainstream primary and secondary schools will not be inspected in the 2010/11 academic year and, subject to parliamentary process, will no longer be routinely inspected in the future. However, outstanding special schools and pupil referral units will currently still be considered for inspection for the time being due to the vulnerability of the pupils and the fact that there is less reliable data on which to risk assess these schools.

Inspection requirements will be streamlined from early 2012 by reducing the 27 judgements currently in the school inspection framework to focus on four core areas: pupil achievement the quality of teaching leadership and management the behaviour and safety of pupils.

This slimmed-down inspection framework will not require schools to have completed a centrally prescribed self-evaluation form (SEF), allowing headteachers and governing bodies to choose for themselves how they evaluate their work. The SEF is a lengthy document (over 45 pages) which most schools update every year. It contains facts, figures and analysis, often duplicating information held elsewhere, and is used by Ofsted to inform decisions about inspection. Headteachers have estimated that just updating the SEF takes at least a working week for them and their school leadership team.

Lesson planning is one of the issues most frequently cited by teachers as creating workload. Teachers often produce lengthy individual lesson plans, especially when schools are preparing for Ofsted inspections. This can lead some teachers to spend a minimum of two hours a week just filling in lesson plan templates; time that could be better spent planning meaningful, motivating teaching.

Neither the Department for Education nor Ofsted actually require written lesson plans for every lesson, although inspectors may want to see where the lesson they observe fits in the sequence of teaching. It is accepted that teachers should plan their lessons but this does not mean imposing a centralised planning template on schools. A school's approach to lesson planning is a matter for the individual school, best achieved by the headteacher reaching an understanding with classroom teachers about what kind of planning is best suited to the school, its teachers and its pupils. There may be times when it is appropriate to ask individual teachers for more detailed evidence of how they plan lessons (for example if there is evidence of poor planning in the past). However this should now be the exception not the rule.

Assessing pupils' progress (APP) will continue as a voluntary approach to pupil tracking but will not be a statutory requirement.

The Government scrapped the the financial management standard in schools (FMSiS) requirement on schools from 15 November 2010. FMSiS will be replaced by a simpler

standard, drawn up in association with schools themselves which will give governors and heads, local authorities and Government assurance about value for money and effective use of public resources.

Qualifications Restrictions over the use of accredited iGCSEs have been removed, along with some of the bureaucracy and cost associated with the Diploma: the requirement for every school to give access to every Diploma subject has been removed; the development of an extended Diploma and the four 'academic' Diplomas have stopped; and schools/colleges no longer have to form consortia and be approved by government before they can offer the Diploma.

Removal of statutory requirements on schools The requirement for schools to cooperate through Children's Trust partnerships and to have regard to the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) will be removed. At the moment, the duty to cooperate means that schools (and colleges) are required to engage with the cooperation arrangements set up by the local authority. By removing this requirement it is hoped that schools and their local partners will come up with the most efficient and effective mechanisms for cooperation given their local priorities and circumstances, rather than having to follow a central model. The requirement for Children's Trust Boards to produce and publish a joint Children and Young People's Plan has also been removed. Schools are being given more autonomy to decide what school improvement support they need. The duty on local authorities to provide school improvement partners to each of their maintained schools is being removed. Schools will be able to buy in this type of support from their own budgets should they feel it is required. There will no longer be a requirement for schools to provide a school profile, leaving governing bodies and schools to choose how to publicise their school to parents. These regulations mean that if community and voluntary controlled schools want to make changes to the times of the school day, they currently have to carry out a lengthy consultation process with the local authority, school staff and parents. From 1 September 2011 schools will no longer have to carry out a lengthy consultation process with the local authority, school staff and parents on changes to the school day including lunch times and start/finish times. The requirement for schools to set statutory performance targets will be removed from September 2011 meaning the targets for 2012, which schools have just set and submitted to local authorities, will be the final time this is centrally required. In future, schools will decide what targets and measures to set for themselves along with choosing what forms of external support they want and determining how to evaluate themselves. The DfE's guidance for schools will be reviewed and simplified, making guidance on key areas short and clear about what schools must do, should do and can choose to do.

Data collection requirements on schools (including the School Census) are being reviewed, aiming to streamline the data returns completed by schools for central government. The Department is committed a 30 per cent reduction in frontline data collection burdens by 2011/12.

Colleges

FE sector colleges are independent autonomous corporations which administer their own affairs but are subject to inspection from Ofsted and audit from the Skills Funding Agency

(GFE colleges) or Young Peoples' Learning Agency (SFCs). The Skills Funding Agency funds provision for the 19+ age group (and GFE colleges overall) and the Young Peoples' Learning Agency funds SFCs. Funding levels are decided by the agencies and funding follows the learner, but only for agency approved courses - provision which is not agency approved is at colleges' expense and they can decide what fees they will charge learners.

Training Providers

Private training providers - members of Association of Employment and Learning Providers(AELP) are private companies, subject to UK company law. (AELP) They are funded by the Skills Funding Agency(SFA).

Quality assurance

Universities and colleges of higher education are reviewed through an institutional audit. Further education colleges that provide higher education programmes are reviewed through an academic review at subject level.

Quality assurance for UK universities and other institutions engaged in higher education is overseen by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

Institutional audit aims to ensure that institutions are providing higher education, awards and qualifications of an acceptable quality and an appropriate academic standard; and exercising their legal powers to award degrees in a proper manner.

Where a university or college of higher education has collaborative arrangements that are too large or complex to be included in institutional audit, they have a collaborative provision audit.

Academic review at subject level looks at subject areas against the broad aims of the subject provider. Judgements are made about the academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities for students.

QAA also reviews healthcare education. Major review of NHS-funded healthcare programmes in England recognises the key importance of teaching and learning within a practice setting, as well as within higher education institutions. The Department of Health has contracted with us to carry out this work. The General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) has contracted with us to carry out QAA GOsC review of osteopathic programmes of study and universities and colleges that provide them.

All education and training below higher education is inspected by Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education.

Schools

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. It regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It is independent in that it does not report to government ministers but directly to Parliament. Ofsted carries out hundreds of inspections and regulatory visits each week, publishing its findings within the Inspection reports area of its website, http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/.

A school inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. Inspection is a process of evidence gathering, particularly through lesson observation, in order to provide an evaluation of how well a school is performing. Inspections take place over two days, and dialogue with senior managers in the school plays a central part. The school's self-evaluation provides the starting point for inspectors, and the views of pupils, parents and other

stakeholders are taken into account. Inspections are conducted by an inspection team. The size of the team is determined by the number on roll. Inspections result in a written report indicating one of four grades: outstanding, good, satisfactory or inadequate.

The frequency of school inspections depends on the outcome of schools' previous inspections and an annual assessment of their subsequent performance. Schools that were satisfactory at their last inspection are inspected within three school years from the end of the school year in which that inspection took place. About 40% of these schools will receive a monitoring visit between inspections to check on progress. Schools judged inadequate at their last inspection will continue to receive regular monitoring visits and are reinspected after a specific period.

Good or outstanding schools are inspected once within five school years from the end of the school year in which that inspection took place unless there are concerns about their performance, safeguarding or welfare arrangements. Good or outstanding schools not inspected three years after their last inspection will receive an assessment of their performance, called an interim assessment report. This assessment will draw on test and examination results and information about, for example, pupils' attendance. It will explain to the school and to parents why the school will not be inspected in that academic year.

Schools receive between zero and two working days' notice of a section 5 inspection, with most receiving between one and two days notice. HMCI may arrange for any school to be inspected without notice where there are particular reasons, such as those connected to pupils' welfare, or where there are concerns about safeguarding or rapid decline in performance. Monitoring visits will be conducted without notice.

Schools are asked to tell parents about the inspection and to pass on an explanatory leaflet and letter to parents. The letter includes a confidential questionnaire asking for parents' and carers' views about the school, which they can return to the inspection team. It is available in English and different languages. Parents can ask to speak to inspectors during the inspection, and inspectors will do their best to meet with them.

When a school is inspected, a sample of pupils completes a confidential questionnaire giving their views about the school. Inspectors talk to groups of pupils to find out their views about the school and what it provides for them. Schools often conduct their own surveys to find out what pupils think. Inspectors will still see the results of this and discuss how the school has taken pupils' views into account.

In boarding schools, residential special schools and children's homes that offer education pupils are asked to complete a further confidential questionnaire which gives the inspectors extra information about this aspect of the school's work. Inspectors write a letter to pupils after the inspection to tell them the main findings and how the school can improve further.

In September 2005 a new system of short notice inspections came into being. Under this system the senior leadership of each school are strongly encouraged to complete a Self Evaluation Form (SEF) on a continual basis, which requires them to be aware of strengths and areas for development. Inspections are generally two or three day visits every three years, with two days notice. They focus on the "central nervous system" of the school – examining

how well the school is managed, and what processes are in place to ensure standards of teaching and learning improve; the school leadership and management are expected to be aware of everything in the SEF. The SEF serves as the main document when planning the inspection, and is crucial in evaluating the quality of leadership and management and the school's capacity to improve.

After an inspection of a school, Ofsted publishes a report on the school on its website. In addition to written comments on a number of areas, schools are assessed on each area and overall on a 4-point scale: 1 (Outstanding), 2 (Good), 3 (Satisfactory) and 4 (Inadequate). Schools rated Outstanding or Good might not be inspected again for five years, while schools judged less favourably are inspected more frequently, and may receive little or no notice of inspection visits.

Figures published in March 2010, show that revised inspection criteria, which were introduced in September 2009, have resulted in a reduction from 19% to 9% in the number of schools judged to be outstanding, and an increase from 4% to 10% in the number of schools judged to be inadequate.

Sometimes a school is placed into special measures if it is judged as 'inadequate' (Grade 4) in one or more areas and if the inspectors have decided it does not have the capacity to improve without additional help. Schools placed into special measures receive intensive support from local authorities, additional funding and resourcing, and frequent reappraisal from Ofsted until the school is no longer deemed to be failing. Furthermore, the senior managers and teaching staff can be dismissed and the governing body may be replaced by an appointed Interim Executive Board (IEB). Schools which are failing but where inspectors consider there is capacity to improve are given a Notice to Improve (NtI).

Colleges and Training Providers

FE sector colleges are inspected by Ofsted, together with a wide range of associated provision.

Private training providers are also inspected by Ofsted, under the same framework as FE sector colleges. Until recently, there was a Training Quality Standard scheme, designed to encourage excellence, but this is being scrapped by the current government in 2011.

ICT organisations

JISC

BECTA

LSIS Excellence Gateway

ICT in education initiatives

ALP e-learning site (part of LSIS)

Controlled assessment replaced coursework in most GCSE subjects in September 2009, and last year for English and ICT. The intention was to improve public confidence in the rigour of GCSEs. Instead of developing coursework at home, students must now work under supervision. While we might applaud the attempt to curb teachers spoon-feeding to pupils only the learning required to pass an exam, the effect on virtual schooling has been challenging.

The demand on students to attend school or college for a number of supervised days is clearly difficult for those who are unable to leave home or hospital. Sheffield's Online College (http://www.online.sheffcol.ac.uk/) has found that the alternative of an exam supervisor visiting individual students is prohibitively expensive, particularly if the student lives abroad. Skype with video has been suggested as alternative, but since institutions have to make sure all aids such as spellcheck, grammar check etc are switched off and that they are not copying anything, this would be impossible to supervise.

Many online schools, including Oxford Open Learning, have now switched their GCSE English to IGCSE ('I' = 'International') which is exam-only, claiming that controlled assessment "is not practical for adult learners studying independently on home study courses." (http://www.ool.co.uk/subject/gcse-english/). Others who have switched to IGCSEs include Wolsey Hall Oxford (http://www.homeschooling.org.uk/), InterHigh School (http://www.interhigh.net/) and First College (http://www.firstcollege.co.uk/).

Numbers: According to http://www.home-schooling-uk.com/, each year 17% more children are home schooled in the UK (presently estimated at 50,000). 42% of home-educating families in the UK earn less than the national average wage. Despite perceptions that learning at home is a middle class phenomenon, 17% of home-educating families live on incomes of under £10,000 per annum.

The South Yorkshire e-learning Programme (SYeLP) , branded as e-sy.info, was set up in 2001. It was a partnership of the four local authorities in South Yorkshire: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and Sheffield City Council, with support from Yorkshire Forward and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Established as a European Union (EU) Objective 1 funded project, which began with an initial feasibility study, followed by a pilot phase in 2001/2002 and roll-out of the main programme from 2003 onwards, the programme's vision was:

> to contribute to economic regeneration in the sub-region and support the growth of information and knowledge-based industries through developing the digital skills of the current and future workforce;
> to harness the potential of digital technology to support and enable learning for all ages 10 and above, in schools, colleges, businesses and the community.

Aims South Yorkshire is an area of around 1.25m inhabitants. It is mainly urban but with rural pockets and has no unitary political authority.

When the programme started, the area was in severe economic decline due to the collapse of its traditional industries of coal and steel, and it was judged by the EU as an area of economic deprivation with GDP less than 75% of the EU average.

As a result the programme was set up to deliver and realise the benefits of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education and training, across South Yorkshire by:

- Improving educational achievement in schools and colleges
- Addressing social exclusion
- Increasing the skill-base of the current and future workforce to attract high technology companies
- Narrowing the digital divide
- Accelerating inward investment in ICT-related activity
- Sustaining the growth of e-learning throughout South Yorkshire

At the heart of the programme was a Virtual Learning Environment, a single point of access to learning resources shared by all organisations in the programme and by users through the Internet anywhere and anytime.

Achievements The programme's achievements include:

- The creation of a single e-learning environment, which has aided the development of e-maturity and confidence in ICT and digital technologies in the sub-region
- Engaging 150 educational organisations in e-learning across South Yorkshire including, 31 primary schools, every secondary school and all Further Education (FE) colleges
- Engaging 450 Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to participate in e-learning
- Developing e-learning in local community facilities such as Libraries and New Deal for Communities' Projects
- Installing & upgrading ICT infrastructures in schools, colleges, businesses and local community organisations
- Engaging over 36,000 learners in e-learning
- 18,000 learners gaining ICT qualifications at Level 2 or above
- A growing national and international reputation for successful delivery of the largest e-learning programme in Europe through partnership working, as part of an economic regeneration strategy

Awards Since the programme was set up in 2001, it won a number of awards including:

- International "Supporting Excellence in e-Learning"(SEEL) Quality Award for e-Learning Regions
- National "e-Learning age Award for "best example of supporting learners online" from the e-Learning Network (2006)

Throughout the sub-region the programme has also directly contributed to:

A rise in the number of pupils gaining ICT qualifications, with attainment in South Yorkshire rising faster than the national average and the sub-region's closest statistical neighbours
The numbers of General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) ICT entries doubling over the same period
Substantially closing the gap between South Yorkshire schools and the national target for pupil to computer ratio, with over 13,000 pieces of kit supplied.

Virtual initiatives in schools

The Bridge Academy and the Bridge Academy Online

The Bridge Academy is a pupil referral unit in Fulham, which caters for 175 boys and girls aged 11 to 16 who are not accessing mainstream schools. Just under half the pupils are from ethnic minorities, predominately Black Caribbean and Black African. Twenty-six pupils have statements of special educational needs, and 80% are eligible for free school meals. The standard of teaching at The Academy has for a number of years been recognised as of high quality, and the number of pupils achieving GCSEs has increased.

The Bridge Academy is taking part in an Innovation Unit sponsored field trial which has been running since Autumn 2006. The Academy is seeking to change the nature of the way its students participate in learning. The Bridge Academy Online was launched formally on 15 February 2007. The Bridge Academy Online is a virtual learning environment via which the school is setting up a differentiated core offer to enable it to provide for students outside the confines of the school building and school day. This offer ranges from a 5 GCSE diet to a highly individualised offer which includes (accredited) work and tailored courses. In phase 1 of the project, the Academy is providing 16 Year 9 students with an ICT equipment package, online activities and support for students and their families. By changing the timetable so students work from home for a day a week, it allows time for students to undertake these activities, and for teachers to personalise their learning. The Bridge Academy Online will draw content from other websites and sources and will develop tailored materials in order to support the bespoke offer which will address the needs of its young people.

The Academy hopes that the good relationships which have been nurtured between staff, parents and families will be extended by The Bridge Academy Online. Visits to pupils' homes to install the equipment have already given staff added insight into pupils' lives and their interests. One parent said

"Using The Bridge Academy Online with a computer at home has been fantastic. When he couldn't do his homework before, he wouldn't let me help him, he would tear it up. On the first day we had the kit we worked for five hours together working things out. Now he wants to know everything, how to do this, how to do that, and it stops him going out on the street."

The network of relationships (between parents, staff and pupils) has been extended in parallel with the ICT network. This has been further strengthened with the recruitment of a former student as ICT technician. The ex-student has also designed the Academy's logo.

The level of personalisation offered through the Bridge Academy and Academy Online is only possible because of the resources available and low learner-teacher ratio (maximum 6:1 and frequently lower). This means that it is unlikely to be replicable in mainstream schools (although it may be possible in Learner Support Units). However, specialist units and inclusion units may in some cases secure the additional resourcing necessary to provide a comparable level of personalisation and support.

The Innovation Unit speculates that the future for the Academy may lie in advising schools about personalising learning within the mainstream.

For an account of the Innovation Unit's visit to and assessment of the Bridge Academy see http://www.innovation-unit.co.uk/images/stories/files/pdf/bridgeacademy.pdf

Accipio Learning

Accipio Learning claimed to be the UK's leading provider of live, interactive, online education and offers a learning experience that is similar to a mainstream school. In partnership with schools and local authorities, Accipio teach the most challenging pupils and help them achieve academic success and re-integrate into mainstream school. However in August 2011 Accipio Learning went into Administration.

Accipio Learning was targeted at young people who cannot attend mainstream secondary schools and operates '…much like a traditional school.' Accipio lists young people who are excluded, at risk of exclusion, bullied, with medical needs, looked after children, have behavioural problems, are travellers, refugees and asylum seekers as being its core client group. The company worked with over 80 Local Authorities and over 100 schools and had more than 1000 pupils each academic year.

Accipio (based in Hatfield, Hertfordshire) operated as a 'virtual school' but its courses focussed on the core curriculum subjects. It offered the core curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4 and nationally accredited courses in work-related learning and basic skills. Available subjects were:

> KS3 – English, Maths, Science & ICT
> GCSE – English, Maths, Core Science, Additional Science, ICT, Preparation for Working Life (PWL) and Enterprise and Employability (E&E).

Accipio also offered a range of New to English courses for pupils who do not speak English as their first language. It offers an archive of over 1500 pre-recorded lessons. It employed a full-time teaching staff of 40, a learning platform and online resources.

Live lessons were supplemented with homework. Lessons utilised Acippio's own content and that of third party providers. Students joined lessons of up to 15 pupils and logged in at a set time. An on-screen register showed who was present. Pupils were equipped with microphones and headsets and/or messaging facilities and could use instant messaging to ask or answer questions so that either the whole class or just the teacher could see. A daily progress report gave mentors and LEAs an up-to-date assessment of each pupil's progress.

Accipio worked on an 'annual cost per seat' business model but each purchased seat was transferable, meaning that if a young person needed two months access due to illness the school still had ten months credit. One seat for a single subject would cost £1440. A package of 5 subjects would cost £6400 per seat per annum. Costs reduced with the number of seats purchased. This did not include broadband (£1150 pp.pa) or technical support (£450pp.pa).

Accipio offered access to its Archive for Schools alone at a cost of £10,000 for 10 learners per annum. The Archive was a resource of over 1100 GCSE lessons covering English, Maths, Dual Science and ICT. The Archive took the format of electronically recorded lessons using visual content and teacher audio, making "virtual" lessons accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. http://www.accipio-learning.com/

Nisai Virtual Academy (http://www.nisai.com/uk/education/nisai-virtual-academy) is an online learning community and real-time teaching environment, working in partnership with Staffordshire University, focussing on support for NEETs (Not in Employment, Education or Training) and SEN (Special Educational Needs) students. It provides interactive learning programmes to students in the UK who are unable to access mainstream education. Typical students have disabilities, medical conditions, and behavioural issues, including the chronically ill/home educated, Excluded, Teenage mothers and Traveller Children.

It offers personalised learning and support programmes that are individually tailored around the specific needs of each student. All programmes at the NVA include a timetable of live, fully interactive lessons. Directed by teachers using online classroom technology, live lessons enable young people to participate, communicate and collaborate with other classmates from any location. Programmes are tailored around existing school timetables and used as either stand alone courses or to complement and support existing provision. The NVA also offers bite-size booster programmes, providing additional short-term support where needed.

The NVA offers a range of courses from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 5 (A Level), as well as vocational and wellbeing programmes. Each student is assessed upon enrolment to identify their strengths, goals and areas for development, enabling them to learn and progress at a level that suits them on an individual basis. There are seven GCSE courses offered (including ICT, English, Maths, AS Levels, basic skills, key skills and selected NVQs). Students have access to communication tools and act collaboratively or interact privately with teachers. Length of courses and frequency of lessons can be tailored to the needs of individual cohorts.

When logging on to the NVA each student enters their own tailored, personal workspace. From this area students can join lessons, view assignments and see information relating to them and their courses. Students can also access all other areas in the NVA community environment. Pupils log in to online lessons of 30 minutes duration and typically take two lessons per week per subject.

The Nisai company started in 1996, when its concept of personalised learning was first established whilst offering training services to corporate clients – providing end users with the skills to use the latest software and computer systems of the day. Nisai worked with a range of clients around the world; including Shell, Unilever and Procter and Gamble – coaching members of staff through individually tailored and personalised programmes.

Over a five year period Nisai developed its personalised learning and in 2001, entered the UK education sector through a partnership with Warwickshire County Council. Called the Nisai-Iris Partnership, the pioneering project offered synchronous learning to out of school children in the authority using Nisai's live classroom technology. Nisai helped Warwickshire County Council to develop content and pedagogies and to harness new technologies for educational benefits. The experience gained was put into developing the Nisai Virtual Academy (NVA) which took on its first cohort of students in 2004, with most of its students registered with Warwickshire. NVA opened its second UK office in 2005 in the North East of England – taking on staff across a range of roles including development, support, teaching and administration. Since then it has worked with over 40 Local Authorities and other educational organisations. The NVA regularly works in partnership with schools, local authorities and support organisations to provide young people with local, face-to-face support. It also acts as an environment to bring each member of a student's support team together to work collaboratively. NVA is recognised by IMS Global Learning Consortium as a leader in personalised learning

A Booster Programme has now been developed for schools and colleges to raise the attainment levels of students requiring additional support with their learning.

Specialist support is delivered both locally, in partnership with schools, and online through the NVA's Wellbeing centre. This enables students exhibiting challenging behaviour to participate in accredited programmes with educational psychologists and other specialists in conditions such as autism and Asperger's.

Exam results have been encouraging: In 2007, 72% of students achieved GCSE pass grades (A*-C) while 100% passed at A level. In 2008 64% of students achieved GCSE pass grades (A*-C), 65% passed Key Skills while 100% passed at A level. In 2009 63% of students achieved GCSE pass grades (A*-C), 86% passed Key Skills while 100% passed at A level. In 2010 NVA Students achieved a combined 98% pass rate at GCSE and 96% at A level.

The Nisai Group is now expanding its operations in Australia following a pilot of the business platform, Nisai Connect Lite. Using architecture developed for the Nisai Virtual Academy, the Connect Lite platform allows training providers and SMEs to provide learners with access to an online portal to communicate, share resources, collaborate on projects and access training materials. The platform also includes the online classroom service Nisai Live, which allows training providers to deliver live, interactive sessions to learners at any location.

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InterHigh School (http://www.interhigh.net/) was opened in September 2005 and has delivered a full secondary school curriculum over the internet every school day since. It is aimed at LEAs wishing to use remote and offsite education services. Some independent schools also it. Regent college in London has even used the platform to open an additional school.

There are currently 250 pupils in the school between the ages of 10 to 19, about equal numbers of boys and girls. Classes are kept to a maximum of 18 pupils. There are a total of 7 year groups, currently across 15 classrooms, from year 7 to year 13. The staff are made up of the Principal, 17 subject teachers and 3 Administrative and Pastoral Leaders. The curriculum delivered is based on the English/Welsh National Curriculum for secondary school age pupils. In Year 11, pupils are entered for International GCSE examinations enabling them to continue on to further education or employment. InterHigh School is also offering A level subjects in its Sixth Form (InterHigh Advanced) from September 2010 and is open to all ages from 16+.

InterHigh is available to any pupil aged 10 – 17. Going to school on the internet allows pupils the flexibility of logging on from home (or anywhere with a suitable internet connection).

Each pupil in the school has their own secure username and password and this logs them into their personal School Control Panel. From here pupils can check their timetable for the week; check the main school notice board for updated information; look at the student Message Boards and keep in touch with classmates; use the Lesson Library for revision and going over work again in their own time; practice in the Games Room; upload homework; read grades and reports on homework; and contact the head teacher.

Pupils click on their Start lesson icon at 9.25 as lessons start at 9.30am, the registers show who has logged into their respective lessons. The school timetable provides a structured day with most lessons finishing by lunchtime. The number of different subjects taught in any one day is kept to minimum to allow consolidation of what is being learnt.

The Virtual Classroom is divided into 3 areas : The voice area where the teachers and students names appear, everyone can hear the teacher talking, and can ask or answer questions and talk to the whole class; The text area where Teachers and pupils can also communicate, using public text which everyone in the class can see, or a private messaging facility so that questions can be asked in private; The work area, where the teacher can use a follow-me-browser to take the class to a specific website. The interactive whiteboard works in the same way as any other class room whiteboard and sometimes Powerpoint presentations are used to illustrate a subject. Pupils often prepare their own presentations on a topic and these can be uploaded to be viewed by the whole class.

InterHigh expanded in September 2010 to include a new A level department. InterHigh Advanced is open to anyone wishing to study for AS or A levels, including adult learners, school pupils and college students. The costs are £840 per student per subject per year. Fees are due termly, £280 for each subject studied. The Advanced lessons are available in evenings generally from 6.00pm to 9.30pm UK time Monday to Friday. Each subject provides 3 hours of interactive lessons each week. In September 2011, InterHigh Education are opening another online school called Academy21 (www.academy21.co.uk/development). This will provide access to a core curriculum of IGCSEs in Maths, English, Science, MFL and Humanities. The IGCSEs are exam only, with no additional support from schools required for controlled assessments;

The school has been granted 'New Provider' status by the Open and Distance Learning Quality Council (ODLQC) and is working towards full accreditation.

The Web School, http://www.thewebschool.eu/#, offers full time tuition to learners aged 11 – 19 in virtual classrooms led by live, qualified secondary teachers. Post-16, learners have a choice of 15 A' Level subjects and 3 Access to HE Diplomas for those aiming to go to university. All lessons are delivered via the internet in interactive virtual classrooms. It is an independent school, free from local authority control and therefore learners have to pay fees.

An indication of the size of the school may be gleaned from the fact that just 6 teachers are identified on the website, with 3 vacancies advertised, as well as temporary/casual positions.

Briteschool (http://www.briteschool.co.uk/) is unique in the UK in offering live Primary support (from age 9 onwards, sometimes from age 8). It offers both Primary and Secondary education for home-schooled and expatriate students. Teachers offer live virtual lessons and tuition in Maths, English, Sciences, French, Spanish, History and Geography. The IT / Computing ECDL, Digital Photography and / or Art courses are free options to all enrolled students, along with extracurricular Activities Week at the end of each Autumn Term. The school also provides Common Entrance preparatory exam classes for two hours per week for children wishing to progress to independent private secondary schools. A limited range of A-levels are available from September 2011. Teachers use a combination of microphone, text chat, a whiteboard, presentation software and weblinks to deliver the lessons. Most lessons are recorded and saved at the end of the lesson and reused later. There is an archive to catch up on lessons missed. Class sizes are limited to 13 students per Secondary class, ten in Primary, but one-to-one tutoring is also available. Secondary education costs £2,495 (excluding VAT) per year for the IGCSE level. Primary costs £999 (excluding VAT) for Homeschool Support for the full year, 3 x 2-hour sessions per week. £8 (excluding VAT) / hour for one subject in a class for Maths or English only, 2 x 1 hour sessions per week. Optional French and / or Spanish are offered for £5.50 (excluding VAT) / hour (2 hours per week, Thursday and / or Friday mornings) if there are places available. Individual Private Tuition: £25to £30 / hour Teachers (5 Primary and 5 Secondary) and support staff are all fully qualified.

The British Council provides a very wide range of learning resources to help people learn English. Learn English Online (http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/) has 500,000 learners, over 2,000 teachers, and over 80 teaching centres in 49 countries. You can get LearnEnglish apps on Android, iPhone and Ovi mobile platforms, as well as Facebook apps. The British Council has an island for learners and teachers in the Second Life virtual environment, offering the chance to visit the UK virtually. The island provides interactive LearnEnglish activities and quests based on UK culture where you can learn English in different ways, solve puzzles and problems, learn about the UK and meet people in other parts of the world. Learn English Online has another section called 'Fun and Games' where you can play a variety of games and listen to jokes to help practise English. There are also Podcasts at http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/elementary-podcasts to practise English language listening skills on a computer, or to download and save on a mp3 player. Each episode is accompanied by a range of activities to introduce new vocabulary and focus on the language heard. There are also support packs which can be downloaded, containing the tape

scripts and extra learning activities. Videos are also available in the 'Listen and Watch' section. There is a section of the website for children at http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/ which includes guidance for teachers and parents, as well as a further complete section called 'Teaching English'.

Wolsey Hall Oxford (http://www.homeschooling.org.uk/) uses a learning management system to provide online learning for 14 to 18 year olds studying A-Levels and IGCSEs through personal tutorials, rather than classes. The business has been supporting students on distance learning courses since 1894. Fees vary from £390.00 for one IGCSE to £510.00 per A level subject (over 2 years). It is estimated that students will take up to 200 hrs for an IGCSE subject and 700 hours for an A-Level subject (350 hrs for AS and 350 hrs for A2).

The USP of this business is fast feedback and responsiveness. Assignments sent to a tutor we are marked and returned within 48 hours, while tutors are available twelve hours a day, seven days a week to respond to queries. Students receive the subject's core study material as soon as they enroll for a course, as well as access to the online learning environment which contains: a study guide; examination syllabus; profiles of tutors; programme of study, showing what a student needs to cover before each assignment; study schedule showing when each assignment is due; assignments, which students submit online and receive back marked within 5 working days; and relevant web links.

Each student is supported by a tutor, available by email or Skype at any time during the course, and a student services manager who deals with admin issues, advice or help. However students have to make their own arrangements to take the exams, using the Cambridge or Edexcel exam centres in the UK and the British Council or International School outside the UK.

Periplus Home Education (http://periplus.org.uk/) provides live, online teaching for young people aged 11-18. Students can choose to do a full taught curriculum, individual subjects at any level or intensive, short-term tuition prior to exams.

At Key stage 3 (11-14 years) the courses are based on the UK National Curriculum. At KS4 (14-16) the courses are based on the IGCSE syllabuses from Edexcel, assessed by final examination only. The portal provides a library of digital learning resources, archived recorded lessons and moderated forums for answers and advice. Online one-to-one tutorials are available at £30 per hour, but students can also pay extra to meet teachers face to face.

Based at the Paddington Academy, London, Periplus also offers solutions for Local Authorities and schools needing special provision for students aged 11-16 who are disaffected, excluded or unable to attend school for other reasons, potentially at lower cost than the authority could manage.

Group lessons are generally 40-60 minutes long. For private groups, the cost starts at £27 + £5 for each additional student. For the school groups one lesson a week for a year costs £240, though for IGCSE Maths there are 3 lessons per week, meaning the total cost would be £720 per year (36 weeks).

Periplus is a not-for-profit organization which hopes to become the leading provider of on line education for school age children within the next 5 years. It is run by John Edwards, ex Head Teacher of a secondary school, but most of the tutors are freelance.

Periplus Home Education is also seeking expressions of interest to demonstrate the viability and sustainability of an application for the first state funded 'school' for home educated students. Using the new government legislation, they are currently engaged in consultation with government ministers and potential partners with respect to opening an Internet based, nationally available "Free School" for secondary age children, which, if successful, would open in September 2013. A critical step however, is an indication of the likely demand for such a school.

First College (http://www.firstcollege.co.uk/) is a small family business offering iGCSEs in all mainstream subjects as well as pre-GCSE courses and Advanced Spanish and French. Delivery is through live interactive small classes for 11 -17 year olds. Normal class size is 10-12, sometimes a maximum of 15, with a teacher-student ratio of 1:5. All students start school at 09.30 UK time by logging into the school website for 3 one hour lessons daily Monday to Thursday, 09.30 -14.00 (UK time). Classes and homework are provided via the internet with no specialist software needed. IGCSE exam results range from A* to C, with a few Ds. Established in 2006, there are seven teachers in the team. FEES are payable in monthly instalments of £198 for 10 months, Sept – June, or termly for £660.

The Digital Learning Community (http://www.thedlc.org/index.shtml) is a self-contained initiative/team within the East Riding Council, School Advisory Service. DLC provides direct teaching services to schools in the shape of lessons broadcast via the Internet to subscribed school cohorts. This 'virtual classroom' and virtual learning environment provides for an interactive lesson to be delivered into the classroom irrespective of location. DLC's blended learning approach means that the learning can continue in school or at home (or elsewhere) after the lesson has been completed.

DLC currently offers courses across the curriculum and age groups from Yr2 to Adult learners. Courses for children and young people are arranged in subject areas but offered to specific target groups including Gifted & Talented, Booster, General, ICT Skill, Personal, Social and Health Education, and Special Educational Needs

Courses are typically from 6 to 12 lessons of between 30 and 60 minutes and are charged to external (not East Riding) schools at per pupil fees of between £60 and £180 per course. DLC already provides lessons for schools across the country. DLC will provide bespoke lessons and courses on virtually any subject although these will inevitably be more expensive than the existing offer.

DLC also offers ICT support for schools, advice for Local Authorities, online training for businesses and online CPD for teachers and Local Authority staff.

Since the start of formal timetabled lessons in January 2005, the DLC has taught some 600 children from 64 different primary schools across the East Riding of Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Cornwall, Coventry and Hull.

EXite (Exploiting Information Technology in Education) is a new leadership programme for ICT in schools and academies. It builds on the original SLICT (Strategic Leadership of ICT) intervention programme, led by two of the directors of the original project, Hannah Jones and Mike Briscoe.

With the support of the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) and the Independent Academies Association (IAA), it will advise schools on learning platforms, Facebook, Twitter, Google Apps, Moodle, Twitter, Microsoft's free live@edu email service, greater use of web 2.0 technologies and mobile learning.

Hannah Jones, formerly with the National College for the Leadership of Schools, Colleges and Children's Services, and Mike Briscoe, previously at Becta, were both directors of the influential SLICT programme. Over seven years this national project reached more than 13,000 school leaders and developed a strong national and International reputation.

Due to be piloted in September 2011 and rolled out from January 2012, EXite will bring together best practice and utilise the expertise of leaders within successful schools and academies. It will provide a framework of professional development opportunities for school leaders to review use, strategically plan and embed new technologies.

The elements of EXite include face-to-face professional development days, online materials, toolkits, resources and Skype workshops – all of which will be led by experts and school leaders from the EXite team. All programmes will be delivered over approximately four months and it is the EXite policy to deliver face-to-face events in schools or academies.

http://www.exite.org.uk/

The Maths Factor (http://www.themathsfactor.com/) is an online maths school for children in primary school to use at home.

Courses are available in separate ‘schools’: Arithmetic (costing £9.99 for the first month and £14.99 per month thereafter), Times Tables and Algebra (both £19.99 for a one-off purchase) along with ‘Perfect Practice’ (£5.99 for an online workbook) and a ‘Summer School’ (£14.99 for a one-off purchase).

Arithmetic and Times Tables start with an initial assessment. The course is then tailored to the appropriate level automatically, continually monitoring performance and progressing through the course as appropriate for the student. A range of video lessons are backed up by Maths Games to help reinforce concepts. There are also teachers on hand to answer queries a parent dashboard that allows parents to monitor their child's progress through the program. The Algebra School and ‘Perfect Practice’ are similar, but have no initial assessment.

There are different Summer Schools for each year of primary school from those who have just finished in Year 1 to those making the move from Year 6 to secondary school). Each Summer School includes Arithmetic that an average child would expect to have completed during the school year they have just finished with unlimited access to teaching videos,

learning games and practice sessions which can be repeatedly reviewed until the end of September.

Notschool.net http://www.notschool.org/

Notschool.net is an Online Learning Community offering an alternative to traditional education for young people who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to engage with school or other complementary provisions such as home tutoring or specialist units.

Notschool.net targets young people disengaged from classroom learning because of: Illness or phobia, Pregnancy, Bullying or disaffection, Travelling, Reluctance to learn Exclusion, In care. It is primarily aimed at the 14-16 age range, although both younger and older teenagers also use its services. It is the only virtual alternative provision that is considered to be 'full-time off site attendance'. It was developed in conjunction with and is supported by the DCSF.

Since it started as a research project in 2000, Notschool has supported over five and a half thousand individual students (known as researchers) helping over 98% back into lifelong learning and employment. Many young people stay with the project for in excess of 18 months, so the number of "student years" is more than this.

Over the last five years, 65-70% of Notschool.net students successfully pass onto college or work based learning. Of these, 45-60% go to college, and the remainder to work-based learning. Between 25 and 30% go directly into work.

To support the annual average population of 750 young people, around 190 staff are used. (around 90 FTE posts): 126 mentors (part time, working 1 day a week each); 6 experts (though there are more experts who are also mentors); 50 regional team people (these are our people on the ground); and 3 in the core team.

Notschool mentors develop individual learning plans with each of their researchers. Accreditation is through the NCFE awarding body although Notschool focuses on re-engagement above accreditation. Nationally, 99% of Notschool researchers achieve 2 or more certificates. A part A award is equivalent to entry level (pre GCSE) and a part B is equivalent to level 1 (D-G at GCSE). However, many of the ‘lower end’ certificates do not have a point score and are not recognized by FE institutions or training providers.

Notschool.net works on a ration of 1 mentor to between 4 and 6 researchers. Each mentor is contracted for a set weekly number of hours (7-8 hours for 4-6 researchers) and submits a weekly online report about each researcher. Researchers are not allowed to attend any other form of training or learning. The total cost of a place is around £8000 per annum, though the actual figure is unclear. This is partly because places are subsidized through DCSF funding and because Notschool negotiates individual agreements with Local Authorities without a set national model. The average stay is just over 18 months. Many researchers join in the autumn of their year 10 and stay on to the July of their year 11. Notschool thinks it needs at least 6 months to really make a difference. It also takes younger students from years 8 and 9.

Virtual initiatives in colleges and training providers

MoLeNET

The Mobile Learning Network (MoLeNET) initiative funded and supported 104 projects involving approximately 40,000 learners and over 7,000 staff, in the 3 years 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10

MoLeNET was a unique collaborative approach to introducing and supporting mobile learning in education and training via supported shared cost mobile learning projects. The LSN MoLeNET Support and Evaluation programme provided technical and pedagogic advice and support, materials development, continuing professional development, mentoring, facilitation of peer-to-peer support, networking and resource sharing, research and evaluation.

LSN are continuing to provide services which support institutions, organisations and practitioners to introduce and embed mobile learning into their teaching and learning delivery

MoLeNET was the biggest mobile learning programme in the UK and probably the world. Collaboration at national level involved participating institutions and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) sharing the cost of mobile learning projects, with the LSN providing support and evaluation. The programme included technical and pedagogic advice and support, materials development, continuing professional development, mentoring, facilitating peer-to-peer support, networking and resource sharing, research and evaluation. National online support included MoLeTV (www.moletv.org.uk) and MoLeSHARE (http://www.moleshare.org.uk)

MoLeNET used a broad definition of mobile learning: “The exploitation of ubiquitous handheld technologies, together with wireless and mobile phone networks, to facilitate, support, enhance and extend the reach of teaching and learning.” The attraction of mobile learning is that it can take place in any location, at any time, including classroom, workplace, home, community locations and in transit. Mobile devices include mobile phones, smartphones, PDAs, MP3/ MP4 players (e.g. iPODs), handheld gaming devices (e.g. Sony PSP, Nintendo DS), Ultramobile PCs (UMPCs), mini notebooks or netbooks (e.g. Asus EEE), handheld GPS, video cameras, voting devices, etc. Mobile learning also involves connectivity via wireless networks, mobile phone networks and linking to institutional systems.

The first phase of MoLeNET began in 2007. The second phase included 30 new projects. The programme completed its third and final phase last year. http://www.molenet.org.uk/

The Sheffield College MoLeNET project The Sheffield College joined the MoLeNET programme in Phase 2, a £300,000 bid targeting Sheffield City College, using the acronym ‘MATTS’ (M-learning – A Tool for Transformation in Sheffield). The partnership bid led by the college for MoLeNET3 was awarded £237,500 as part of the national £2.5m MoLeNET3 allocation in 2009/10. Phase 3 targeted the college centres at Hillsborough and Norton. Partners were the Sheffield Diploma Consortium and six local secondary schools: All Saints School, Chaucer Business and Enterprise College, The City School, Myers Grove School,

Stocksbridge High School and Wisewood Sports and Community College. The Project Manager was Dave Pickersgill, reporting to a steering group and a project implementation group, consisting of college and school managers, critical friends and consultancy from Sero Consulting Ltd.

Throughout the MATTS project there were various face-to-face events which enabled staff to meet and talk about what they are doing. However, because of the demands on staff time it was appreciated that not everyone was able to attend all the events. For this reason a well-used Moodle was set up to support a MoLeNET Community of Practice. http://vle.sheffcol.ac.uk/moodle/course/view.php?id=854

In a related initiative, Sheffield College was one of eight colleges receiving £40,000 capital funding to set up a MoLeNET Academy. The Academy was a centre of excellence for mobile learning CPD and helped to support three micro projects at Franklin College (Grimsby), Hartlepool College and John Leggott College (Scunthorpe).

Case Studies of micro projects:

Case Study 1: Using Qwizdom voting devices with Carpentry and Joinery students.

Aims: to further engage level 2 Carpentry and Joinery students.

Addressing the challenge: • Learners took part in quizzes to check if learning had taken place by using the hand held voting devices to submit answers to prepared questions. The responses were recorded and their progress fed back to them in the form of a game (racing cars). This created healthy competition as well as requiring the students to meet their learning objectives. • Each learner's progress was monitored against learning objectives set by the teacher and the results tracked in the game. • Students enjoyed using Qwizdom.

Impact on teaching and learning: • Students using Qwizdom got better results • Students were more engaged with their learning when Qwizdom was being used. • Students were more active and contributed more towards the lesson. • The tutor facilitated the lesson but the session soon became more student-led.

Learner's reaction: • One student suggested that they could create the content for future Qwizdom sessions. • Students are requesting the use of Qwizdom for future lessons

John: "Qwizdom has helped me to remember important bits of information."

Sam: "I enjoyed using Qwizdom because it makes learning fun."

Teacher's reaction: (referring to an Ofsted observation during the March 2010 inspection of the Sheffield College)

"The inspector fed back to colleagues and other departments that if they would like to see active learning taking place they should go and see one of my lessons as the inspector was impressed at how the students were involved in the session. This has increased competition

within the group to achieve, in a fun and productive way. I have been assessing my learners with this resource and I love it and so do my learners. One particular group recently took their Gola on line end exam where they achieved 5 distinctions, 5 merits and 1 pass out of 11 learners. This was their first attempt at the test and these are results that I am extremely proud of." Michael Cook, Carpentry and Joinery, Sheffield City College.

Lessons learned: • Setting up initial power point presentations to use with Qwizdom can be time-consuming. Better to add to an existing power point presentation. • Develop uses as a team of teachers rather than alone!

Next steps: • Develop more lessons with Qwizdom software. • Use reports created in Qwizdom to track student's progress.

Links: http://goo.gl/TCSNu Qwizdom Education: http://education.qwizdom.co.uk/index.php

Case Study 2: Using iPod Nanos at All Saints Catholic High School Sheffield

Overview Year 7, top set: As part of two schemes of work, 'Debating and Presentation' and 'The Merchant of Venice', students used the voice memo function on iPod Nanos to record themselves practising presentations, speeches and audio guides. They worked with a learning partner to listen back to this work, identifying strengths and setting targets. The targets were then reflected upon and discussed before students created final, 'neat' copies of the speeches. This work could then be marked in the teacher's own time, maximising the drafting time available in lessons for students. The devices were also taken on a trip to Stratford-upon-Avon for students to record details, which they developed and expanded back in class.

Impact on teaching and learning • Improved speaking and listening grades by an average of one sub-level per student; • Increased understanding of students' own speaking habits and strengths. Planning lessons with the iPod Nanos gave students time to work on their speeches and as they were able to listen back to them, they were keen to create a 'perfect' recording. Students took ownership of their own work and understood speaking and listening grades more clearly. Crucially, they were much more engaged in speaking and listening work using the Ipod Nanos than with previous tasks, where they wanted to "just get up and do it"; using the iPod Nanos helped them understand the importance of drafting and practising. Significantly, students could identify the improvements they had made between the first and final recordings.

Next steps Continue using with top set year seven next year and trial a similar project with another class for their speaking and listening assessments to encourage similar engagement, independence and pride in their work. Ten of the current group help run a lunchtime news group; the iPod Nanos can be used in a similar way to improve their news broadcasts.

Case Study 3: Using PSPs in a Mencap competition

A group of LLD learners who attend Norton College wished to enter the 'MENCAP Snap! 2010 photo and film competition.' The 2010 theme was, 'to tell us what you like doing to be active.' The 'School Sports Partnership – SEN Athletics MLD 2010' event at the English

Institute of Sport in Sheffield was a good venue for image-gathering as the learners would be entering many of the events. Some twenty schools and colleges from across the region took part in this day (18th May 2010). Student Adam Cowlishaw was subsequently one of the 100 winners in the photography competition: http://goo.gl/RenRs Aims: (i) a structured opportunity to use the camera function of the Sony PSP (ii) the opportunity to enter a national competition and (iii) opportunities to increase their self-awareness and esteem.

Addressing the challenge: PSP devices (with GoCameras) were first introduced in the classroom. On event day, learners were encouraged to record events, using both still and video digital imaging. After the event, images were studied and appropriate entries made to the Mencap competition Outcomes and reactions: Learners quickly became adept at using the PSP GoCamera function Learners enjoyed seeing results immediately and were able to act on results Speech and language improved significantly Impact on teaching and learning: The PSPs have made a great impact on teaching and learning within the department. The students were quick to respond to requests when using the equipment and they enjoyed inventing new ways of using them to learn. They helped spark new ideas and students have gained in confidence and self-esteem. eg using eye contact when talking to someone. Memory recall has also improved.

Learners' reaction: Learners can connect with this technology immediately; whatever their learning difficulty they need very little demonstrating on how to use it. The technology has been key to opening doors which were previously locked with some students. They may not have the ability to write a diary of events but they can record it! It brings their ideas to life and they respond with great enthusiasm. This in turn encourages speech and language therapy. "I like using the PSP in lessons because I don't like writing, my writing and spelling isn't very good. I don't feel embarrassed using the PSP and I like being able to see my pictures so I can see how good they are." (Chris Wells, age 18) "It's magic I like using the PSP for taking pictures and videos better than playing games on it. My memory isn't very good and when I look back at my videos I remember things better." (Danielle Barson, age 17)

Teacher's reaction: Some teachers some were worried they wouldn't be able to demonstrate the PSP and help the students use the device effectively enough to get the desired results. They soon realised the students needed very little tuition on how to use the device. The students enjoyed teaching the teachers! Staff then enjoyed encouraging the students to be more creative with their ideas. "I wasn't surprised at the increase in learner engagement: even though our students have learning difficulties they grasp new ideas quickly. What did surprise me was the knock on effect of using the PSP's video function. Students responded to questions on video more readily than in Q & A sessions in the classroom. It sparked positive reaction and students who are normally very quiet and unresponsive to many activities 'woke up' and took notice. These were the students who produced the best video and picture results." (Jeanette Bell, Lecturer Additional Support)

Managers' reactions: "A programme of staff training is planned around the use of the new technology being offered to Additional Support. The team is keen to explore ways in which the new technology can be used to enhance our curriculum area. I am excited at the prospect of staff using other technologies which may become available. It's about time we used resources which allow our students and teachers to be more creative. The results have been

very encouraging so far." (Paul Blakeney, Additional Support Manager) What Worked The PSP created opportunities for an expanded learning environment, from classroom to offsite learning to home. It instantly engaged learners who would normally take a long time to grasp new concepts. Instant assessment made a huge difference: improvements and alterations could be made there and then thus allowing the student to feel less frustrated.

Next steps: Wi-fi access is planned for parts of the Norton building which will allow increased use of other PSP functions Student-led sessions will extend the boundaries of using mobile technology in offsite sessions. Links: http://goo.gl/E9y12 English Institute of Sports Sheffield: http://www.eis-sheffield.co.uk/ Mencap Snap! 2010: http://www.mencap.org.uk/page.asp?id=3704

Case Study 4: PSPs at City School English and Media class, Y9

Using PSPs to identify the key aspects of film trailers, explore camera angles and analyse film for purpose. Also to increase student engagement, increase independence in learning and to personalise learning. Each student had their own PSP, working independently, identifying key features of a documentary film trailer. Each student had their own task to do. The PSPs helped the teacher to avoid having to play the same video over and over again to the whole class on the whiteboard. Each student could watch the film as many times as they needed to. T: “We’re probably getting twice as much work done…The PSP has saved our lives.” Students concentrated very effectively on the task. Mobile devices provide variety, an alternative mode of delivery and a solution to the difficulty of differentiated learning in a class. Resources used: PSPs, headphones, trailer video which each student can pause when they need to, rewind, etc. The task was to answer specific questions analysing the trailer, such as: ‘Speed – does the film speed up or slow down?’ ‘Use of Captions’ ‘Describe the music and any changes you hear’; ‘The last image you see’; ‘use of voice over – what is said.’ ‘How many scene changes can you count?’ Sound effects – can you identify any sounds?’ The teacher (Martin Greenhough, Faculty Head – Communications) used the PSP to develop independent work. The device enables differentiation in how students respond to task, from level 4 to level 7. Each student can work at their particular level, rather than having to fit in with the pace or depth of rest of class. Link: http://goo.gl/2w7Jr

Case Study 5: Using Mobile Technology in a Learning Resource Centre'

Aims: The Learning Resource Centres at both Hillsborough and Norton Colleges wished to increase use of the LRC by (i) attracting hard-to-reach learners and (ii) enhancing the service available to learners.

Addressing the challenge: A wide variety of devices were introduced:

A lunchtime Nintendo ‘games club’
Graphics tablets loaned to students
Dell mini-9 notebook pcs used to supplement desktop devices
IiPods loaned out to students for exam revision
E-readers

Learning Assistant Melinda Green believes; "students are already really enjoying using these devices, so we're excited about trying out some other ideas to ensure we're utilising them as effectively as possible. After that, our next challenge is to develop a QR-code treasure hunt ready for Induction in September."

Next steps: • A wider selection of Nintendo games will be obtained using other funding sources • Learners will be encouraged to suggest suitable games. • Wi-fi access is planned for the LRC at Norton from September 2010 (other centres already have this) Link: [7]

Findings of Sheffield College project

The Sheffield MoLeNET Camel process used a radically different approach to traditional CPD: buy the kit first, distribute it to teachers willing to experiment with it, then share successes and failures with other staff (combined with a buffet to encourage informal networking and guest speakers to give further ideas on how the kit might be used).

A perennial problem for staff development is: which comes first – the kit or the training?

It is easy for institutions to waste money on staff training where teachers are introduced to innovative practices which turn out to be impossible to implement in classrooms because they lack the necessary equipment. This waste of money is, however, invisible, so the practice tends to continue without a proper examination of its effectiveness. Any waste of money is much more visible using the MoLeNET model, if kit is bought but then not used. But precisely because it is so visible, there is a much stronger incentive to do something with it and kick-start the process of staff development.

'Show and tell' events to share experiences were successful because staff felt completely free to be open and honest about shortcomings as well as triumphs. This too is unusual in most project reviews, where implementers feel an obligation to highlight successes and minimise or brush under the carpet any failures. This openness in turn encouraged other teachers to have a go, feeling less in awe of 'experts' or innovators who might decry their faltering steps or limited ambitions. The model also neutralised the common conservative response that an innovation might work in the trainer's subject area, but 'couldn't work in my class.' Nobody is told, 'This is what you should try and do'. At most the advice is: 'This is one way you might try, but you will probably find a better way yourself.'

This devolution of the source of innovation from trainer to teacher can also be carried further, when students come up with their own ideas of how to use new devices which the teacher had not thought of. Such a collaborative approach to innovation seems much more likely to win hearts and minds than any new approach imposed by managers.

The project has proved the learning value of mobile devices. Both teachers and learners have embraced the potential of the technology with great enthusiasm. This potential would have remained hidden without the injection of funds and impetus provided by the project. However it is doubtful that the college can afford to provide new devices for students on the same scale year on year. Fortunately, this scale of provision is not necessary, since students own a large number of mobile devices themselves – devices that they would prefer to use, since they're

familiar with their operation. The project has proved cost-effective in having a significant impact on the culture of the college, encouraging institutional acceptance that mobile learning can and will be highly effective and that the network therefore needs to be accessible by wi-fi to both college and learner-owned devices. It is hoped that this culture change will help the college to make the most of the potential offered by mobile technologies and maintain its reputation for innovation in learning technology.

LearnDirect

University for Industry (http://www.ufi.com/home2/aboutus/aboutus.asp) is the organisation behind the learndirect brand, set up in 1998 to use new technology to transform the delivery of learning and skills. Ufi Ltd is a private limited company and a wholly owned subsidiary of Ufi Charitable Trust, a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity.

Through the learndirect brand, Ufi has helped more than 3 million people gain skills and qualifications in areas such as Maths, English and IT. Learners use the internet to access their courses and qualifications which range from basic skills to vocational and leadership and management. Training is also provided to employers, and Ufi has worked with thousands of businesses in the last decade.

10,000 people log on and learn with learndirect every day. Ufi runs the Life in the UK Test for the UK Border Agency. It had a turnover of £140 million last year. It has 500 direct employees. It also indirectly employs about 2,000 people in a network of centres around the country. More than 500,000 Skills for Life test passes have been achieved with learndirect. Leandirect claim that learners can earn £2,240 more on average after learning with them. More than 34,000 people have achieved a Level 2 qualification with learndirect. It has worked with more than 6,000 businesses through the Train to Gain initiative, with training designed to fit around business priorities.

Learndirect provides a wide range of online courses to improve employability and raise the skills of the working population. From basic skills to NVQs and other qualifications, online courses mean learners can log on and learn wherever suits them best, be it at home, at work, in one of the learndirect centres in local communities, or anywhere with internet access. Wherever people choose to do their learning, support is on hand to help them on their way.

Qualifications offered include Certificates in Literacy and Numeracy and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). Learndirect offer a range of courses designed to match the National Curriculum in Adult Literacy and Numeracy. These are nationally recognised qualifications and are similar to having a GCSE. Learndirect also offers a range of courses in IT - from the beginners Digital Literacy Certificate, through to the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) and ITQs. NVQs are qualifications which demonstrate ability at work and training is delivered mainly on the job. NVQ assessment recognises performance at work with a nationally recognised qualification in:

ITQ
Team Leading NVQ - Level 2
Management NVQ - Level 3

Health and Social Care NVQ
Business and Administration NVQ - Level 2 and 3
Customer Service NVQ - Level 2 and 3

Sheffield Online College (http://www.online.sheffcol.ac.uk/) has been offering online learning to learners and their employers since 1997, making it one of the first colleges in England to use the internet in this way. The experience gained in this field is reflected in the quality of its courses, and in the acclaim that the courses, course teams and individual tutors have received. The college has won many national awards since 1997 and all courses lead to nationally recognised qualifications. The Online College is also the home of online teaching and learning resources for the use of learners, tutors and employers in Sheffield.

The 'Online Professional' courses have a client list that includes The British Council, The Federation of Small Businesses, Edexcel, Kent Adult Education Service, Lloyds TSB, South Yorkshire Police, NSPCC, The Open University, Proctor & Gamble, Devon County Council and UNISON trade union. Online College courses have also been undertaken by more than 1,500 further education colleges and universities. Thousands of individual learners have studied online with The Sheffield College.

Courses available include English from Level 1 (Literacy for Adults) to GCSE and A level, as well as IELTS for international students who want to study or work in an English-speaking country.

The ten week Level 1 English course is free of charge and leads to the national Adult Literacy level 1 qualification. Students have their own online tutor to provide guidance and support you through a programme focused on life in South Yorkshire. Students study at their own pace at a time that suits them, supported by the tutor who marks work and helps improve grammar, spelling, punctuation and understanding.

The Level 2 Literacy is a fully tutored ten week English online course with a nationally recognised qualification at the end which is the equivalent to grade C or above at GCSE English. It is free of charge and prepares students to pass the one hour adult literacy test, which is taken at Sheffield City College. Students can study where and when they choose, s supported by a tutor who is in regular contact by email. The tutor marks work and gives feedback on how to improve.

GCSE English Language Online is probably the best known online course in the UK. It has been running since 2001 and over one thousand people have gained grades A*-C. Almost 45% of those learners get A or A* and the pass rate at C or above is 99.7%. It is a one year online course beginning in September and ending with an exam in May or June the following year. Students belong to an online class and have their own online tutor. The course has won five national awards.

IELTS (International English Language Testing System) is the most important English qualification for international students who want to study at university or do professional work in English speaking countries. The course provides students with their own UK native English speaking tutor, who contacts them online two or three times a week and marks their

work. Students can interact with their fellow IELTS students at any time and have unlimited opportunities to practise their reading and writing. They can also take a one-to-one practice mock Speaking IELTS test with their tutor, either face-to-face or via a web camera and watch video clips of an IELTS test showing students who achieve a high score in IELTS, teaching others how to achieve similar success. The online A Level English Language and Literature course is suitable for people who want to progress from GCSE and need to achieve at level 3 to progress to university, a college foundation degree course, or because their employers expect a high level of English.

2 Foundation degree courses are also available – in eCommunications and eBusiness and Management. Students can study fully online with the Sheffield College (for three years, part time) then progress to Sheffield Hallam University for the BA Hons (two years, part time). The courses exploit a range of online technologies such as online forums, blogs and wikis and explore how these technologies can be used in business.

The Management and Leadership Award and Certificate - Level 5 from the Chartered Management Institute is designed for practising middle managers who wish to develop their core management skills and practices and learn how to fully exploit the resources of the internet.

LeTTOL (Learning to Teach Online) has had almost 3,000 students from across the world since it began in 1997. It is an online course aimed at teachers, lecturers, trainers and content developers who wish to transfer their existing skills to an online environment.

An offshoot from LeTTOL, The Effective Mentor's Toolkit course addresses the skills and knowledge that mentors need to be effective in the mentoring role. In addition it explores how modern technologies can enhance the role, using such things as email and the internet to support and provide information to mentees.

Getting to Grips with Moodle aims to introduce students to a range of Moodle's content creation, communications, interactivity, and management tools; and consider how they can be used effectively in an educational and training context. The course is supported by a tutor. The course is not aimed at 'techies' but at ordinary teachers and trainers who want to develop online provision for their learners.

CIPD – the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (http://www.cipd.co.uk/training/) offer ten different portfolios of Human Resources Courses at levels 1-7:

Coaching

Employment law

Learning and development

Management and people management

Organisational development

HR management

Psychology at work

Recruitment and selection

Reward management

Talent management

The courses are designed to be flexible, with multiple start dates throughout the year, and often blend face-to-face and online learning. The institute also offers support for in-house delivery, so that learners can study in their own workplace. It claims over 13,000 learners per year at Foundation, Intermediate or Advanced levels. Learners can choose the mode of study they would prefer. For example:

• Full time - candidates are required to attend a number of taught sessions at their centre totalling at least 21 hours per week. The sessions are usually held during the day.

• Part time - candidates are required to attend one or two taught sessions at their centre. Each session usually lasts between 3-4 hours, and they are held in the evening and/or during the day.

• Supported distance learning - candidates study in their own time, using learning materials such as workbooks. Many centres integrate workbooks with online learning media contained within their virtual learning environment. Candidates are supported by their centre through periodic face-to-face tutorials and group workshops (online or offline at an approved centre).

• Block - candidates attend a series of taught sessions, usually delivered in blocks of three to five consecutive full days over a specified period.

• Mixed mode - aimed at experienced individuals who may require some distance learning support from their centre but are generally ready for assessment. Centres running mixed mode programmes are approved to offer competence-based assessment which enables candidates to use evidence from their workplace to meet the majority of CIPD's qualification requirements. The type of learning input and support provided by the centre will vary according to the centre's resources and the needs of the candidate.

Virtual College (http://www.virtual-college.co.uk/), founded in 1995, works with companies and public sector organizations (including UFI, NHS, Police and General Electric) as well as providing e-learning to individual learners. Based in Ilkley, West Yorkshire, it employs over 70 people including technical staff and designers, but it is not clear how many are teachers, nor how many live online classes are delivered (as opposed to self-contained courses).

As well over 150 e-learning courses available direct from the college or developed alongside distance learning partners, it also runs its own Learning Management System. It claims to have over 600,000 current registered online learners, mostly on vocational courses such as Business Skills, Continuing Professional Development, Fire Safety, Food Hygiene Training, Safeguarding Children, Housing Associations, Moving and Handling, NHS & Social Care, Health & Safety, Healthcare, Engineering and Productivity. Two of the most popular online courses are Food Hygiene Level 2 and a mandatory electrician's course.

Free E-Learning Courses for NEETs are also available from the 1st September 2011 until the 23rd December. The following courses can be accessed free of charge: Time Management, Customer Care, Health & Safety in the Workplace, Data Protection in the Workplace, Money Matters and Climbing the Career Ladder.

The Virtual College Network is also home to numerous e-Academies; specialist websites that concentrate on a sector to ensure that a team is meeting specific training needs, as well as providing a hub for updates and developments in policy and legislation. The most recent addition to the e-learning network is the 21st Century Apprenticeships hub, which is designed to help organisations get the most out of advances in training solutions, maximising learner progression while minimising costs and administration.

Oxford Open Learning (http://www.ool.co.uk/) offer a wide range of GCSE, iGCSE and A level courses, as well as 'Skills for Learning' courses, including 'Everyday Good English', 'Everyday Mathematics', 'Everyday Information Technology' and 'Everyday Bookkeeping'. It has been offering course materials since 1988. It provides courses for students who are over 18 years of age. Its sister company, Oxford Home Schooling, provides similar courses for students who are under 18 years old.

Last year 79% of Mathematics GCSE students achieved a grade C or above, set against a national average of just 50%. Students are usually adult learners, some of whom under-achieved in school and now wish to rectify that, and some who, whilst having a generally good academic background, now need a specific qualification to make progress in their career.

Oxford Open Learning provides the student with written course materials that have been developed to cover a particular syllabus or specification. All course materials have regular activities and self-assessment tests. Courses also include tutor-marked assignments which students send to their tutor for marking. Tutors make regular contact by telephone with their students to maintain motivation.

Oxford Open Learning make the point that all GCSE English courses (as opposed to IGCSE English courses) now include controlled assessment. Coursework is unavoidable and it must be directly supervised by the tutor. This is not practical for adult learners studying independently on home study courses, so OOL recommends the IGCSE English courses instead. The 'I' in IGCSE stands for 'International' but IGCSEs are recognised as having the same standing as "ordinary" GCSEs by government, schools, colleges and employers. The main difference with IGCSE specifications is that they are exam-only. There is no controlled

assessment before the final exams and you do not need to submit coursework. This is ideal for distance learners and students of home study courses.

Cambridge English Online (http://www.cambridgeenglishonline.com/) began in 2002, specializing in innovative English language learning materials, but is now creating more resources for other subjects. It works in partnership with the British Council, BBC and Cambridge University Press. It also hosts Learn English Mobile, which lets publishers and developers of mobile English learning and teaching apps showcase them in one place, so that students can find them more easily.

Online College of Art and Design (http://www.artcoursework.com/coursefinder.html) provides school and Further Education courses, including: IGCSE in Fine Art or Art and Design; A level in Art and Design; Foundation Diplomas in Art and Design, Fine Art or Graphic Design; ABC awards in Animation or Interior design; ABC Certificates in Animation or Interior Design; ABC Diplomas in 3d Modelling and Animation, Computer Aided Design or Interior Design. It also offers Recreational courses and portfolio preparation for university.

Each student gets a personal tutor who gives supports through the online course, marks art work and answers questions, as well as a student course co-ordinator. There is also an online art club where students can discuss their art work with fellow OCAD students.

Tutors tend to be freelance and part-time.

Online College of Art and Design (OCAD), 83a High Street, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 3HR UK

Virtual initiatives in Higher Education

Very major initiatives (GELIs)

These are the following:

Open University University for Industry (Ufi) London University External Programme

It should be noted that the main focus of Ufi is FE but there is a small amount of HE delivery in the Work-Based Learning area from partner universities via a specialist Ufi subsystem.

Current prima facie MELIs

There are fewer than there were in the heyday of English e-learning during the UKeU era. However, the following are prima facie cases:

University of Liverpool – joint venture with Laureate at MSc level University of Derby (a former member of GUA) Staffordshire University

MELIs now faded to NELIs

These include:

Middlesex University – Global Campus (downsized after key staff losses) Anglia Ruskin University – Ultraversity and Ultralab (both now closed)

New NELIs some maybe rising to MELIs

These all need investigation but are likely to include:

University of Bolton (said to have taken over Ultraversity) Canterbury Christ Church University – arrangement with Hibernia College of Ireland Essex University – joint venture with a commercial provider for Foundation Degree University of Leicester – featured in the MegaTrends report Northumbria University – including operation as an ASP provider.

Failed initiatives (FELIs)

The best known example is the UK e-University (UKeU) which is very well documented and will not be described further. This is often said to have lost around £50 million but in fact around £10 million of this was used after it closed to support a number of Academy initiatives including the Pathfinder programme, so that the actual loss was rather less.

A less well-known but actually larger failure is the NHS University (NHSU), which seems to have lost around £90 million and achieved no practical results at all. Until recently there were no reports on this at all except for one strictly confidential and little-known report on technology but one excellent report has recently become available – not quite public but for subscribers of the Observatory for Borderless Higher Education (OBHE). However, the archives of NHSU are closed (as they are for IU but not completely for UKeU) and many technical aspects were not covered in the OBHE report.

Lessons learnt

General lessons

Notable practices

References

Both

[8]
[9]
[http://www.pisa.oecd.org/pages/

Relevant websites

Both

European Commission
[10]
[11]
[12]
[13]
[14]
[15]
[16]
[17]
[18]
[19]

Retrieved from "http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/England"
Categories: United Kingdom | England | Home nations of the UK | VISCED

A2. Selected non-EU countries

The US is well known to have many virtual schools. The country report for the US is very long and detailed, thus we do not reprint it here. In this subsection we reproduce:

1. Turkey – an important non-EU country in the Lifelong Learning Programme
2. South Africa
3. Brazil – which might be expected to have many virtual schools but does not
4. Canada – with several virtual schools including in Francophone areas
5. Australia – with several virtual schools

Turkey

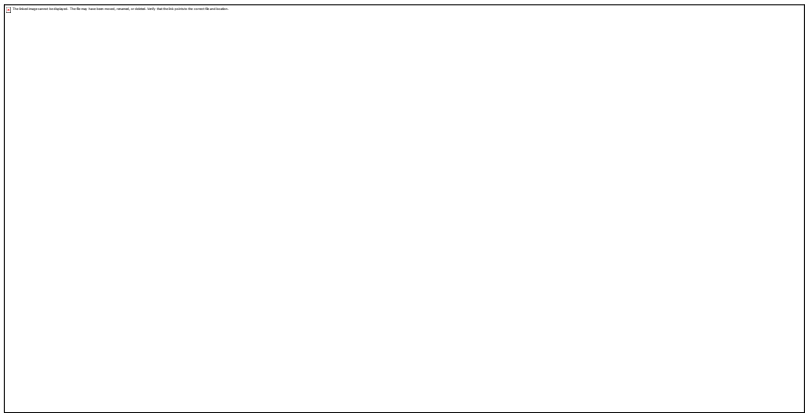
From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

Contents

Experts situated in Turkey

Turkey in a nutshell

Turkey (Turkish: Türkiye), known officially as the Republic of Turkey (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti) is a Eurasian country that stretches across the Anatolian peninsula in western Asia and Thrace (Rumelia) in the Balkan region of southeastern Europe. Turkey is bordered by eight countries: Bulgaria to the northwest; Greece to the west; Georgia to the northeast; Armenia, Azerbaijan (the exclave of Nakhichevan) and Iran to the east; and Iraq and Syria to the southeast.



Source : http://www.cia.gov

The Mediterranean Sea and Cyprus are to the south; the Aegean Sea and Archipelago are to the west; and the Black Sea is to the north. Separating Anatolia and Thrace are the Sea of Marmara and the Turkish Straits (the Bosporus and the Dardanelles), which are commonly reckoned to delineate the border between Asia and Europe, thereby making Turkey transcontinental.

The population of Turkey is around 71,892,808 - July 2008 estimate

Due to its strategic location astride two continents, Turkey's culture has a unique blend of Eastern and Western tradition. A powerful regional presence in the Eurasian landmass with strong historic, cultural and economic influence in the area between Europe in the west and Central Asia in the east, Russia in the north and the Middle East in the south, Turkey has come to acquire increasing strategic significance.

Turkey is a democratic, secular, unitary, constitutional republic whose political system was established in 1923 under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, following the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of World War I. Since then, Turkey has become increasingly integrated with the West through membership in organizations such as the Council of Europe, NATO, OECD, OSCE and the G-20 major economies. Turkey began full membership negotiations with the European Union in 2005, having been an associate member of the EEC since 1963, and having reached a customs union agreement in 1995. Meanwhile, as a Muslim-majority country, Turkey has continued to foster close cultural, political, economic and industrial relations with the Eastern world, particularly with the states of the Middle East and Central Asia, through membership in organizations such as the OIC and ECO.

The territory of Turkey is subdivided into 81 provinces for administrative purposes. The provinces are organized into 7 regions for census purposes; however, they do not represent an administrative structure. Each province is divided into districts, for a total of 923 districts.

Provinces usually bear the same name as their provincial capitals, also called the central district. Provinces with the largest populations are İstanbul (+12 million), Ankara (+4.4 million), İzmir (+3.7 million), Bursa (+2.4 million), Adana (+2.0 million) and Konya (+1.9 million).

The biggest city and the pre-Republican capital İstanbul is the financial, economic and cultural heart of the country.[Other important cities include İzmir, Bursa, Adana, Trabzon, Malatya, Gaziantep, Erzurum, Kayseri, Kocaeli, Konya, Mersin, Eskişehir, Diyarbakır, Antalya and Samsun. An estimated 70.5% of Turkey's population live in urban centers. In all, 18 provinces have populations that exceed 1 million inhabitants, and 21 provinces have populations between 1 million and 500,000 inhabitants. Only two provinces have populations less than 100,000.

The population of Turkey stood at 71.5 million with a growth rate of 1.31% per annum, based on the 2008 Census. It has an average population density of 92 persons per km². The proportion of the population residing in urban areas is 70.5%. People within the 15–64 age group constitute 66.5% of the total population, the 0–14 age group corresponds 26.4% of the population, while 65 years and higher of age correspond to 7.1% of the total population. According to the CIA Factbook, life expectancy stands at 70.67 years for men and 75.73 years for women, with an overall average of 73.14 years for the populace as a whole

Turkey is officially a secular republic, with no official state religion; the Turkish Constitution provides the freedom of religion and conscience, but does not represent or promote a religion.

The population of Turkey is predominantly Muslim (99%) - the majority are Sunni (75%) and a large minority are Alevi (15-25%). The small remainder of the population are mainly Christians and Jews.

Education in Turkey

Education is compulsory and free from ages 6 to 15. The literacy rate is 95.3% for men and 79.6% for women, with an overall average of 87.4%. The low figures for women are mainly due to the traditional customs of the Arabs and Kurds who live in the southeastern provinces of the country.

The Turkish Education System was built in accordance with Atatürk's Reforms after the Turkish War of Independence. It is a state supervised system which was designed to create skillful manpower for the social and economic process of the country.

Public education in Turkey is divided into five stages: Preschool, primary, middle school, high school and university. Education in Turkey has undergone many changes: there were many religious schools in Turkey but secular schools were set up under the contemporary Turkey education system which was established in 1924. Elementary school attendance was made compulsory and coeducational. Since the 1980s all children have been enrolled in school. However, pre-school is noncompulsory and mostly common in large cities. Primary school encompasses a five year program. The middle education program is coeducational as well. High school education is encouraged by restricting youth employments.

Apart from main public grammar schools, there also exist technical schools, domestic science training centers, teacher training, Islamic teacher training schools, commercial and agricultural schools and many other specialised training institutions. These specialised training institutions also include schools for children with disabilities and adult education.

The Turkish system mandates 8 years of primary education between the ages of 6 and 14, and in 2001 enrollment of children in this age range was nearly 100%. For 14-18 year olds three or more years of secondary education are available in public, distance-learning, and vocational high schools. About 95% of students attend public schools, but inadequacies of the public system increasingly motivate middle-class parents to seek private education.

In 2001 some 1,273 institutions of higher learning were in operation. Except for the Open Education Faculty (Turkish: Açıköğretim Fakültesi) at Anadolu University, entrance is regulated by a national examination, ÖSS, after which high school graduates are assigned to the limited university space available, according to their performance. Annually, about 1.5 million students graduate from Turkish high schools.

In 2002, the total expenditure on education in Turkey amounted to $13.4 billion, including the state budget allocated through the National Ministry of Education and private and international fund. The government is gradually aiming at building more classrooms and increasing the number of trained teachers and hence, reducing the number of students per class from 50 to below 30. The government has also recently stressed the importance of

foreign languages and computer skills as part of the curricula. Despite the presence of a large number of Higher Education Institions offering excellent facilities, new institutions are gradually being established to meet different needs.

Schools in Turkey

Prominent Private International Schools, Preschools, Primary & Secondary Schools"

Eden's Garden International Preschool, Istanbul

- Nursery Program for children aged 1.5-3
- Preschool Program for children aged 3-6
- Summer Discovery camp for children aged 2-8
- Baby Ballet Playgroup for children aged 0-3
- All programs are taught in English.

The British International School Istanbul

- Preschool Programme
- Primary School Programme
- Secondary School Programme
- Internationally recognised programmes following English National Curriculum, IGCSE and International Baccalaureate Diploma. All programmes are taught in English

Bosphorus International Preschool

- Preschool programme in English
- A Turkish bilingual program is available to serve the needs of the bi-national students

Istanbul International School

- K12 - kindergarten-playgroups
- Bilingual School (Turkish-English)
- Language Classes: Finnish, Korean, Spanish; Cambridge University International Exams; Weekend playgroups; Summer school - UK summer camps

Atolye Preschool, Istanbul

- Preschool for children are between ages 2 and 5
- Full day and half-day programs with both English and Turkish classes offered
- There is also a toddler playgroup for the 0-2 age group held on Saturdays between 10:00-12:00

Gence Preschool, Ankara

- Accepts students from age 2 to 6
- A curriculum concentrated on music (group and individual music courses), English learning and environmental awareness
- School hours 09:00 to 18:00. Half day program also available. Morning, evening snacks and lunch. After-school activities are also available for children from 6 - 9 years of age

TEIS (The English International School of Istanbul)

- Currently accepting children aged 2 - 6 years
- TEIS follows a British style curriculum and system, incorporating the first two classes of Primary - Reception and Year 1

Mor Kelebek House Preschool, Istanbul

- Toddler Program for children 0-2 years

- Preschool Program for children from 2-5 years
- Full day and half-day programs with both English and Turkish classes offered

Binbir Çiçek Children`s House Montessori Preschool, Ankara

- Toddler Class (18 months - 3 years old)
- 3 to 6 Years Old Children Montessori Classes
- Kids Club Classes, Gym Classes, Hobby Classes, Private English Classes

PLUS International Preschool, Istanbul

- Classrooms are organized to facilitate students' learning through hands-on discovery, peer interaction, and the British Curriculum's Early Years Foundation Stage
- Program includes:
  - Everyday half an hour kinaesthetic development with a Russian teacher conducting the lesson in Russian (Yoga, Pilates, Sport, Dance)
  - Drama classes conducted in either English or French, twice a week
  - Music lessons conducted in English using the ORFF music system, twice a week

For more information regarding the above range of schools, visit the following websites:
http://www.learn4good.com/great_schools/for_children_in_turkey.htm

http://www.english-schools.org/turkey/

For websites of the English language schools in Turkey, follow the link below:
http://www.eslbase.com/schools/turkey

Middle Schools

Middle school is a two years program between the ages of twelve and fourteen. This level is also coeducational and has been compulsory since 1972. Statistics have schown that middle schools are fewer in rural areas since authorities do not usually enforce middle school programs. Most students in rural areas have to move long distances to attend middle school programs in the city. Middle-school graduation is a prerequisite to access to general, vocational, and technical high schools, and is deemed advantageous for admission to many vocational training programs.

High schools

Secondary school education is free in public high schools but not compulsory. The Ministry of National Education supervises the rate of Turkey literacy. The types of high schools in the Turkish education system include:

Public High Schools, the standard type which are more than 1,300 of them in the country and commonly known as lycées (general). Lycées are coeducational institutions offering three years of college preparatory programs. Most of them in the larger cities are bilingual, teaching subjects in Turkish and either English, French, or German. Some Lycées also present opportunities for education to three largely legally recognised minorities in Turkey, the Armenians, Greeks and Jews and classes are taught in Armenian or Greek. For a complete list of all public secondary and high schools in Turkey, click on the following Wikipedia link. It should be noted however that the list below is still incomplete and sources are not trustworthy.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_high_schools_in_Turkey

Anatolian High Schools which provide more lessons in a selected foreign language (English, German or French)
Anatolian Imam-Hatip High Schools which have the same curriculum as Anatolian High Schools with lessons about religion
Science High Schools focusing on science education
Vocational High Schools, which focus on a certain type of profession (such as Tourism Vocational High Schools, Industrial Vocational High Schools and Electrical Vocational High Schools). In contrast to general education offered by the lycées, many of the vocational high schools offer four year programs. They include technical training schools for men, domestic schools for women, teacher training schools, auxilliary health care, commercial and agricultural schools, muslim teacher training schools and other specialised institutions.
Imam-Hatip High Schools, a different type of general high school with lessons about religion
and finally, *Private High Schools*, which are established by private enterprises.

Some of the foreign high schools of good international standards operating in Turkey are:

Alman Lisesi - Deutsche Schule, Istanbul

American Collegiate Institute, Ozel Izmir Amerikan Lisesi, Izmir

Istanbul International Community School, Istanbul

Lycee Charles De Gaulle, Ankara

Lycee de Galatasaray, Istanbul

Lycee Francais Saint-Benoît, Istanbul

METU Development Foundation School, Ankara

Oesterreichisches St. Georgs-Kolleg, Istanbul

Robert College of Istanbul, Istanbul

TED Ankara Private School, Ankara

Uskudar American Academy, Istanbul

Uskudar Anadolu Lisesi, Istanbul

By the year 2007, there already 7934 High Schools operating in Turkey.

Further and Higher education

(again sourced from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Turkey)

After the national university entrance examination ÖSS (Turkish: Öğrenci Seçme Sınavı) organized by ÖSYM, if they succeed, students continue with their studies at a university.

Universities provide either two or four years of education for undergraduate studies. Some universities also ask for an additional year of English preparatory study to be completed before the start of studies, unless a proficiency examination is passed.

For graduate studies, a further two years are necessary, as is typical throughout the world.

There are around 820 higher education institutions (including over 100 universities) with a total student enrollment of over 1 million and number of students normally exceeds the number of seats.

Major universities are located in Istanbul and Ankara.

Tertiary education is the responsibility of the Higher Education Council, and funding is provided by the state for public institutions that make up the bulk of the tertiary education system.

To encourage higher education a law was passed in 1983 which prohibited the employment of youths younger than fourteen.

Universities in Turkey

In Turkey, the univeristy education system is very old and it dates back to 2000 B.C. when they were seen first time on the pages of history and from that period they were the part of three separate civilizations. Turkish universities are the part of modern civilization and the major universities are situated in Istanbul and Ankara. Undergraduate studies in Turkish Universities are mainly for two or four years whereas for graduate degree it's another two years. There are 118 universities in Turkey, which are classified as either public or foundational (private) and 373,353 students were graduated from these universities in 2006. Public universities typically charge very low fees and foundational are highly expensive with fees that can reach $15,000 per annum, and as such, a majority of students in tertiary education attend public institutions. Since 1998, universities have been given greater autonomy and were encouraged to raise funds through partnerships with industry.

The quality of education at the Turkish universities varies greatly, some providing education and facilities on par with internationally renowned schools (for the technical universities, often compared with the universities in the United States, as there are several Turkish universities regularly visited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, the recognized U.S. accreditor of college and university programs, and their engineering programs deemed substantially equivalent to comparable programs at the U.S. universities), and these reflect as the popularity of a university in students' choices at the ÖSS examination.

Turkish universities actively participate in the Socrates - Erasmus program of the European Commission, aiming to increase student and academician mobility within the European Union, the European Economic Area countries, and other EU candidate states. An increasing

number of Turkish university students complete a part of their studies abroad at other participating countries' universities, and Turkish universities receive students of the same status from abroad.

With the passage of law 2547, the rectors of all the public universities are appointed jointly by the faculty, Higher Education Council and the President of Turkey

Wikipedia reports in the List of universities in Turkey that there are 146 universities and academies in Turkey:

> 102 of them are State Universities (two of which are institutes of technology, four of which are technical universities and one of which is an Arts and Music-only university)
> 24 private foundation universities
> 4 military academies
> 1 police academy.

Since the list is long and comprehensive we do not repeat it here. A shorter list is the list of the 18 members of IAU - this is repeated below (see http://www.unesco.org/iau/members_friends/mem_membinst1.html)

1. Afyon Kocatepe Üniversity - http://www.aku.edu.tr/
2. Akdeniz University - http://www.akdeniz.edu.tr/
3. Ankara University - http://www.ankara.edu.tr/
4. Atatürk University - http://www.atauni.edu.tr/
5. Baskent University - http://www.baskent.edu.tr/
6. Bogaziçi University - http://www.boun.edu.tr/tr-TR/Content/Default.aspx
7. Canakkale (18th March) University - http://www.comu.edu.tr/
8. Eastern Mediterranean University
9. European University of Lefke
10. Girne American University
11. Hacettepe Üniversity - http://www.hacettepe.edu.tr/
12. Istanbul Bilgi Universitesy - http://www.bilgi.edu.tr/
13. Istanbul Technical University - http://www.itu.edu.tr/
14. Mugla University - http://www.mu.edu.tr/
15. Near East University
16. Sakarya University - http://www.sakarya.edu.tr/
17. Suleyman Demirel University - http://w3.sdu.edu.tr/
18. Uludag Üniversity - http://www.uludag.edu.tr/

There are yet further lists at http://www.columbia.edu/~sss31/Turkiye/universite.html and on Yahoo at http://dir.yahoo.com/Regional/Countries/Turkey/Education/Higher_Education/Colleges_and_Universities/

A more comprehensive list including their websites can be found via the following Turkish university directory link http://www.university-directory.eu/Turkey/Turkey-Universities.html

Firat University Hospital

The Firat University Hospital Center is one of the most important university centers in Turkey. This center came to existence through a protocol signed between the Ministry of Health and Firat University which took effect on 24th December 1984. It took off with the name Firat University Research and Application Hospital, while in 1997 the decision of the Senate changed the name to Firat University Medical Center. In 2008, the hospital's name was amended again to, "Firat University Hospital." Firat University Hospital today is a tertiary health care district hospital. In November 2008 Firat University Hospital had 46 professors, 64 associate professors, 41 assistant professors doctors, specialist doctors and 333 research assistants, including a total of 485 academic and 403 administrative staff, making a total of 888 staff. Other staff for cleaning and procurement are hired from personnel companies to the number of 170,800. The hospital has the following departments and units: Internal Medicine (General Internal Medicine, Rheumatology, Nephrology, Endocrinology, Gastroentoroloji, Oncology), Dermatology, Infectious Diseases, Cardiology, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Pediatrics, Neurology, Public Health, Family Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Psychiatry, Chest Disease, Forensic Medicine, radiodiagnostic, General Surgery, Ophthalmology, Pathology, Ear-Nose-Throat, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Orthopedics and Traumatology, Urology, Neurosurgery, Cardiovascular Surgery, Thoracic Surgery, Anesthesiology and Reanimation, Pediatric Surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, Phycology, Biochemistry, Microbiology and Clinical Microbiology, Immunology, Medical Genetics, parasitology, and clinics Dallarlı Department of Nuclear Medicine, Intensive Care Center, Andrology Laboratory, Acupuncture Practice Lab, DNA Analysis Laboratory, Oncology Day Therapy Unit, Pharmacy, Blood Center, and service units such as the Sampling Unit, and there are twelve operating rooms. The emergency unit is available 24 hours. For more information, visit the website via the following link: http://ftm.firat.edu.tr/

Polytechnics, Academies and Institutes in Turkey

A list of some of the major polytechniques, vocational schools and institutes and their websites are found below:

Academic Research Institute in Turkey - http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/ARIT/
Atatürk Teacher Academy - http://www.aoa.edu.tr/
Beykoz Vocational School of Logistics - http://www.beykoz.edu.tr/
Directorate General of Minerals - http://www.mta.gov.tr/v2.0/index.php
Feza Gürsey Institute - http://www.gursey.gov.tr/
Gebze Institute of Technology - http://www.gyte.edu.tr/
Hacettepe University Ankara State Conservatory - http://www.konser.hacettepe.edu.tr/
Izmir Institute of Technology - http://www.iyte.edu.tr/
School of Sports Science and Technology | Hacettepe University - http://www.sbt.hacettepe.edu.tr/
Turkish Academy of Sciences - http://www.tuba.gov.tr/
Turkish National Police Academy - http://www.pa.edu.tr/
Turkish Patent Institute - http://www.tpe.gov.tr/portal/default.jsp

Colleges in Turkey

Some of the very prominent colleges in Turkey and their websites include the following:

Bogazici University, Business School -http://www.mgmt.boun.edu.tr/
Graduate School of Business, Istanbul, Koc University -

http://web.ku.edu.tr/ku/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1134&Itemid=2190

Hisar School - http://www.hisarschool.k12.tr/
Istanbul International Community School - http://www.iics.k12.tr/
Istanbul Technical University - School of Textile Technologies and Design - http://www.tekstil.itu.edu.tr/
Kemer Canadian High School Programme - http://www.kemer.k12.tr/
School of Tourism and Hotel Management, Adnan Menderes University -

http://www.akademik.adu.edu.tr/yo/turizm/index.asp?lang=1

Education reform

Schools

Post-secondary

Turkey is a full participant in the Bologna Process. For details of progress see the *National Bologna Report of Turkey (2004-2005)* at http://www.yok.gov.tr/duyuru/bolonya_sureci.doc

Administration and finance

Good information regarding education administration and other general details for preschools, elementary schools and high schools in Turkey can be obtained via the following link: http://www.allaboutturkey.com/education.htm#primary

Schools

Post-secondary

(sourced from http://www.yok.gov.tr/duyuru/bolonya_sureci.doc)

The Council of Higher Education is the fully autonomous supreme corporate public body responsible for the planning, coordination, governance and supervision of higher education within the provisions set forth in the Constitution (Articles 130 and 131) and the Higher Education Law (Law No. 2547). It has no political or governmental affiliation.

The President of the Council is directly appointed by the President of the Republic from among the Council members. The day-to-day functions of the Council are carried out by a nine member Executive Board serving full-time, including the President and two Vice-Presidents and all elected from among its members.

The Interuniversity Council is an academic advisory body, comprising the rectors of all universities and one member elected by the senate of each university. In addition to those, the Turkish Rectors Conference acts in an advisory capacity to the President of the Council of Higher Education.

The Center for Student Selection and Placement, ÖSYM (to all higher education institutions) functions subject to the decisions of the Council of Higher Education including both Turkish and foreign nationals.

The Minister of National Education represents higher education in the Parliament and can chair the meetings of the Council but has no vote. The decisions of the Council and the universities are not subject to ratification except for the establishment of a new university or a new faculty within an existing university.

However, a hidden or indirect governance of the state universities by the government stems from the public finance laws, which stipulate in minute detail the procedures to be followed in the preparation of annual budgets, procurement (including construction contracts), and auditing of expenditures, to which all public agencies are subject.

This indirect governance also covers the allocation of both academic and administrative staff positions to state universities. Hence, state universities, being dependent on the governmental decisions on those two issues, do not enjoy financial and administrative autonomies.

Administrative and Research Organisations

The following organizations represent certain administrative organs of higher education or at least have some thing to do with higher educational research in Turkey. Their websites are also included.

Istanbul Vocational School Concept - http://www.ikmyo.edu.tr/
Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) - http://www.bsec.gov.tr/
The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey - http://www.tubitak.gov.tr/
Turkish Astronomical Society - http://www.tad.org.tr/
Sabanci University/Marie Curie Research Training Network (RTN) - http://www.sabanciuniv.edu/tr/anasayfa/anasayfa.php

Associations of Higher Education Institutions and Research

The following associations represent higher educational institutions and certain fields of research. Their websites are also available via the corresponding links.

EurAsian Universities Union - http://www.euras-edu.org/

Turk Matematik Dernegi (Turkish Mathematical Society) - http://www.tmd.org.tr/
Turkish Social Science Association - http://www.tsbd.org.tr/
Turkish Sociological Association - http://www.sosyolojidernegi.org.tr/
Turkish University Rectors' Conference - http://www.yok.gov.tr/

Prominent Centers for Academic Research

The following centers represent prominent initiatives of academic research. Their websites are found in the corresponding links.

Center for Strategic Research (SAM)

The Center for Strategic Research (Stratejik Arastirmalar Merkezi - SAM) is established to conduct research on international relations and regional studies. The Center examines international conflicts, makes scholarly and scientific assessments of relevant issues, and reviews Turkish foreign policy with a futuristic perspective. It is a consultative body with the responsibility of bringing to the attention of decision makers independent, unbiased views and findings from different sources. The Center is chartered by law and has been active since May 1995. More information can be found on their website - http://www.sam.gov.tr/default.php

Continuing Education Center, Ankara University - http://www.ankusem.ankara.edu.tr/
Istanbul Bilgi University, Center for European Studies, Dolapdere Campus - http://ces.bilgi.edu.tr/
Istanbul Business Education Center - http://www.ibecedu.com/
Marmara Research Centre (MRC) - http://www.mam.gov.tr/

Quality assurance

Schools

Post-secondary

In 2004 it was noted (in the Bologna progress report that:

> By law, it is the responsibility of the Council of Higher Education and the Interuniversity Council to see to it that a national system of quality assurance with a structure and function comparable to its transnational counterparts is established and implemented. In their last meeting, both the Council and the Board have expressed their willingness to establish a national quality assurance system and re-acknowledged that the establishment of this action line has top priority in their agenda after being briefed about the existing practices by some higher education institutes in Turkey. It is expected that there will not be any need for a legislative change and, hence, the process will be completed before the 2007 ministerial meeting.

This is now seemingly set up. YÖDEK - The Commission of Academic Assessment and Quality Improvement in Higher Education (Turkey) - is now soon to be an Associate Member of ENQA.

The Council of Higher Education has also issued a set of *Regulations on Academic Assessment and Quality Improvement at Turkish Higher Education* - http://yok.gov.tr/duyuru/academic_assestment.pdf.

Interestingly, and still unusually, the Council of Higher Education has issued a set of *Regulations on Inter-University Distance Higher Education Based on Communication and Information Technologies* - http://www.yok.gov.tr/english/distance.html

Information society

ICT in education initiatives

In 2004, the government of Turkey introduced educations reforms that were geared at preparing students for a modern future that is open to cultures of other people. A policy document for integrating ICT as an indispensable part of lifelong learning was adopted for schools from basic education (Grade 1 through to Grade 8) through primary to higher education. ICT initiatives that have been completed or in progress indicate that the government is committed to the use of ICTs for management, education and training purposes. By the year 2005, 15,350 ICT classrooms had been established already with distribution of hundreds of thousands of computers for both students and teachers, instructional administrative softwares, broadband internet access options like satelite and ISDN had been provided. More than 20,000 schools had internet connections already. ICT infrastructure and operation has significantly improved ever since then with almost all levels of education making use of computer-assisted and ICT based learning.

However, there are still issues in Turkey related to few computers to ensure complete integration of ICT in the school system. There are still slow internet connections with some providers and the lack of peripheral equipments in a few schools and insufficient software in the native language.

Virtual initiatives in schools

Distance education and virtual school initiatives only started in Turkey around 1982. However, the first first distance education notion was mentioned during a meeting in which the problems of education were discussed in 1927. Distance education was seen then on as a very important way of increasing the literacy rate of the people of Turkey. Today, there are several distance education and virtual school initiatives as well as virtual campuses in several universities in Turkey.

In 1992, Open Education Faculty (see the next heading on virtual initiatives in post-secondary schools) application is taken as a model by Ministry of National Education, Film,

Radio and Television Education Directorate-FRTED to carry out secondary education level of distance education. Between 2nd June and 5th June 1992, 44.151 students enrolled to the Open High School-OHS, the first virtual school initiative in Turkey, and education started in 1992-1993 school year.

In the following years the number of students increased, in 1995-1996 school year 1st semester, the number was 71.309 and in 1996-1997 educational year 90.000 students. There were more than 1,300,000 in 2008/2009. Similar to Open Education Faculty, Open High School also made use of printed material, television and radio programmes as the educational components of the system. The reasons of this increase in the number of OHS students are the removal of the exams for the graduation from normal high schools and vocational high schools without attending the courses in 1993-1994 school year and closing of "Evening Lycees".

Examples of virtual education initiatives in schools include:

Open Primary Education School

Open High School Turkey

Open Vocational High School

Non-Formal Education

Nonformal education is one of the two components of the national education system. This component is for those who never received any formal education, those with a certain skill and ability who are currently enrolled in a formal education program, and those who left the formal education program without receiving a degree. Some of these non-formal educational programs are run in the form of distance education with virtual campuses in different cities while others have to attend classes in a specified institution.

The objectives of Turkey's nonformal education program are to teach reading and writing to adults who have not mastered these skills; to provide these individuals basic knowledge and, if they attended any formal education program, to build on the knowledge base of the last level they attended; and to create new opportunities that will help them earn a living. The program also explains and promotes Atatürk's reforms and principles to further develop the country's sense of national unity and solidarity. It is concerned with educating this segment of the population about new agricultural and industrial technologies and techniques so the standard of living can be improved.

Nonformal education has two components: general and vocational technical nonformal education programs. Institutes providing nonformal education include:

Practical arts schools for girls
Advanced technical schools for girls
Industrial practical arts schools
Technical education centers for adults

Public education centers
Apprenticeship training centers

The programs may be classified as public education, apprenticeship training, and distance education. Most of the public education programs and activities take place in formal education centers. Any individual, regardless of age or educational background, can enroll in literacy courses, vocational courses, and social and cultural courses that are offered in many of the formal education buildings.

Apprenticeship training is available to 14-19 year olds who have not received formal education, to those who completed the 8 year compulsory program but were not eligible to continue their formal education, and to those who never completed the required formal education program. Individuals between the ages of 14 and 19 who have complete the primary education program may enter a 3 to 4 year apprenticeship training program. The apprentices attend training centers one day each week for eight to ten hours of training each time. Those who complete the training program may take the journeyman examination. If they pass the examination, they receive a journeyman certificate and may take the master's examination after three years of work experience if they continue mastership training.

Every Turkish citizen may participate in distance education courses. Beginning in 1997 when the compulsory primary education program was extended from five to eight years, open primary education school programs were available for those who, under the previous national education program, had completed the required five-year program but not continued for the then optional three-year middle school program. This open primary education program allows individuals to compete the compulsory eight-year primary program. The open education high school program is available to three groups of students: those who are unable to continue their formal education, those who too old to continue in the formal education program, and those who are currently enrolled in a formal education program who prefer to complete their formal education via distance learning.

In addition to these nonformal education programs, Turkey provides educational and training services to Turkish citizens living aboard. Turkish educational consultancies in twenty-one locations and educational attaches oversee these programs. In 1999, almost 800,000 Turkish students received education abroad; over 1,000 teachers were sent from Turkey to provide the necessary instruction.

Virtual initiatives in post-secondary education

This first distance education application was initiated at Ankara University, the Faculty of Law, The Research Institute of Bank And Trade Law, in 1956. In this application, the personnel in the banks were educated through letters. In 1961, The Center For Education Through Letters was established as a sub organization of the Ministry of National Education and preparation courses were given to people who wish to complete their secondary education without physically attending courses.

Later on in 1975 and 1978 draft law proposed the establishment of "Open University", however it was not accepted. In other words, in Turkey, "Education Through Letters" (called

in Turkish as being YAY-KUR) application started as a correspondence education. As an alternative to the traditional education however required efficiency and success was not achieved.

In 1970s', Eskisehir Economics and Commercial Academy, The Institute for Education Through Television became a pioneer in the area. In 1981, a campaign was started to reduce illiteracy rate in Turkey by government. In this attempt, television was an important education tool. The application achieved a considerable success and literacy rate increased. In the same year, Turkish Higher Education Council gave an opportunity to apply distance education at Turkish Universities. After these years, the developments have been faster, better planned and more scientific, more functional and more effective. In November 1981, Anadolu University was given the mission to carry out distance education application.

Therefore, Open Education Faculty-OEF- was organized and 29.479 students were enrolled to Economics and Business Administration Programs. Initially, this application had a target to reach students through printed materials, television programmes and face-to-face academic tutorials. Later on these educational components were extended to the use of video, computer, radio and newspaper, videoconference, etc. Later on, in 1993, the services Open Education Faculty offered were reorganized. With this reorganization Economics and Business Administration Programs were changed into Faculties of Management and Economics that are based on distance education method. Open Education Faculty continued to give two-year pre-licence education to its students.

Anadolu University

Anadolu University offers several e-learning services, including audio books, on-line resources, actual distance learning.

Avicenna Project

Avicenna is an ambitious virtual campus in higher education project, managed by UNESCO and co-financed by the European Commission (European EUMEDIS programme) in order to produce and adapt training distance modules within 15 European and Mediterranean Universities members, sharing best practices and pedagogical innovation through a network of E-learning centers. For more details see http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/science-technology/sti-policy/avicenna-virtual-campus/

The project aims at creating a self-sustainable virtual campus, based on cooperation among institutions of higher education in Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Palestine, Spain, Syria, Tunisia and ***Turkey***. Installation of adequate infrastructure and intensive training of trainers are the crucial requirements of implementation of the project. The nodes of the network, the AVICENNA Knowledge Centers (AKCs), will be installed in each partner institution to support a Euro-Mediterranean network for ODL services, including production and delivery. Pedagogical resources will be stored and managed into the “Avicenna virtual library”, which forms a network knowledge data-base of pedagogical resources, tools and knowledge.

The project is dedicated to accelerating the adoption and best use of ICT-assisted Open Distance Learning (ODL) Demand for ODL in the target Universities and societies already exist. The project aims at establishing adequate local infrastructures and to transfer best practice and professional know-how within target universities. The project is named after Ibn Sina (981-1037 Ad) the most famous philosopher of his time.

For more detailed information about the project please refer to the Avicenna page on UNESCO.

Istanbul Technical University

Istanbul Technical University (ITU) established a distance learning centre in 1996. Web-based distance teaching projects have recently become an integral part of the ITU educational system. For more details see the article *Turkey's eLearning Future* in *Checkpoint eLearning* at http://www.checkpoint-elearning.com/article/1098.html

Lessons learnt

General lessons

Notable practices

The Ministry of National Education Turkey partnered with Microsoft Turkey and Idea e-Learning Solutions to develop a regional and online training programme to reach the 600,000 teachers in the school system who needed convenient, accessible IT training. See http://download.microsoft.com/download/1/d/4/1d47d31f-1ee4-4610-ad02-f171ed00847d/Turkey_PiL_Customer_Evidence_FINAL.pdf.

Lessons learnt

References

Helen Chapin Metz, ed. Turkey: A Country Study. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1995.

http://countrystudies.us/turkey/50.htm

Turkey Academic Institutions Directory - http://www.university-directory.eu/Turkey/Turkey.html

http://www.learn4good.com/great_schools/for_children_in_turkey.htm

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_high_schools_in_Turkey

http://www.midasebook.com/dosyalar/AOLING_PDF.pdf

http://maol.meb.gov.tr/English_Site/Meslek_Eng_AnaSayfa.html

http://www.unicef.org.tr/en/content/detail/57/appendix-the-formal-education-system-2.html

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South Africa

From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

To view the virtual HE initiatives, go to the Virtual Initiatives in South Africa Re.ViCa page.

by Nikki Cortoos

Contents

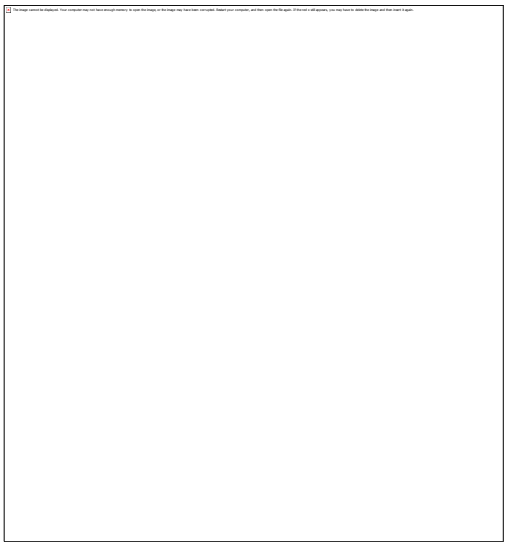
Experts situated in South Africa

Herman J. van der Merwe, North West University, South Africa

Ariellah Rosenberg, ORT SA

Laura Czerniewicz, Director of the Centre for Educational Technology (CET) at the University of Cape Town

South Africa in a nutshell



Map of South Africa

The Republic of South Africa (also known by other official names) is a country located at the southern tip of Africa. South Africa's coast borders both the Atlantic and Indian oceans. To the north of South Africa lie Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Swaziland, while the Kingdom of Lesotho is an independent enclave surrounded by South African territory.

South Africa is known for its diversity, and eleven official languages are recognised in its constitution. English is the most commonly spoken language in official and commercial public life, however it is only the fifth most spoken home language.

South Africa is ethnically diverse, with the largest Caucasian, Indian, and racially mixed communities in Africa. Although 79.6% of South Africa's population is Black, this category is neither culturally nor linguistically homogeneous, as they speak a number of different Bantu languages, nine of which have official status.

Population (2010): 49.99 million. Composition--black 79.4%; white 9.2%; colored 8.7%; Asian (Indian) 2.7%. (2010 Mid-Year Population Estimate Report at http://www.statssa.gov.za). This makes it quite large compared with the typical European country.

The main Cities are: Capitals--administrative, Pretoria; legislative, Cape Town; judicial, Bloemfontein. Other cities--Johannesburg, Durban, Port Elizabeth.

(Above section adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa and http://www.info.gov.za/aboutsa/landpeople.htm)

Education in South Africa

In recent history, South Africa has seen major changes, both in governments, society and education as the *Apartheid* only came to a halt in 1994. Apartheid was a government-enforced system of racial segregation which had a very limiting impact on the everyday life, living areas, job opportunities and education of coloured people in South Africa. An example of this is the *Bantu Education Act of 1953 (No. 47)* which enforced racial segregation in education. The Apartheid lasted from 1948 to 1994, after which the Constitution was established and the educational system was revised to improve racial diversity and equality in education.

Document of relevance:

> Wikipedia entry on Apartheid
> South Africa: A Country Study > Education, 1996 by Rita M. Byrnes, ed. for the Library of Congress, USA.
> Wikipedia's page on Bantu Education Act of 1953 (No. 47)

The Bill of Rights, contained in the Constitution, 1996, even mentions *the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices* (Section 29. Paragraph 2.3).

The Bill stipulates that everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education and further education, which the State, through reasonable measures, must progressively make available and accessible: 28. Children: *Every child has the right (...) not to be required or permitted to perform work or provide services that (...) place at risk the child's well-being, education, physical or mental health or spiritual, moral or social development;* 29. Education:

1. *Everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education; and to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible."*
2. *Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. In order to ensure the effective access to, and implementation of, this right, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium institutions, taking into account equity; practicability; and the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices.*
3. *Everyone has the right to establish and maintain, at their own expense, independent educational institutions that* do not discriminate on the basis of race; are registered with the state; and maintain standards that are not inferior to standards at comparable public educational institutions.
4. *Subsection (3) does not preclude state subsidies for independent educational institutions.*

Sources & Related Documents:

Bill of Rights > Section 28. Children > Paragraph 1.f.ii and Section 29. Education
Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 and amendments
South African Government Information - Education Policy (web page)
Plan of Action Improving access to free and quality basic education for all (PDF), June 2003 by the Department of Education

The Council for Higher Education (CHE) has also published the Ministry of Education's Language Policy Framework for South African Higher Education (PDF) in 2001, which has the promotion of multilingualism as a central aspect. It also affects the language of each qualification certificate and transcript issued to a student within the South African higher education system, as stated in the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) (PDF), 2007.

The National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996), empowers the Minister of Education to determine national norms and standards for education planning, provision, governance, monitoring and evaluation. The South African government is divided into departments instead of what we call *Ministries*. Department of Education is responsible for formulating policy, setting norms and standards, and monitoring and evaluating all levels of education and also in funding Higher Education Institutions through subsidies and by providing financial support to students through National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).

The government puts its focus on equity, quality of teaching and learning and literacy. As the Department of Education states on its site:

> *"Our vision is of a South Africa in which all our people have access to lifelong education and training opportunities, which will in turn contribute towards improving the quality of life and building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society"* and part of its mission is *"creating a vibrant further education and training system to equip youth and adults to meet the social and economic needs of the 21st century."*

In 1994 The government-in-waiting's commitment to increasing access to education through the use of distance education methods was evident in the 1994 Policy Framework for Education and Training (ANC Education Department, Johannesburg):

> *The development of a well-designed and quality distance education system based on the principles of open learning is the only feasible approach to meeting the needs of the vast numbers of our people who were systematically deprived of educational opportunity in the past, while at the same time providing opportunities for the youth coming up through the educational system at present. It will allow people access to education and training and the ability to determine where, when, what and how they want to learn (ANC, 1994:78).*
>
> Source: Designing and Delivering Distance Education: Quality Criteria and Case Studies from South Africa. Section One (PDF - EN - 17 pages, by Tessa Welch and Yvonne Reed with NADEOSA Quality Criteria Task Team

Formal education in South Africa is categorised according to three levels – General Education and Training (GET), Further Education and Training (FET) and Higher Education (HE). By mid-2007, the South African public-education system had 12,3 million learners, 387 000 educators, 26 592 schools, 2 278 Abet centres, 50 public FET institutions, 4 800 Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres and 23 HE institutions.

There are also policy frameworks in South Africa that focus on inclusion such as the Policy Framework on HIV and AIDS in October 2008, which was adopted by the Minister of Education (Naledi Pandor in 2009), and the 23 public sector higher education institutions in South Africa. HEAIDS is South Africa's nationally co-ordinated, comprehensive and large-scale effort designed to develop and strengthen the capacity, the systems, and the structures of all HEIs in managing and mitigating the causes, challenges and consequences of HIV/AIDS in the sector and to strengthen the leadership role that can and should be played by the HE sub-sector.

Source: Higher Education South Africa (HESA) > HEAIDS, Strategic framework 2006-2009 and beyond (PDF).

Related document: HESA > Press Release > *SA higher education adopts policy framework to mitigate HIV and AIDS at institutions* (PDF), Oct. 2008

Councils and advocacy groups:

Higher Education South Africa (HESA) represents all 23 public universities and universities of technology. It is the successor of the South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association (SAUVCA) and the Committee of Technikon Principals (CTP). The launch of HESA was in part driven by the restructuring of the higher education sector, which resulted in the establishment of new institutional types, but also by the need for a strong, unified body of leadership.

the African Council for Distance Education (ACDE)

the South African Council for Educators (SACE) aims to enhance the status of the teaching profession, and to promote the development of educators and their professional conduct

the South African Nursing Council (SANC) which focuses on nursing education and practice standards

the South African Council for English Education (SACE) promotes the use of English as one of South Africa's official languages. (If web site is offline, there is also information on myggsa.co.za)

the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) is an association for the 63 public universities in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region

the Association of African Universities (AAU) which strives to raise the quality of higher education in Africa and strengthen its contribution to African development by fostering collaboration among its member institutions

the Council on Higher Education (CHE) is an independent statutory body responsible for advising the Minister of Education on all matters related to higher education policy issues, and for quality assurance in higher education and training

the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA)

one of the roles of the South African Technology Network (SATN) is to *provide a forum to discuss higher education issues in the universities of technology, including co- operative education, teaching, research training; technological innovation and technology transfer, advocate the needs, interests and purposes of technological higher education and their communities to government, industry and other groups* and to *develop policy positions and guidelines on various related higher education matters*

Related Documents:

South African Government Agencies and Policy Documents and Speeches on Education, up to 2004

Department of Education > Documents > Policies

The South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996) The South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996) (PDF)

South Africa education system

The Constitution has vested substantial power in the provincial legislatures and governments to run educational affairs (other than universities and universities of technology), subject to a national policy framework. The national Department of Education is responsible for formulating policy, setting norms and standards, and monitoring and evaluating all levels of education. It also funds HE institutions through subsidies and by providing financial support to students through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).

Source: South African Government Information - National and Provincial Departments

Formal education in South Africa is categorised according to three levels:

1. General Education and Training (GET): consists of the Reception Year (Grade R) and schooling up to Grade 9 and the equivalent *Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)* qualification.
2. Further Education and Training (FET): consists of grades 10 to 12 in schools and all education and training from the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels 2 to 4 (equivalent to grades 10 to 12 in schools), and the N1 to N6 in FET colleges. After completion of level 1 of the NQF, a learner could achieve a GETC and after completion of level 4 of the NQF, an FETC.
3. Higher Education (HE): consists of a range of degrees, diplomas and certificates up to and including post-doctoral degrees

Educational levels

Band	Age	School grade	NQF Level	Qualification Type
Higher Education and Training	21		8	Post-doctoral research degrees (Postgraduate Diploma, Bachelor Honours Degree at Exit Level 8)
				Doctorates
				Masters degrees
	20		7	Professional Qualifications / Post Graduate Certificate
				Honours degrees (Advanced Diploma, Bachelor\'s Degree at NQF Exit Level 7)
	19		6	National first degrees
				Higher diplomas (Advanced Certificate, Diploma at NQF Exit level 6)

	18		5	National diplomas
				National certificates (Higher Certificate at NQF Exit Level 5)
Further Education and Training	17	12	4	National certificates
	16	11	3	
	15	10	2	
General Education and Training (ABET Level 4)	14	9	1	
	13	8		
	12	7		
	11	6		
	10	5		
	9	4		
	8	3		
	7	2		
	6	1		

	5	0/R		Grade R (reception year)
Legenda		Compulsory education		

The age of a child entering grade 1 is age five turning six by 30 June in the year of admission. Grade R (reception year) or grade 0, the age is four turning five by 30 June in the year of admission.
Grade 12 is the *year of matriculation*: the final exams of high school are administered by the government and are called *"matric exams"* so students in the final year of high school (grade 12 or the *matriculation grade*) are known as "matrics" and if they pass these exams they are called *matriculants* or it's said that they *"matriculated"*. Becoming a matriculant is required (with certain minimum conditions) for tertiary education. Some private schools also offer a post-matric "sixth form" year which allows students to sit for A-level examinations.

The minimum requirement for admission to a higher education institution from 1 January 2009 is the National Senior Certificate. Related document: Minimum Admission Requirements - for Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree, Programmes requiring a National Senior Certificate (EN – PDF), 2005, by the Department of Education
Government is (...) bound by the Constitution to progressively improve access to further education and training (FET) (which is Grades 10 to 12 in schools).

Source: Plan of Action Improving access to free and quality basic education for all (PDF), June 2003 by the Department of Education

Teacher-student ratio

There is usually some correlation between class size and fees. The average teacher-to-pupil ratio in state schools is 1:33, as compared with 1:18 in private schools. At those state-aided schools where parents pay for extra teachers by way of school fees, and at the more expensive private schools, the maximum number of pupils is usually about 30. At poorer schools this is often higher, with as many as 40 to 50 children in a classroom.

Sources:

A parent's guide to schooling > How large will my child's class be?
South African Government Information - Introduction (web page)
Matriculation in South Africa (Wikipedia page)
GOVERNMENT GAZETTE, 5 OCTOBER 2007
Levels of education in South Africa, 2006.

Distance education in primary education

OLSET is a provider of Open and Distance Learning in South Africa specifically for primary school children. Committed to the goal of 'Education for All', OLSET, a South African-based

NGO working in collaboration with the country's National and Provincial Departments of Education, actively supports the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through the considerable geographic outreach of its Interactive Radio Learning Programme. In 2008-9 OLSET's English In Action Radio Learning Programme reached over 1.8 million learners and 52,000 teachers in seven of South Africa's nine provinces. A highly-regarded education provider, OLSET has worked and works in collaboration with, inter alia, South African Provincial Departments of Education, South African Broadcasting Corporation, UNICEF/Operation Lifeline Sudan, UNESCO IICBA, the British Council, DFID and the BBC.

Source: http://www.olset.org.za

The Department of Education established the Thutong portal, with the aim to aims to improve learning in the country through appropriate use of technology. It offers free educational resources, policy information, and interactive services concerning all aspects of the South African Schooling Sector. Source: http://www.thutong.doe.gov.za/

There are organisations that are trying to enhance education with digital resources and connectivity such as the e-Schools' Network, founded in 1993 is a non-profit, self-funded, organisation that provides 1700 schools and the FET College community e-services such as SchoolMail, (a mailbox for each learner and educator in a school), connectivity and communication solutions and training support. Source: http://www.esn.org.za/

The Further Education & Training (FET) institutions were affected by restructuring as they were reduced from 152 to 50 institutions.

Source: South African Government - Information about Education:

Schools in South Africa

All South Africans have the right to a basic education, including adult basic education and further education. According to the Bill of Rights of the country's Constitution, the state has an obligation, through reasonable measures, to progressively make this education available and accessible. Under the South African Schools Act of 1996, education is compulsory for all South Africans from the age of seven (grade 1) to age 15, or the completion of grade 9. General Education and Training also includes Adult Basic Education and Training.

School life spans 13 years or grades, from grade 0, otherwise known as grade R or "reception year", through to grade 12 or "matric" – the year of matriculation. Grades 1 to 9 are compulsory, and classified as General Education and Training. Grades 10 to 12 are considered to be Further Education and Training. Grade 12 is the year of matriculation, which is required (with certain minimum conditions) for tertiary education. Some private schools also offer a post-matric "sixth form" year which allows students to sit for A-level examinations.

The Ministry of Basic Education focuses on adult basic education and training in addition to primary and secondary education. The central government provides a national framework for

school policy, but administrative responsibility lies with the provinces. Power is further devolved to grassroots level via elected school governing bodies, which have a significant say in the running of their schools. Private schools and higher education institutions have some autonomy, but are expected to fall in line with some government policies – no child may be excluded from a school on grounds of his or her race or religion, for example.

The Further Education and Training (FET) branch is responsible for the development of policy for grades 10 to 12 in public and independent schools, as well as in public and private FET colleges. It monitors the integrity of assessment in schools and colleges, and offers an academic curriculum as well as a range of vocational subjects. FET colleges cater for out-of-school youth and adults. It also oversees, coordinates and monitors the system's response to improved learner participation and performance in maths, science and technology. It also devises strategies aimed at the use of information and communication technology (ICT), and supports curriculum implementation through the national educational portal, Thutong (Setswana, meaning "place of learning").

The breakdown of schools includes 26 065 ordinary schools and 9 166 other education institutions – including special schools, early childhood development (ECD) sites, public adult basic education and training (ABET) centres, public further education and training (FET) institutions and public higher education (HE) institutions.

The total of 26 065 ordinary schools comprised 15 358 primary schools, with 6 316 064 pupils and 191 199 teachers; 5 670 secondary schools, with 3 831 937 pupils and 128 183 teachers; and 5 037 combined and intermediate schools, with 2 253 216 pupils and 74 843 teachers.

Other educational facilities include 2 278 ABET centres, 50 public FET institutions, 4 800 ECD centres and 23 HE institutions.

In state-funded public schools, the average ratio of pupils to teachers is 31.5 to one, while private schools generally have one teacher for every 17.5 pupils.

Compared with most other countries, education gets a large proportion of public spending – usually around 20% of total state expenditure. The greatest challenges lie in the poorer, rural provinces like the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. Schools are generally better resourced in the more affluent provinces such as Gauteng and the Western Cape.

Illiteracy rates currently stand at around 18% of adults over 15 years old (about 9-million adults are not functionally literate), teachers in township schools are poorly trained, and the matriculation pass rate remains low.

Further and Higher education

The Wikipedia List of universities in South Africa is informative at a general level as well as for details. It also provides comprehensive listings of the many other providers both domestic and foreign.

Public universities in South Africa are divided into: traditional universities, which offer theoretically-oriented university degrees; universities of technology, which offer practically-oriented diplomas and degrees in technical fields; while the list on Wikipedia also makes a distinction for comprehensive universities (indicated with a star), which offer a combination of both types of qualification.

There are also a large number of other educational institutions in South Africa - some are local campuses of foreign universities, or foreign HEIs that conduct classes for students who write their exams at the distance-education University of South Africa while other institutions offer unaccredited diplomas.

In 2004 South Africa started reforming its higher education system, merging the (university and non-university) HEIs into larger, regional unitary institutions which also caused a renaming of the so-called *Technikons* to *Universities of Technology*.

More information about this reform can be found on this page under the section on Higher education reform

Universities in South Africa

1. University of Cape Town (UCT), (Cape Town)
2. University of Fort Hare (UFH), (Alice), (East London)
3. University of the Free State (UOVS), (Bloemfontein)
4. University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), (Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Pinetown, Westville)
5. University of Limpopo, (Polokwane, Ga-Rankuwa)
6. North-West University (NWU), (Mafikeng, Mankwe, Potchefstroom, Vanderbijlpark)
7. University of Pretoria (UP), (Pretoria)
8. Rhodes University (RU), (Grahamstown)
9. University of Stellenbosch (SUN), (Stellenbosch)
10. University of the Western Cape (UWC), (Cape Town)
11. University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), (Johannesburg)
12. University of Johannesburg (UJ), (Johannesburg) *
13. Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), (Port Elizabeth) *
14. University of South Africa (UNISA), (Pretoria - Distance Education) *
15. University of Venda (Univen), (Thohoyandou) *
16. Walter Sisulu University for Technology and Science (WSU), (Buffalo City, Butterworth, Mthatha, Queenstown) *
17. University of Zululand (Unizulu), (Empangeni) *

Universities of Technology (Polytechnics) in South Africa

There are 6 Universities of Technology (previously known as Technikons)

1. Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), (Bellville, Cape Town)
2. Central University of Technology (CUT), (Bloemfontein, Welkom)
3. Durban University of Technology (DUT), (Durban, Pietermaritzburg)

4. Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT), (Durban)
5. Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) (Pretoria)
6. Vaal University of Technology (VUT), (Vanderbijlpark)

Relevant sources:

SATN > Universities of Technology list
the government's page on HEIs
HESA > Public Universities (with overview of founding date and number of students)

Colleges in South Africa

Notable provider

CIDA Foundation UK is a university that enables previously disadvantaged learners from taking up Higher Education. It depends on funding and sponsoring from companies and individuals and demands from its students that they go to their own communities and educate their peers. [..] The students to fully appreciate their education they all contribute financially towards tuition: £31 in total for year one, and £13 per month in years two to four. This is 6% of the cost of attending other universities in South Africa. [..] Students also help to run the campus by dedicating a minimum of five hours of their time each week. At the end of the course, rather than paying back a loan, students are encouraged to "pay it forward" by committing to funding another student from their hometown after they graduate and become employed.

Source: CIDA - About Us - Fees (web page)

Relevant document: Register of Private Higher Education Institutions, 13 July 2009 (PDF - EN), 2009, by the Department of Education

Education reform

Schools

The South African Schools Act (Act 84), passed by Parliament in 1996, aims to achieve greater educational opportunities for black children. This Act mandated a single syllabus and more equitable funding for schools.

While 65% of whites over 20 years old and 40% of Indians have a high school or higher qualification, this figure is only 14% among blacks and 17% among the coloured population.

The government is in particular targeting education for the poorest, with two notable programmes. One is fee-free schools, institutions that receive all their required funding from the state and so do not have to charge school fees. These have been identified in the country's most poverty-stricken areas, and made up 40% of all schools in 2007.

The other is the National Schools Nutrition Programme, which feeds about 7-million schoolchildren every day, including all those attending primary schools in 13 rural and eight urban poverty nodes. The programme was extended in 2009 to 1 500 secondary schools around the country, feeding 1-million secondary school pupils from grades 8 to 12. Under the programme, the Department of Education has also established almost 2 100 school gardens with the support of the Department of Agriculture, local government structures and a number of NGOs. In July 2010, the government announced plans to get more than 200 000 children between the ages of seven and fifteen enrolled in school by 2014 by increasing the number of no-fee schools, while widening feeding schemes.

Other priorities include early childhood development, HIV/Aids awareness programmes in schools, and adult basic education and training.

From 2010, all grade three, six and a sample of grade nine learners write annual national assessments that are independently moderated. In 2011, more than 19 000 schools participated.

Over the last 17 years, investment in education has doubled. Access to primary and secondary schooling has reached near universal enrolment figures. 98% of children from seven to 15 years are now enrolled in schools; 88% of six-year olds, and 70% of children aged four and five are in early childhood development centres.

The Department of Basic Education has set 4 targets to be achieved by 2014:

1. the number of Grade 12 learners who pass the national examinations and qualify to enter a Bachelor's programme at a university must increase from 105 000 to 175 000.

2. the number of Grade 12 learners who pass Mathematics and Physical Science must total 225 000 and 165 000 respectively.

3. the percentage of learners in grades three, six and nine in public schools who obtain the minimum acceptable mark in the national assessments for Language and Mathematics (or Numeracy) must improve from between 27% and 38% to at least 60%.

4. all children should have participated in a Grade R (Reception) programme before entering Grade One and at least 37% of children from birth to five years should have participated in an early childhood development programme. In 2009, more than 785 000 learners had access to a Grade R programme.

Starting from the 2011 academic year, government will introduce free education for the poor at undergraduate level. Students in Further Education and Training colleges who qualify for financial aid will not pay academic fees.

Post-secondary

In 1997, the Education White Paper 3 was published with the central proposition to create *a single national co-ordinated higher education system that is planned, governed and funded*

as a single system. To meet the transformation goals of this paper, a different HE system was necessary, as stated in the Towards a New Higher Education Landscape report (2002). This also meant that what fell under the jurisdiction of the provincial administrations was to be transferred to a national coordination.

The National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) was set up to provide a framework for the White Paper and the National Working Group (NWG) advised the Minister of Education on the appropriate arrangements for *restructuring the provision of higher education on a regional basis through the development of new institutional and organisational forms, including institutional mergers and rationalisation of programme development and delivery* (the NWG warned to prevent an *academic drift* towards university-type programmes at the expense of technikon-type programmes). The NWG identified three main properties flowing from the principles, which it believes are critical to ensuring the "fitness for purpose" of the higher education system. These are *equity, sustainability and productivity*.

In 2002, The Restructuring Of The Higher Education System In South Africa elaborated in detail on the restructuring of the HEI landscape and how to merge the dispersed institutions and campuses into regional unitary institutions. It made the HEIs refocus their mission but also their campuses and programmes. Its purpose was to regulate the Higher Education System in a response to globalisation, the growing economy and the needs of South Africa. Some statements taken from the document:

> *The NWG believes that the implementation of its recommendations will result in the fundamental restructuring of the higher education system. It will transform the apartheid edifice of the higher education system and lay the foundation for a higher education system that is consistent with the vision, values and principles of our young and vibrant democratic order.*
>
> *Distance education programmes at traditionally residential institutions should be strictly regulated* as further in the document it was noted that one HEI outsourced the face-to-face guidance in its Learning Centers, therefore not ensuring quality education.
>
> *Apart from the one urban university and one urban technikon, and apart from the one comprehensive rural institution offering both technikon and university programmes, no other publicly funded higher education institutions should be allowed to offer programmes in the province (KwaZulu-Natal), with the exception of the new dedicated distance education institution.*

The Ministry's proposals would result in 23 higher education institutions and two National Institutes for Higher Education (outlined in Appendix 1), consisting of 11 Universities, 6 Universities of Technology (previously known as Technikons), 4 Comprehensive Institutions and 2 National Institutes for Higher Education.

The universities and technikons which were incorporated with others and thus no longer exist are listed at the end of the Wikipedia article List of universities in South Africa.

Sources and Relevant Documents:

> Final Report: Development of Performance Indicators for Universities of Technology (UoTs) and UoT related parts of Comprehensive Universities (CUs), November 2008 by SATN Online

Commentary - on issues in Higher Education > Universities of Technology, January 2008 by the University of Auckland

"Position, Role and Function of Universities of Technology in South Africa", 2004 by Higher Education South Africa (HESA)

Transformation and Restructuring: A New Institutional Landscape for Higher Education (PDF - 40 pages), 2002, by the Ministry of Education .

The Restructuring Of The Higher Education System In South Africa (PDf - EN - 89pages), by the Ministry of Education, 2002.

Towards a New Higher Education Landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the 21st Century, 2000, by the Council on Higher Education (CHE)

Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (PDF), 1997, by the Department of Education.

Education Reform in Post-Apartheid South Africa, a video in which Helen Ladd and Edward Fiske speak about their book from 2004, Elusive Equity: Education Reform in Post-Apartheid South Africa, ISBN-13: 978-0815728405, 269 pages.

41st TB Davie Memorial Lecture *Accounting for Autonomy: How Higher Education lost its Innocence* by Jonathan D. Jansen, Dean of Education: University of Pretoria, 2004 (PDF - 11 pages) on the relation between the state and the Higher Education institutes and how autonomy in the South Africa Higher Education changed.

Case studies on dealing with "pipeline students" within their respective institutions, Council of Higher Education (CHE), 2007. In 2005, the HEQC requested a number of people from different merger contexts to produce case studies on dealing with so-called "pipeline students" within their respective institutions.

Administration and finance

Schools

At about 5.3% of gross domestic product (GDP) and 20% of total state expenditure, South Africa has one of the highest rates of public investment in education in the world.

In the apartheid years, there was a separate government department for white children's schools, black children's schools and coloured children's schools. The three departments had different funding available, different resources at their disposal and issued different exams.

The House of Representatives (HOR) was the department that handled coloured childrens schooling, the Department of Education and Training (DET) handled black children's schooling and the white children's schools were known as Model C Schools.

To this day former Model C schools still typically have the best facilities, best teachers and best educational opportunities for children. Former HOR schools, although not quite as sidelined as DET schools, still have relatively poor infrastructure and facilities. Former DET schools are by far the worst off even today.

All schools receive government funding, however former Model C schools are permitted to top up the funding with fees payable by the parents of the schools. Thus different Model C schools can have different budgets, different teacher to student ratios, and varying quality of facilities, all based on what the parents can afford.

Over and above these government funded schools are private or independent schools which receive no funding from the government and are funded entirely by fees paid by the parents.

Of the total enrolled pupils, 12 048 821 (85.0%) were in public schools and 352 396 (2.5%) were in independent schools. Of the pupils in other institutions, 761 087 (5.4%) were in public HE institutions, 320 679 (2.3%) were in public FET institutions, 292 734 (2.1%) were in public ABET centres, 289 312 (2.0%) were in ECD centres, and 102 057 (0.7%) were in special schools.

Post-secondary

A 2004 document of the Ministry Of Education called *A New Funding Framework: How Government Grants Are Allocated To Public Higher Education Institutions lists a broad summary of the ways in which funds flowed to public universities and* technikons *(now Universities of Technology) in South Africa:*

50% Government grants
25% Student tuition & other fees
25% Other private income

= 100% Annual funds for public higher education.

Source: *> A New Funding Framework: How Government Grants Are Allocated To Public Higher Education Institutions (PDF, 2004)(Diagram 1 p. 2/20)*

Funding to institutions

"South Africa has one of the highest rates of government investment in education in the world. Education was allocated R105,5 billion in 2007/08."

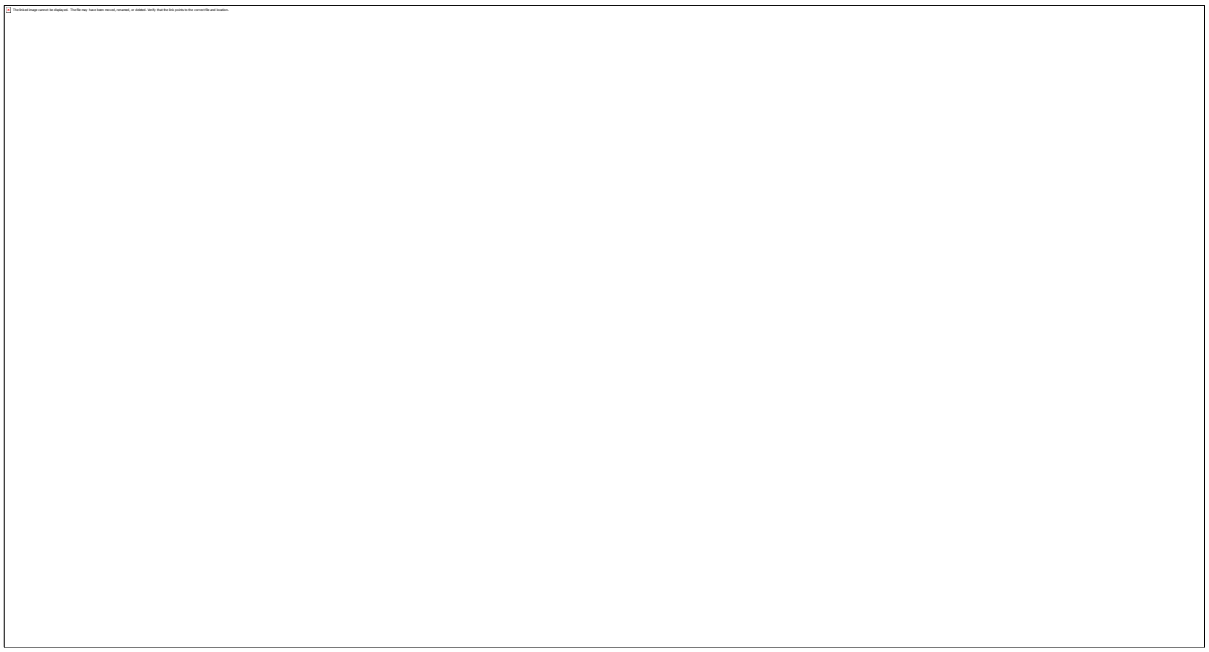
Source: South African Government Information - “About Education” web page

The South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) lists:

5.7% Public Expenditure on Education as a % of Gross National Income (GNI)
14.5% of Education budget allocated to higher education in (2008)
A Loan/Grant scheme is in place

Source: SARUA (2008) – Pillay report, referenced on the SARUA's South Africa web page

This table *Allocation of MTEF Budgets 2006/7 to 2008/9* shows how the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) budgets for the triennium 2006/07 to 2008/09 have been divided between the various categories of grant in the new funding framework:



Source:Ministry of Education - Ministerial Statement of Higher Education Funding: 2006/7 to 2008/9 Quality Assurance (PDF), 2006

In the Department of Education's Higher Education Information Management System (HEMIS), the properties of a qualification determines the total number of units of state subsidy approved by the Minister of Education for that qualification. The record of *subsidy units* per qualification is an essential part of the determination of full-time equivalent student totals. In turn these enable the Department of Education to calculate the annual subsidy grant for each public higher education institution. Subsidy units are at present described for each qualification in terms of "approved total years", "approved formal years", and "approved experiential years".

Source: The Higher Education Qualifications Framework - Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997), October 2007

Related Documents on Funding:

> Review of Higher Education in South Africa (selected themes), 2007
> The funding framework, published in the Government Gazette of 9 December 2003 (Vol 462, no 25824)

Bursaries for students

"In 2007/08, government allocated R1,8 billion to FET colleges. Over 25 000 students registered in newly developed technical and service skills-related programmes. Some R600 million was provided for bursaries to FET college students."

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is responsible for, among other matters, allocating loans and bursaries to eligible students in public HE.

Source: South African Government Information - "About Education" web page

Furthermore there are also several scholarship options for South African students, for example the scholarships of the Medical Research Council of South Africa (MRC)

Related Documents:

> Bursaries and training scholarships at Universities and Technikons, 2008
> Department of Education > EMIS > Statistics
> Education Statistics in South Africa - 2006 (PDF) Published by the Department of Education in February 2008
> the National Information Service for Higher Education (NiSHE) is a project of Higher Education South Africa (HESA) to provide quality information and guidance to anyone interested in studying at a university or a university of technology in South Africa. This information can spread from entry requirements to qualification pathways related to career options.

The South African Council on Higher Education (CHE) is an independent statutory body responsible for advising the Minister of Education on all matters related to higher education policy issues, and for quality assurance in higher education and training. Its statutory responsibility for the promotion and assurance of quality in higher education is carried out by one permanent sub-committee, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). The HEQC is responsible for evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of the quality management systems of higher education institutions in relation to assessment, short courses, certification arrangements, and recognition of prior learning (RPL).

The Higher Education Act of 1997 (reference: Higher Education Act 101 of 1997) states that the functions of the HEQC are to:

> promote quality in higher education
> audit the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions
> accredit programmes of higher education

National Qualifications Framework

In 2007 the Minister of Education published the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) (PDF) as set out in the Schedule as policy in terms of section 3 of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997). It recognized that separate and parallel qualifications structures for universities and technikons have hindered the articulation of programmes and transfer of students between programmes and higher education institutions. The HEQF is designed to facilitate vertical, horizontal and diagonal progression and provides the basis for integrating all higher education qualifications into the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and its structures for standards generation and quality assurance.

South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) is a body of 29 members appointed by the Ministers of Education and Labour with two major functions: to oversee first of all the development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and second of all the implementation of the NQF

Accumulation of credits towards qualifications

Matriculation Board is a project from Higher Education South Africa (HESA) and strives to administer the Matriculation Board regulations as required by law for the 2006 and 2007 Senior Certificate examinations, and entry into public HE in 2007 and 2008, and via HESA it advises the Minister of Education on the minimum general admission requirements for first bachelor's degree studies.

Credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) is the process whereby a student's achievements are recognised and contribute to further learning even if the student does not achieve a qualification.

The framework has nine qualification types mapped onto the six levels of the NQF occupied by higher education qualifications. Some levels have more than one qualification type. The framework comprises the following qualification types:

1. Undergraduate
    1. Higher Certificate (primarily vocational, or industry oriented and minimum entry requirement is National Senior Certificate)
    2. Advanced Certificate (primarily vocational, or industry oriented and minimum entry requirement is Higher Certificate)
    3. Diploma (primarily professional, vocational or industry specific and minimum entry requirement is National Senior Certificate or alternate the Higher Certificate or Advanced Certiticate in a cognate field]
    4. Advanced Diploma (minimum entry requirement is an appropriate Diploma or Bachelor's Degree)
    5. Bachelor's Degree (often referred to as "professional" Bachelor's Degrees, minimum entry requirement is the National Senior Certificate)
2. Postgraduate (postgraduate specialisation, minimum entry requirement Bachelor Honours Degree)
    1. Postgraduate Diploma (minimum entry requirement is an appropriate Bachelor's Degree)
    2. Bachelor Honours Degree (minimum entry requirement is a Postgraduate Diploma)
    3. Masters Degree (minimum entry requirement is a Bachelor Honours Degree or alternate a "professional" Bachelor's Degree with a minimum of 96 credits at level 8 or a Postgraduate Diploma)
    4. Doctoral Degree (minimum entry requirement is a Master's Degree)

The minimum requirement for admission to a higher education institution from 1 January 2009 is the National Senior Certificate, whose specifications were approved by the Minister of Education (in the document National Senior Certificate - A qualification at level 4 on the

National Qualifications Framework published in the Government Gazette, Vol. 481, 1\10. 27819, July 2005). Given the diversity of programmes and qualifications in higher education, the Minister has declared as policy the Minimum Admission Requirements for Higher Certificate/ Diploma and Bachelor's Degree Programmes (published in the Government Gazette, Vol. 482, No. 27961, August 2005) requiring a National Senior Certificate. These minima must be met by all applicants to entry level higher education qualifications. Applicants with different qualifications may only be admitted in they are judged equivalent by the designated equivalence-setting bodies.

Documents / web pages of relevance:

"Higher Education Monitor: A Case for Improving Teaching and Learning in South African Higher Education" by Ian Scott, Nan Yeld, Jane Hendry, 2007
Review of Higher Education in South Africa (selected themes), 2007
"The South African Council for Educators (SACE) aims to enhance the status of the teaching profession, and to promote the development of educators and their professional conduct."
Internationalisation and Quality in South African Universities, 2003, by Michael Smout (PDF)
Quality Assurance in South African Universities), 2002, by Michael Smout (PDF)

Information society

Organisations or Councils

SchoolNet SA is a non-profit educational organisation that creates learning communities of educators and learners who use ICT to enhance education in South Africa. Since 1997 SchoolNet SA manages a variety of projects covering all aspects of the use of ICTs, directed mainly at historically disadvantaged schools in South Africa.
The African Council for Distance Education (ACDE)(Kenya) is a continental educational organization comprising African universities and other higher education institutions, which are committed to expanding access to quality education and training through open and distance learning. Prof. Barney Pityana, Principal & Vice-Chancellor, Univ. of South Africa is Chairman of the board.

Umbrella institutions

The South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) promotes open learning principles, the use of quality distance education methods and the appropriate use of technology
National Association of Distance Education Organisations of South Africa (NADEOSA) promotes access to lifelong learning of high quality

Documents of relevance:

A Bibliography of ICT Applications in Education in Africa on WikiEducator.org
UNSECO Observatory Portal > South Africa
National Research Foundation > nformation and Communication Technology (ICT) and the Information Society in South Africa

The Impact of South Africa's ICT Infrastructure on Higher Education (p.69-76) (PDF), 2008, by Cheryl Brown (University of Cape Town South Africa), Herbert Thomas (University of the Free State, South Africa), Antoinette van der Merwe and Liezl van Dyk (University of Stellenbosch, South Africa). A paper presented at ICEL 2008, which is included in the Booklet with Abstracts of Papers.

Landscaping Information and Communication Technologies in Higher Education in South Africa (WORD or PDF), 2007, by Cheryl Brown, Herbert Thomas, Antoinette van der Merwe, Liezl van Dyk. A paper prepared for TENET Symposium 12-14 November 2007.

Higher Education Monitor - Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and South African Higher Education: Mapping the Landscape Research Report for the Council on Higher Education, July 2006, by Laura Czerniewicz, Neetha Ravjee, Nhlanhla Mlitwa.

Designing and Delivering Distance Education: Quality Criteria and Case Studies from South Africa. Section One (PDF - EN - 17 pages, by Tessa Welch and Yvonne Reed with NADEOSA Quality Criteria Task Team

Enhancing the contribution of Distance Higher Education in South Africa, 2004, by the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE)

ICT in education initiatives

In all the different facets of the ICTs for education prism, South Africa boasts about two decades of accumulated experience from its wide range of projects and programmes pioneered by noteworthy champions across the stakeholder spectrum of communities, the private sector, civil society, donor, development, and government agencies.

ICT education policies are embedded within a broader national government economic, social, and development strategy which includes:

Attention at the highest level in government to the role of ICTs in the promotion of economic growth, job creation, social development, and global competitiveness

Linkages of South Africa's strategy to a broader pan-African mandate as expressed in the commitment to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) programme and its dedicated project promoting e-schooling

Overhaul in the education and skills development system at all levels

A dedicated policy on the transformation of learning and teaching through the use of ICTs, particularly in the formal schools

Education Network and E-rate

The Department of Communications (DOC) leads all ICT initiatives in South Africa through its Electronic Communications and Transactions Act (ECA) of 2002, which is an extension of its Telecommunications Act of 1996 and 2001 and which promotes the establishment of a Universal Service Agency (now referred to as the Universal Service and Access Agency of Southern Africa (USAASA), a Universal Service Fund, an Education Network (EduNet), and an "e-rate," all of which serve at least conceptually to support access to and use of ICTs in education institutions.

The Education Network is to be an entity that would network all public schools and education and training institutions. The e-rate allows discounted access to Internet services to education institutions in South Africa. Section 73 of the ECA states that Internet services provided to all public schools and all public further education and training institutions must be provided at a minimum discounted rate of 50% of the total charge levied by the licensee. The discount includes, but is not limited to, any connectively charges for access to the Internet, charges for any equipment used for or in association with connectivity to the Internet, and all calls made to an ISP.

E-education White Paper

Policy development on ICTs in education date back to 1995, with the establishment of the Technology Enhanced Learning Initiatives (TELI) which was followed by the Feasibility Study for the Establishment of a Dedicated Educational Channel. In 2001, the National Department of Education and the Department of Communication jointly released a Strategy for Information and Communication Technology in Education, which is believed to have laid the basis for the e-Education White Paper adopted in 2004.

The goal of the policy is that every learner in the primary and secondary school sectors should be ICT capable by 2013. To achieve this, schools are expected to be developed into e-schools consisting of a community of both teachers and learners. E-schools are further defined as having:

Learners who utilise ICTs to enhance learning
Qualified and competent leaders who use ICTs for planning, management, and administration
Qualified and competent teachers who use ICTs to enhance teaching and learning
Access to ICT resources that support curriculum delivery
Connections to ICT infrastructure

In such institutions, the teachers and learners are be able to function across three dimensions:

Operational – referring to skills to use ICTs
Cultural – developing cultures that support the practices of using ICTs
Critical – ability by teachers and learners to challenge assumptions embedded in the success stories about ICT

E-education is defined as much more than just developing computer literacy skills and the skills necessary to operate various types of ICTs. It is also the ability to:

Apply ICTs, access, analyse, evaluate, integrate, present, and communicate information
Create knowledge and information by adapting, applying, designing, inventing, and authoring information
Function in a knowledge society by using appropriate technology and mastering communication and collaboration skills

South Africa has a host of dispersed and unco-ordinated programmes and projects that promote education through the use of ICTs at various levels of the education system,

particularly in the formal schools sector. A study by SchoolNet South Africa (2002) lists 34 different programmes and projects in the schools sector. Since then a few have fallen by the wayside and some have tended to collaborate more closely. The need for coordination remains. Some of the individual government departments of education have had their own provincial strategies, particularly in the schools sector. The major programmes in the schools sector currently underway in South Africa are listed below:

Community Education Computer Society (CECS) - NGO promoting access to training on ICTs in Southern Africa - http://www.cecs.org.za

ICDL Foundation - Certified courses based on an end-user standard on ICTs training - http://www.icdl.org.za

The AVOIR Project - The African Virtual Open Initiatives and Resources (AVOIR) Project, initiated by the University of the Western Cape (UWC), is a collaborative effort among several African higher education institutions. It attempts to create educational and business opportunities that contribute to the development of Africa through Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) development activities - http://www.avoir.uwc.ac.za

Sakai SA - Three South African universities, the University of Cape Town, University of South Africa and North-West University, are collaborating on the deployment and extension of the Sakai Collaboration and Learning Environment (CLE). Sakai is a global consortium of over 100 higher education institutions jointly developing an open source CLE which is used to support teaching and learning, ad hoc group collaboration, support for portfolios and research collaboration - http://www.sakaiproject.org

Media Works - Media Works is an established company that specialises in providing National Qualifications Framework-aligned training for Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and learnerships. They provide both face-to-face classes and computer-assisted learning through multimedia programmes with workbooks and facilitator sessions - http://www.mediaworks.co.za

Women'sNet - is an NGO that promotes gender equality and justice in South Africa through the use of ICTs by providing training and facilitating content dissemination and creation that supports women, girls, and women's and gender organisations and networks to take control of their own content and ICT use - http://www.womensnet.org.za

Virtual initiatives in schools

iSchoolAfrica is an Apple project which provides each participating school with 1 mobile classroom containing 12 MacBooks, 12 video cameras and 1 projector. The mobile classroom, which fits into a secure, mobile case, is a way of deploying scarce resources and can be moved from classroom to classroom. Each MacBook comes preloaded with the iLife suite of applications - allowing learners to make movies, music, websites etc. A trainer, the iSchoolAfrica facilitator (iSf), works with teachers in the classroom. The combination of mobile classroom and facilitator encourages teachers to develop confidence and competence, so that gradually teachers can start to use technology independently in the classroom.

The iSf identifies and trains the most committed and capable teacher in each school to become a resident facilitator, who takes over the facilitation and becomes responsible for lesson plan development and integration. The focus of the programme is learning and teaching, not tools, nor infrastructure.

The Youth Press Team involves teams in more than 20 schools across South Africa using the project to create newsworthy video content for TV. The Press Team project started with the World Cup 2010 in South Africa.

Member schools and sponsors: Gauteng: Peermont School Support Programme Corporate Sponsorship Schools:

Thuto-Lesedi Secondary School, Vosloorus
Sunward Park High School, Boksburg
Tembisa Secondary School
Unity Secondary School, Daveyton
Germiston High School
Lethulwazi Secondary School, Vosloorus
General Smuts High School

Mini SA Corporate Sponsorship Schools:

Jeppe High School for Girls, Kensington
National School of the Arts, Braamfontein
Buhlebuzile Secondary School , Thokoza

Rio Corporate Sponsorship Schools:

Alabama Combined School, Klerksdorp
Are Fadimeheng Secondary, Klerksdorp
Technical High School, Klerksdorp
Sacred Heart College
Zonkizizwe Secondary, Katlehong
Kingsmead College, Rosebank

North-West

Bakubang Economic Development Unit Corporate Sponsor
BEDU Schools

Western Cape

Khanya: Western Cape Education Department Technology in Education Project Sponsored Schools:
Wynberg High School
Cedar High School

Eastern Cape, North-West and Limpopo Sponsored schools:

Hatlani Muyexe Secondary, Muyexe
Dysselsdorp Secondary, Dysselsdorp

Gaoplotlake Secondary North-West

Thuthong Education Portal Offers a wide range of resources on teacher development, curriculum, legislation, educational policy, administration, links to external web resources on the internet and more. Requires (free) registration.

Mindset Network Mindset delivers free educational material via satellite broadcasts, with supporting multimedia material in print and on the internet. It focusses on high school, primary school and health care workers. Video content is broadcast on Mindset Learn to 1 000 high schools and over a million homes in southern Africa.

The Learning Channel Coming out of an educational series on SABC television, the Learning Channel offers free downloadable workbooks for matric subjects, as well as interactive video tutorials in a comprehensive list of subjects for sale. There are also resources in an archived site.

M-Web Learning This site requires M-Web, Tiscali or Iafrica membership and offers resources for school-goers of all ages: textbooks, past exam papers and school projects, while learners can use forum boards to ask questions of a panel of experts.

South African History Online This offers alternative perspectives of history, focusing on untold stories and giving learners a chance to construct their own oral histories. The Classroom section has comprehensive content for grades 4 to 12. There's also plenty of information for teachers, and a well-illustrated section on arts and culture. SA History Online aims to "break the silence on the historic and cultural achievements of the country's black communities" and to celebrate the achievements of all those who "fought for the realisation of a common humanity, the building of a non-racial democracy and the celebration of our cultural diversity". (http://www.sahistory.org.za/) The website is linked to a school and community-based outreach programme. Other components of the programme, which is sponsored by the Ford Foundation and Ireland Aid, include an annual history competition using television, print and radio to encourage the public to record their histories

Internet Biology Education Project The University of the Western Cape's botany department, the Western Cape Schools Network and the Western Cape education department collaborate to improve the teaching and learning of biology with online assistance. The site hosts mailing lists and newsgroups, and contains a wide range of learning and teaching materials. http://www.botany.uwc.ac.za/Sci_Ed/

South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement

Saasta, part of the National Research Foundation (NRF), aims to promote public understanding and awareness of science, engineering and technology (SET), and to make science accessible and exciting to all South Africans. It seeks to build the quantity and quality of mathematics and science outputs at school level to expand the number of learners who will become scientists and innovators. South Africa was ranked very low in the 1993 and 1998/9 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, so the work done by SAASTA's

Education Unit is seen as important in encouraging young people to become scientists and engineers. Its work can be divided into three areas:

School science support, which includes educator and learner programmes, science enrichment projects and competitions.

SET careers, which exposes learners to career opportunities in science, engineering and technology.

Science resources, which includes resources to support the school science curriculum; enrichment materials; web-based materials; and online learning.

SAASTA derives its core funding from the Department of Science and Technology (DST). http://www.saasta.ac.za/

SABC Education The SA Broadcasting Corporation's education division provides information on the SABC's various educational programmes, plus details on school competitions, school TV, games and colouring-in exercises for kids. http://www.sabceducation.com/

For further information on ICT initiatives in South Africa, follow the following websites:

http://www.intodev.org
http://www.computersforkids.co.za
http://www.edupac.co.za
http://www.telkomfoundation.org
http://www.linuxchix.org
http://www.unganaafrika.org
http://www.computeraid.org
http://www.digitallinks.org
http://www.eafricacommission.org
http://www.netday.org.za
http://www.learn.co.za
http://www.learnthings.co.za
http://www.naledi3d.com
http://www.riverbend.co.za
http://www.saide.org.za
http://www.santecnetwork.org
http://www.hp.com/einclusion/en/project/project_mogalakwena.html
http://www.ulwaziproject.co.za/

Virtual initiatives in post-secondary education

To view the initiatives, go to the Virtual Initiatives in South Africa Re.ViCa page.

Lessons learnt

General lessons

Notable practices

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Matriculation Board by HESA
South African Nursing Council (SANC)
South African Council for English Education (SACE)
African Council for Distance Education (ACDE)
National Association of Distance and Open Learning in South Africa (NADEOSA)
South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE)
Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA)
Association of African Universities (AAU)
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South African Government Information - National and Provincial Departments

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Wikipedia entry on Bantu Education Act of 1953 (No. 47) with regards to the Apartheid
South Africa: A Country Study > Education, 1996 by Rita M. Byrnes, ed. for the Library of Congress, USA with regards to the Apartheid
Education Reform in Post-Apartheid South Africa, a video in which Helen Ladd and Edward Fiske speak about their book from 2004, Elusive Equity: Education Reform in Post-Apartheid South Africa, ISBN-13: 978-0815728405, 269 pages.
41st TB Davie Memorial Lecture *Accounting for Autonomy: How Higher Education lost its Innocence* by Jonathan D. Jansen, Dean of Education: University of Pretoria, 2004 (PDF - 11 pages) on the relation between the state and the Higher Education institutes and how autonomy in the South Africa Higher Education changed.
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> Countries
>> Main Page

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Brazil

From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

(Re.ViCa version by Paul Bacsich, Ilse Op de Beeck, Sandis Zuciks et al)

Put in merged template and prepared for external consultants by Paul Bacsich, Sero.

For entities in Brazil see Category:Brazil.

Contents

Partners and experts in Brazil

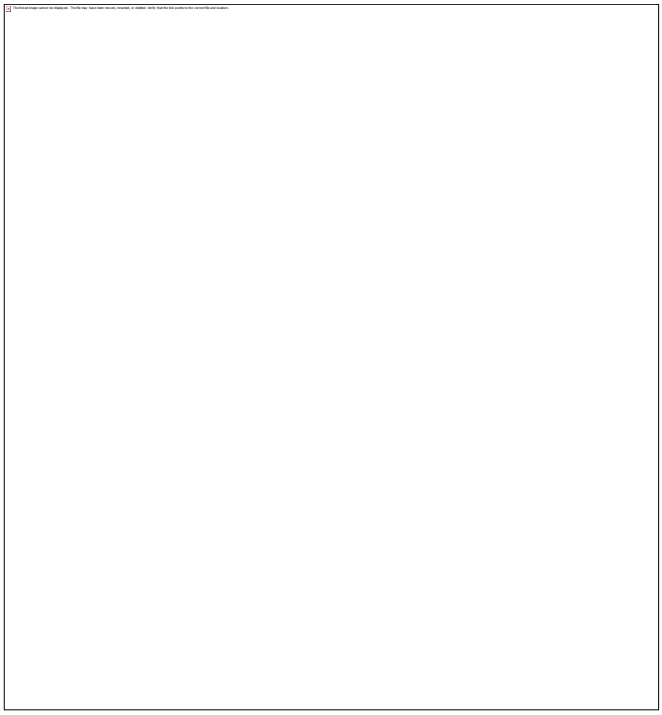
Partners

There are no project partners situated in Brazil.

Experts

Prof. Fred Litto is member of the Re.ViCa International Advisory Committee and now of the VISCED International Advisory Committee.

Brazil in a nutshell



Brazil (Portuguese: Brasil), officially the Federative Republic of Brazil (Portuguese: República Federativa do Brasil), is a country in South America. It is the fifth largest country by geographical area, occupying nearly half of South America, the fifth most populous country, and the fourth most populous democracy in the world. Bounded by the Atlantic Ocean on the east, Brazil has a coastline of over 7,491 kilometers. It is bordered on the north by Venezuela, Suriname, Guyana and the overseas department of French Guiana; on the northwest by Colombia; on the west by Bolivia and Peru; on the southwest by Argentina and Paraguay and on the south by Uruguay. Numerous archipelagos are part of the Brazilian territory, such as Fernando de Noronha, Rocas Atoll, Saint Peter and Paul Rocks, and Trindade and Martim Vaz.

Brazil was a colony of Portugal from the landing of Pedro Álvares Cabral in 1500 until its independence in 1822. Initially independent as the Brazilian Empire, the country has been a republic since 1889, although the bicameral legislature; now called Congress, dates back to 1824, when the first constitution was ratified. Its current Constitution defines Brazil as a Federal Republic. The Federation is formed by the union of the Federal District, the 26 States, and the 5,564 Municipalities.

Brazil is the world's tenth largest economy at market exchange rates and the ninth largest in purchasing power. Economic reforms have given the country new international projection. It is a founding member of the United Nations and the Union of South American Nations. A predominantly Roman Catholic, Portuguese-speaking, and multiethnic society, Brazil is also home to a diversity of wildlife, natural environments, and extensive natural resources in a variety of protected habitats.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brazil

States of Brazil

Brazil has 26 states and one federal district, which is the capital city, Brasilia (Distrito Federal, DF). The states are: Amazonas, Pará, Mato Grosso, Minas Gerais, Bahia, Mato Grosso do Sul, Goiás, Maranhão, Rio Grande do Sul, Tocantins, Piauí, São Paulo, Rondônia, Roraima, Paraná, Acre, Ceará, Amapá, Pernambuco, Santa Catarina, Paraíba, Rio Grande do Norte, Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro, Alagoas and Sergipe.

Education in Brazil

Education in Brazil is regulated by the Federal Government, through the Ministry of Education, which defines the guiding principles for the organization of educational programs. Local governments are responsible for establishing state and educational programs following the guidelines and using the funding supplied by the Federal Government.

The Federal Constitution and the 1996 General Law of Education in Brazil(LDB) determine how the Federal Government, States, Federal District, and Municipalities manage and organize their respective education systems. Each of these public educational systems is responsible for their own maintenance, which manages funds as well as mechanisms and sources for financial resources. The Constitution reserves 25% of state and municipal taxes and 18% of federal taxes for education.

The 1988 Brazilian Constitution states that education is a right for all, a duty of the State and of the family, and is to be promoted with the collaboration of society, with the objective of

> fully developing integral development of the human personality and his/her participation in the work towards common welfare;
> preparing individuals and society to master scientific and technological resources which will allow the use existing possibilities to common welfare;
> protecting, disseminating and expanding cultural heritage;
> condemning any unequal treatment resulting from philosophical, political or religious belief, as well as any social classes or racial prejudices.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Brazil

Education is divided into three levels, with several grades in each division. Fundamental education (the first educational level) is free for everyone (including adults), and mandatory for children between the ages of 6-14. Secondary education is also free, but it is not mandatory. Higher education (including graduate degrees) is free at public universities.

Schools in Brazil

Education is divided into Pre-School, Basic and Higher Education. Basic education is divided into Fundamental and Secondary (ensino médio) levels and higher education corresponds to undergraduate and graduate degrees. Fundamental education is free for everyone (including adults) and mandatory for children between the ages of 6-14. Secondary education is also free, but it is not mandatory. Higher education is only free at public universities, but these correspond to less than 25% of the available places. Most higher education in Brazil is offered by the private sector.

Pre-School education (Educação Infantil)

Pre-School education is entirely optional, and exists to aid in the development of children under 6. It aims to assist in all areas of child development, including motor skills, cognitive skills, and social skills while providing fertile ground for the later acquisition of knowledge and learning. There are day nurseries for children under 2, kindergartens for 2-3 year olds, and preschools for children 4 and up.

Basic Education **(Fundamental and Secondary Education)**

Fundamental Education (Ensino Fundamental)

Fundamental Education is mandatory for children ages 6-14. There are 9 "years" (as opposed to the former 8 "grades"). The current "First Year" broadly corresponds to the former Pre-School last year of private institutions, and its aim is to achieve literacy. Generally speaking, the only prerequisite for enrolling in first year is that a child should be 6 years old, but some educational systems allow children younger than 6 to enroll in first year (as long as they turn 6 during the first academic semester). Older students who, for whatever reason have not completed their fundamental education are allowed to attend, though those over 18 are separated from the younger children.

The Federal Council of Education (Conselho Federal de Educação) sets a core curriculum consisting of Portuguese, History, Geography, Science, Mathematics, Arts and Physical Education (for years 2, 3, 4 and 5). As for years 6, 7, 8 and 9, one or two foreign languages are also compulsory (usually English and also Spanish).

Each educational system supplements this core curriculum with a diversified curriculum defined by the needs of the region and the abilities of individual students.

Fundamental Education is divided in two stages, called Ensino Fundamental I (years 1-5) and Ensino Fundamental II (years 6-9). During Ensino Fundamental I each group of students is usually assisted by a single teacher. As for Ensino Fundamental II, there are as many teachers as subjects.

The length of the school year is set at at least 200 days by the National Education Bases and Guidelines Law (Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação). Fundamental schools must provide

students with at least 800 hours of activities per year. The actual school calendar is set by individual schools which, in rural areas, often organize their calendar by sowing and harvesting seasons.

Secondary Education (Ensino Médio)

Secondary education normally takes three years. The minimum is 2200 hours of coursework over three years, but there are plans under discussion to increase that to 3000 hours, by adding 200 hours every year. Students are required to finish their 'Fundamental' education before they are allowed to enroll in the 'Ensino Médio'. The secondary education core curriculum comprises Portuguese (including Portuguese language, Brazilian and Portuguese literatures), foreign language (currently: usually English, also Spanish and very rarely French), History, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology. Recently Philosophy and Sociology, which were banned during the military dictatorship (1964-1985), became compulsory again.

It is possible to take professional training along with mainstream Secondary education. Such training usually lasts two years and can be taken during the second and third years of Secondary education. Some Secondary schools provide professional training in specific areas, such as Agriculture; such schools usually have a greater amount of instruction hours per week and the complete course can last up to four years.

Since 2004, technical and vocational/professional education in Brazil has benefited from considerably more attention from the government, as it has been regarded as vital for qualifying the workforce. Programs such as PRONATEC (Programa Nacional de Acesso ao Ensino Técnico e ao Emprego – National Program of Access to Technical Education and Employment) have been launched by the federal government to widen access to professional education to Brazilians by means of a series of sub-programmes and actions.

There are six programmes in PRONATEC, but the one that is relevant here is E-Tec. This is an important sub-programme in the context of virtual schools - E-Tec Brasil (Programa Escola Técnica Aberta do Brasil – Open Technical School of Brazil Programme), launched in 2007 with courses officially starting in March 2008. Its objective is to offer technical courses in the distance education (DE) mode, articulated with the schools of the federal and state network.

In Brazil, legislation related to distance education requires that DE courses assess students on a face-to-face basis. Therefore regional centres need to be set up and equipped with libraries and computer labs. In order to enable this, the Brazilian Ministry of Education (MEC) provides funding for equipment, tutoring, course management and production.

National Basic Education Assessment Systems: Prova Brasil, SAEB and IDEB

Both Prova Brasil and the National System of Basic Education Assessment (SAEB – Sistema Nacional de Avaliação da Educação Básica) are large-scale diagnostic assessment systems developed by INEP (National Institute of Studies and Educational Research Anisio Teixeira – INEP/MEC). Their goal is to assess the quality of the teaching offered in the Brazilian

educational system by using standardized measuring tests and socio-economic surveys. In the tests applied to students of the fifth and ninth years of the fundamental cycle and of the third year of secondary education (ensino medio) the students respond to questions of Portuguese language (focusing on reading skills) and mathematics (focusing on problem solving). In the socio-economic survey, information is given in relation to contextual factors that may affect their performance.

Teachers and headteachers also respond to demographic, professional profile and work condition surveys. SAEB is an assessment by sample, in that only a selection of students participate in it; a random sample of students. However, Prova Brasil is applied to all the students of the years mentioned above (fifth and ninth), who are studying in the rural and urban schools systems. Prova Brasil makes the results available per school, municipality and state, whilst SAEB does not.

The results of SAEB and Prova Brasil are used as guidance to MEC and State and Municipal Secretariats to define the actions that will improve the quality of education in the country and reduce the inequalities. These actions aim to promote the correction of distortions in the system previously identified, with the objective of redirecting technical and financial resources to priority areas.

The average obtained in the results of these tests is deployed to assist the calculation of the IDEB (Basic Education Development Index). These results are available throughout society, so that the population may follow the development of the Brazilian education system, and check the performance of each individual school through the Prova Brasil results.

Brazil’s Index of Basic Education Quality - IDEB

"The Brazilian Ministry of Education introduced in 2007 an innovative tool for systematic monitoring of basic education progress in every school, municipality, state (and federal district) and region of the country. The innovation lies in the IDEB index’ combined measure of student learning results and student flows (grade progression, repetition, graduation, etc.). Because the index is the product of both test scores and pass rates, it discourages schools from automatic promotion of children who are not learning. However, it also discourages schools from holding children back in order to boost learning scores. Avoiding incentives for grade retention is important in Brazil, with average repetition rates in primary school approximately 20%, the highest in Latin America.

The IDEB builds on the progress Brazil has made in scaling up its national student assessment system to a technically well-regarded learning assessment that applied every two years to all 4th and 8th grade students in math and Portuguese -- called the Prova Brasil. The IDEB measure combines Prova Brasil test results with administrative data on school enrollments, repetition and grade promotion. The raw scale of the exams ranges from 0 to 500, and the standardized scale ranges between 0 and 10. Pass rates are calculated based on the information reported by each school to the National School Census, applied annually by the Ministry of Education.

The IDEB has become rapidly accepted in Brazil as the leading metric for gauging the relative performance of both individual schools and municipal and state systems. Biannual IDEB results are widely reported in the media and the federal government has established targets for improvement of primary and secondary education results for every one of Brazil's 26 state and federal district, and 5,564 municipal school systems. Within states and municipalities, IDEB reveals the relative performance of different schools. At the secondary school level, the index is based on SAEB test results (which is applied in a representative sample of schools in each state and the federal district) and student flow data. Thus, it generates state-level, but not school or municipal level scores".

Source: Reynaldo Fernandes (2007), INEP (2008), quoted in ([World Bank Report 2010], p. 19

ENEM – National Exam of Secondary Education (Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio)

The Exam was created in 1998 and its objective is to assess the performance of each student at the end of the basic education system. Students who are coming to the end of the cycle or who have finished the cycle in previous years can take part in the assessment.

ENEM is used as a criterion for university entry; it is a prerequisite for those students who want to have a studentship in the programme known as ProUNi (University for All – Universidade para Todos) – a government-supported programme which offers grants for students. Besides that, many other private universities use ENEM as a criterion in the selection of students for places in their undergraduate courses.

The main objective of ENEM is to evaluate the performance of the student when they finish basic education in order to assess whether they have the basic competencies to be a fully engaged citizen. ENEM has also been used as a tool to increasingly democratize the access to higher education in Brazil and as a complementary factor in the curriculum of individuals when searching for jobs.

New Initiatives

The Education Ministry has created a new exam (Exame Nacional de Ingresso na Carreira Docente) for all new teacher candidates.

Pernambuco's "Escolas de Referência". In 2007, Pernambuco partnered with a set of companies committed to improving education to convert 10 existing secondary schools in to a new model of full-day schools with high quality instruction; by 2010 the program had expanded to 60 full-time and 100 half-day secondary schools. Phillips, Odebrecht, ABN Amro/ Real Bank and Hidreletric Company of São Francisco (Chesf) created the ICE (Insituto de Co-responsabilidade pela Educação) in Pernambuco.

Public-Private Partnerships, e.g. Institutions such as Unibanco Institute, Pão de Açúcar group are investing in secondary public education in partnership with States.

Minas Gerais PEP (Programa do Ensino Profissionalizante). The largest-scale and most promising approach to date is Minas Gerais' innovative voucher program, called PEP. In an effort to diversify and expand the technical and vocational training options for youths and young adults, the state in 2007 launched the secondary-level voucher.

Pace of change: The Brazilian "Education Action Lab"

The education landscape is changing in Brazil. Profound reforms of the basic education system over the past 15 years at the federal level have put in place the institutional framework for a higher-performing basic education system. An impressive number of governors and mayors have made education reform a political priority. Dynamic secretaries of education are moving ahead with creative programs and bold reforms that were unthinkable two decades ago. Education policymakers are beginning to support rigorous impact evaluations to establish which programs really work. Leading examples of promising reforms and the evidence on their impact are highlighted throughout this report. ([World Bank Report 2010], p.21)

Brazil's highly decentralized basic education framework – with 26 states, a federal district, and over 5,500 municipal education systems – makes the country a natural "innovation lab" for education policy. Thousands of promising new initiatives are launched each year in public systems. A significant number of private foundations are active in program development and providing implementation support to states, the federal district, and municipalities across the country.

Tens of thousands of creative new education policies and programs are being tried out at this moment across Brazil by dynamic, results-oriented secretaries of education. There are very few countries in the world with the scale, scope and creativity of education policy action that can be seen today in Brazil. Even more unique is the large number of cutting-edge policy areas in which different states and municipalities are experimenting with similar programs with slightly different design features -- like the teacher bonus programs in Minas Gerais, São Paulo, Pernambuco and Rio de Janeiro municipality. The chance to study these systematically makes Brazil one of the world's best laboratories for generating global evidence on "what works" in education. ([World Bank Report 2010], p.86)

"A concerted federal strategy to support systematic research and knowledge generation from the Brazilian "education action lab" might be the single fastest road to world class education". ([World Bank Report 2010], p.87)

Higher education

Higher Education (Ensino Superior)

Secondary education is mandatory for those wishing to pursue higher education. In addition, students must pass a competitive entrance examination (known as vestibular) for their specific course of study. The number of candidates per available place in the freshman class may be in excess of 30 or 40 to one in the most competitive courses at the top public

universities. In some particular courses with small number of vacancies, this number can be as high as 200[1].

Higher education in Brazil, as in many nations, can be divided into both undergraduate and graduate work. In addition to providing education, Universities promote research and provide stand-alone classes to the community.

The standard Brazilian undergraduate degree, styled "bacharelado", is awarded in most fields of arts, humanities, social sciences, mathematical sciences, or natural sciences, and normally requires 4 years of post-secondary studies at a certified university. Students who wish to qualify as secondary school teachers must complete a separate licentiate ("licenciatura") degree course, which, like a "bacharelado", also has a normal length of 4 years, but has a stronger emphasis on teaching methods and pedagogy. There is also a graduate in technology (whose graduates are called technologists), which emphasizes professional education geared to the labor market and the development of studies in the area of technology, especially in health, information technology, engineering and management. The degree in technology normally requires 2 to 4 years of studies in a certified university or college.

Five-year degrees leading to a professional diploma are awarded in select state-regulated careers such as architecture, engineering, veterinary medicine, psychology, and law. The professional degree in medicine requires in turn six years of full-time post-secondary studies. Residência, a two-to-five years internship in a teaching hospital is not required, but it is pursued by many professionals, especially those who wish to specialize in a given area.

Students who hold a four-year bachelor's degree or a five-year professional diploma are qualified for admission into graduate school (pós-graduação). Graduate master's degrees are normally awarded following the completion of a two-year program requiring satisfactory performance in a minimum number of advanced graduate courses (typically between five and eight classes), plus the submission by the degree candidate of a master's thesis (dissertação de mestrado) that is examined by an oral panel of at least three faculty members, including at least one external examiner. Doctoral degrees on the other hand normally require four years of full-time studies during which the degree candidate is required to complete further advanced graduate coursework, pass a doctoral qualifying exam, and submit an extensive doctoral dissertation (tese de doutorado) that must represent an original and relevant contribution to current knowledge in the field of study to which the dissertation topic belongs. The doctoral dissertation is examined in a final public oral exam administered by a panel of at least five faculty members, two of whom must be external examiners. Results from the dissertation are normally expected to be published in peer-reviewed journals, proceedings of international conferences, and/or in the form of books/book chapters.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Brazil

Table 1. Institutions of Higher Education in Brazil in 2004

		Universities	University centers	Integrated colleges	Colleges, Schools, Institutes	CET/FaT*

Brazil	2013	169	107	119	1474	144
Public	224	83	3	3	86	49
Public- Federal	87	46	1	-	6	34
Public- State	75	32	-	-	28	15
Public- Municipal	62	5	2	3	52	-
Private	1789	86	104	116	1388	95
Private - Private	1401	26	60	97	1125	93
Private - Community	388	60	44	19	263	2

CET/FaT Centers for Technological Education and Collages of Technology (INEP, 2004b).

Source: Marina Becker Reifschneider Distance Education in Brazil and in the United States: a comparative view

Brazil has put significant resources into developing its higher education system over the past three decades. As a result, a system has evolved in which some institutions have achieved recognizable excellence in teaching and research, while, more generally, the majority of institutions have struggled to provide relevant, quality education at reasonable cost. Looked at in isolation, certain parts of the system are sound and productive. Taken as a whole, the system still has a number of large challenges to overcome.

About 15% of the age cohort is enrolled in higher education. This is quite low compared to other countries in the region (Argentina 36%; Chile 32%; Uruguay 30%; Venezuela, R.B. 29% [World Development Indicators 2001]) and to the OECD country average of 52% (OECD, 2001). Simply doubling the number of spaces offered, however, will not double the rate of coverage, because a demographic bulge of young Brazilians is reaching university age. Over the past 15 years, growth in private provision of higher education was roughly equal to the moderate growth of the university-age cohort, but now large absolute increases in enrollments would be needed simply to maintain the current rate of coverage. In addition, graduation rates from secondary schools are rising sharply and more older, working Brazilians are seeking tertiary degrees. In short, a larger percentage of a growing number of Brazilians are demanding higher education, and the system cannot keep pace with this demand under existing conditions.

Cost per student in public institutions, roughly R$14,000 per year in the federal system, is on par with OECD country averages while quality is not. Rigidities in funding and regulation create strong disincentives for cost-efficiency or quality. Public universities have been funded on the basis of input. Federal policy toward higher education, until recently, did not attempt to control costs or correlate funding to productivity. Other legislation and regulations, outside the control or influence of MEC, created built-in cost increases that did not improve the

access, quality, or relevance of the education. University rectors have traditionally concerned themselves more with obtaining resources from the federal government than with managing the resources effectively within their institutions.

With a few notable exceptions, the quality of instruction and the relevance of the curriculum are below desirable standards. Historically, the Brazilian system - like those of continental Europe - is oriented to provide professional training rather than general or interdisciplinary education. Holders of a first university degree (graduação) are licensed to practice their profession by virtue of their diplomas. Such systems have been successful, productive, and of high quality under a variety of conditions. However, in Brazil, thanks largely to restrictive labor market regulation, the influence of professional associations in setting the curricula and the numbers of courses/places have served to limit the supply of professional labor, rather than to satisfy the demands of the labor market. Furthermore, in the Brazilian public system, a lack of coherence in research, teaching, and career advancement policies in public institutions has often led to a concentration of professors doing specialized research at the expense of undergraduate teaching. By contrast, many private institutions are driven by profit, and therefore do not undertake any research or pay salaries necessary to attract and retain high-quality professors.

The public system, which includes many, but not all of the country's finest institutions, provides higher quality education than the private sector, charges no tuition, and limits the number of places. Competition for admittance is fierce, and wealthy students do best because they can afford elite private high schools and special preparation courses for the entrance exams. Estimates on enrollment by income quintile show that two thirds of students are from the highest income quintile, while only about 5% are from the two lowest. It is a generally recognized problem that students from lower and lower middle class backgrounds have greater difficulty gaining entrance to the free, public system. If these individuals study at all, they are more likely to be in the private system, where they must pay tuition. Some financial assistance is available from the government and the institutions themselves, but it does not sufficiently address the needs of the students in the system, and much less the potential students who are excluded due to inability to pay.

Clearly, many important changes are underway within the system. The challenge is to focus attention on those that will promote the greatest progress in equitable access, quality, relevance, and efficiency. With this in mind, it is recommended the following steps. First, with respect to access: (a) the trend towards diversification through new instruments, such as sequential courses, and new institutional definitions (such as university centers) should continue; (b) the amount of targeted financial assistance for poor students should be increased; and (c) five and ten year enrollment increase targets should be identified, and progress toward improved coverage should be monitored closely. Additionally, the Government of Brazil has several policy options for increasing access to tertiary education that it may consider in the future. These include: i) increasing government and private funding of public institutions; in light of the current economic situation in Brazil, and the government's relatively high spending for higher education, it is unlikely that a large infusion of public funds for higher education is forthcoming. However, the addition of private resources could lead to an increased supply of places to the extent that the additional resources are used to educate and train students rather than to pay for administrative costs or

research; ii) reducing costs per student at public institutions could be achieved in any number of ways and is best dealt with at the institutional level; and iii) charging tuition at public universities. This option is being used increasingly around the world as a means to maintain or increase institutional budgets. When combined with well thought out student aid schemes, this could have a positive impact on equity access.

Higher education structure

Secondary education is mandatory for those wishing to pursue higher education. In addition, students must pass a competitive entrance examination (known as vestibular) for their specific course of study. The number of candidates per available place in the freshman class may be in excess of 30 or 40 to one in the most competitive courses at the top public universities. In some particular courses with small number of vacancies, this number can be as high as 200.

Higher education in Brazil, as in many nations, can be divided into both undergraduate and graduate work. In addition to providing education, Universities promote research and provide stand-alone classes to the community.

Higher education begins with undergraduate or sequential courses, which may offer different specialization choices such as academic or vocational education. Depending on choice, students may improve their educational background with postgraduate courses Stricto Sensu or Lato Sensu. Higher education has three bases: teaching, research and extension, each with their own specific contribution to make to a particular course. Diplomas and certificates are proof of having passed through higher education.

The standard Brazilian undergraduate bachelor's degree (graduação) is awarded in most fields of arts, humanities, social sciences, mathematical sciences, or natural sciences, and normally requires 4 years of post-secondary studies at a certified university. Students interested in teaching careers at secondary schools can take an additional year in lecturing courses (licenciatura). Five-year degrees are awarded in the so-called professional careers such as architecture, engineering, veterinary medicine, and law. The undergraduate degree in medicine requires in turn six years of full-time post-secondary studies. Residência, a two-to-five years internship in a teaching hospital is not required, but it is pursued by many professionals, especially those who wish to specialize in a given area.

Students who hold a four-year bachelor's degree or a five-year professional diploma are qualified for admission into graduate school (pós-graduação). Graduate master's degrees are normally awarded following the completion of a two-year program requiring satisfactory performance in a minimum number of advanced graduate courses (typically between five and eight classes), plus the submission by the degree candidate of a master's thesis (dissertação de mestrado) that is examined by an oral panel of at least three faculty members, including at least one external examiner. Doctoral degrees on the other hand normally require four years of full-time studies during which the degree candidate is required to complete further advanced graduate coursework, pass a doctoral qualifying exam, and submit an extensive doctoral dissertation (tese de doutorado) that must represent an original and relevant contribution to current knowledge in the field of study to which the dissertation topic

belongs. The doctoral dissertation is examined in a final public oral exam administered by a panel of at least five faculty members, two of whom must be external examiners. Results from the dissertation are normally expected to be published in peer-reviewed journals, proceedings of international conferences, and/or in the form of books/book chapters.

Problems in Higher education system

The main problems the Brazilian higher education system is facing at present are the following:

1. Access: in spite of the rapid expansion during the last ten years, the system is still small compared with those of other countries in Latin America. Also, most students in higher education come from medium- and high-income groups. The poorest sections of the population can only enter higher education today as a result of the great expansion at secondary level.

2. Finance: the new sections of the population trying to enter higher education lack sufficient financial backing. Places in the free public institutions are very restricted and the cost of private education is very high in terms of the incomes of these new groups aspiring to enter higher education.

3. Quality: the quality of higher education institutions in Brazil is very variable. Alongside institutions with international reputations we find many with low levels of teaching and little encouragement to undertake research.

4. Efficiency: public institutions - usually of better quality than the rest - suffer great problems of inefficiency in the use of public resources, resulting in a relatively small number of students attending them in terms of the amount of funds invested.

5. Curricular structure unrelated to the needs of the labour market: the content of higher education courses in Brazil lacks the flexibility to adapt to the needs of the labour market.

6. Little connection with the productive sector: in general, technological research and development is carried out in universities with little connection with the productive sector.

Expansion and access to Higher Education

Higher education enrolments more than doubled in the last ten years. In spite of this significant growth, the gross rate of enrolments at the higher level in Brazil is very small when compared to international levels, even when compared to some of other comparable countries in Latin America. Nevertheless, there is a reasonable consensus of opinion on the need to settle on the most effective way to provide a more lasting solution to the problems of access and equity in higher education. In the 1980s growth in enrolments did not even keep up with population growth.

Between 1980 and 1994 expansion of higher education was quite restricted: growth of only 20% in enrolments; reduction of 3.5% in the number of higher education institutions and 26%

growth in the number of courses. In 1994, total enrolments on undergraduate courses were 1.7 million. The higher education system at that time consisted of 851 institutions. There has been a significant increase in enrolments and completions of higher education courses in Brazil after 1995.

The growth in supply of courses in recent years has being greater in towns in the interior than in state capitals. That an 'interiorization' of higher education is occurring because of an appreciable growth in the numbers of courses, so that many towns which previously had no HEI now have one. This has brought great benefits to students who had been excluded on a regional basis. Many who had not been able to move to the state capital to study at the higher level and now have the chance to do so in their hometown.

Socio-economic data concerning students in Brazilian higher education institutions show the marked presence of those coming from social groups with average and high incomes. It can even be stated that the supply of places is basically a response to the demand for higher education that these classes have created. With the ever-growing demand and a far greater number of students able and desiring to enter higher education, private institutions have had ample room to increase their supply.

The growing expansion of secondary education and the increase in the number of students leaving this level of education suggests that there is greater pressure for obtaining chances of education at a higher level coming precisely from the poorer classes in society. The growth in supply of courses in recent years has been greater in the poorest states and in towns in the interior than in the southwest or south and state capitals. Projections concerning access to higher education indicate the growth among students from lower-income families in the total numbers of new entrants to higher education. This is happening due to the increased flow of students coming from public secondary education and the increasing demand for better-qualified personnel with university degrees for jobs which previously did not require them.

One of the main areas for public policy in relation to access is the design of the means of financing studies and maintaining lower-income students in the system. The policies of increasing rates of schooling at higher level with improved quality at this level, especially in public institutions, increasing the number of places on evening courses, the broad re-design of the means of financing studies and maintaining lower-income students in the system, are some of the possible initiatives being put into place. The country has experienced several mechanisms for increasing access to higher education, including student loans programmes, scholarships in private institution in exchange of tax exemption and, quotas. The policy of quotas, which is very controversial, appears in this context as a transitional strategy. It is also important to emphasize that the expansion of evening classes in the public sector is still insufficient to meet the potential demand from students who are finishing their public secondary education during the evening 'shift'. A great part of this potential demand has been met by the private sector. In Brazil, 68% of private enrolments are for the evening period, in which most courses do not require full-time attendance.

Universities in Brazil

There are about 2,300 HEIs in Brazil of which 11% are public and 89% are private institutions.

Among the public HEIs 42% are federal, 34% are state operated and 24% are run by municipalities. The municipal HEIs are mainly colleges, schools and institutes.

Among the private HEIs 78% are profit-seeking institutions while 20% are non-profit institutions run by religious, community or philanthropic organizations.

Research is mainly conducted at the 178 universities, which also grant the majority of Master's and Doctoral degrees.

Some of the universities in Brazil are:

Escola Federal de Engenharia de Itajuba
Escola Técnica Federal de Goiá
Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo Fundação Getúlio Vargas
Federal University of Paraiba
Instituto Militar de Engenharia
PUC-Rio
Pontifí&cia Universidade Católica do Paraná
Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Campinas
Pontificia Universidade Catolica do Rio Grande do Sul
Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo
Universidad Federal de São Paulo
Universidade Católica de Brasília
Universidade Católica de Pernambuco
Universidade Estadual Paulista
Universidade Estadual do Norte Fluminense
Universidade Federal Fluminense
Universidade Federal da Bahia
Universidade Federal de Alagoas
Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora
Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais
Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto
Universidade Federal de Pernambuco
Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina
Universidade Federal de Santa Maria
Universidade Federal de Uberlândia
Universidade Federal de Viçosa
Universidade Federal do Ceará
Universidade Federal do Paranà
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte

Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul
Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro
Universidade Federal fo Espírito Santo
Universidade de Brasília
Universidade de Fortaleza
Universidade de Passo Fundo
Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro
Universidade do Sul de Santa Catarina
University of Campinas
University of São Paulo

Education reform

Schools

Distance education reform

An important part of the Brazilian education reform began in 1995 with the creation of a federal department called the "Secretary of Distance Education" (SEED). The goal of SEED is to use information and communication technologies toward supporting and improving the quality and dissemination of education in this country with a population of 170 million people spread across nearly 1/2 of South America's land mass. Under SEED's "Proinfo" program, computers and access to the internet were issued to all public schools in Brazil, under the condition that the schools present an appropriate pedagogical strategy. To this end, each municipal government was allocated funding to establish a "Nucleus of Educational Technology" (NTE), making computer labs and networks available for teachers, and offering educational programs for teacher training.

Upgrading of teachers

Another important advance occurred in 1997, when the Brazilian Ministry of Education decreed that all K-12 school teachers have an undergraduate degree, and all university teachers a masters degree, by the year 2006. This meant that at least 50% of the Brazilian teachers and professors would have to upgrade their skills in a relatively short time, resulting in a huge and widespread demand for teacher training, as well as need to create solutions for efficient and effective teacher education.

The Distance Education Laboratory (LED) of the Federal University of Santa Catarina (South Brazil) has been meeting this challenge for several years by forming partnerships with educational institutions all over Brazil, implementing programs using Teleconferencing, Videoconferencing and Internet-based distance education programs, making it possible for teachers to avoid leaving their posts to learn. Although the subjects taught via the LED are varied, they are mainly related to information technology and education, according to each institution's specific needs and budget.

((more to be added by consultants - Task A))

Post-secondary

The Bologna Process

No information.

Administration and finance

Schools

((to be added by consultants - Task A))

Post-secondary

Higher education institutions in Brazil are, according to their administrative organization, classified as public or private, depending on the juridical nature of the organizations that maintain them. Public institutions are maintained and administered by the federal, state, or municipal governments. Private institutions are maintained and administered by individuals or legal entities and may be for-profit or not-for-profit (SESUa). Access to higher education is Brazil is through very competitive national entrance examinations; since public education, including tertiary and graduate education, is completely free of charge, entrance examinations to public schools are even more competitive. According to their academic organization, they may be Universities, Specialized Universities, University Centers, Specialized University Centers, Integrated Colleges and Colleges, Higher Education Institutes and Schools of Higher Education, and Centers for Technological Education. Universities and Specialized Universities conduct research and extension activities in addition to teaching (INEP, 2006).

Source: Marina Becker Reifschneider Distance Education in Brazil and in the United States: a comparative view

Quality assurance, inspection and accreditation

Schools

((to be added by consultants - Task A))

Post-secondary

There are large differences in quality of higher education institutes in Brazil. There are universities that have a high reputation all over the world and offer very high quality education; on the other hand, there are dozens of universities that fail the national evaluation tests applied by the Ministry of Education (MEC).

The evaluation process results in the quality level. Accreditation, re-accreditation of Universities, authorization, recognition and renewal of recognition are regulatory procedures. Evaluation identifies a scenario checking their quality. The Sinai (National System for the Evaluation of Higher Education) is responsible for these evaluations,and it is composed of four instruments for evaluation:

The institutional self-evaluation, carried out continuously and with results to be presented every three years;
The foreign institutional evaluation, performed locally by a committee of evaluators;
The assessment of the conditions of education (ACE) applied to courses where the evaluation committee deems necessary to check;
Integrated Evaluation Process of Educational Development and Innovation Area (ENADE), which will be applied to test students in the middle and end of the course in four major areas: human sciences, exact, technological and biological and health .

For a society to know the quality of each educational establishment and have parameters to choose where to attend graduation, the register of institutions and courses will contain a complete dossier with data legal, academic, and census evaluation. The results of the Sinai explain the decisions of the MEC on the recognition of courses and accreditation of institutions.

Source: http://www.nesobrazil.org/dutch-organizations/brazilian-education-system/quality-assurance

Quality of higher distance education

Quality control in higher education in Brazil seeks to 'insure continuous improvement in the development and dissemination of cultural, scientific, technological, and professional knowledge, as a means of overcoming regional, national and international problems, and achieving sustainable development' (SEEDc). The Distance Education Secretariat has released the document 'Ministry of Education Quality Indicators for Higher Distance Education Courses' ('Indicadores de Qualidade do MEC para Cursos de Graduação a Distância') as a guide to institutions seeking accreditation. This document discusses 10 critical issues to assure quality DE: management engagement, project design, multidisciplinary professional team, communication/integration between agents, educational resources, support infrastructure, continuous and comprehensive evaluation, agreements and partnerships, transparency of information, and financial sustainability.

Source: Marina Becker Reifschneider Distance Education in Brazil and in the United States: a comparative view

Information society

Towards the information society

The socio-economic inequities in Brazil strongly contribute to prevent a significant portion of country population to benefit from the access to modern information technologies. According to studies, (Waisenfisz, 2007) more than 31 million people had internet access in Brazil in 2005. However, this represents only 17,2% of Brazilian population. These results put Brazil in the 76° position among the 193 surveyed countries. In Latin America its rank is behind Chile (28,9%), Costa Rica (21,3%), Uruguai (20,6%), and Argentina (17,8%). The inequity of access among Brazilian regions and groups of people are even more dramatic. State of Alagoas rates were of 7,6%, while the Federal District presented 41,2%. The low-income group presented 0,5% access rate, in opposition to the higher income group with 77% access rate.Through education, social exclusion is to be reduced in order to avoid social inequality. To achieve this, the Brazilian Ministry of Education proposes a set of development programs in different but integrated directions. Some of these programs are: equipping schools with necessary structure to use computers and internet connection; enhancing teacher education and training stressing the development of information technology skills; providing open and distance learning opportunities; and offering free and quality digital learning resources. In order to take advantage from the information technologies individuals need to have access to information and knowledge production. However, in order to have access, it's necessary to know how to use these new technologies. The currently policies for education sector deal not only with the increasing of digital access but also with the learning skills required to use and make the most of information technologies. The National Program for informatics in Education – Proinfo plan for the next three years consists of supplying 138.405 public schools in Brazil with computer labs and broadband internet connection, and offering training on educational technology for K-12 teachers of all parts of the country. Proinfo is a result of a partnership among the federal government, states and cities to equip schools with computers. A variety of digital content is brought to school with the new computers, such as: educational videos, multimedia learning objects, hypertexts, and opens source software. Digital Educational Repositories

One of the first initiatives in Brazil to provide free digital learning material through the web was the Interactive Virtual Education Network - RIVED, a Ministry of Education project. And this was the pioneer attempt in the country to use learning object concept and open standards to produce and publish digital material (Nascimento, 2003). RIVED learning objects consist of problem-based multimedia interactive activities, covering diverse topics, mostly aimed for high school level. The learning objects are stored in a repository, and users can find them by using a search engine. When users access the search results the full description of the materials are available, and also a teacher's guide. An important feature for assessment and recommendation is implemented for those who access the resources. RIVED sponsors multidisciplinary teams at universities for research and production of learning objects. Consequently, the project major benefit is the development of a culture of digital learning resources production for free dissemination and reuse, in the Brazilian universities. While the teams support the creation of resources to feed the repository, they also help to enrich the pre-service teachers training by having them as team members. The Portal of Public Domain is another repository MEC implemented to provide anyone the free access to

literature, academic papers, audio and video files, among others. Many videos produced by TV School are stored in this repository and available for use.

Although the web has a great amount of content, it is time consuming for a teacher to search everywhere for published resources. And many educators go into MEC web address hoping to find easily the learning material, but they have to navigate in different pages looking for what they need. Considering all these, the idea of a major gateway for locating and using varied format of learning objects was the natural progress. Therefore, a new project has been developed to bring together, in the same repository, the whole digital educational resources produced or sponsored by MEC, besides all the other ones identified in Brazil and other countries, intended for the sharing and reusing. The repository, named International Bank of Learning Objects, is to support the Teacher's Portal, where teachers will find examples of how to use the digital resources, will have access to open source software, and will be able to assess and know other people opinions about each learning object. The public learning resources will support K-12, vocational and higher education in diverse knowledge fields.

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Information society strategy

Most efforts in technological development and innovation have been concentrated in certain of Brazil's universities and not in the business world. Research and development is a strength of higher education of Brazil. Today, almost all states have federal universities, and foundations to encourage research. However, these institutions do not have the same kind of autonomy, especially in terms of continuous, regular and guaranteed financing.

On the other side, Brazil's scientific and technological development in the area of business is still at an initial stage. Brazilian companies have been late in incorporating and developing technology. It is also a consequence of the weakness of business sector's own capacity of research. On top of that, the collaboration between academia and industries is also very insufficient taking into account the needs of Brazilian development. Besides the poor performance of the Brazilian companies in relation to innovation, there is some prejudice that exist among Brazilian scholars in relation to the cooperation with the private sector.

Brazil shows a paradox: on the one hand, there is in the business sphere a low capacity for absorbing human resources into Science, Technology and Innovation (S&T&I); on the other hand, the system of training these resources has shown a large increase in supply especially in terms of postgraduate programmes. In the last two decades, Brazil's scientific capacity has grown systematically year by year at an increasingly faster rate. The ranking of countries, according to their participation in world scientific production – Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) of the National Science Indicators (NSI) – is evidence of Brazil's progress in this field. In 1981, Brazil was in 26th place; in 2001, it already occupied a worthy 18th position. On the other side, from 2000 to 2003 a slow growth was observed in technological development and innovation in Brazilian industry.

The fact that national research being concentrated in universities - in particular at the postgraduate level - makes it very dependent on the training of those with master's and doctoral degrees. In this context, the importance of new strategies to bring the network of universities together with the world of business becomes more important. An important step in this direction was taken by the recently voted and approved Innovation Law. New means of finance – Sector Funds – and identification of priority sectors in industrial policy, as well as the formulation of the post graduate development plan by CAPES, indicates the desire to continue these trends.

It may be said that a move towards innovation and a clearer preparation for future expansion in R & D activities within growing companies is beginning to be developed recently. There are, however, obstacles hindering this development from proceeding more rapidly. These obstacles are mainly due to organizational inflexibility, problems in the marketplace and the absence of systemic synergy. However, what is most noticeable in the two periods studied is that over 30% of companies complain of lack of qualified personnel. This shows that, even where there is clear difficulty in absorbing manpower, there are questions of quality that have to be overcome.

ICT in education initiatives

Context and Current Developments

Two valuable and detailed reports on education and the development of technology-enhanced teaching and learning in Brazil have been made available since 2010. The first is the *World Bank report (from now on WB report, published on December 21, 2010)* Achieving World Class Education in Brazil: The Next Agenda'. Last accessed 05/10/2011.

The second is the *ICT Education 2010 Report (published in 2011) - Survey on the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Brazilian Schools*. Brazilian Internet Steering Committee (CGI - Comitê Gestor da Internet). Last accessed 05/10/2011.

These two reports together help tracing a panorama of the state of development of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) in schools and, and as consequence, on what to expect in terms of the development of virtual schools in Brazil.

[The World Bank Report]

Internationally, education systems are in a state of flux and widespread Government attempts to reform and modernise all elements of education mean that legislation is constantly being introduced and the system of education in most countries is dynamic, to say the least. Brazil is no exception:

The average educational attainment of the labor force since 1995 has improved faster than any other developing country, including China, which had set the global record for schooling expansion in the prior decades. […] by 2007, public spending on education in Brazil (5.2

percent of GDP) was already above the OECD average of 4.8 percent of GDP. (WB Report 2010, p. 3)

Despite these exciting numbers, the WB report cites government audits and research studies which have documented a serious degree of corruption and mismanagement of education funds and evidence that these are highly correlated with poor education quality and results.There is a "long-standing culture of clientelismo – or the transfer of public funding in exchange for political support. (WB Report, 2010, p.8)

These instances may interfere with the published data and it is possible that any descriptive report may become rapidly dated as state and federal governments find effective ways to improve efficiency and eradicate corruption and as spending on education increases (from both public and private sectors).

In terms of ICT infrastructure the WB report reveals that "municipalities with detected corruption were much less likely to have adequate school infrastructure or to provide in-service training to teachers. Teachers and directors in these municipalities were more likely to cite a lack of resources as a principal concern". (WB report, p.52)

The WB report also reveals that traditional teaching methods predominate. Books are used less than 20% of time. The blackboard is the principal teaching material -- used 25-34% of the time. Between 8 and 21% of time, no materials are used. Almost no use of ITC or cooperative learning activities is observed.

"In each of the school systems observed, there were many classrooms that exceeded the OECD good practice benchmarks for time spent on instruction. There were classrooms where students were never off-task. There were classrooms where books, materials, ICT and cooperative learning activities were used as intensively as in the best schools in Finland, Korea or Canada. There were teachers like the "heroes" profiled in Annexes 1 and 2. But these teachers, and their classrooms, are not the norm in Brazil today. Many teachers in Brazil resist having their work observed". (WB report, p.63)

An additional dimension in Brazil concerns the shifting pattern of legislation, funding, and the introduction of digital information and communication technologies (DICTs). Most important is that some of this work is recent and very current, so there are few evaluations of effectiveness or longitudinal research outcomes to report. But the pace of change is impressive and this will soon improve as classroom observation experience and impact evaluations are developed.

The WB Report identifies four priority areas for the immediate future of Brazil's education system. These are:

i) raising teacher quality; ii) protecting the early development of the most vulnerable children; iii) building a world class secondary education system; and iv) maximizing the impact of federal policy on basic education – especially by capitalizing on the Brazilian "education action lab (p.54)

In summary, the World Bank Report seems to conclude that – even when funds are directed at school improvement via enhanced ICT media and methods – there is (a) resistance because of the inherently conservative and traditional approach, and (b) too much funding is siphoned off through corruption and inefficiency. However, as stated, this is a dynamic process and the scene is changing rapidly.

[The ICT Education Report]

ICT Education 2010

The ICT Education Report is ongoing, in order to address the challenge of a developing context, as the authors explain: "Two approaches have been adopted in the survey […] The first approach is comprised of a longitudinal qualitative module, in which 12 schools will be monitored over four years, starting in 2010 and finishing in 2013, with two annual visits for observation, monitoring the changes in broadband access and its impacts on teaching practices. Results of this study will be analysed and published in the future. The second stage comprises a quantitative sample, which is presented in this publication". (ICT Education Report, p.141)

The first stage of the ICT Education Report is therefore not yet available, but its publication will significantly add to the current understanding and awareness of online or e-learning and 'virtual schools' in Brazil. In order to achieve its goals, the ICT Education Survey interviewed a sample of 500 public schools, interviewing principals, directors of studies, teachers and students, seeking to represent the Brazilian scenario of education and the use of technologies. According to this proposal, the work was based on international references, such as InfoDev (World Bank), the IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) and Sites 2006 (Second Information Technology in Education Study). (Ibid, p.142)

Until publication of the second stage of the Report, there are several caveats to be borne in mind. As pointed out earlier – the vagaries of funding, teachers' experience and attitudes, and the simple availability of different ICTs – will all impact on the full exploitation of new technologies and media in teaching and learning. Statistics produced by the Cetic.br surveys contribute to the debate about public policies, particularly those related to digital inclusion, such as the National Broadband Plan, the Broadband in Schools and the Community Telecenters programs, etc.

There has been limited inclusion of ICT in education in initial teacher education in Latin and this reflects the late and uneven diffusion of these technologies in the region. ICTs have been slow to acquire prominent status in Latin American economy and society, although there has been more enthusiasm in Brazilian universities. In schools, the *Um laptop por Criança* (One Laptop per Child) initiative offers promise (this project involves Argentina and Uruguay as well), but the results of ICT policies in schools are difficult to assess, since there is a lack of methodology, specific indicators, and systematic and reliable data are missing.The research presented on the ICT report reveals that although a number of projects for the use of technologies in education have been implemented over the past two decades, the use of ICTs

in the classrooms is still not fully integrated to the day-to-day activities of the schools nor the syllabi.

Teachers' professional development is therefore a necessary first step towards fully exploiting DICTs in schools. For example, in the UK, the Learning Schools Programme of 2000-2003 was critical in aiding teachers' understanding of the affordances and benefits of ICT in schools.

Data from the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee (ICT Education Report 2010) suggests that each public school has on average 23 computers, but only about 18 of those are actually installed and in use due to maintenance reasons. There is an average of 800 students per public school and broadband is present in 87% of schools which have an Internet connection.

The conservative and traditional approach to schooling, coupled with lack of recognition of the affordances of technology-enhanced education, will continue to hold back development in schools and colleges. Even so, Brazilian HE is strong and its universities are prominently represented in international ratings, such that they are leading in the LA region. In time, the deployment of ICTs in universities will filter into teacher training and then into schools.

In conclusion, the digital divide exists in two dimensions: first – the under-provision of ICTs and connectivity, and second – the lack of understanding of the benefits of technological exploitation in education. It is reasonable, however, to predict that Web 2.0, the 'Cloud' and social networking will hasten the uptake of new technologies and rich media in teaching and learning.

Virtual initiatives in schools

A brief definition

By virtual schools, in the context of the VISCED research carried out in Brazil, it is meant schools and/or colleges attended by people in the age-range 14–21, where there is significant evidence that human, face-to-face teaching and learning has been replaced by technology-enhanced learning – e-learning, online learning, or open and distance learning. Such schools may be partly or completely active in the virtual sense, but – where the virtual schooling is only part of the school's provision – it is expected it to be a significant part. This section attempts to show, to the extent it is possible, how widespread these initiatives have become in Brazil, so that comparisons may be made across a range of countries. Eventually, the VISCED project will hope to benchmark best practice in the field and recommend measures for quality assurance.

Colégio Militar de Manaus

The Colégio Militar de Manaus, in the state of Amazonas, started its distance learning activities in 2002. Its aim is to serve students that are between 10-18 years old and registered from the 6th year of the fundamental cycle to the 3rd year of the secondary education (ensino medio), whose parents are on duty in the Amazon area or abroad. The school caters for approximately 400 students every year, located in 33 different countries. Among the media

used for delivering the courses, these are the most used: email, Skype, telephone, fax, mail and a virtual learning environment. The students receive printed materials, CDs and DVDs, all delivered through the Brazilian air force.

For a virtual tour of the distance learning department of the school in Portuguese click here

Escola Técnica Aberta do Brasil (E-TEC)

The Escola Técnica do Brasil (Open Technical School of Brazil) is a national programme that aims to expand professional education in Brazil. It has been developed under the umbrella of the former Distance Education Secretariat (SEED) and the Professional and Technological Education Secretariat (SETEC). Its objective is to take technical courses to distant regions of Brazil and to the peripheral areas of big Brazilian cities. The aim is to encourage the young to conclude secondary education (ensino médio) and join the active worforce.

The Escola Técnica do Brasil is therefore an important step towards the democratization of public and free secondary education in Brazil in the distance learning mode. In 2008 alone for example 50 thousand places have been offered, and 193 regional centers with computers and libraries have been inaugurated across the country. Courses in 14 subject areas were on offer, to include computing, nursing, metallurgy, environmental studies, tourism, civil engineering, business management, health and social care, commerce, arts, chemistry and telecommunications. In total, 75 million Reais were invested, 143 courses offered, and 26 thousand students registered.

The model of E-Tec is similar to the one of UAB (Universidade Aberta do Brasil – Open University of Brasil). The Ministry of Education (MEC) is responsible for providing financial assistance for the production of courses. The states, federal district and municipalities provide the infrastructure, the equipment, the human resources and other items needed for each institution running the courses. The target was to provide infrastructure to 1000 regional centres and to register 200 thousand students up until 2010.

EVESP - Escola Virtual de Programas Educacionais

EVESP is an initiative of the São Paulo State Education Secretariat. The school was authorized by decree dated 20th May 2011. The aim is to offer 50 thousand language courses places for students of the São Paulo State Education System. The virtual school also targets the education of hard-to-reach audiences such as prisoners, Afro-Brazilians and the indigenous population.

Fundação Bradesco Escola Virtual

The Fundação Bradesco Escola Virtual (Virtual School) extends the pedagogical project of the Bradesco Foundation beyond the borders of its 40 school units. Dedicated to offering distance learning courses - Internet-based and "semi-presential" segments of Basic Education, Training and Youth and Adult Education, this portal for e-learning is available to students and alumni, educators and staff of Bradesco Foundation, as well as people in the community

and unemployed people who wish to obtain a new qualification or retraining for work. Its web site is http://www.ev.org.br/Paginas/Home.aspx

Instituto Nacional de Educação a Distância (INED)

INED is a private school based in São Paulo offering courses targeting the education of young and adult individuals – a population described as EJA (Educação de Jovens e Adultos – Education of the Young and Adults). It also offers technical courses, preparing for the job market (equivalent to college – in Brazil described as Educação Tecnológica) - these courses can be attended by individuals of all age groups that qualify for technical secondary education (ensino médio técnico).

The technical courses at INED are licensed by the Brazilian Ministry of Education to be offered at a distance, in the blended learning mode as the Brazilian law requires (with face-to-face assessments). The courses at INED are offered mostly using virtual technologies (email, discussion forums) and the students also receive printed course materials.

PROCEFET – RN

PROCEFET (Programa de Iniciação Tecnológica e Cidadania do CEFET / Rio Grande do Norte) is a basic, entry level course on Technology and Citizenship offered at a distance, aimed at students of the ninth year of the fundamental years of public schools. The aim is to provide a revision of subjects such as Portuguese and Mathematics with focus on themes such as citizenship and ethics in relation to day-to-day activities at home, at school and in their professional environment.

The mix of media used in the course is: • Printable materials • Book • TV classes recorded on university channel – available online • Online assessment

Examples of educational materials used in the course:

1. Click here to see a TV programme example – number 1 of the series, in Portuguese

2. Click here to see the printable materials

Projeto Bem Receber – World Cup 2014

The Projeto Bem Receber Copa 2014 (Good Hosting Project - World Cup 2014), is sponsored by the Brazilian Ministry of Tourism. It offers online distance learning courses for employees of hotels, aiming to qualify them free of charge to be ‘good hosts’ during the World Cup 2014 in Brazil. Age range: all.

The Ministry of Tourism aims to qualify 306 thousand professionals up until 2013. These professionals are: porters, receptionists, room cleaners and hotel managers.

Rede SENAI de Educação a Distância

SENAI (SENAI Distance Education Network) offers a number of professional and technical courses aiming to prepare individuals for the job market. SENAI stands for National Service for Industrial Learning (Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial). Technical courses are offered in the blended learning mode where face-to-face meetings happen at regional centers. SENAI provides printed and online materials and courses are free of charge, offered at all national territory.

SEBRAE (Serviço Brasileiro de Suporte à Micro e Pequena Empresa)

"SEBRAE (Brazilian Support Service to Micro and Small Businesses) offers about 15 courses online and free of charge to anyone wishing to learn more about business management and entrepreneurship. The courses are tutored on a virtual learning environment (platform WebAula), and the learners receive a course certificate on completion. The courses are offered free of charge and are open to anyone to study them. Users only need to have access to the Internet and commit to a certain number of study hours over a given period of time so that they can complete the syllabus. Some of the courses offered by SEBRAE are: Individual Entrepreneurship, Quality Management, Internet for Small Business and Innovation Management".

Source: Santos, A.I. (2011) Open Educational Resources in Brazil: State of the Art, Challenges and Prospects for Development and Innovation. UNESCO- IIET: Moscow

SESI - Serviço Social da Indústria

SESI (Social Services of the Industry)has a number of short open courses on different subject areas, ranging from music and arts to environment and law. They are open to all, usually at an affordable price and some of them are free of charge. These courses can be taken by anyone and they do not require any previous certificate or qualification. Examples of courses are Healthy Eating, Relaxation, Vocal health, Music and Recruiting Techniques. SESI Paraná in particular has won an e-learning award amongst other 25 e-learning institutions in Brazil for 'best practice' in 2011.

Virtual Campuses in post-secondary education

Interesting Virtual Campus Initiatives in universities

Some Virtual Campus and other interesting initiatives and organisations are listed here:

> FGV Online, created in 2000, is an online universitary program. FGV Online serves undergraduate, graduate

and MBA students, executives and entrepreneurs, and corporate universities developing e-learning projects.

FATECE, Faculdade de Tecnologia, Ciências e Educação offers graduate, postgraduate and specialisation courses (academic, post lauream and professional training courses) delivered both in traditional and eLearning modality.

Technospice do Brasil Tecnologia LTDA. Technospice is a private enterprise highly specialized in econtent and media fields.

Fundação de Fátima. The Foundation of Fatima is a non profit organization sited in Sao Paulo-Brasil that delivers educational broadcasting services.

The School of the Future of the University of São Paulo

The "School of the Future" of the University of São Paulo, is an interdisciplinary laboratory investigating the question of how new communications technologies can improve learning at all educational levels. Begun in 1989 as a departmental laboratory in the School of Communications and Arts, its growth and increasingly interdisciplinary nature took it out of that home in 1993 and placed it under the aegis of the Office of the Dean of Research, where it continues to flourish, financially self-sustaining and independent of the University budget, but with strong encouragement and guidance from the central administration.

Virtual Campus of the Gama Filho University

Connected to the changes and innovations in the educational field, Universidade Gama Filho created the UGF Virtual Campus. Through the website http://www.campusvirtual.br, students and visitors have access to libraries, classrooms, professors' rooms, events and the Knowledge City, a digital inclusion project developed by the UGF Distance Education Unit in partnership with the Palmas City Hall, in the State of Tocantins.

Cederj

Cederj, the Center for Distance Learning of the State of Rio de Janeiro, is a consortium of six public universities effectively collaborating to extend full university diploma courses to residents of underserved communities far from large urban centers.

CVA-RICESU

CVA-RICESU, the Network of Catholic Institutions of Higher Education, is a consortium of sixteen private universities achieving exceptional synergy through the coordinated offerings of online courses from the participating institutions.

FUNIBER Virtual Campus

As a pioneer in the field of distance education La Fundación Universitaria Iberoamericana (English: Ibero-American University Foundation) (FUNIBER), has set up a Virtual Campus, which is accessible via the Internet. Founded in 1997 in Barcelona, Spain, it has become an academic and professional network across 15 countries. In Brazil the Centro Universitário Leonardo da Vinci and the Universidade do Contestado are members of FUNIBER.

e-ProInfo

An e-learning project that has already trained 50 thousand students.

BEACON

IST project that will develop innovative t-learning pilot services related to social inclusion in the State of Sao Paulo.

Alfa Virtual School

This seems to be linked with a repository of educational objects, run by the Ministry.

Further information

An excellent account of distance education developments in Brazil can be found in the article: Porto, S., & Berge, Z. 2008. Distance Education and Corporate Training in Brazil: Regulations and interrelationships. The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning [Online] 9:2. Available: http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/478/1033

An overview of Corporate Virtual Universities in Brazil can be found in the article: Fredric M. Litto, Corporate Virtual Universities in Brazil - A Glimpse of the Scenario in 1999. Available: http://www.abed.org.br/publique/cgi/cgilua.exe/sys/start.htm?infoid=176&sid=104&UserActiveTemplate=4abed

Interesting Programmes

1. Faculdade Pitágoras
2. Virtual Public University of Brazil a.k.a. Universidade Virtual Publica do Brasil a.k.a Unirede
3. Universidade de Brasilia Centro de Educação a Distância
4. Universidade Virtual do Centro-Oeste
5. UVB Campus
6. Open University of Brazil a.k.a. Universidade Aberta do Brasil
7. Mackenzie Presbyterian University

Virtual initiatives in colleges

Holos Virtual School

Holos Virtual School was the first school to specialize in "Natural Therapies courses at a distance". It is a private college. Its brochure states:

> Born of the need to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge for all those who for one reason or another are unable to attend classroom courses while maintaining the quality of learning, which is just the highlight of our school. Current technology allows us to be present in the most remote places in a matter of seconds, without even leaving the house and make available to many people the knowledge to which its staff dedicate themselves and still am

involved. Holos Virtual School makes a significant contribution in training of high capacity in various areas of Holistic Therapy. Its mission is to enable the student not only to be a diagnostic system but rather a deepening in several therapeutic systems. Only then can it promote health and help minimize the pain and suffering of humanity. It is for this reason that this site is dedicated to make available to students "Distance Learning Courses" with unquestionable quality and responsibility of professionals of the highest standard. All courses are accompanied by evaluation and give the right to obtain a certificate.

The Holos Virtual School web site is at http://holosvirtualschool.com/site2010/

((to be added by consultants - Task B))

Lessons learnt

General lessons

No information yet.

Notable practices

No information yet.

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Marina Becker Reifschneider Distance Education in Brazil and in the United States: a comparative view

Martha A. S. Lucchesi, Brazilian Higher Education Policies, The ETHOS and the role of the University.

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Ministério da Educação The plan for the development of education. Reasons, principles and programs.

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http://www.isep.org/students/placed/handbook_education.asp?country=7

> Countries

Retrieved from "http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Brazil"

Categories: Brazil | South America | Latin America | Community of Portuguese Language Countries | G-20 countries | Rising Powers | Country reports | Countries with Programmes | Countries in merged template | VISCED

Canada

From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

By Barry Phillips, Sero

For enttities in Canada see Category:Canada

Contents

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Partners and experts in Canada

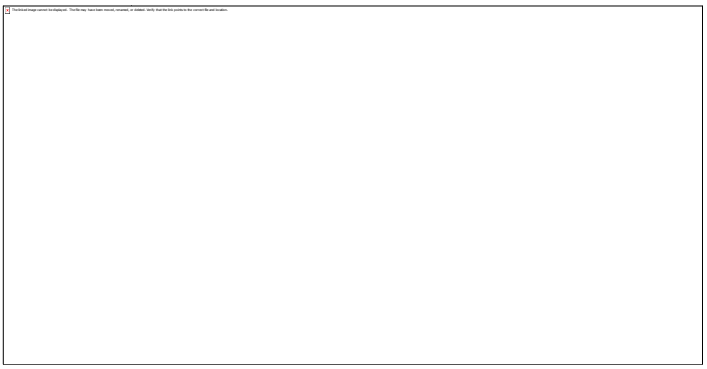
Tony Bates of the International Advisory Committee.

Erin Mills Senior Researcher, Canadian Council on Learning and Lead author of the 2009 State of e-Learning in Canada report.

Michael Barbour (based in the US at Wayne State University) author of the 2008, 2009, 2010 iNACOL State of the Nation: K-12 Online Learning in Canada reports.

Canada in a nutshell

Canada is a large country occupying over half of the continent of North America, touching three oceans - Pacific, Arctic and Atlantic. Its population was estimated in the 2006 census as around 31.5 million but other estimates such as the CIA Factbook give up to and over 33 million currently. (Rapid immigration is one source of the discrepancy but not, it seems, the only one - the issue has generated some debate.)



Thus there would seem to be a strong argument that a Commonwealth country of this size would have many points of relevance, generally and in education, to many larger countries in the European Union. While true generally (e.g. for industrial policy) *it is not at all true for education* - the provinces are the relevant entities. See later for details.

Many if not most Canadian universities have competence in e-learning at least in pockets. Several major e-learning systems past and present have come from Canada, some from academia but most not - for example, in recent years WebCT and Desire2Learn, and many years ago the CoSy and FirstClass conferencing systems used at the Open University. We give the main ones below of relevance to an EU audience.

Canada is divided into 13 provinces and territories of which the most important and relevant in e-learning terms are the following:

British Columbia, population 4.1 million, thus rather smaller than Scotland but rather larger than Wales and similar in size to Ireland - the base of the University of British Columbia (UBC) and Simon Fraser University (SFU), two notable institutions in e-learning; and also of Thompson Rivers University (TRU) which now operates the Open Learning Agency for British Columbia. Another example is Royal Roads University.

Alberta, population 3.2 million, thus a bit more than Wales - the base of Athabasca University, Canada's Open University (a smaller version of the UK Open University), but also of the much smaller but nimble Mount Royal College.

Ontario, population 12.1 million, thus not really comparable to any UK home nation (but approaching that of the Netherlands) - with several illustrious institutions. Some have a long history in distance education (e.g. University of Guelph, which has over 60 online courses [1]), and others (e.g. the University of Waterloo, and the University of Ottawa) have extensive blended learning initiatives. The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) contains eminent researchers in schools e-learning known across Europe and beyond.

Quebec, in particular the Télé-université de Québec.

For further details at the province level see the particular province entries listed in Category:Provinces and territories of Canada.

The Canadian Virtual University (CVU) is a group of Canadian universities specializing in online and distance education and a list of these can be found on the site.

Document of relevance: Learn4Good.com sums up Canadian distance learning courses and programmes provided by Higher Education.

Education in Canada

In Canada, almost alone among countries in the world, education at all levels is so completely devolved to the provinces that there is not and cannot be a Minister of Education for Canada. (The wikipedia article on Education in Canada gives more details including of the residual federal responsibilities. See also CMEC.) (sourced from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Canada)

With the earlier caveat about the devolved approach to education, here are the basic facts.

Education in Canada is generally divided into Elementary (Primary School, Public School), followed by Secondary (High School) and Post Secondary (University, College). Within the provinces under the ministry of education, there are district school boards administering the educational programmes.

Schools in Canada

Education is compulsory up to the age of 16 in every province in Canada, except for Ontario and New Brunswick, where the compulsory age is 18. In some provinces early leaving exemptions can be granted under certain circumstances at 14.

Canada generally has 180 to 190 school days in the year, officially starting from September (after Labour Day) to the end of June (usually the last Friday of the month, Wednesday in some Ontario schools).

Canada spends about 7% of its GDP on education. Since the adoption of section 23 of the Constitution Act, 1982, education in both English and French has been available in most places across Canada (if the population of children speaking the minority language justifies it), although French Second Language education/French Immersion is availble to Anglophone students across Canada.

Originally all the provinces had educational systems divided by religion, but most provinces have abolished these. Ontario, Alberta, and certain cities in Saskatchewan are exceptions to this, as they still maintain publicly funded Separate district school boards (usually Catholic but occasionally Protestant). In Quebec, the Catholic/Protestant divide was replaced with a French/English one in 1998. Québécois must attend a French School up until the end of high school unless one of their parents previously attended an English-language school somewhere in Canada (immigrants from other countries cannot use this exception). However this rule applies only to public schools, therefore immigrants to Quebec can send their children to English *private* schools.

Most Canadian education systems continue up to grade 12 (age 17 to 18). In Quebec, the typical high school term ends after Secondary V, the same as to grade 11 (age 16 to 17);

following this, students who wish to pursue their studies to the university level have to attend CEGEP which is a unique educational institution, between high school and junior colleges. Cegeps are often referred to as "junior colleges".

Normally, for each type of publicly funded school (such as Public English or Public French), the province is divided into districts (or divisions). Normally, all publicly funded schools are under the authority of their local district school board. These school boards would follow a common curriculum set up by the province the board resides in. Only Alberta allows public charter schools, which are independent of any district board - instead, they each have their own board, which reports directly to the province.

Primary education and secondary education combined are sometimes referred to as K-12 (Kindergarten through Grade 12). It should be noted that this structure can vary from school to school, and from province to province. For instance, Prince Edward Island school systems is the only province that does not provide Kindergarten. In contrast, Ontario is the only province which provides two levels of Kindergarten (Junior and Senior).

In Canada, secondary schooling, known as high school, "école secondaire" or secondary school, differs depending on the province in which one resides. Additionally, grade structure may vary within a province and even within a school division. Education is compulsory up to the age of 16 in every province in Canada, except for Ontario and New Brunswick (where the compulsory ages are 18). Students may continue to attend high school until the ages of 19 to 21 (the cut-off age for high school varies between province). Those 19 and over may attend adult school. Also if high schoolers are expelled or suspended for a period of time over 2 months or so they could attend night school at the high school.

Ontario had a "Grade 13" known as Ontario Academic Credit (OAC) year, but this was abolished by the provincial government to cut costs. OAC was last offered for the 2002-2003 school year. As a result, the curriculum has been compacted, and the more difficult subjects, such as mathematics, are comparatively harder than before. However, the system is now approximately equivalent to what has been the case outside of Quebec and Ontario for many years. Secondary education in Quebec continues to Grade 11 (Secondary V), and is typically followed by CEGEP, a two or three year college program taken after high school. Pre-university CEGEP programs are two years in Quebec (university for Quebecers is three years), and vocational or professional programs are three years in duration.

Private schools

In Canada there is no obligation for parents to place their children in the public school system, and about 8% of students are in the private system. Nevertheless, there are more and more private schools in urban areas (high schools, especially). It is not unusual for the wealthy and prominent in Canada to send their children to public schools, especially in the lower grades. A far larger portion of private schools are religious based institutions. Private schools are also used to study outside the country. For example one in Italy has an Ontario curriculum.

Each province deals differently with private religious schools. In Ontario the Catholic system continues to be fully publicly funded, but other faiths receive no such funding. Ontario has several private Jewish, Muslim, and Christian schools, but all are funded through tuition fees. Since the Catholic schools system is entrenched in the constitution, the Supreme Court has ruled that this system is not unconstitutional. However, the United Nations has ruled that Ontario's system is unfair. In 2002 the government introduced a controversial proposal to partially fund all private schools, but this was criticized for undermining the public education system and the proposal was eliminated after the Liberals won the 2003 provincial election.

In other provinces privately operated religious schools are funded. In British Columbia the government pays 50% of the cost of religious schools provided that they meet rigorous provincial standards. The province has a number of Sikh, Hindu, Christian, and Muslim schools. Alberta also has a network of charter schools, which are fully funded public (not private) schools offering distinct approaches to education within the public school system (note that the province does not grant charters to religious schools). These charter schools have to follow the provincial curriculum and meet all standards, but are given considerable freedom in other areas. In all other provinces private religious schools receive some funding, but not as much as the public system.

Further and Higher education

Post-secondary education in Canada is also the responsibility of the individual provinces and territories. Those governments provide the majority of funding to their public post-secondary institutions, with the remainder of funding coming from tuition fees, the federal government, and research grants. Compared to other countries in the past, Canada has had the highest tertiary school enrollment as a percentage of their graduating population.

Nearly all post-secondary institutions in Canada have the authority to grant academic credentials (i.e., diplomas or degrees). Generally speaking, universities grant degrees (e.g., bachelor's, master's or doctorate degrees) while colleges, which typically offer vocationally-oriented programmes, grant diplomas and certificates. However, some colleges offer applied arts degrees that lead to or are equivalent to degrees from a university.

Post-secondary education in Quebec begins with CEGEP (collèges d'enseignement général et professionnel), following graduation from Grade 11 (or Secondary V). Students complete a two- or three-year general program leading to admission to a university, or a professional program leading directly into the labour force. In most cases, bachelor's degree programmes in Quebec are three years instead of the usual four; however, in many cases, students attending a university in Quebec that did not graduate from CEGEP must complete an additional year of coursework. When Ontario had five years of high school, a three-year bachelor's degree was common, but these degrees are being phased out in favour of the four-year degree.

The main variation between the provinces, with respect to universities, is the amount of funding they receive. Universities in Quebec receive the most funding and have the lowest

tuitions. Universities in Atlantic Canada generally receive the least funding and some, like Acadia University, are almost wholly reliant on private funding.

The Royal Military College of Canada (RMC), is the military academy of the Canadian Forces and is a full degree-granting university. RMC is the only federal institution with degree granting powers.

The higher education systems in Canada's ten provinces have different historical development, organization (e.g., structure, governance, and funding), and goals (e.g., participation, access, and mobility). This makes it impossible to summarise the overall system. The reader is referred to the wikipedia article http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Higher_Education_in_Canada.

Universities in Canada

(sourced from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_universities_in_Canada)

Canada has somewhat over 70 universities including the large multi-campus Université du Québec which includes Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) , the host of the Télé-université (Téluq) There is an elite group, the Group of 13, comprising the most prestigious and research-active universities, but e-learning competence is found across the span of universities in Canada.

A selection of those better known beyond Canada including for e-learning (research and/or implementation) would be something like the following:

Athabasca University
University of Montreal (Montréal, Québec)
Capilano University (North Vancouver)
Royal Roads University (Victoria)
Simon Fraser University (Burnaby, Vancouver, Surrey, British Columbia)
Thompson Rivers University (Kamloops)
University of British Columbia (University Endowment Lands, Okanagan)
University of New Brunswick (Fredericton & Saint John)
McMaster University (Hamilton)
Ryerson University (Toronto)
University of Guelph (Guelph)
University of Toronto (Toronto (Downtown, Scarborough), Mississauga)
University of Waterloo (Waterloo)
University of Western Ontario (London)
University of Windsor (Windsor)
York University (Toronto)
McGill University (Montreal)
Concordia University (Montreal)
Université du Québec à Montréal, UQAM (Montreal) including Télé-université, Téluq
University of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon)

Cape Breton University (CBU)

Polytechnics in Canada

This term is seldom used in Canada (for example, École polytechnique de Montréal, which trains almost 5000 engineers. This term is also used to describe some colleges.

Colleges in Canada

There are many colleges in Canada - for a partial list see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_colleges_in_Canada.

Most are not known outside Canada, whether or not for e-learning, but one that is known is Mount Royal College.

CEGEP

(sourced from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CEGEP)

A CEGEP (French: Cégep) is a post-secondary education institution exclusive to the province of Quebec in Canada. CEGEP is a French acronym for Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel, meaning "College of General and Vocational Education". They are comparable to community colleges, but are required to enter university, which is why secondary school and undergrad degrees both are one less year in Quebec.

The purpose of CEGEPs is to make post-secondary education more accessible in Quebec, as well as to provide proper academic preparation for university. There are both public and private subsidized CEGEPs with the public CEGEPs having little or no tuition fee. The CEGEP system was started in 1967 by the Quebec provincial government and originally had 12 CEGEPs. Today there are 48 CEGEPs in Quebec, of which 5 are English language CEGEPs. There are also 50 private colleges, including 6 English language colleges. While CEGEP refers technically to only public colleges, in common usage the term is sometimes applied also to private colleges offering some of the same programmes.

They are not seen at this stage as relevant to Re.ViCa but we look forward to input on this issue.

Education reform

Schools

Post-secondary

The Bologna Process

Interestingly the Rectors of Canadian universities are closely interested in the Bologna Process. A June 2008 statement from AUCC is given below.

Higher education, like most sectors, is transforming itself in step with the ever-advancing trends of the global knowledge economy. A high profile example of this is the reform agenda being implemented by Europe's universities through the Bologna Process. While the Bologna Process is a uniquely European initiative, its influence and impact on higher education is being felt throughout the world.

Canadian universities continue to be recognized globally for the quality of higher education delivered. They are, however, not immune to developments of the magnitude of the Bologna Process. It is therefore appropriate at this time to respond to this emerging European initiative by at once seizing its related opportunities and facing its challenges.

The internationalization of Canada's universities includes facilitating the two-way flow of students through international student recruitment and student exchange as well as bringing an international dimension to the curriculum. It is in these areas of student mobility and curricular reform where the Bologna Process will have its greatest impact on Canadian universities.

AUCC members therefore, through this statement, acknowledge the significance of the emerging European Higher Education Area and hereby commit to undertaking a course of action to address the implications of the Bologna Process for Canadian universities and plan a path forward for engaging with our European partners, both old and new, in a spirit that mirrors Europe's own renewal in higher education.

AUCC, through its Standing Advisory Committee on International Relations and the Board of Directors, has been examining for some time how Canadian universities can best respond to the changes under way in Europe. It began by identifying the following three key implications of these changes for Canadian universities.

Competition in international student recruitment is the primary implication. The Bologna Process, among its other goals, is also a sophisticated exercise in marketing European higher education. As the Bologna countries seek to make Europe a more attractive study destination through its degree harmonization and support for increased academic mobility, they are likely

to increase their international student market share at the expense of other leading host countries, including Canada.

Secondly, the impact of the increasing number of three-year undergraduate degrees from Bologna countries on Canadian credential evaluation policies and practices needs to be assessed. The coming influx of three year degrees presents obvious challenges for admission decisions in graduate studies at Canadian institutions and raises questions about the effect this will have on our graduate programs.

Finally, student mobility, through short-term exchanges and study abroad opportunities for Canadian students is an area in which AUCC believes it is imperative to act to take advantage of the emerging landscape of higher education in Europe. The prevalence of the transparency tools in the Bologna Process, such as the European Credit Transfer System and the Diploma Supplement, along with funding programs such as Erasmus Mundus, represent a potential for increased Canada-Europe student mobility and enhanced international curricula through joint degree programs.

As AUCC pursues further action in relation to the Bologna Process, all activities will be informed by the guiding principle of the autonomy of individual Canadian universities to respond to these issues according to their own particular needs and strategies. This exercise is also guided by the acknowledgement of the challenges in pursuing any collective approach aimed at aligning with the European model, given the diversity and complexity of Canadian higher education.

AUCC recognizes, however, that responding to the Bologna Process also represents a unique opportunity to examine 'lessons learned' and best practices in addressing Canada's internal system of credit transfers and mobility among institutions across jurisdictions.

In the spirit of renewed engagement in higher education beyond our borders and given the circumstances related to the emerging Bologna Process, AUCC commits to:

- Keeping a close watching brief on the progress of the Bologna Process with respect to implementation of reforms and political direction in Europe.
- Closely monitoring the engagement of other non-Bologna countries such as the United States, Australia and China along with other actors within Canada, such as governmental partners and other higher education stakeholders.
- Continuing to raise awareness among its membership of key issues related to the Bologna Process through a continued national dialogue within the association, research on good practices and the organization of various information sessions and workshops.
- Pursuing a policy dialogue with European partners such as the European University Association, to identify ways of seizing the opportunities to enhance Canada-Europe cooperation, especially student mobility, and address any challenges for Canadian universities in the broader Bologna context.

Other activities

None known. This is not to say that all is perfect with Canada's universities. Even local commentators accept that things must change.

Administration and finance

Schools

Post-secondary

Although the provinces have responsibility for universities including providing funds, the federal government retains a funding role - and a vital one. A position paper from AUCC describes the situation.

In Canada, as in most other well-established federal systems, including the United States, Australia, Switzerland and Germany, constitutional jurisdiction for education rests with the regional, provincial or state governments. However, in all of these federations, the central governments have come to play major roles in support of higher education. They have done so in large part because of the strategic importance of these institutions in educating people for the knowledge economy and in performing research. In Australia, for example, the federal government is now the primary source of funds, not only for university research but also for the operating budgets of the universities. In the United States, by contrast, the state governments remain the primary source of operating funding for public universities and fouryear colleges, but the federal government is the most important source of university research funding and effectively reduces some of the pressure on university operating budgets by paying for faculty time devoted to federally-funded research.

Despite the Constitution's exclusive grant of powers to the provincial legislatures to "make Laws in relation to Education" and "in and for each Province", the federal government in Canada has shown an interest in higher education since the early years of Confederation and especially, since the First World War. The overriding goal of federal investments in higher education, particularly since the Second World War, has been to maximize universities' contributions to economic growth, competitiveness and social development in Canada as a whole. To this end, the investments have sought:

> to support growth in institutional capacity to provide access to growing numbers of students;
> to promote accessibility for students through student assistance measures;
> to develop university research and graduate education and, especially in recent years, to build internationally competitive research capacity in the universities; and
> to promote Canada's interests internationally in relation to, and through, higher education.

With regard to the last of these objectives, the federal government has made a number of investments over the years, including the Canada Corps University Partnership Program and

Human Resources and Social Development Canada's International Academic Mobility Programs. In general, however, these have lacked overall policy coherence and sustained commitment.

On the student assistance, research and graduate education objectives, the federal government has made major investments over the period since the Second World War, and especially since 1997, in recognition of the strategic importance of university education and research in a knowledge economy. In particular, the large research investments since 1997 have had a very positive impact on the health of Canada's university research environment. At the same time, international competitors have also been investing in university research and major challenges remain in this country. The first of the objectives, increasing universities' institutional capacity to take on more students, was at the heart of federal investments in the period from 1945 to 1967, first through direct grants to universities and then through the cost-shared program.

With the creation of the EPF transfers from 1977 to 1995 and even more so, the creation of the unconditional and undifferentiated CHST transfers in 1995, the federal government has paid little overt attention to this objective. No portion of the CHST or the subsequent CST is designated specifically for postsecondary education.

Quality assurance, inspection and accreditation

Schools

Post-secondary

Canadian universities are notoriously reluctant to accept any level of direction from outside the institution, be it from provincial or federal goverment. This applies also to quality issues. Thus the regimes typical now in Europe and much of the rest of the British Commonwealth are not found - yet - in Canada. Some local commentators fear that the Bologna Process will be used by the Canadian government to impose uniformity on universities including a uniform quality process - see for example the May 2008 outpouring A load of Bologna by Alex Ussher.

However the AUCC seems to accept that some better coordination and peer review is necessary to reassure students and government. Their statement on the matter notes:

> In Canada, education, including higher education, is a constitutional responsibility of the country's 10 provinces and 3 territories. The universities, which at this time are located only in the provinces, derive their authority from provincial legislation.
>
> Each Canadian university is autonomous in academic matters including the determination of its own quality assurance policies and procedures. In addition, as the result of their longstanding commitment to a common framework of standards across provincial

jurisdictions, Canadian universities have a shared understanding of the value of each other's academic credentials.

Robust institutional quality assurance policies and processes are the foundation of the Canadian higher education quality assurance regime. These policies may stand alone, and some may be based in legislation. They may operate in an environment which includes another level of quality assurance, for example the policies and processes that provide a second level of quality assurance in the higher education systems in the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. For some programs, institutional policies may be supplemented by standards of professional accreditation.

A separate note lists the provincial quality regimes. There is also a set of principles.

All rather vague from a European point of view.

Information society

In this subsection we discuss the Canadian NREN (CANARIE) and the potential Major E-Learning Initiatives.

CANARIE

CANARIE Inc., based in Ottawa, is the advanced network organization for Canada. It facilitates the development and use of its network as well as the advanced products, applications and services that run on it. The CANARIE Network is the National Research and Education Network (NREN) for Canada - serving universities, colleges, schools, government labs, research institutes, hospitals and other organizations in a wide variety of fields in both the public and private sectors.

However, CANARIE has a wider brief, in some ways similar to agencies such as SURF and JISC. It furthers this by promoting and participating in strategic collaborations among key sectors, and by partnering with peer networks and organizations around the world, CANARIE Inc. stimulates and supports research, innovation and growth, bringing economic, social, and cultural benefits to Canadians.

The national organization was created in 1993 by the private sector and academia under the leadership of the Government of Canada.

CANARIE Inc. is supported by membership fees, with major funding of its programmes and activities provided by the Government of Canada through Industry Canada.

In the past, CANARIE has funded many e-learning developments.

Its web site is at http://www.canarie.ca/about/index.html (English) and http://www.canarie.ca/about_f/index.html (French).

Existing case study

There is a comprehensive but somewhat out of date case study of CANARIE at http://www.matic-media.co.uk/ukeu/EUNI-chap10-CANARIE-2004.doc - it was first written in 2001 but updated in summer 2004 (by Paul Bacsich and Sara Frank Bristow).

The Editor's Introduction to that notes:

> Between 1993 and March 2004, CANARIE – a small, non-profit organisation – received government funding of C$360 million (£161 million) for over 225 projects focussed on e-learning, e-content, e-business and e-health. Many would credit CANARIE for assuring Canada's reputation as a world-leading broadband adopter and innovator (and, more relevant to e-university developments, with helping the country to become a lead developer of learning object repository infrastructure). CANARIE has also helped connect over 2,000 schools, colleges and universities to its advanced CA*NET 4 network, and has created thousands of jobs nationwide.
>
> When this CANARIE Report was written, CANARIE was an organisation "in full swing", with government funding assured for over two more years. Nearly all of its projects saw completion by March 2004, however, and many of those discussed below finished long before that. During a presentation in June 2004, CANARIE president and CEO Andrew Bjerring noted that CANARIE's original mandate had been to "visit the future and report back" – now that the future has arrived, it seems, it is the role of CANARIE itself that requires clarification.
>
> At the time of writing [2004], CANARIE maintains some modest funding for completing the roll-out of CA*net 4 as scheduled, but all other project funding is on hold. Several of Canada's federal departments are said to be collaborating on what might become a national strategic vision to help frame the future of organisations like CANARIE, and perhaps lead to the creation of an agency not unlike the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) e-Learning Strategy Unit in the UK. Until the emergence of this new strategic plan, hoped to be in the autumn of 2004, however, there will be no further funding for the CANARIE projects described below. Thus it remains to be seen whether CANARIE will succeed at reinventing itself in today's context.

This depressing conclusion seems still to be the case. A search of the CANARIE web site for "e-learning" reveals no hits later than 2003.

ICT in education initiatives

Virtual initiatives in schools

Distance learning is a feature (to a variable degree) of the education systems in all thirteen territories and provinces. The 2010 iNACOL Report 'State of the Nation: K-12 Online Learning in Canada' estimated that between 150,000 and 175,000 students were enrolled in distance learning courses and/or programmes. This constitutes between 2.8% and 3.4% of the total K-12 student population. Unsurprisingly, given the vast land area and regional autonomy, there is an extremely broad spectrum of distance learning provisions varying by cities, districts, provinces and territories.

"The highest level of activity appears to be in British Columbia, which also has the most comprehensive legislative and regulatory regime. The only province that does not have its own K-12 distance education programme is Prince Edward Island, which relies upon programmes from other jurisdictions (similar to the three northern territories). The only jurisdictions that continue to maintain single province-wide systems are Newfoundland and Labrador and New Brunswick."

"...other trends include a high level of district-based cooperation in the Provinces of Ontario and Saskatchewan. The total K-12 student population in Canada for 2009-10 was just over 5.2 million."

The 2011 iNACOL report 'State of the Nation:K–12 Online Learning in Canada' has calculated that there are now 207,096 K-12 students enrolled in 'distance learning'. This represents an overall (nationwide) growth in the proportion of K–12 students involved in distance education to 4.2% in 2010–11. however, this does mask decreases in some provinces such as New Brunswick.

The iNACOL 2011 Report mentioned above (p31) details the provincial enrollments as follows:

Province or Territory/K-12 Students/Enrolled in DE/Percent Enrollment

Newfoundland & Labrador/168,729/~1,000/1.5%

Nova Scotia/128,131/~2,450/1.9%

Prince Edward Island/21,126/66/<1%

New Brunswick/104,421/1,841/1.8%

Quebec/949,350/~30,000/3.1%

Ontario/2,061,390/~50,000/2.4%

Manitoba/179,975/~9,000/5.0%

Saskatchewan/159,465/3,285/2.1%

Alberta/585,397/21,339/3.6%

British Columbia/649,952/~88,000/13.5%

Yukon/2,933/95/3.2%

Northwest Territories/8,576/20+/<1%

Nunavut/8,855/~0/-

It should be noted, however, that, in the Canadian K-12 context, 'distance learning' and 'distance education' includes print-based (offline) materials. iNACOL also observed that distance education is often provided as a solution to longstanding challenges such as geographical isolation and/or non-viable study cohort sizes rather than as a choice for students.

The key 2009 report State of e-Learning Canada 2009 provides an overview of the history of virtual schools in Canada

"Virtual schooling in Canada first began in 1994–1995, and advancements in K–12 e-learning continue to develop across the country...In 2003–2004, more than one-third (36%) of secondary schools across Canada had students participating in electronic or online courses. The curriculum of most online courses was developed by the school board, district, jurisdiction or province/territory. The proportion of students enrolled in online courses differed according to the instructional level, type and size of school, and geographic location. More rural schools than urban schools reported having students who participated in online courses. Close to 40% of rural secondary schools reported offering online courses to their students, compared with 35% of urban secondary schools. Only 3% of elementary schools had students participating in online courses in 2003–2004."

Before comparing these figures with those collected by others it should be noted that the report defines virtual schools as follows:

"Virtual schools do not have a building or physical location; they are operated and managed online."

It is unclear whether this excludes the many Canadian online, distance learning programmes which consist of a physical location at which students undertake some of their online studies (perhaps a partner school) but where the students host 'school' is an online entity. It should also be noted that many programmes have appeared since 2003-04.

Canadian virtual school initiatives - by province

The information below on provincial programmes is based on the iNACOL 2010 Report - amended, updated and supplemented with additional research.

The Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI) is Newfoundland and Labrador's technology supported distance learning arm with responsibility for educating students living in remote areas. Approximately 100 schools are active with an annual enrollment of approximately 1,500 students (the province has a population of just 500,000).

The Nova Scotia Virtual School (NSVS) is a province wide online learning programme which provides a central course management platform which individual school boards use to provide access to, and support for, their own courses. Individual school boards have also created their own platforms (Strait Regional School Board Virtual School and Chignecto-Central Virtual School). Annual enrollment is currently approximately 650 students.

The cross-provincial Francophone school board, the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) provides online learning (and physical schools) for students in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The iNACOL 2010 report states that together the NSVS and CSAP have seen approximately 650 students enrolled per annum. Funding models are a mixture of tuition fees and publicly funded individual students or 'seats' on the programme with some priority given to students from small high schools (iNACOL *State of the Nation: K-12 Online Learning in Canada*).

New Brunswick is a bilingual province and has both English and French online learning programmes. The New Brunswick Distance Learning Programme currently offers *"...over 40 high school courses, including all required courses at the grades 11 and 12 levels as well as many optional and advanced level courses. This allows students to access courses that, because of scheduling conflicts, illness or limited course availability in their own schools, might not otherwise be available to them."* Classroom teachers can also make use of the programme and resources to support and enhance in-class and homework activities. Enrolments in both Anglophone and Francohone online programmes have declined with 1,677 and 328 students (respectively) enrolling for one or more course one of the programmes. iNACOL notes that the *"...majority of distance education enrolments in the province are from supplemental students."*

Students in Prince Edward Island have access to a videoconferencing system and some of the New Brunswick online learning resources but enrolments are low (even allowing for the size of the province with a population of just 140,000) with a little over 30 students enrolled.

Ontario has historically organised much of its K-12 online eduaction at the district level although iNACOL reports that the Ministry now has a more active role. The Ministry published an e-Learning Strategy in 2006 and now offers school boards access to a provincial Learning Management System and online resources. Ministry requirements regarding the use of this LMS mean that many schools and boards run it in parallel with their own LMS. School boards who comply with Minsitry policies get free access but are required to levy a charge to students from other school boards (although there are pre-existing agreements with some school boards which secure free access).

The Ontario eLearning Consortium (OeLC) is a consortium of 20 school boards designed to maximise efficiencies of scale through sharing resources and expertise. Enrolments had increased significantly in 2009-10 and, that year, totaled nearly 9,700. There is also an

Ontario Catholic e-Learning Consortium although some Catholic school boards are members of the OeLC.

The French language consortium Consortium d'apprentissage virtuel de langue française de l'Ontario reported that its online learning programme saw 1,300 successful course completions in 2009-10 with a failure rate of just 4%.

The Ontario Ministry of Education is responsible for eLearning Ontario which provides secondary schools in the province with access to a wide range of online course for Grades 9 - 12. The Ministry also funds the pan school-board (with 31 Ontario school boards now listed as members) Homework Help programme. This is an expansion of a project, piloted in 2007-2008 by Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB and Hamilton-Wentworth DSB. Homework Help is a freely accessible, real-time (but with both synchronous and asynchronous support) maths help programme now available to 236,000 Grade 7-10 students.

Western Canada (Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan) covers several large urban conurbations (e.g. Vancouver, Victoria, Edmonton, Calgary and Winnipeg) and large expanses of low-population density - as such the ICT initiatives compose a spectrum of responses to the variety of circumstances and challenges. iNACOL observe that the region has a tradition of centralised K-12 distance education initiatives but that all provinces have moved towards decentralised models (whilst in some cases retaining some province-wide programmes).

Alberta has over 20 K-12 distributed learning programmes (iNACOL notes that 'distributed' covers all forms of distance education, however, closer reading of case studies suggests that it may also encompass 'blended learning' even where this is, at core, supported 'in-class' access to a Learning Platform). Responses to Alberta's comprehensive 2010 consultation *Inspiring Action on Education* suggest that students generally appreciate the value of digital technologies for learning (albeit only 192 respondents Student-Centered Education, Competencies and Curriculum. Whilst Alberta has Charter Schools there are, as of August 2011, no virtual charter schools (see The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools or, the official list of 2011 Public, Separate, Francophone, and Charter Authorities).

British Columbia's (BC) distributed learning programme is founded on district level initiatives although there are (or, *have been*, since some now appear to have ceased online activity e.g. the Rural Education Network) province wide programmes which underpin this (and may be used independently by distributed learning schools). LearnNowBC is a key foundation although it is an education portal, providing information, advice, guidance and also access to resources rather than a virtual school or even a Learning Management System. There are nearly 60 distributed learning schools listed by LearnNowBC although it is not clear to what degree and in what ways they use technology to support learning. In 2010 there were also 12 independent distributed learning schools in BC. iNACOL reports that there were 71,405 unique students enrolled on one or more courses via distributed learning in BC (up from 33,022 in 2006-07).

Open School BC offers services and content to school Boards in BC. Open School BC is a division of the Ministry of Education although it is now operated on a cost-recovery basis.

Open School BC is a member of the Virtual School Society which was founded in 2006 with the aim of establishing British Columbia as a *"...recognized world leader in the delivery of educational programs through distributed learning."* The VSS also manages the LearnNowBC website.

The Vancouver Learning Network part of the Vancouver School Board is a public school programme which annually offers approximately 90 courses - the majority of which are online - and serves some 8,000 students. Courses are tuition-free to students of any age who are Canadian citizens and residents of British Columbia. Students are able to register for a course at anytime and complete a course at any time - each student working at their own agreed pace.

The Premier's Technology Council: A Vision for 21st Century Education offers a recent (December 2010) overview of BC Government policies and philosophies with specific reference to the role of technology for teaching and learning. In common with many of the provinces, districts and schools described below there is a clear emphasis on 'Blended Learning' but little reference to distance learning and none to distributed or virtual schools.

Manitoba Education (the Ministry of Education) offers three distance learning options of which the Independent Study Option (ISO) is predominantly print-based although with some growing use of web conferencing tools.

The Teacher Mediated Option (TMO) has also offered print based courses, supported (during the school day) with scheduled, teacher-hosted, teleconference 'classes'. iNACOL's 2010 report noted that Manitoba Education was "...experimenting with using the province's learning management system (LMS) and web-based synchronous tools in the TMO delivery model". However, the Ministry's own TMO Guide for 2011-12 makes no mention of this.

The third programme, the Web Based Course (WBC) Option, is more obviously of relevance to those interested in virtual schools and online distance learning models. WBC offers schools and teachers access to centrally developed courses and the province wide LMS to provide their own learning programmes - blended or online. In 2009-2010 there were approximately 4,000 student enrolments on the WBC making it the largest of the three options (with 530 for TMO and 3,400 for WBC).

Saskatchewan's historically centralised K-12 distance learning programme (the Ministry being responsible for delivering courses via online, TV and print based models) was, in 2009-10, devolved to school divisions. Seventeen school divisions and/or schools (there are 29 school divisions) currently also utilise the Saskatchewan Distance Learning Course Repository to offer courses or places to students outside of their own schools. iNACOL reports that in 2009-10 there were "...3,591 course enrolments from 2,650 distinct students."

The three territories of Northern Canada (Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut) have strikingly low population densities (0.03 inhabitants per square kilometre) and together comprise less than 1% of Canada's total population yet a land mass greater than that of India. As such, in many ways, the territories have less autonomy than others and tend towards re-

using or adapting the existing curriculum models of other territories. This clearly influences the distance learning K-12 programmes of the region.

Government of Northwest Territories Education Dept (which lists just 50 schools) follows the same curriculum as Alberta. iNACOL notes that there appears to be only one small online course - offered through the Aurora College - a post-secondary institution. Similarly Nunavut has no obvious K-12 online learning programmes.

However, subject to growing economic pressures, it may be that both territories are seeing some developments which may help lay foundations for supporting their dispersed student populations. In the Northwest Territories post-secondary sphere Alberta-North (which provides distance education and a network of Community Access Points) announced in March 2011 that it is moving towards a merger with the eCampus Alberta. The Nunavut Department of Education also has a Community Access Programme whereby "...local schools, libraries and community centers act as "on-ramps" to the Information Highway and provide computers and support on how to make the best use of the Internet." The Department also has a scheme to provide low-cost "gently used" computers to schools.

The Yukon follows the curriculum of British Columbia - tailored to local cultural and linguistic contexts. The Yukon Education Department draws on figures from Statistics Canada to judge the Yukon as being "...the most connected educational jurisdiction in Canada with a student/computer ratio of 2.9:1." This is quite possibly still relevant although the web page has not been updated since 2008. The Department states that all (approximately 30) Yukon schools have high speed internet connection through YESNet. Yukon also has a well established tradition of providing distance learning programmes. These have been combined with collaborations with content providers in both British Columbia and Alberta to provide access to resources 'distributed learning' opportunities (which *may* include print based programmes or components). The Yukon Education Department Annual Report 2009-2010 states

"Regardless of a student's location or school population, through distributed learning programs, students have access to all courses available in eight distance education schools in British Columbia, from Open School BC and Alberta's Distance Learning Centre. Locally, distributed learning opportunities are available by connecting with other Yukon classrooms by video conferencing. French students can access distributed learning through Centre francophone d'éducation à distance."

"Students may register in a distributed learning course at any time during the year, and they have one full calendar year to complete their course. In the 2009 –2010 school year, 113 Yukon students enrolled in a total of 40 different courses through distance education schools."

The Annual Report also notes that distance education programme is "continuing to grow" with a new post being created and that all 14 Yukon community schools now have video-conferencing facilities (in addition to facilities in some other centres).

Canadian Exemplars

To be confirmed

Ottawa Carleton e-School

Chignecto Central Virtual School
Keewaytinook Internet High School
Saskatoon Cyber Catholic School
Argyll Centre
Wapaskwa Virtual Collegiate
Credenda Virtual High School & College
Sunchild E-Learning Community
Virtual Learning Centre (Ontario)

Ottawa Carleton e-School

This Programmes entry is a stub. You can help our projects by expanding it.

Ottawa Carleton E-School (OCES) is an Internet High School that is accredited by the Ministry of Education in Ontario, Canada. The mission of OCES is

"...to make education available to all those who are aspiring to obtain their high school diploma, yet for various reasons find it difficult to attend conventional classroom courses." This includes both current high-school age students and adult students who may wish to gain a high-school diploma.

"*OCES was designed to provide high school education for many types of students including:*

**Students that require a course that their own local high school is not offering in a particular semester*

**Those who are pursuing careers in professional athletics or arts and must travel a great deal during the school year*

**Students with health related issues that prevent them from attending a traditional high school*

**Mature students who are working full time and do not wish to attend night school*

**Students who are seeking entry into a college or university program and are missing a necessary prerequisite*

**International students seeking Canadian education*"

Courses are generally 3 month duration although students can complete in advance. Students are supported by teachers but are not expected to attend (physically or virtually) scheduled 'classes'. Fees are chargeable - the most recent listed are Can $399.00 per course.

Chignecto Central Virtual School

This Programmes entry is a stub. You can help our projects by expanding it.

The Chignecto Central Virtual School (CCVS) has been developed as a response to the challenges faced by schools serving Nova Scotia's rural communities. Establishing viable student cohorts for many subjects (particularly, but not solely, special interest courses) at upper high school is often difficult.

CCVS says

"An integrated asynchronous-synchronous (real-time) model is used. Students are required to participate in one real-time class per week with the instructor and fellow classmates (two options of one-hour each; 12 to 20 students per session). They also interact with fellow students and/or their instructor at least one other hour per week (as it fits into their in-school timetable). A CCVS course is one of four courses that a student takes in a given semester."

"Features of the CCVS learning system include:"

"• An online discussion area that supports audio and video student submissions

• An eJournal and an ePortfolio area that support audio and video entries

• Online testing capabilities

• Just-in-time software tutorials

• Seamless integration of realtime text chat, voice chat, videoconferencing and whiteboard capabilities

• Personal web and file space accessible from both home and school

• A dedicated technical support person"

Keewaytinook Internet High School

This Programmes entry is a stub. You can help our projects by expanding it.

Keewaytinook Internet High School (KiHS) was established to serve the First Nation communities in the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN). KiHS as a pilot project for Grade 8 students in three communities but has now expanded to serve Grades 9 to 12 students in fourteen communities.

Students attend a community classroom from 9 am to 4 pm and are supported by in-class teacher and teaching assistant and an online teacher. The programme is semester based with students able to take two courses in each of the four (9 week) semesters.

"*The students complete their actual studies online. The programme is primarily asynchronous, with online teachers posting activities each Sunday and students completing those activities and assignments online as the week progresses. Online teachers also schedule synchronous sessions using Elluminate® or Adobe Connect, as well as using video conferencing, to work on activities that require more direct instruction.*"

(Keewaytinook Internet High School vignette from iNACOL'S State of the Nation: K-12 Online Learning in Canada)

KiHS has achieved significant success in terms of completion and retention rates and progression to post-secondary education. Completion rates have increased year on year and whereas in the initial pilot year saw rates on a par with First Nation averages (19%) by 2009-10 these were 55% across the programme and up to 80% in some participating communities. Retention rates are typically 70% but with some communities achieving 90%.

Enrolment is also on the increase with a new high of 220 students active in KiHS during the 2009-10 school year.

Saskatoon Cyber Catholic School

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The Saskatoon Catholic Schools System has been a leader in exploiting technologies in support of students' learning. In 1999 the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools executive council's desire to meet the changing education environment was the catalyst for the development of the Saskatoon Cyber Catholic School (SCCS). By August of the following year the SCCS was operational offering 4 courses to the 156 enrolled students.

Saskatoon Catholic Cyber School was intended to "...have the potential to meet the needs of students in the global context by providing relevant education using current technologies.". The teaching staff were said to be recruited for " ...their content expertise within courses rather than their facility with technology. The SCCS website states that teaching staff are all part-time at SCCS and all have taught conventional classes within the school division. This information is assumed to have currency but this particular web page has not been updated for some time (although the website itself is certainly current).

Argyll Centre

This Programmes entry is a stub. You can help our projects by expanding it.

The Argyll Centre is *"...an Edmonton Public School in Alberta, Canada, with campuses in Calgary and Lethbridge, that provides distance learning for Elementary, Junior High and High School in both online and offline programs, as well as acting as a facilitator and*

curriculum resource centre for homeschooling families. We provide a range of learning options from parent directed Home Education, blended, and teacher directed, as well as a variety of on site programs, including Christian and unschooling."

The Argyll Centre is (in relative terms) well-established having developed from the genesis of an *experiment* in the mid 1990s when a number of Edmonton Public Schools investigated the implications of students having access to 24/7 learning. The Centre formally dates from 1997.

The Argyll Centre offers a variety of home-based and face-to-face, on-site, education options to students throughout Alberta. There appears to be a strong emphasis on parental engagement (or, more accurately, *involvement*) to the extent that in some programmes the parent is the primary educator for parts of the course(s) and the teacher for others.

Live Online is a constructivist-based approach which combines parent-teacher-pupil *triad* with synchronous (live) virtual classroom, asynchronous (access anytime) learning tools and spaces, and the home environment. It allows students to set and follow a self-paced, individualized program. Live Online is for Grades 1-9 and aspires to *"...construct social learning communities."* Students learn in *"...multi-graded, cross-curricular learning cohorts."*

At the heart of the Argyll Centre's menu is the online programme Learn Net (for Grades 4 to 12) which Argyll Centre describes as

"...a teacher directed, online delivery strategy. Students in both elementary and junior high LearnNet programs are assigned a teacher. Students in High School are assigned a teacher advisor for each subject. Students registered in the LearnNet program can expect teacher to provide yearly and monthly plans to support learning and time management. In consultation with parents and students, adjustments can be made to help meet individual needs."

Students can select to combine online and offline, on-site and off-site or homebased study to suit their circumstances (Blended Education). However, to qualify as blended, at least 50% of the program for grades 1-9 and at least 20% for grades 10-12, must be teacher directed instruction that follows the *Alberta Program of Study*. The rest of the program may be Home Education that meets the *Home Education Regulation*.

Other strands include the Alternative High School and the eTourism programme - a semestered *"...online program which blends high school tourism credit courses, work/volunteer experience, and Canadian Travel and Tourism (CATT) industry certification."* The full range of High School courses offered in 2011-12 is contained in the Argyll Centre High School Guide.

In 2006 Argyll Centre was said to have had supported over 5,000 students through Grades 1-12. More contemporary figures are being sought and will be added when identified.

Wapaskwa Virtual Collegiate

This Programmes entry is a stub. You can help our projects by expanding it.

The 19 First Nations secondary schools in Manitoba are unable to provide the variety of Grades 9-12 courses and particularly at Grade 12 are unable to offer the opportunity for students to repeat courses where desirable.

In 2010 the Wapaskwa Virtual Collegiate (WVC) began a pilot programme (in partnership with Credenda Virtual High School in Saskatchewan and the Manitoba Department for Education) to offer a virtual high school service to Manitoba First Nations communities. WVC makes use of Elluminate for synchronous learning and Desire2Learn for asynchronous learning. Despite a steep learning curve (the iNACOL vignette notes the challenges of a novice e-larning institution playing the dual roles of course developer(s) and online teacher(s)) the WVC pilot has been extended and is about to embark on its third year with eight additional courses being developed this academic year.

Credenda Virtual High School & College

This Programmes entry is a stub. You can help our projects by expanding it.

Credenda Virtual High School (CVHS) is a virtual school which employs a synchronous delivery model based on a combination of Desire2Learn Learning Management System (LMS) and Elluminate Live! Virtual Classroom (vClass) to offer online high school and post-secondary learning experiences. Credenda's offer includes

scheduled real time interaction with eTeachers
24/7 access to course content
recorded lessons for review and revision
the opportunity for students to learn at school, home, or wherever online access is available.
a range of learning tools; whiteboard, audio, video, chat, web tours, breakout rooms for group work.

CVHS was established in 2005 to meet the needs of the communities in the north of the province. It has now evolved to become a First Nations high school for all students across Saskatchewan representing a diversity of ethnicity. CVHS was created to meet a specific need and was not intended to replace schools. It was designed to support schools through partnership working to meet student needs wherever class sizes were too small to justify offering a course (or the course was best delivered by a subject specialist).

Credenda charges an average tuition of $500 per class. Students living within a provincial school division in Canada may be reimbursed by their school district for up to two classes per term.

Sunchild E-Learning Community

In common with many aboriginal communities the Sunchild First Nation (Alberta) face specific social and educational challenges. The community (registered population approximately 1,200) has established a technology supported (using the internet, text messaging and telephones) distance learning programme to help address this.

Sunchild E-Learning is based on regular interaction between student and teacher and now offers a range of high school courses and some post-secondary with a clear focus on continuing education and/or employability.

"Students are expected to be logged into the computer during class times and can speak with the teacher at any time through text messaging or a microphone. In most cases, students work from a classroom environment where a Key Teacher addresses technical concerns and ensures student participation."

"The Sunchild E-Learning Community has met with remarkable success. In record numbers, students are re-entering the school system and staying in school. They're gaining valuable experience with computers, graduating and moving on to rewarding jobs or post-secondary education."

Sunchild E-Learning claims a level of education that is equal or superior to that of urban schools and increasing numbers of students. In 2010 Sunchild e-Learning was selected as the Regional Award Winner (the Americas) in the Global Best Awards.

Virtual Learning Centre and Open School (Ontario)

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Trillium Lakelands District School Board's The Virtual Learning Centre has been offering online courses and support to students since 1997. The VLC is a partner of both eLearning Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Education. The VLC aims to offer a wide range of courses. Whilst there are some self-paced courses available to grades 11 and 12 most require 'attendance' (not necessarily physical attendance) at scheduled 'classes' and follow a semester model.

Residents of Ontario are eligible to take online courses at no charge. However, those in full-time attendance at a publicly funded Ontario secondary school, have to make arrangements with the home school to take courses with the VLC. Where the home schools is already collecting the full Ontario grant for the student it must be willing to share a portion of this grant with the VLC. Those outside of Ontario, pay a tuition fee to take courses. Residents of the Province of Ontario, not enrolled full-time in a publicly funded institution, are not usually charged a tuition fee.

The TLDSB Director's Annual Report 2010 states that there were 1,787 online credits granted through the VLC. The Open School Ontario is a more recent development with its foundation in VLC. OpenSchool is a continuous-entry, online-school offering Ontario high school credits "on demand." Open School is particularly aimed at catering for students for whom physical attendance in school may be inappropriate.

Ontario residents pay no tuition fees for OpenSchool. Out of Province students will be required to pay a tuition fee as determined by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Towards a Comprehensive List of Canadian Virtual Schools

This list will be updated as VISCED research continues. At present it includes cross-school-board, district and provincial collaborations

Alberta Distance Learning Centre (ADLC)
Argyll Centre (Alberta)
Centre For Distance Learning and Innovation (Newfoundland and Labrador)
Chignecto Central Virtual School (CCVS) (Nova Scotia)
Conseil Scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) online programme (Nova Scotia and New Brunswick)
Consortium d'apprentissage virtuel de langue française de l'Ontario online programme (Ontario)
Credenda Virtual High School & College (Saskatchewan)
eLearning Ontario
Homework Help (Ontario)
Keewaytinook Internet High School (Ontario)
kool.sd73.bc.ca (British Columbia)
Learn Quebec
LearnNowBC (British Columbia)
Manitoba Education Distance Learning (WBC - Web Based Courses)
New Brunswick Distance Learning (NBDL)
Northern British Columbia Distance Education School (NBCDES)
Nova Scotia Virtual School (NSVS)
Ontario Catholic eLearning Consortium (OCeLC)
Ontario eLearning Consortium (OeLC)
Open School BC (British Columbia)
Open School Ontario
Ottawa Carleton e-School (Ontario)
Saskatchewan Distance Learning Course Repository
Saskatoon Cyber Catholic School (SCCS) (Sakatchewan)
Southwest Horizon Online Campus (Manitoba)
Sunchild E-Learning Community (Alberta)
Vancouver Learning Network
Virtual High School Nova Scotia (VHSNS)
Virtual High School Ontario (VHSO)
Virtual Learning Centre (Ontario)
Wapaskwa Virtual Collegiate (Manitoba)

Virtual initiatives in post-secondary education

Virtual Colleges

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e-Campus Alberta

eCampusAlberta brings together more than 700 online courses and 60 programs offered by 16 Alberta post-secondary institutions. As of 2011 eCampusAlberta has been established for nearly 9 years and for the year ending June 2011 had recorded 16,213 registrations. The previous year's total had been 13,107 registrations and eCampus Alberta has now seen seven consecutive annual increased of 24% or above.

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== Further information ==
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In May 2011 eCampus Alberta announced that it would be merging with Alberta North

TRU-OL

TRU-OL (Thompson Rivers University - Online Learning) offers post-secondary online courses include adult secondary school completion, certificates, and diplomas (including advanced and post-baccalaureate). Cooperative arrangements with other educational institutions, community organizations, industry, business and professional associations provide students with choices in earning recognized credentials.

Major E-Learning Initiatives

See Major e-learning initiatives in Canada.

Lessons learnt

General lessons

Notable practices

References

Canadian companies who have developed e-learning systems

WebCT was developed at the University of British Columbia by Murray Goldberg as an "unofficial" e-learning system, finally being bought by a company which became WebCTm, in turn acquired by Blackboard.
Desire2Learn is another Canadian-based learning management system, but this did not come out of academic circles.
The FirstClass system was developed in the late 1980s by http://www.softarc.com/ [SoftArc] for use in the Ontario School Board - the product was then sold on to various companies and gradually failed to keep up with developments.
Even earlier, the CoSy system was developed at the University of Guelph and used by the Open University for some years in the 1980s and into the early 1990s.

It is not a company yet but the Kuali Student system being developed by a consortium around the University of British Columbia is exciting interst in the US and now the UK.

(Readers are refered to the relevant wikipedia articles - of wildly varying quality and length, but at least giving some of the history. For a hopefully more measured historical view see the Wikipedia History of Virtual Learning Environments.)

Eminent Canadian experts in e-learning

Such lists are always invidious but the following three have a focus close to our mission - on post-secondary deployment - as well as research, and would be known to many UK experts in e-learning:

Tony Bates, Consultant - formerly of the Open University, then the Open Learning Agency and then University of British Columbia, more recently an advisor to the Open University of Catalonia, the Portuguese Open University and to EU projects including Re.ViCa - with a comprehensive web site
Terry Anderson, Professor of Distance Education, Athabasca University - with his university site
Thierry Karsenti, Professor of information and communication technology in Education, University of Montreal - with his university site. Pr. Karsenti also holds the Canada Research Chair in ICT and Education.
Linda Harasim [2], Professor, School of Education, Simon Fraser University, and author of several books, including 'Learning Networks'[3]

There are of course many active researchers in e-learning also and several Francophones of whom Gilbert Paquette is the doyen. Unlike many countries, Canada has or at least had an active tradition of research into e-learning in the FE and Skills area.

And in the schools e-learning area Professor Marlene Scardamalia and Emeritus Professor Carl Bereiter are leaders.

> Countries

Retrieved from "http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Canada"

Categories: Canada | Provinces and territories of Canada | North America | OECD | G8 countries | G-20 countries | Commonwealth countries | French-speaking countries | Country reports | Countries with Programmes | VISCED

Australia

From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

Or did you mean Athabasca University (AU) in Canada or Aarhus University (AU) in (Denmark)?

Contents

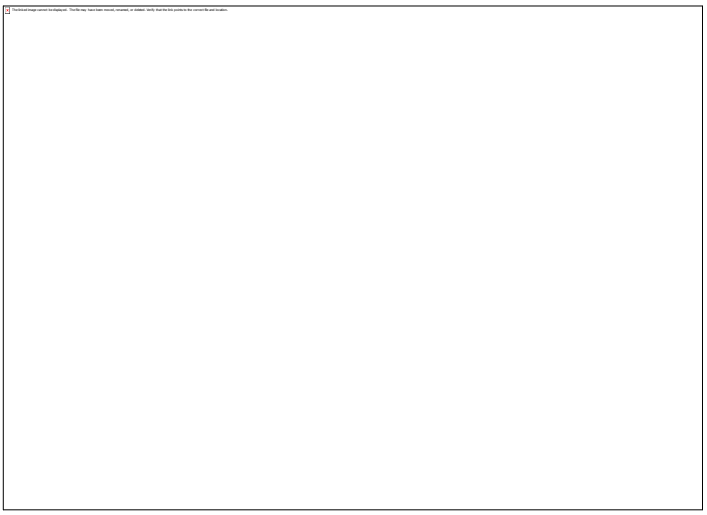
Experts situated in Australia

Please check the International Advisory Committee list for members in Australia

Australia in a nutshell

Australia is a country occupying a whole continent in the southern hemisphere with neighbouring countries including Indonesia, East Timor, and Papua New Guinea to the north, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and New Caledonia to the north-east, and New Zealand to the south-east.

For around 40,000 years before European settlement commenced in the late 18th century, the Australian mainland and Tasmania were inhabited by around 250 individual nations of indigenous Australians. After sporadic visits by fishermen from the immediate north, and European discovery by Dutch explorers in 1606, the eastern half of Australia was claimed by the British in 1770 and initially settled through penal transportation to the colony of New South Wales, founded on 26 January 1788. The population grew steadily in the following years; the continent was explored, and during the 19th century another five largely self-governing Crown Colonies were established.



In 1901, the Commonwealth of Australia was born when the colonies became a federation.

Australia is comprised of six states, plus two major mainland territories and several minor territories including islands. The states are New South Wales (NSW), Queensland, South Australia (SA), Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia (WA). The two major mainland territories are the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). The national's capital city is Canberra located in the ACT which is between NSW and Victoria.

Australia is a constitutional democracy based on a federal division of power – that is the states have control over some portfolio matters. The form of government in Australia is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of government. Queen Elizabeth II is the head of the country and is represented by the Governor-General at federal level and by the Governors at state level.

There are three levels of Australian government: Australian (Federal), state and territory and local.

Australia has a population of over 21 million according to the CIA Factbookwith the largest population concentrated around the mainland cities of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide.

Australia is a multicultural country with its residents coming from every part of the world. Australia is a federation of states/territories and so contains similar political and organisational challenges to many regios which are federations of states/territories or countries.

It could be argued that the relevance of Australia is mainly to the larger nations of the European Union, yet since it has a states structure as well the relevance is wider, in fact to all nations large and small. It should also be noticed that most Australians now see themseleves as being in the Asia-Pacific region. This regional relationship is very important now in Australia.

Education in Australia

Education in Australia is primarily the responsibility of states and territories. However the administration and financing of education in Australia is shared between the Australian Government and the Australian states and territories. The nature of the arrangements depends on the educational sector and legislative responsibilities.

Consultation between the Australian Government and the states and territories takes places through the [[Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs| Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA)].

The Australian Government's education policy focuses on:

- Improving learning outcomes
- Implementing a national school curriculum
- Increasing school retention rates
- Providing more funding for education and research.

The policy was released in 2007 when the Australian Labor Party (ALP) was still in opposition prior to forming government in late 2007.

For further information see:
http://www.alp.org.au/download/now/education_revolution_r1.pdf

The ALP was succesful in obtaining power in November 2007. The government's productivity agenda includes education, training, skills and early childhood as key elements. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) have agreed to a new model of cooperation on a number of matters of which productivity is one.

The states and territories are primarily responsible for policy and administration of school education. The Australian Government provides funding and co-ordination. Support is provided through:

- general recurrent, capital and targeted programs
- policy development
- research and analysis of nationally significant education issues.

A key priority of the current Australian Government is to provide a national consistent school system. That is agree on a common starting age, common national testing in key subject areas, consistency in curriculum outcomes, and a common information system for the transfer of student data when students move interstate.

The states and territories are responsible for:

- organisation, funding and delivery of school education

non-government schools registration, inspection and supplementary funding determines its own policies and practices on organisation of schooling, curriculum, course accreditation, student assessment and certification.

Each state and territory has its own education department and agencies which are responsible for publicly-funded education.

Curriculum and assessment is underpinned by the *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century* which focuses on the learning outcomes for students and provides a framework for national reporting on student achievement. The National Goals for Schooling have been agreed by all education ministers.

See:
http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/policy_initiatives_reviews/national_goals_for_schooling_in_the_twenty_first_century.htm

Generally, education in Australia follows the three-tier model which includes primary education (primary schools), followed by secondary education (secondary schools/high schools) and tertiary education (universities and/or TAFE (Technical and Further Education Colleges)).

Education is compulsory up to an age specified by legislation; this age varies from state to state but is generally 15-17, that is prior to completing secondary education. Post-compulsory education is regulated within the Australian Qualifications Framework, a unified system of national qualifications in schools, vocational education and training (TAFE) and the higher education sector (university).

The academic year in Australia varies between states and institutions, but generally runs from late January until mid-December for primary and secondary schools and TAFE colleges, and from late February until mid-November for universities.

Schools in Australia

For a list of all schools in Australia including their location and websites, visit the following link:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lists_of_schools_in_Australia

There are three levels of school education, primary, secondary and senior secondary.

Pre-school and Primary School

Primary school is from year 1 to year 6 or 7, with the emphasis being on developing English language and literacy skills, numeracy and basic mathematics as well as health and creative activities. There are no formal examination requirements and students progress to secondary education, on the recommendation of the teacher in consultation with the parents, at the completion of primary schooling.

Pre-school in Australia is relatively unregulated, and is not compulsory. The first exposure many Australian children have to learn with others outside of traditional parenting is day care or a local government run playgroup. This type of activity is not generally considered schooling. Pre-school education is separate from primary school in all states and territories except Western Australia and Queensland, where pre-school education is taught as part of the primary school system.

Pre-schools are usually run by local councils, community groups or private organizations except for the Northern Territory and Queensland where they are run by the Territory and State Governments respectively. Pre-school is offered to three- to five-year-olds, although attendance numbers vary widely (from 50% in New South Wales to 93% in Victoria). The year before a child is due to attend primary school is the main year for pre-school education. This year is far more commonly attended, and usually takes the form of a few hours of activity five days a week.

Secondary, Senior Secondary/High Schools and Colleges

Secondary education is from year 7 or 8 to year 10. Core subjects are taught for the first two years and a selection of electives are introduced thereafter.

Senior secondary covers year 11 and 12 and a range of programs are offered aimed at preparing students for future study and work life. The Senior Secondary Certificate of Education is awarded to students who have successfully completed year 12.

However, the years for both secondary and senior secondary schools in Australia do in fact vary from state to state. In territories such as Tasmania and the Astralian Capital Territory, the term *High School* is used to refer from years 7-10 while it is substituted by the term *College* from years 11-12. Following reforms of the Labor Government in the late 1980's and the early 1990's, the term *secondary college* has largely replaced the term *high school* in the territory of Victoria. Some schools in Victoria such as Melbourne High School have retained the term *high school*. Others have dropped the word 'secondary' and are simply referred to as '*colleges*'.

In New South Wales, the last year of high school, year 12, is known as the Higher School Certificate (HSC) while years 11 and 12 in Victoria are known as the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). There are various other similar names in other states.

The first examination mark for a student in New South Wales and a combination of examination marks and coursework in other states, excluding Queensland, are indexed into the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR). This index is usually the sole factor considered when applying for university courses. The ATAR was only introduced in 2009 in New South Wales, and previously each state calculated its own final high school rank, such as the Universities Admission Index (UAI) in New South Wales and Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank (ENTER) in Victoria.

Victorian students also have an opportunity to complete a high school qualification under the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning which gives students practical experience in a trade or workplace. This qualification generally leads students into a trade.

Generally, lower secondary education (Years 8 – 10) maintains continuity of learning in the learning areas and enables students to concentrate on the development of knowledge and skills in accordance with their personal learning goals and needs. Students are provided with opportunities to participate in enquiry based learning, innovative thinking, problem solving and decision making.

Senior secondary education (Years 11 and 12) provides students with a wide range of programs to ensure they are well placed to qualify for secondary graduation and to gain University or TAFE entrance or employment. The students undertake the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) and have the opportunity to pursue subjects of their choice in greater depth.

Teachers design educational programs to suit the learning needs of their students. Educational standards are maintained with state and nation wide testing.

The school year consists of two semesters divided into two terms each. The school day commences at approximately 9.00am and concludes between 3.00 and 3.30 pm

Government schools welcome students from other countries. They strive to ensure their learning experiences are both stimulating and educationally rewarding and the students enjoy their life in a different cultural environment.

Schools in Australia can be classified according to sources of funding and administrative structures. There are three such categories in Australia: Public Schools (also known as 'Government' schools or 'State' schools), Independent Schools (informally known as 'private' schools) and Catholic schools.

School is compulsory in Australia between the ages of six and fifteen, depending on the state and date of birth, with, in recent years, over three quarters of students staying on until they are eighteen. Government schools educate about two thirds of Australian students, with the other third in independent schools, a proportion which is rising in many parts of Australia.

Government schools are free, while independent schools, both religious and secular, charge fees. Regardless of whether a school is government or independent, they are required to adhere to the same curriculum frameworks. Most school students, be they in government or independent school, usually wear uniforms, although there are varying expectations and some Australian schools do not require uniforms.

Government (or state) schools

Government or state schools are run by the local state or territory government. They do not charge compulsory fees, with the majority of their costs being met by the relevant government, and the rest by voluntary levies and fund raising activities.

Government schools are of two types: open and selective. Open schools accept all students from their government defined catchment areas. Selective government schools mostly cater for academically gifted students (the top 5 percent), although there are performing arts and sports schools. Almost all selective schools are in New South Wales, though a few exist in other areas. For example Victoria has 2 selective entry high schools for students in year 9 -12.

Selective schools are more prestigious than open government schools, and generally achieve better results in the school-leaving exams than independent or open government schools. Entry to selective schools is often highly competitive these schools cater to a large geographical area.

Independent and Catholic schools

Most Catholic schools are either run by their local parish and/or by each state's Catholic Education Commission.

Independent schools enroll about 14% of students. These include schools operated by religious groups and secular educational philosophies such as Montessori.

All independent schools charge tuition fees. Government funding for independent schools often comes under criticism from the Australian Education Union and the general public.

Private schools have better infrastructures, facilities, higher paid teachers, prestige and social status as well as a better educational environment. They focus on extra-curricular activities such games and sports, other activities alongside better education. Private schools are considered a very important part of the Australian school system because of their quality. They get funded by the government and students still have to pay a very high tuition, making them more expensive than the government schools.

Some of the best private schools in Australia include Anglican Grammar School, Canberra Grammar School, Saint Hilda's School, etc. Other good private schools are mostly found in major cities such as Canberra, Adelaide, Perth, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. Usually, there is tough competition enrolling in private schools and both parents and students have to meet specific eligibility requirements before applying, which normally vary from school to school and from class to class. Besides educational requirements, the students may also have to appear for a written test.

Amongst other subjects, main courses offered in Australian private schools include English, the language other than English, Math, Science, Art, Social & Environmental Studies, Technology, Personal Development, Health and Physical Education. Some private schools at the senior secondary level offer specialization in particular areas. For a list of all the private schools in Australia, visit http://www.indiaedumart.com/australia-education/schools/private-schools/

Further and Higher education

The Australian Government has significant financial and policy responsibility for higher education, while state and territory governments retain major legislative responsibility. At the national level higher education policies and programs are administered by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations – DEEWR . The provision of government funding is outlined in the Higher Education Support Act 2003.

See: http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/default.asp?id=11408

The Australian Government also provides substantial funding to the higher education sector in support of research through various grants and programs:

Institutional Grants Scheme
Research Infrastructure Block Grants
Australian Postgraduate Awards
Research projects administered by the Australian Research Council (ARC)
National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

Vocational education and training

The Australian Government contributes about one-third of government funding for vocational education and training, with the other two-thirds coming from state and territory governments.

Australia's vocational education and training (VET) system is built on a partnership between governments and industry. Industry representatives and employers play a key role in determining training policies and priorities, and in developing training qualifications that can deliver the skills employers need for the workforce.

Australian's training system is based on competencies, nationally consistent and quality-assured.

The [Australian Qualifications Framework http://www.aqf.edu.au/cs.htm (AQF)] was established in 1995. The Framework links qualifications from school, vocational education and training and higher education sectors. The AQF recognises prior learning or current competence, and makes credit transfer and flexible learning pathways easier. AQF VET qualifications are outcomes based, and focus on the skills and competencies gained rather than on the length or type of course studied.

State and territory governments have constitutional responsibility for the management and administration of vocational education and training within their jurisdictions. That is they are responsible for state-level planning, regulation of training providers, allocation of funds to public and private training providers, setting student fees and charges and managing Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutes.

The Australian Government takes a strategic leadership role in vocational education and training by working collaboratively with states and territories and industry as part of its responsibility to ensure national prosperity and economic development.

Under the 2005-2008 funding agreement, the Australian Government committed to providing almost $5 billion to states and territories to support their training systems. The Australian Government also directly funds a number of programs to support the vocational education and training system. These include:

Australian Apprenticeships (including support for employers and new apprentices)
Australian Technical Colleges
Workplace English Language and Literacy Program (provides existing workers with English language, literacy and numeracy skills.

The Digital Education Revolution

The Digital Education Revolution, a major part of the Australian Government's Education Revolution, is a vital step in creating a world-class education system for Australia.

The aim of the program is to contribute sustainable and meaningful change to teaching and learning in Australian schools that will prepare students for further education, training and to live and work in a digital world. Source : http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/DigitalEducationRevolution/Pages/default.aspx

Higher education

Tertiary or higher education in Australia is made up of universities and non-university higher education institutions (called higher education providers).

A higher education provider is an entity approved state and territory authorities to offer particular higher education courses. Australia has approximately 150 higher education institutions approved to offer particular higher education courses. Higher education providers have to be approved by the Australian Government Minister for Education in order to be eligible for government grants or for their students to be eligible to receive assistance from the Australian Government under the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA). Providers are subject to quality and accountability requirements.

In 2007, the Australian higher education system consisted of:

39 universities of which 37 are public institutions and 2 are private;
1 Australian branch of an overseas university;
4 other self-accrediting higher education institutions; and
non-self-accrediting higher education providers accredited by State and Territory authorities, numbering more than 150 as listed on State and Territory registers. These include several that are registered in more than one State and Territory.

The non-self-accrediting higher education providers form a very diverse group of specialised, mainly private, providers that range in size and include theological colleges and other providers that offer courses in areas such as business, information technology, natural therapies, hospitality, health, law and accounting.

Universities in Australia

For a list of all universities in Australia including their location and websites, visit the following link:

http://www.australian-universities.com/list/

Both private and public universities can be found in Australia. As of 2006, there are 36 public, 2 Catholic and 1 Non-profit Private universities in Australia.

Universities Australia is the industry peak body representing the university sector. Currently, 38 universities are members of Universities Australia.

Most Australian universities developed substantial capability in distance learning in the 1980s and a significant number have now embraced e-learning. Perhaps the best known is the University of Southern Queensland.

There is a service provider called NextEd who operates globally and in particular supported the GUA.

For a list of university rankings in Australia by different agencies, organisations and international bodies, visit http://www.university-list.net/Australia/rank-1000.html

Polytechnics in Australia

Colleges in Australia

Vocational Education and Training

The main providers of vocational education and training (VET) in Australia are the various state-administered institutes of Technical and Further Education (TAFE). TAFE institutions generally offer courses based on the Australian Qualifications Framework that is Certificates I, II, III, and IV, Diplomas, and Advanced Diplomas in a wide range of vocational areas. They also offer some higher education courses, especially in Victoria.

In addition, to TAFE Institutions, there are many Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) which are operated privately. In Victoria alone there are approximately 1100 RTOs. They include:

commercial training providers,

the training department of manufacturing or service enterprises,
the training function of employer or employee organisations in a particular industry,
Group Training Companies,
community learning centres and neighbourhood houses,
secondary schools/colleges providing VET programs.

In terms of size these RTOs vary from single-person operations delivering training and assessment in a narrow specialisation, to large organisations offering a wide range of programs. Many RTOs receive government funding to deliver programs to apprentices or trainees, to disadvantaged groups, or in government identified priority areas.

All course providers are required to comply with the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) and compliance is monitored by regular internal and external audits.

VET programs delivered by TAFE Institutions and private RTOs are based on nationally registered qualifications, derived from either endorsed sets of competency standards known as Training Packages, or from courses accredited by state/territory government authorities. These qualifications are regularly reviewed and updated. In specialised areas where no formal qualifications exist, RTOs may develop their own course and obtain endorsement for it as an accredited privately owned program which is then subjected to the same rules as the publicly owned programs.

All trainers and assessors delivering VET programs are required to hold a qualification known as the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104) or demonstrate equivalent competency. Additionally, they are also required to have relevant vocational competencies, at least to the level being delivered or assessed.

Education reform

Schools

Post-secondary

The Bologna Process and Australia

The Bologna Process represents a commitment by forty-five European countries to undertake a series of reforms in order to achieve greater consistency and portability across their higher education systems.

The Bologna process is likely to have a profound effect on the development of higher education globally. Australian education observers (as well as observers from other continents) are taking a close interest in the reform process and beginning to consider how their own system can be more closely aligned with 'Bologna' thinking.

A discussion paper developed in 2006, by the Department of Education, Science and Training, aimed to initiate discussion on the significance of Bologna for Australia and

possible Australian responses. The Department of Education Science and Training's initial assessment is that Australian higher education has much to gain by aligning with the key Bologna actions. Potential benefits identified are of two types:

Facilitation of interaction and recognition
Benefits to Australian students and employers (with the use of "The Diploma Supplement" and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS))

The document also state that the institution choosing to maintain positions of Bologna 'incompatibility' take a risk.

What would Australian compatibility with Bologna involve? At a minimum, compatibility would entail:

a three cycle (Bachelor, Masters, Doctorate) degree structure;
promotion of the Diploma Supplement;
a credit accumulation/transfer system compatible with the ECTS; and
the existence of an accreditation/quality assurance framework meeting Bologna criteria.

Australian structures and processes which fit within the Bologna framework:

Australia has a three cycle (Bachelor, Masters, Doctorate) qualification structure.

There are some areas in which efforts would be required to achieve Bologna compatibility, for example repositioning of Australian Honours degrees, four-year and graduate entry Bachelor degrees and one-year Masters courses, to ensure alignment with Bologna structures and emerging trends.

The Diploma Supplement has been trialled in Australia, but institutions will need to make decisions about adoption.
The Australian quality assurance system generally fits within the broad guidelines established by the Bologna Process, but a documented audit of compatibility may be useful as a tool for marketing and dealing with future recognition issues in Europe. There is a question of whether AUQA should seek admission to the proposed, but yet to be developed, European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies, should its eventual guidelines be framed to include external countries.
Australia has the EFTSU system which provides a common measure of student workload applying across Australian universities. It may be possible to adapt this system so that it connects more effectively with the ECTS.

Concluding remarks

There are some challenges posed by the Bologna reforms in relation to existing qualifications that Australian higher education institutions need to consider. A key issue is the position of Australian graduate entry and four-year bachelor level qualifications. It is likely that the European pathway for professional accreditation, in a range of professions, will become a

bachelor degree followed by a two-year masters degree. The level of acceptance of graduate entry or four-year bachelor degrees is as yet unclear.

The recognition of Australian one-year masters courses will also need to be monitored because whilst there is scope for a one-year masters within the Bologna structure, it is likely that the two-year masters will become the norm in most countries. The one-year masters may become a course offered only to international students in Europe and questions may arise about the professional recognition, comparability and quality of such courses within Europe.

The use of Australian honours degrees as direct entry points to doctoral studies may also be problematic in Europe, since the pathway to doctoral studies within the Bologna Process will be through a masters qualification (3+2).

Australian's HE reforms

In 2002, the Commonwealth Government conducted a review of Australia's higher education system. The Government's response to the Review was announced on 13 May 2003 as part of the 2003/2004 Budget process. Announced by the previous Government in 2003, the "Our Universities: Backing Australia's Future" package provided an additional $11 billion in funding over 10 years to enable higher education providers to deliver world-class higher education.

The Commonwealth Grant Scheme and Higher Education Loan Programme (HELP) arose from these reforms. The reforms were structured around four key policy principles:

> sustainability – improved governance, appropriate resourcing and greater pricing flexibility for universities
> quality – incentives to improve performance and greater accountability
> equity – increased number of student places, greater availability of income-contingent loans, increase in the repayment threshold and incentives to improve participation and outcomes for disadvantaged groups
> diversity – incentive and performance-based funding for teaching and research, support for restructuring and collaboration and additional funding for regional institutions.

source : http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher_education/

The reforms focused on establishing a partially deregulated system of higher education, in which individual universities are enabled to capitalise on their particular strengths and determine the value of their course offerings in a competitive environment. There is renewed emphasis on learning and teaching outcomes, greater recognition of the role of regional campuses and institutions, and a framework for research in which all Commonwealth funding is either competitive or performance-based. New arrangements for student financing promote lifelong learning, and ensure equity of access to higher education - no eligible student will be required to pay up-front fees when enrolling at an eligible higher education institution. Greater access for disadvantaged groups is supported, and the market for private higher education is opened up, while still maintaining quality control. Diversity will be encouraged

through the creation of performance-based incentives for institutions to differentiate their missions.

source : http://www.backingaustraliasfuture.gov.au/reforms.htm

Reforms to the State's skills and workforce development system

South Australia's Workforce Development Strategy, which was released in 2005, articulated the State Government's vision for the future workforce as: South Australia has an efficient, highly skilled workforce that supports a globally competitive economy and a socially inclusive community. The three priority areas within the strategy are: a high skill economy, quality employment and better workforce planning. This approach represents an innovative way of integrating workforce planning, employment participation and demand considerations, and was the first such strategy in Australia. These three priorities continue to underpin the South Australian Government's ongoing skills reform agenda. The workforce development approach which has been adopted in South Australia responds to the State's dual social and economic priorities which are articulated in South Australia's Strategic Plan.

Future direction of tertiary education

In March 2008, the Government initiated a Review of Higher Education to examine the future direction of the higher education sector, its fitness for purpose in meeting the needs of the Australian community and economy, and the options for ongoing reform. The Review of Australian Higher Education was undertaken by an independent expert panel, led by Emeritus Professor Denise Bradley AC.

An initial response to the review by the government indicates:

A student-centred, demand driven, higher education system:

> future structural reforms which focus on a student-centred, demand driven system
> from 2012 universities will be funded on the basis of student demand
> the Government will establish a national regulatory and quality agency for higher education.

Tertiary education pathways for the future:

> work with the states and territories to develop strong and cohesive national regulatory arrangements for VET alongside the proposed higher education regulator
> commission the Australian Qualifications Framework Council to improve articulation and connectivity between the university and VET sectors
> form a single tertiary education sector ministerial council, with representatives from the Commonwealth, states and territories.

Enhanced equity in tertiary education, with a focus on improving accessibility:

> by 2020, 20% of higher education enrollments at undergraduate level should be from low socio-economic backgrounds

work closely with the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC) to improve higher education access and outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

Reform for Australian innovation and research - a new approach to research funding and measures to strengthen the contribution universities make to the national innovation system.

Administration and finance

Schools

Post-secondary

Government responsibility The Australian Government has significant financial and policy responsibility for higher education, while state and territory governments retain major legislative responsibility. At the national level higher education policies and programs are administered by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations – DEEWR . The provision of government funding is outlined in the Higher Education Support Act 2003.

See: http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/default.asp?id=11408

Australian Government funding support for higher education is provided largely through:

- the Commonwealth Grant Scheme which provides for a specified number of Commonwealth Supported places each year
- the Higher Education Loan Programme (HELP) arrangements providing financial assistance to students
- the Commonwealth Scholarships
- a range of grants for specific purposes including quality, learning and teaching, research and research training programmes.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) is the Australian Government Department with responsibility for administering funding, developing and administering higher education policy and programs.

Decision-making, regulation and governance for higher education are shared among the Australian Government, the State and Territory Governments and the individual institutions.

Universities' responsibility By definition within Australia, universities are self-accrediting institutions and each university has its own established legislation (generally State and Territory legislation).

As self-accrediting institutions, Australia's universities have a reasonably high level of autonomy to operate within the legislative requirements associated with their Australian Government funding.

The Australian Catholic University is established under corporations law. It has establishment Acts in NSW and Victoria.

Many private providers are also established under corporations law.

States and Territories

Some aspects of higher education are the responsibility of States and Territories. In particular, most universities are established or recognised under State and Territory legislation.

States and Territories are also responsible for accrediting non-self-accrediting higher education providers.

Fees

Australian students can undertake higher education studies at an approved institution as either a Commonwealth support student or a a fee-paying student. Students have to pay for their tertiary education.

Commonwealth support places (formerly known as HECS) are made possible through the financial contribution to higher education providers by the Australian Government.

For more information on Commonwealth support places see: http://www.goingtouni.gov.au

VET sector

The Australian Government contributes about one-third of government funding for vocational education and training, with the other two-thirds coming from state and territory governments.

Employer contributions to training in Australia include:

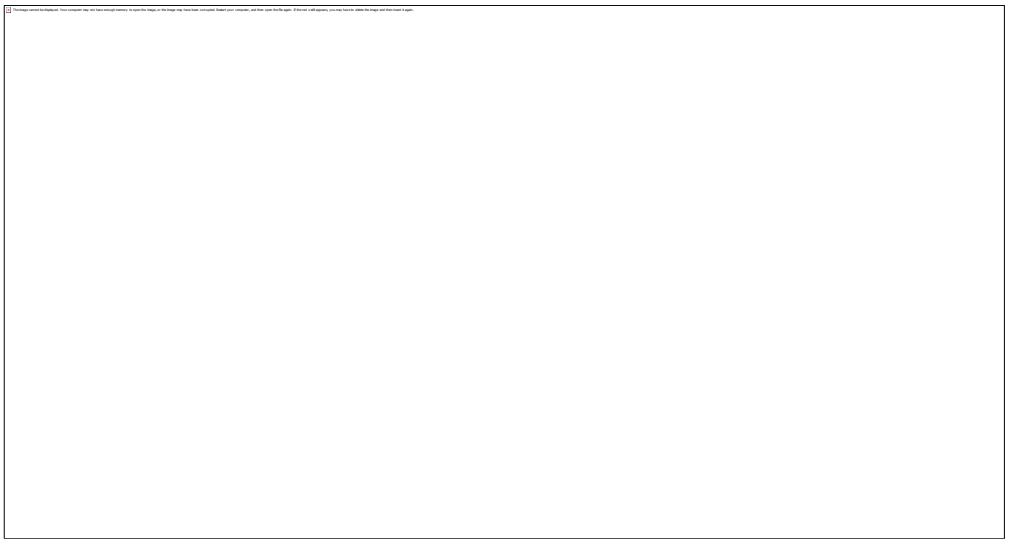
- training provision for employees (in the form of payment for courses)
- paid time off
- training materials, travel and subsidies

For more details see section under Australian education policy

Quality assurance

Quality assurance in Australia's higher education system is based on a strong partnership between the Commonwealth (federal), State and Territory Governments and the higher education sector.

Source:
http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher_education/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/assuring_quality_in_higher_education/partners_in_quality_assurance.htm



Commonwealth

The Australian Government's role includes:

- Protection of the term 'university'
- Legislative protection of overseas students studying in Australia
- Performance management tools
- Learning and Teaching Performance Fund
- Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC)
- Institution Assessment Framework (IAF) [formerly Educational Profiles]

State and Territory Governments

Australia's State and mainland Territory Governments are responsible for the legislation which protects the integrity of Australian universities and higher education awards in their jurisdiction. Their responsibilities include:

- specifying arrangements to establish and recognise universities, as well as protecting the use of the term "university"
- protecting higher education award titles and accrediting higher education courses to be offered by non-self-accrediting private providers
- approving the operation of overseas providers of higher education
- endorsing courses of study as suitable for overseas students.

These responsibilities are explained further in the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes.

Schools

Post-secondary

Australia's universities are self accrediting bodies established by or under Commonwealth, State or Territory legislation. They are responsible for maintaining the quality of their own academic standards. This quality is independently verified every five years by the Australian Universities Quality Agency.

There are 43 self-accrediting higher education institutions in Australia and 39 of these are universities. In addition to these institutions there are over 100 private education providers accredited by State and Territory Governments offering higher education courses.

Universities assure the quality of their offerings in a number of ways including external academic and industry in-put into courses and peer review of new and ongoing courses. Usually universities formally review their courses on a five-yearly basis. Additionally, universities regularly evaluate student feedback.

Universities also voluntarily comply with various codes of practice and guidelines set by Universities Australia to maintain and ensure the quality of their offerings.

The Australian Qualification Framework

The Australian Qualifications Framework (commonly known as the AQF) is a unified system of national qualifications in schools, vocational education and training (TAFEs and private providers) and the higher education sector (mainly universities).

AQF lists universities and other self-accrediting higher education institutions.

AQF was established by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) in 1995 to provide for nationally recognised pathways between awards offered in Australia's vocational education and training and higher education sectors. It brings together the qualifications issued by different sectors into a single comprehensive system of titles and standards.

AQF also maintains a public register of MCEECDYAendorsed post compulsory education providers and accreditation authorities. The register is a key element of the Australian higher education quality assurance framework.

Australian Universities Quality Agency

The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) is an independent, not-for-profit national agency to promote, audit, and report on quality assurance in Australian higher education. AUQA was formally established by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) in March 2000. It operates independently of governments and the higher education sector under the direction of a Board of Directors. AUQA is owned by and receives core, operational funding from the

Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers for higher education who are members of MCEECDYA. The AUQA Constitution is available for download.

AUQA website

Information society

The Australian Information and Communications Technology in Education Committee (AICTEC) is a national, cross-sectoral committee responsible for providing advice to all Australian Ministers of Education and Training on the economic and effective utilisation of information and communications technologies in Australian education and training and on implementation of the Digital Education Revolution.

A real ICT policy and organisational framework exists for the use of Information and Communication Technologies in Australian Education Training. A Joint Ministerial Statement on Information and Communications Technologies in Australian Education and Training: 2008-2011 was endorsed by MCEETYA and the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education (MCVTE) in June 2008.

> Joint Ministerial Statement PDF
> Joint Ministerial Statement web page

Australian Flexible Learning Framework

The Australian Flexible Learning Framework (Framework0 provides the vocational education and training (VET) system with the essential e-learning infrastructure and expertise needed to respond to the challenges of a modern economy and the training needs of Australian businesses and workers.

> The Framework was launched as a strategy in 2000, responding to information and communication technology (ICT) developments in workplaces and society. The Australian Government and all states and territories agreed to work together nationally to advance the use of e-learning in VET.
>
> The first 2000-2004 Framework Strategy focused on raising awareness of the potential of e-learning, and starting to build capability. The second 2005-2007 Framework Strategy continued this work, and focused on engaging with key target groups.
>
> The 2008-2011 Framework Strategy maximises and builds on the national investment to date in essential e-learning infrastructure. It will focus on embedding e-learning in registered training organisations (RTOs), business and industry. The 2008 Framework Business Plan provides the blueprint for the Framework in the first year of the new Strategy, detailing the Leadership and Innovation programs, and their related business activities.

Together these strategies have created a considerable infrastructure and a sound foundation on which to establish e-learning as an integral part of the national training system.

The national training system's e-learning strategy, the Australian Flexible Learning Framework (Framework), has received the go-ahead for its 2009 activities, opening up more than $7 million in funding opportunities for registered training organisations (RTOs), business and industry to embed e-learning in the vocational education and training (VET) system.

The announcement coincides with recent research showing that 36% of all VET activity in RTOs now formally involves e-learning, compared to just 3-4% in 2003-2004. Research also confirms that 91% of students and 88% of teachers and trainers now use e-learning as part of their VET experience.

More information about the Australian Flexible Learning Framework is available at : http://www.flexiblelearning.net.au/flx/go/home/about

For information about the initiatives and projects classified by states and territories, visit this page: http://www.flexiblelearning.net.au/flx/go/home/States_and_Territories

Information society strategy

In Australia 14% of students (95 000) are doing distance education.

> The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century - Preamble and Goals

source : http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/policy_initiatives_reviews/national_goals_for_schooling_in_the_twenty_first_century.htm

> On 5 December 2008, State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education meeting as the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, released the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians which sets the direction for Australian schooling for the next 10 years. source : http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/melbourne_declaration,25979.html

> Digital Education Revolution. Not only a programme but also a kind of strategy / policy. See in programme below.

Benchmarking e-learning

Australia is one of the few countries where time and effort has been committed to benchmarking e-learning. Other countries include UK and New Zealand.

Interest in benchmarking in Australia can by attributed to:

> a long strand of development and piloting of the [www.acode.edu.au/ Australian Council on Open, Distance and E-Learning (ACODE)] scheme
> an impending pilot of eMM by around six institutions

Although the ACODE scheme is a distinct scheme, it has several similarities with the Pick&Mix style of benchmarking which has been used for analytic purposes in Re.ViCa - and in fact Paul Bacsich was the external advisor to the ACODE scheme. There are interesting differences, including a stronger focus in ACODE on IT.

ICT in education initiatives

Government entities

Education.au is Australia's leading Information and Communications Technology (ICT) agency for educators and delivers a range of web services to clients in the higher education, schools education and vocational education and training sectors.

AICTEC - The Australian Information and Communications Technology in Education Committee (AICTEC) is a national, cross-sectoral committee responsible for providing advice to all Australian Ministers of Education and Training on the economic and effective utilisation of information and communications technologies in Australian education and training.

ACODE the Australasian Council on Open, Distance and E-Learning, the peak Australasian organisation for universities engaged or interested in open, distance, flexible and e-learning. ACODE's mission is to enhance policy and practice in open, distance, flexible and e-learning in Australasian higher education.

Interesting Programmes

e-framework

The Le@rning Federation is an initiative of the state, territory and national governments of Australia and New Zealand. It is developing high-quality online curriculum content for years P-10 (preschool to year 10) in two formats: interactive, multimedia learning objects and digital resources. The materials are designed to engage students and support teachers and will be freely available to all schools in Australia and New Zealand.

Australian Flexible Learning Frameworkis the e-learning strategy for the vocational education and training (VET) sector. It provides the VET system with the essential e-learning infrastructure and expertise needed to respond to the challenges of a modern economy and the training needs of Australian businesses and workers. The Framework was launched as a strategy in 2000, responding to information and communication technology (ICT) developments in workplaces and society. The Australian Government and all states and territories agreed to work together nationally to advance the use of e-learning in VET.

Australian Scheme for Higher Education Repositories ASHER: program to assist eligible HEPs to establish and maintain digital repositories.

The Australian partnership for Sustainable Repositories (APSR) aims to establish a centre of excellence for the management of scholarly assets in digital format. APSR is a partnership that aims to promote excellence in building & managing these collections of digital research objects.

RUBRIC RUBRIC focuses on the needs of smaller and regional universities by providing a structured framework for partner institutions to evaluate, trial and implement an Institutional Repository solution; to collaborate on the development of better processes and tools; to act collectively and to develop the expertise that will be necessary to respond to emerging needs of the Research Quality and Accessibility Frameworks across universities.

MAMS - Meta Access Management System. This project allows for the integration of multiple solutions to managing authentication, authorisation and identities, together with common services for digital rights, search services and metadata management. The project provides an essential "middleware" component to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of Australia's higher education research infrastructure.

Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) Initiative. The Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative will be developed by the ARC. It will assess research quality within Australia's higher education institutions using a combination of indicators and expert review by committees comprising experienced, internationally-recognised experts.
http://www.arc.gov.au/era/default.htm

Digital Education Revolution. The Digital Education Revolution, a major part of the Australian Government's Education Revolution, is a vital step in creating a world-class education system for Australia. The aim of the program is to contribute sustainable and meaningful change to teaching and learning in Australian schools that will prepare students for further education, training and to live and work in a digital world.
http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/DigitalEducationRevolution/Pages/default.aspx

Virtual initiatives in schools

Elementary and Primary Schools

Kalgoorlie School of the Air

Alice Springs School of the Air

Port Hedland School of the Air

Secondary and High Schools

Brisbane School of Distance Education

Karabar High School Distance Education Centre

Mount Isa School of the Air

Northern Territory Open Education Centre

Open High School Australia

Open Access College School of the Air

xsel

Here are some organizations participating in virtual initiatives and distance education in Australia:

- Isolated Children's Parents Association of Australia (ICPA) http://www.icpa.com.au/
- The Australian Association of Distance Education (AADES) http://www.aades.edu.au/
- The Australian Association of Distance Education (ACE) http://www.austcolled.com.au/
- The Virtual School Agency (VSA)

The Virtual School Agency is an agency that helps prospective students abroad, at all levels of education, including secondary/high and university levels, to secure admission and student jobs in Australia. Most of the correspondences between agency and prospective students are done online. They also help the prospective student obtain a study visa as well as work permit. They also provide awareness about the possibilities of different scholarships for students. For more information on the Virtual School Agency (VSA), visit http://virtualstudentagency.com/study-in-australia/

Virtual initiatives in post-secondary education

Open Universities Australia -- formerly Open Learning Australia
Charles Sturt University
Curtin University of Technology
Deakin University
Edith Cowan University
University of Southern Queensland
Open Training and Education Network (OTEN)
TAFE Open Learning
TAFE virtual campus (Victoria) - a learning platform
University of New England UNEOnline (UNE)
TAFE open training and education network (OTEN)
Macquarie University's E-Learning Centre Of Excellence (MELCOE) - a research lab
International Career Institute

Lessons learnt

General lessons

Notable practices

References

OECD Country Page for Australia, OECD, http://www.oecd.org/country/0,3731,en_33873108_33873229_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

"OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Australia", Paulo Santiago, Graham Donaldson, Joan Herman, Claire Shewbridge, OECD, 18 August 2011, http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/1/44/48519807.pdf, 5 October 2011
OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes, OECD, http://www.oecd.org/document/24/0,3746,en_33873108_33873229_44567960_1_1_1_1,00.html, 5 October

Associations and networks

EdNA (Education Network Australia): one of the world's largest education and training websites with more than 16,000 evaluated online resources and free online forums, chatrooms and discussion lists to support collaboration and communication in the education and training communities.

Elearning Network of Australasia (ElNet) http://www.elnet.com.au/

Open and distance learning association of Australia

Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (ASCILITE) http://www.ascilite.org.au/ Relevant for higher education.

Repositories of OER

LORN currently has seven member repositories contributing more than 2500 learning objects for download. A wide range of industries and subject areas, including business, community services, electrotechnology, horticulture, tourism and hospitality, are represented. The number of Learning objects increases as repository owners build their collections.

- Flexible Learning Toolboxes
- TAFE Tasmania
- Centre for Learning Innovation (CLI)
- TAFE SA
- TAFE VC
- TVET
- WestOne

Australasian Digital Theses Program
Australian Research Repositories Online to the World
Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies
Australian e-Humanities Gateway
FindLaw Australia

A synthetic presentation is available here:
http://eprints.utas.edu.au/1031/2/Australia_talk.ppt#598,12,ARROW Discovery Service

Australian journals

Australasian Journal of Educational Technology (AJET).
http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet.html

Listed as an A journal by the Australian government

Other

Government Educational Portal
The official Australian Government site for studying in Australia
http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/Sia/Splash.aspx
Education in Australia Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Australia
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
http://www.dewr.gov.au/
Australia online education network (EdNA) http://www.edna.edu.au/edna/go
http://www.flexiblelearning.net.au/flx/go/home
http://www.educationau.edu.au/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/papers/elearning_seoul_jm.pdf
http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/16/52/1854142.pdf
http://eprints.utas.edu.au/1031/2/Australia_talk.ppt#575,18,Software about repositories
http://www.caudit.edu.au/educauseaustralasia07/authors_papers/Blackall-125.pdf about repositories
education.au http://www.educationau.edu.au/jahia/jsp/index.jsp
Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST)
http://www.dfeest.sa.gov.au/
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lists_of_schools_in_Australia

> **Australia**

Retrieved from "http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Australia"

Categories: Australia | Australasia | OECD | G-20 countries | Commonwealth countries | Countries in merged template | VISCED | Country reports | Countries with Programmes

Appendix B – Selected supraregion reports

It had been the original intention to produce a report for each supraregion – but this was based on (a) an assumption that there was a coherent set of information on the supraregion (as opposed to just the countries in it) and (b) sufficiently many virtual schools in the supraregion to make it worthwhile to spend the effort providing an analytic underpinning. However, before the paucity of virtual schools in some supraregions became evident a number of useful supraregion reports were produced – the two tasks were going on rather in parallel.

Here we reproduce the supraregion reports on Central Asia and Yugosphere, where there are few if any virtual schools and the one for Hispanic America, where there are several.

In addition, and as usefully, around 100 country reports were updated in order to gain a supraregion perspective. Thus we also provide a small selection of these.

B1. Selected supraregion reports

Central Asia

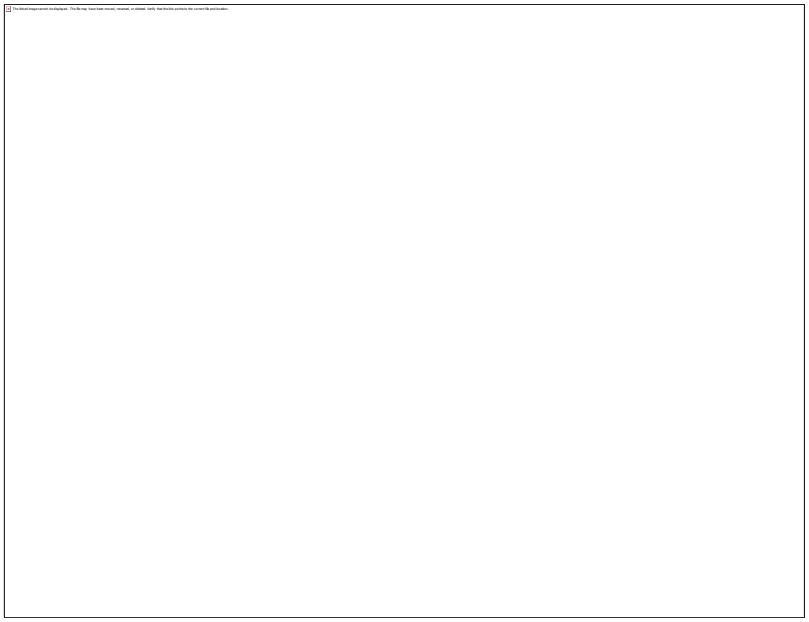
From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

Contents

Experts situated in Central Asia

None

Regional overview



Historically, according to Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Asia), *Central Asia* is a core region of the Asian continent from the Caspian Sea in the west, China in the east, Afghanistan in the south, and Russia in the north.

It is also sometimes referred to as Middle Asia, and, colloquially, "the 'stans" (as the five countries generally considered to be within the region all have names ending with that suffix) and is within the scope of the wider Eurasian continent.

Various definitions of its exact composition exist, and no one definition is universally accepted. Despite this uncertainty in defining borders, it does have some important overall characteristics. For one, Central Asia has historically been closely tied to its nomadic peoples and the Silk Road. As a result, it has acted as a crossroads for the movement of people, goods, and ideas between Europe, West Asia, South Asia, and East Asia.

In modern contexts, all definitions of Central Asia consensually include these five republics of the former Soviet Union: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan), Turkmenistan), and Uzbekistan, with a total population of 61.5 million as of 2009 - in other words, in total around the size of one of the larger members of the European Union.

Other areas often included are Mongolia, Afghanistan, northern and western Pakistan, northeastern Iran, Kashmir, and sometimes Xinjiang in western China and southern Siberia in Russia.

For VISCED purposes, Central Asia is defined in the stricter sense above purely as the countries of the former Commonwealth of Independent States that are mainly or partially in Asia, as judged by cultural as well as geographic frontiers.

The complete list is:

1. Kazakhstan (pop. 16.0 million)
2. Kyrgyzstan (5.5 million)
3. Tajikistan (7.3 million)
4. Turkmenistan (5.1 million)
5. Uzbekistan (27.6 million).

This corresponds exactly to the definition of the Central Asia subregion in the UN geoscheme (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_geoscheme_for_Asia). It is thus a subset of the countries in the wider supraregion of Category:Asian former CIS which includes Transcaucasia also.

Education in Central Asia

The collapse of the Soviet economic block and the move to a market economy brought two fundamental needs to the education systems of Central Asia. The first was to create functioning Ministries of Education with the capacity to establish education policy as well as to oversee the provision of education and to ensure its quality. The second was to reorient education programs to the new needs arising from the transition from a command economy to a market economy. The countries have dealt differently with these challenges resulting in quite significant variations in the education systems.

Kazakhstan - Once leaving lower secondary school after 9 years of study, there are three tracks available. Students are free to choose any track of higher secondary education but are required to pursue one track. Graduates of all three tracks are eligible to enter university. The first track is a general secondary school which covers grades 10 -11 and provides general

education covering a variety of subjects. In addition, there are two curriculum tracks for vocational education: Initial vocational education which is provided by training schools and lycees, and secondary vocational education provided by colleges and trade schools. Tertiary education is provided by a number of public and private institutions.

Kyrgyzstan - Education in Kyrgyzstan is compulsory for nine years, between ages 7 and 15. Following four years of primary and five years of lower secondary school, the system offers two years of upper secondary school, specialized secondary school, or vocational/technical school. In 2001 some 89 percent of the relevant age-group was enrolled in the compulsory program, but this figure has decreased in the early 2000s.

Tajikistan - Education in Tajikistan consists of four years of primary school followed by two stages of secondary school (lasting five and two years, respectively). Attendance at school is mandatory from age seven to seventeen.

Turkmenistan - Education in Turkmenistan is obligatory for nine years. However, the government has limited curricula by eliminating a wide variety of studies that are considered dangerous or useless. Funding has not matched the growing population, teacher salaries have been reduced, and the infrastructure is in poor condition. Some 16 institutions of higher education were operating in the early 2000s, but the government has limited access to higher education by eliminating free tuition in 2003 and by requiring ethnic background checks on applicants.

Uzbekistan - In Uzbekistan, eleven years of primary and secondary education are obligatory, starting at age seven. This requirement includes four years of primary school and two cycles of secondary school, lasting five and two years, respectively. The rate of attendance in those grades is high, although the figure is significantly lower in rural areas than in urban centers. Lack of budgetary support has been more noticeable at the primary and secondary levels, as the government has continued to subsidize university students. Between 1992 and 2001, university attendance dropped from 19 percent of the appropriate age group to 6.4 percent. There are 63 institutions of higher education in Uzbekistan

Schools in Central Asia

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the gaining of independence by Central Asian states, the education sector also had to be adjusted to the new political, economic and social conditions. Despite major reform efforts since the early 1990s, the education systems do not as yet offer the required high-quality tuition for children and young people.

A particular problem in all five countries is the low standard of the materials used in schools, the lack of a practice-based initial and continuing training system for teachers and their poor remuneration, which results in a shortage of teaching staff. Syllabuses are strongly geared towards conveying theoretical knowledge and leave hardly any room for developing the individual aptitudes of pupils. Teaching content lacks practical relevance. The subjects taught do not sufficiently promote the social potentials of children and young people, and they are not given sufficient careers guidance. The ministries of education and education sector

institutions in Central Asian countries are not adequately equipped for translating the reform objectives of national education strategies into pilot projects and innovations.

Further and Higher education in Central Asia

Despite their common origin, each higher education system in Central Asia today is evolving its own national education context or environment and which consist of three dimensions. First, higher education is part of a national education system and responds to the demands of secondary education. Second, education is closely related to and influenced by the labor market. Third, national competitiveness requires an economy that can produce and sustain a broad range of skills particularly associated with science and technology. These three dimensions – the national education system, labor market demands and international competitiveness – are the determinants of higher education in each of the Central Asian Republics.

The patterns of higher education, shown by the five countries, can be examined from one simple perspective. Notably, Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republics are expanding their university enrollments to become 'mass' systems, while, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan with slower growth appear to be willing to remain elite systems. These latter countries continue to support technical-vocational education – reminiscent of centralized planning strategies – as a key building block for skills. The region has seen a rapid growth in the number of students attending higher education since the end of the Soviet period, particularly in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz Republic. The coverage rates for four countries as of 2007 are; Kazakhstan, 44.7 percent, the Kyrgyz Republic (36.2) and Tajikistan and Uzbekistan with coverage rates of 14.4 and 8.3 percent respectively. However, it must be noted that the expansion of the system has been due to paying rather than state supported students.

Education reform

The severe economic crisis that followed the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991 forced the governments of the new Central Asia Republics to adopt austerity measures and to cut expenditures, particularly in education and social services. Economic contraction was compounded by a decline in real wages of teachers, and pressures to adapt to the changing social and economic needs during the transition to a market-based economy were high. As a result, education systems have dramatically deteriorated and the quality of education has steeply declined. In the mid-90s, the governments undertook a number of reforms aimed at decentralising the education management, diversifying its funding, developing innovative institutions and curricula, as well as increasing teacher's salaries and social sector spending. In 2003, representatives from the Ministries of Education, from educational scientific research and from public institutions and NGOs met in Bishkek with the aim of defining an effective strategy that will generate dialogue between the education policy makers of Central Asia and support the commitment to achieve the EFA standard by 2015

Ongoing reforms concentrate mainly on the following issues: equal and universal access to education, raising school attendance, ensuring gender equality and integration of minorities, improving qualifications of teachers, investment in facilities and textbooks, tackling

corruption. However, in all the countries the processes are hindered by budgetary constraints, shortcoming in the area of effective legislation, infrastructure, equipment and supplies and lack of adequate human resources. UNESCO has been instrumental in supporting these reforms, particularly since 2003. The projects concentrate on providing the countries with advice and guidance in organizing EFA activities such as workshops, case studies and seminars in priority areas. The latter being, e.g., life skills and vocational education (Kazakhstan), adult education (Kyrgyz Republic), and girls education (Tajikistan). Main lines of activities for recent years have concentrated on:

Promotion of access to primary education for disadvantaged groups of children
Promotion of the development of policies to improve access to ECCE in CA
Advocacy for Girls' Education and Gender parity
Support of Life-skills programmes for youth, especially in rural areas
Promotion of Non-Formal Education
Promotion of Education for Sustainable Development
Promotion of improvement of secondary education, technical and vocational education and training
Strengthening of national capacities to measure and monitor quality of education and learning achievements

Administration and finance

In Central Asia, as in the other countries of the former Soviet Union, one of the first acts of the newly independent republics was to legally decentralize the responsibility for finance and provision of most primary and secondary education to regional or local governments. Decentralization was motivated both by necessity (falling budget revenues at the republic level) and by ideology (the centrifugal pressures for local governance). Primary and secondary education management has ostensibly been decentralized in Central Asia. School ownership has been transferred to oblast (regional) and rayon (local) governments that are nominally responsible for managing, financing, and maintaining them.

In reality, little real decentralization has occurred, for two reasons. The first is that centrally imposed norms on class size and teaching loads severely constrain regional and local governments' discretion to manage education programs, including reconfiguring schools and right-sizing the teaching force to achieve better efficiency and performance. The second is that revenues of regional and local governments fall far short of the amounts needed to operate schools. In order to keep schools in operation, teacher salaries (and sometimes utilities) are being financed by state budgets. This is meant to be a temporary measure, but there is very little prospect in any of the Central Asian countries that oblast and rayon revenues will be adequate to finance teachers' salaries for at least decade.

Collapsing state budgets also motivated efforts to mobilize additional sources of financing through various non-budgetary sources, including contributions of parents and communities for textbook rental and other educational inputs at the school level, through income-generating activities such as rental of school premises and production of articles for sale, and through the establishment of fee-paying "contract" places in higher education for students

who fail to qualify for free, budget-subsidized places. Throughout the Central Asia region, as in much of the former Soviet Union, the practice of private contributions to schools has been subverted from its original purpose of augmenting educational resources at the school level. It has often contributed to corrupt practices such as "selling" examination grades and places to the most coveted schools and programs, and has eroded the credibility of diplomas and degrees to employers and the public.

Quality assurance

Both large assessments and informal proxy measures affirm that greater effort is needed to improve the quality of education in Central Asia. Large-scale international and national assessments offer some insights into the quality of education in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Kyrgyzstan's overall score on PISA 2006 earned it a last place ranking out of the 57 participating countries in reading, mathematics and science. It performed particularly poorly in reading, where it ranked third to last, and almost 200 points behind the regional average. Kazakhstan's performance on the same assessment, by contrast, suggests impressive primary school outcomes, but national indicators reveal that only three fourths of students are proficient in reading and mathematics. In other Central Asian nations, proxy indicators are used to monitor educational quality. Proxy measures include student data, teacher competency and school resources. These proxy measures confirm that educational quality throughout this subregion is subpar. In Tajikistan, for example, districts struggle to find qualified teachers, have limited textbooks and worn-out furniture. Challenges in Turkmenistan include the prevalence of traditional rote teaching methodologies and limited student engagement, which affects students' attainment and retention of knowledge. Kazakhstan faces problems with the retention of teachers as a result of low salaries and the limited engagement of students in classes.

Information society

Both Internet usage and availability of computers in the region are low. According to the "Information Society Statistical Profiles 2009: CIS" prepared by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), Internet user penetration rates in the region are between 15-20% in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and below 15 % in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Armenia, and Turkmenistan.

Kazakhstan reaches the highest mobile penetration level in the region in 2007. International Internet bandwidth per Internet user increased from 192 bits/user in 2002 to 1'052 in 2007, and Internet penetration rate experienced some progress. Despite the improvement, Internet usage was still low and mobile broadband services unavailable in 2007.

Kyrgyzstan made some progress in the last years but it did not match the region's overall progress. The increase in mobile cellular penetration reached 41% in 2007 from 1% in 2002, and international Internet bandwidth per Internet user increased from 59 to 796 bits/user in the same period, yet in both cases Kyrgyzstan remained below the region's average. Kyrgyzstan has a very low fixed telephone penetration (9 per cent in 2007).

Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan occupy the last three places in the region. All three countries have a very low proportion of households with a computer (below 2.5% in 2007), and a low proportion of households with Internet access at home (less than 1% in 2007). Mobile cellular penetration rates are low, especially in the case of Turkmenistan (7% in 2007). Turkmenistan has the highest fixed telephone penetration of the three (9 fixed telephone lines per 100 inhabitants). By 2007, Tajikistan was the only country amidst the three offering mobile broadband services, although with a negligible uptake. Both Internet usage and fixed broadband penetration were low in all three countries.

ICT in education initiatives

Virtual initiatives in schools

Virtual initiatives in post-secondary education

Lessons learnt

General lessons

Notable practices

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Yugosphere

From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

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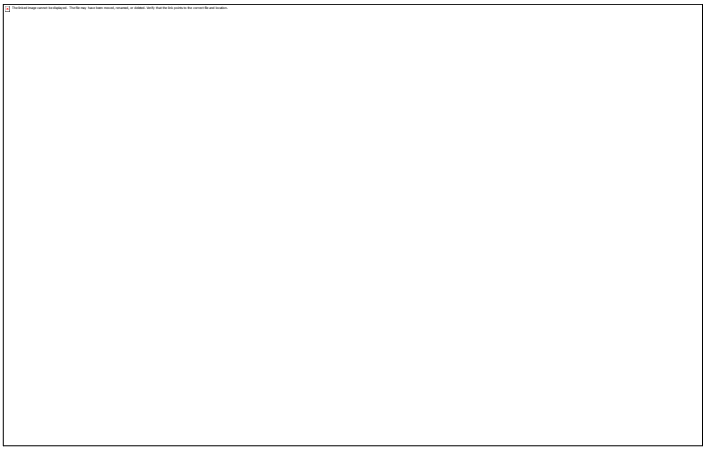

The *Yugosphere* is a category used to describe the present day states which succeeded the collapse of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. For its members see Category:Yugosphere. The territory of the former Yugoslavia is roughly coterminous with the geographical region of the Western Balkans; in the EU's definition of the term, the Western Balkans excludes Slovenia but includes Albania.

Slovenia is the only country of the former Yugoslavia in the EU. Croatia, Macedonia, and Montenegro are official candidates, while Serbia has submitted an application for membership and have been recognized as a "potential candidate". Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republic of Kosovo have not submitted an application but are nevertheless recognized as "potential candidates" for a possible future enlargement of the European Union. All states of the former Yugoslavia, with the exception of the disputed Autonomous Province of Kosovo, have subscribed to the Stabilisation and Association Process with the EU.

The CIA Factbook has estimates for the populations of Yugoslavia's successor states as of July 2011 which amount to a total population of 23.0 million. Net population growth over the three decades between 1981 and 2011 was thus practically zero (below 0.1% p.a. on average). Ethno-linguistically, the majority of the former Yugoslavia is South Slavic, speaking a dialect continuum clustered around the Serbo-Croatian, Slovene and Macedonian. Other larger ethnic groups include Albanians (mostly in Kosovo), Hungarians (mostly in Vojvodina), Roma and other minorities.

Education in Yugosphere

Schools in Region

Further and Higher education in Region

All countries in the region are implementing the Bologna Process with an orientation towards current EU policy, notably the Lisbon strategy and its successor. Countries have started to align their policies towards the strategic EU goals (such as growth, creation of jobs, investments in higher education and research) which are especially pertinent goals for the region. The Bologna Process is a central driver in the current reform of region's higher education systems and the Bologna Process is perceived as "providing a direction that is essential for societal development". Croatia joined the Bologna Process in 2001, Bosnia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia in 2003, and Kosovo has an observer status. Another influential factor in higher education development has been the EU's official integration politics in relation to the Western Balkan Countries. Within the politics of the region, education has always been assigned a major role in promoting democratization, socio-economic development, and civil society. The countries are eligible to participate in a number of EU programs such as TEMPUS, Erasmus Mundus (under the "WBC Window" and the "External Cooperation Window"), Youth, the framework programs for research (7th Framework Program 2007-13, including a specialized cooperation instrument for the Western Balkans), the activities of the Joint Research Centre (JRC), and the European Training Foundation (ETF).

Higher education systems have been expanding over the past decades in all European countries. The growth rates in the countries of the Yugosphere within the last 10 years have been especially high and are also among the highest worldwide. In some countries student numbers have doubled within a decade. Along with the increase in the number of students, the number of HE institutions has been increasing and quality issues arose in several countries during these times of rapid expansion. Another development has been the growing importance of private (and accredited) HEIs in the region as legislation has gradually been changed to allow the establishment of private institutions. Access to HE is mostly regulated by school leaving examination marks and entrance examinations (as in many other European countries). The accent is often put on the entrance examinations which the universities can usually regulate independently. Typical of the region is the so-called paid education in public institutions: students not achieving the necessary criteria for state-funded education can be admitted to public universities on a tuition fee basis. Fee-paying students can represent a

significant resource of funds to universities and the paid education system can pose problems in terms of equal access and quality in education.

Education reform

Considering the entire region, reforms in education have concentrated mainly on the following areas:

- Adjustment and review of existing national legal frameworks in line with ongoing European developments and national reform priorities
- Decentralisation of education management and administration, with a focus on quality enhancement and accountability
- Development of education management information systems and quality assurance mechanisms
- Curriculum reform in line with European trends and developments
- Widening access to quality education and ensuring equal opportunities - taking account of gender equality - for national minorities, especially Roma communities, and other disadvantaged groups including members of low income groups, people with disabilities, citizens from isolated rural communities, etc.
- Promotion of education for democratic citizenship in both formal and non-formal education programmes
- Ensuring access to, and effective use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- Development of opportunities for lifelong learning as a key means to stimulate economic regeneration in the region
- Vocational education and training, especially establishing links between education and labour market

Schools

Administration and finance

Yugosphere countries have also started to pass new legislation increasingly aligning their higher education systems with the concept of institutional autonomy, thereby enabling HEIs to (re)act more flexibly and efficiently to societal needs. There is yet another dimension of autonomy within the region: it is the autonomy and self-management of single faculties, schools or departments, which is a legacy of the former Yugoslavian republics. The historically relatively high level of legal, functional, financial and academic autonomy of single faculties hinders the process of modernization and the implementation of coherent reform measures not only within the countries, but even within one institution. One of the central milestones to be achieved in the former Yugoslavian states is to overcome this challenge.

A related problem is the professionalization of staff and the improvement of institutional management (internal governance). Inefficient and ineffective structures and procedures will have to be reduced while competent intermediary bodies for specific tasks, such as funding,

research management, student services or quality assurance have to be established and staff at all levels professionalized. Legislation in some countries has been revised to give HEIs more financial and budgetary autonomy and flexibility but in total the systems are still very rigid, relying heavily on input factors and not providing many opportunities to reward successful reform-oriented approaches

Schools

Quality assurance

Internal and external quality assurance is relatively new to the region and is furthermore complicated by the aforementioned peculiarities of the HE system. Quite often external quality assurance bodies have only been recently established by law. Internal quality management is an issue as well and as a European study revealed, little change or improvement has been registered regarding internal quality processes. A significant aspect seems to be that the basic tools for quality assurance are often lacking. University-wide data is rarely available in a coherent form and the lack of effective central management and administrative systems means that data gathering and analysis is time consuming and unreliable. Feedback and monitoring mechanisms are weak and inconsistent across institutions. Another factor in both internal and external quality management is that the region lacks professional staff and experts in this area and countries of the region could benefit from increased regional cooperation.

Schools

Information society

Regional cooperation in the field of ICT development has taken place in the context of the Electronic South East Europe (eSEE) initiative, which promotes the creation of adequate institutional mechanisms for the development of information society, and facilitates the introduction of ICT technologies in various sectors. By now, all countries in the region have acknowledged the importance of ICT infrastructure, and have increasingly invested in its development, which has resulted in overall growth of the sector of electronic communication, and all countries have higher than 95% digitization of the fixed network. It is promising that the broadband usage has grown at very high speed in the last few years, whereas DSL technology is the dominating technology, followed by Cable TV. Nevertheless, the broadband remains still very limited in most countries which could limit the usage of the full range of digital content and services. The levels of Internet access are low - averaging at about 20 users per 100 inhabitants for the entire region, with Croatia being the best performer with 45%. It is promising, that the Internet users have reached very high percentage of growth in the last few years.

ICT in education initiatives

"EU IT Pilot Project in the Field of Education"

The objective of this project is to support the Kosovo Government in improving the quality and efficiency of education and training services. This is to be done through support in introducing training of teachers and educational staff in ICT and how to use ICT technology in the teaching and learning process and the establishment of an EDUCATION network for data and information exchange linking education actors at local and central level which can then also be linked across a European education networks. The project will assure compatibility with the eLearning Strategy of Kosovo. The pilot project will develop and establish following:

An effective ICT education network (EDUNet) connecting all beneficiaries and stakeholder institutions involved in the piloting phase at central and local level;
Train teachers and support centre staff in how to use IT in their work;
Train teachers on eLearning and its application using pilot schools to field-test;
Develop and establish an eContent repository and develop eContent, including modules in local languages;
Train pilot schools and other relevant stakeholders in the education system to develop and maintain web-sites and web-portals.

Lessons learnt

General lessons

Notable practices

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Hispanic America

From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

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Regional overview

Hispanic America is very clearly defined as the supraregion comprising the American countries inhabited by Spanish-speaking populations. For related concepts see Category:Central America, Category:South America and Category:Spanish-speaking countries.

Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hispanic_America lists these countries as:

1. Argentina
2. Bolivia
3. Chile
4. Colombia
5. Costa Rica
6. Cuba
7. Dominican Republic
8. Ecuador
9. El Salvador
10. Guatemala
11. Honduras
12. Mexico
13. Nicaragua
14. Panama
15. Paraguay
16. Peru
17. Puerto Rico
18. Uruguay
19. Venezuela

It is a debatable point whether in cultural/political terms, Puerto Rico should be included - since it is effectively a colony of the US.

Most mainland countries of Central America and South America thus belong to Hispanic America, with the major exception of Brazil and the minor exceptions of some former colonies of Netherlands, France and UK.

Country reports from Hispanic America

This supra-region report is currently (August 2011) based on 10 country reports:

Four of these are detailed reports:

- Colombia
- Mexico
- Paraguay
- Uruguay

Six are briefer reports:

- Argentina
- Bolivia
- Chile
- Panama
- Peru
- Venezuela

Re.ViCa also has brief country reports, which have not yet been updated, for:

- Costa Rica
- Cuba
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Nicaragua
- Puerto Rico

Partners and Experts in Hispanic America

Education in Hispanic America

All the countries in the region profess to see education as a priority in achieving social and economic progress. Many countries have ambitious aspirational mission and vision statements on their Ministry websites - e.g. Paraguay, where the vision specifically includes references to promoting both ICT and social media for educational purposes.

The table below compares a range of education indicators across Hispanic American countries - the data is drawn from UNESCO Institute for Statistics:

Country	Average years of schooling of adults	Duration of compulsory education (years)	Years of primary education	Years of secondary education	Primary completion rate %	Enrolment ratio > Secondary level %	Tertiary enrolment %	Education spending (% of GDP)	Education spending (% of total government expenditure)
Argentina	8.8	9	6	6	99	79.1	48.8	4.0	13.8
Bolivia	5.6	8	6	6	101	68.1	35.7	6.3	19.7
Chile	7.5	9	6	6	95	74.5	35.7	4.2	18.7
Colombia	5.3	8	5	6	97	56.5	23.3	5.2	15.6
Costa Rica	6	10	6	5	92	49.2	16.0	5.1	22.4
Ecuador	6.4	10	6	6	101	48	-	1.0	8.0
El Salvador	5.2	9	6	6	87	39.3	17.5	2.9	20.0
Guatemala	3.5	11	6	5	74	26.2	8.5	-	13.0
Honduras	4.8	6	6	5	79	-	14.7	-	-
Mexico	7.2	10	6	6	-	59.7	20.7	5.3	-
Nicaragua	4.6	6	6	5	76	35.5	11.5	3.1	15.0
Panama	8.6	6	6	6	97	62.2	34.9	4.5	9.0
Paraguay	6.2	9	6	6	89	46.7	10.1	4.4	11.4
Peru	7.6	11	6	5	99	61.5	28.8	3.0	17.1
Uruguay	7.6	10	6	6	91	69.9	36.1	2.6	7.9

Venezuela	6.6	7	6	5	92	50.4	28.5	-	17.0
Means	*6.3*	*8.7*	*6*	*5.7*	*91.2*	*55.1*	*24.7*	*4.0*	*14.9*
Range	*3.5-8.8*	*6-11*	*6*	*5-6*	*74-101*	*26.2-79.1*	*8.5-48.8*	*1.0-6.3*	*8.0-22.4*

In the table notably high and low scores are shown in bold type and the mean scores and ranges in bold italic.

Average years of schooling for adults: a useful measure of the country's starting point for current and future education development. Note the high scores for Panama and Argentina and the very low scores for three Central American countries - Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras.

Duration of compulsory education: whilst most countries currently make this 8 - 11 years, note the high scores for Guatemala (starting from a very low adult base) and Peru and the low scores for three Central American countries (Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) and the below average score for Venezuela.

Years of primary education: universally six years, except in Colombia.

Years of secondary education: again, six years in the majority of countries, but in none of them are more than the first three years compulsory.

Primary completion rate: still below 80% in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, but around 90% or above in all other countries.

Enrolment rate for secondary education: there are wide variations here, with notably low transition rates (below 40%) in three Central American countries: Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador contrasting with transition by more than two thirds of young people in Argentina, Uruguay and Bolivia.

Tertiary enrolments: again, there are wide variations, with scores of 10% or below in Guatemala and Paraguay, contrasting with almost half the population involved in tertiary study in Argentina. However, tertiary enrolments cover all education, vocational and professional training beyond the school system; whilst many will be studying at degree level, many others will be undertaking vocational training at intermediate or technician levels.

Education spending: there are quite wide variations in education spending, both as a percentage of GDP and as a percentage of total government expenditure. Several countries have extensive provision of private schools, colleges and universities and it is not entirely clear from the statistical data how this is accounted for. Note, however, the low scores in both columns for Ecuador, which is not one of the more economically advanced countries and Uruguay, which is one of the most prosperous. By way of contrast, El Salvador only spends 2.9% of GDP on education, but this amounts to 20% of total govenment expenditure. Bolivia has notably high scores on both measures.

None of the countries specifically prohibit home schooling and virtual schools and colleges, but if virtual organisations are to be effective, they require Ministry approval of accredited courses.

Schools in Hispanic America

All countries in Hispanic America feature both state and private schools, though private education is not strongly advertised in Venezuela, presumably for political reasons. Most private schools are Catholic foundations, reflecting the dominant religion across the region, but in some countries where there are significant immigrant populations from northern European countries and north America there a number of schools are sponsored by other Christian denominations - e.g. Lutheran and Evangelical schools in Uruguay and Paraguay.

> Kindergarten and pre-primary education is available in many countries, much of it provided by private organisations. The *inicial* year in Uruguay is the only country where any of this is part of compulsory schooling.
>
> Primary schools are not divided into separate infant and junior schools in any of the Hispanic American countries. There are often considerable differences between the facilities in rural and urban schools and a greater concentration of private schools in urban areas - e.g. in Uruguay, where there is also a significant number of private schools (both primary and secondary) for children with special educational needs.
>
> Secondary schools vary widely across the region, both in titles and organisation. As noted in the table of statistics in the section above, the end of compulsory schooling occurs from the end of the first year of secondary (Nicaragua and Panama) to the end of the third or fourth year of secondary in most countries (Only in Peru does compulsory education span the full secondary phase). In most countries there is a school leaving certificate at the end of the compulsory phase (see Qualifications and Accreditation) but the same secondary establishment provides continued optional schooling.

Uruguay is an exception: there are a number of lower secondary schools (Establecimientos de Educación Media Básica), with 237 of these (almost 35%) in Montevideo. Outside Montevideo there are also 61 Escuelas con Ciclo Básico Rural which offer a basic general education in rural areas. Vocational education also commences in separate schools at the start of the secondary phase, with three types of vocational establishments: 21 Centros de Ciclo Básico Tecnológico; 90 Escuelas de C.B.T. y Técnicas and 23 Escuelas Agrarias. None of these are private establishments.

Upper secondary schools in Uruguay (Establecimientos de Educación Media Superior) are largely housed i the same buildings as the Establecimientos de Educación Media Básica, but some are separate.

Secondary schools in Paraguay illustrate the wide variety of titles and organisations in secondary eduction across the region: they may be Colegios [or Colleges, in the case of the small number of foreign schools, notably US]; Escuelas Nacionales; Academies; High Schools; Centros de Educación Superior [these are secondary schools, in spite of appearing to provide tertiary education]; or Centros Educativos.

Further and Higher education in Hispanic America

All the countries in Hispanic America have universities, both private and public. Some of these have close links with other countries within the region - e.g. Universidad Iberoamericano, Mexico. Many also have strong links with USA and/or Spanish and Italian universities, reflecting two of the major cultural influences on the region - an example of this is the University of Bologna campus in Argentina. Several of them operate in more than one country - e.g. Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas", which was founded in El Salvador, also operates in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama.

Universities in Hispanic America

Wikipedia lists a total of 477 separate universities in countries covered by this report.

Argentina - 95;
Bolivia - 11;
Chile - 34;
Colombia - 31;
Costa Rica - 11;
Ecuador - 16;
El Salvador - 12;
Honduras - 5;
Mexico - 213;
Nicaragua - 2, plus a further 44 HEIs operating in some parts of the country;
Panama - 32, but this list is sourced from Catalogue of World Universities and includes a considerable number based in other countries. The Ministry of Education accredits 5, and there is a sixth which does not have its courses accredited by the Ministry.
Paraguay - 6;
Peru - 21;
Uruguay - 5;
Venezuela - 9.

Polytechnics in Hispanic America

Wikipedia does not show detailed lists of clearly defined Polytechnics in the region. The American website Braintrack lists a number of Polytechnics: some of these are technological universities and some are specialised institutes within accredited universities. Removing these from the list, to avoid double counting, shows the following 18 institutions:

Argentina - 2

1. Instituto Politécnico Superior -- Instituto Politécnico Superior "General San Martín" - Rosario
2. Instituto Tecnológico de Buenos Aires -- Buenos Aires Institute of Technology - Buenos Aires

Bolivia - none listed

Chile - 1

1. Academia Politecnica Militar -- Academia Politecnica Militar, Santiago

Colombia - 1

1. Escuela de Ingenieria de Antioquia -- Escuela de Ingenieria de Antioquia, Medellin

Costa Rica - 3

1. CEFOF -- Centro de Transferencia Tecnológical, Alajuela
2. Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad -- Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad
3. Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica -- Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica

None of these three websites appears acessible.

Ecuador - 3

1. Escuela Politecnica Nacional -- Escuela Politecnica Nacional, Quito
2. Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo -- Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo, Riobamba
3. ESPOL -- Escuela Superior Politecnica del Litoral

El Salvador - none listed

Guatemala - none listed

Honduras - 1

1. Zamorano, Tegucigalpa -- Pan American School of Agriculture, Tegucigalpa

Mexico - 5

1. Centro de Enseñanza Técnica Industrial -- Technical and Industrial Teaching Centre (CETI) - Guadalajara
2. Instituto Politécnico Nacional -- Instituto Politécnico Nacional
3. ITESM -- ITESM Campus Guadalajara
4. ITESO -- Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente, Guadalajara
5. ITESM Monterrey - Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey

Nicaragua - none listed

Panama - none listed

Paraguay - none listed

Peru - none listed

Uruguay - 2

1. Escuela Superior de Electrotecnia y Electrónica -- Escuela Superior de Electrotecnia y Electrónica, Montevideo
2. ITM - Instituto Tecnológico de Montevideo, Montevideo

Neither website is accessible

Colleges in Hispanic America

The title 'College' is used almost indiscriminately across the region to describe a wide range of institutions, most of which only display a partial similarity to UK colleges. 'Colleges' in Hispanic America range from small rural organisations providing agricultural training, through some upper secondary schools (particularly private schools), to both general and specialised vocational training providers, post-graduate schools of some universities, notably USA based and even a USA Community College Brookdale Community College in Guayaquil, Ecuador.

Most countries have vocational and professional training organisations, with a large majority in the public sector. There is a well developed network of 32 *Instituciónes Técnicas Laborales* (Technical colleges) in Colombia providing "Education for Work and Human Development" - vocational education focusing on labour market competences. Their programmes include education and training provided by businesses to their employees. The Colombian government promotes this kind of education as an alternative for university education, which is not accessible for the majority. Several of the leading Instituciónes Técnicas Laborales provide an extensive range of virtual programmes, delivered entirely online. Some of these - e.g. CESDE bear a strong resemblance to UK FE colleges.

Vocational education and training is highly developed in Uruguay. There are several colleges, especially in the Montevideo area, which have the same likenesses to UK FE colleges as in Colombia - e.g. Aldey Instituto, ISEDE and Instituto Agroveterinario. Although the Escuelas de C.B.T. y Técnica and the Escuelas Agrarias are classed by the Ministry as schools, their offer of higher level courses, following on from the lower secondary programme, are akin to the standard fare of vocational training in general FE and land-based colleges.

In Argentina there are 2129 'Superior no universitaria' (non-university colleges) providing tertiary education:

572 providing teacher training only
850 providing vocational training only
639 providing both teacher training and vocational training
68 providing general tertiary education.

Colleges along European lines providing further education and vocational training do not exist in Bolivia. However, NGOs provide vocational training, business administration skills, product marketing and micro-credit programmes to help parents, families and entire communities become self-sustaining.

In Panama there are around 80 Centros y Institutos Superiores providing tertiary level vocational programmes - Técnicos (technician and higher technician level training). Some of these offer programmes in a broad range of vocational areas, but most are specialised, providing training for one employment sector only.

Paraguay does not at present have a structure of colleges along the same lines as neighbouring countries and information about Peru is very sketchy.

Education reform in Hispanic America

There has been rapid development of the education systems in most Hispanic American countries over the past 15 years. Key areas include:

- Extending the years of compulsory education in some countries
- Using ICT to transform education and training - see the section on ICT in education for a broad picture
- Improving educational provision in rural areas - ICT is seen as a transformational tool
- Improving quality assurance
- Decentralising management functions
- Expanding higher education and professional training

Mexico provides a good illustration of many of the education development and reform issues across the region. Although many improvements were made towards the end of the 20th century, at the start of the 21st century the education system was still largely centralised and highly bureaucratic, with significant gender and regional inequalities and one third of the Mexican population did not complete their basic education cycle.

The first five year reform and development programme of the century (PNE: Programa Nacional de Educación 2001–2006) tackled several key issues, one of them being to take responsibility in supervising and reforming preschool education and to make it mandatory by 2008 for children aged 3 to 5. Following this, the SEP designed a second five year plan - the "Programa Sectorial de Educación 2007-2012" - with six objectives, each accompanied of quantitive goals and indicators applied to each level of education (primary, secondary and HE):

- Objective 1: to increase quality in education to improve students' achievement levels.
- Objective 2: to extend education opportunities in order to reduce social disparities, gaps and to enhance equity.
- Objective 3: to encourage the use of ICT in the education system in order to support learning processes, to expand students' skills for their future life and to facilitate their integration into the knowledge society.
- Objective 4: to provide a comprehensive educational offer that is a balance between providing citizenship values and developing skills and knowledge via regular classroom activities, practical teaching and an institutional context, in order to enhance democratic and multicultural coexistence.

Objective 5: to offer quality education services to provide people with a high sense of social responsibility that enable them to enter the labour market in a productive and competitive way.
Objective 6: to promote a management system that encourages the participation of education centres in the decision-making process, involves the responsibility of different social and educational stakeholders and increases both the students' and the teachers' security, openness and accountability.

Several Ministry of Education websites (e.g. Colombia) describe a strong vision for promoting and developing education at all levels with an increasingly strong emphasis on the use of ICT.

Schools

Post-secondary

Administration and finance in Hispanic America

Administration is often devolved to provinces and municipalities and there is a strong move towards decentralisation - e.g. in Colombia.

In Argentina the State, the provinces and the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires are responsible for planning, organizing, supervising and financing the national education system, ensuring access to education at all levels and modalities, creating and managing state-run educational establishments.

However, decentralisation often exists more in theory than practice - in Mexico, for example the government is only officially responsible for providing compulsory basic education, although it is also involved at the other three levels through public provision of preschool and upper secondary as well as public funding of higher education in most states. Governance is still centralized as the national level with the Secretaria de Educación (SEP)—setting the curriculum, selecting textbooks, hiring and firing school personnel, and setting salary schedules. Although Mexico decentralized the basic education system to its 32 states in 1992, this reform was mostly administrative, and did not diminish the centralization of decisionmaking. Overall, teachers and school administrators have little autonomy in the system.

Schools

Almost all Ministry websites contain statements about decentralisation, but the reality in most is still akin to the situation in Mexico described above.

Post-secondary

All countries have at least one national state university. This is usually controlled, and certainly overseen, by a department of the Ministry of Education - e.g. in Argentina the national state creates and funds the National Universities. Private universities, which exist in all the region's countries, are accredited by the Ministry, but generally enjoy a relatively high degree of independence, particularly where they span several countries. Many of them have links with universities overseas, and where they operate as overseas campuses of European or US universities they may have less administrative and financial autonomy.

Fees and student loans are issues in many countries, as in western Europe. For example, in Chile the Secretary of State announced a package of reforms for higher education in August 2011. These involve reducing the interest on student loans to 2% with retroactive effect to extend the benefits of student aid for the middle class through a combination of scholarships and loans, in addition to sending projects legislation to establish the demunicipalisation of public education and the creation of the Superintendency of Higher Education to enforce the law prohibiting for-profit universities.

Quality assurance, inspection and accreditation in Hispanic America

Most Ministry of Education websites give details of government agencies, either within the Ministry or linked to it, which are responsible for quality assurance and monitoring and effectively act as an Inspectorate. In many cases the same body has responsibility for schools, colleges and higher education. An exception is Uruguay which has different branches of the Ministry overseeing general education in schools (CES) and vocational education (CETP), whether this is in schools, colleges and institutes or organised by professional bodies.

Schools

Accreditation

Most countries have a school leaving certificate at the end of the compulsory phase of secondary education and most also use certificte the successful completion of upper secondary education with the *Bachillerato*, which acts as the matriculation qualification for university entry - this is parallel to the system in Spain.

Quality assurance and inspection

Examples of government agencies responsible for quality assurance and monitoring include:

> DiNIECE - Argentina, the Dirección Nacional de Información y Evaluación de la Calidad Educativa, which publishes annual education statistics covering a wide range of metrics; commissions and publishes reports on curriculum development, curricular and pedagogical

issues; and has powers to intervene at regional, district and institutional level in case of problems.

In Bolivia there is a national accreditation agency which covers all the country's universities, both private and public. Its remit includes evaluation and accreditation of institutions and programmes, guaranteeing the quality of institutions and programmes as well as facilitating the development of a Higher Education system which is integrated, cooperative and supportive.

Sistema de Medición de Calidad de la Educación (SIMCE) in Chile, which performs similar functions.

ICFES (Colombian Institute for Educational Evaluation) is the Colombia government department responsible for accreditation and monitoring of secondary schools. It offers educational assessment in all educational levels and supports the Ministry of National Education in the development and administration of state assessments and in systematic investigation about the factors that influence the quality of education, to provide useful and timely information that contributes in the improvement of the quality of education.

In Paraguay The Consejo Nacional de Educacion y Cultura, part of the Ministry of Education and Culture, oversees development of school education and collects statistics. The Ministry directs the general curriculum and issues frequent circulars.

In Uruguay the Ministry of Education and Culture takes direct responsibility for accreditation, inspection and quality assurance.

Post-secondary

In Argentina, under the ministry, SPU, the Dirección Nacional de Gestión Universitaria (National Bureau of University Management) is responsible for coordinating the process of creation, modification and deletion of Private Universities Academic units; the licensing procedures and curriculum in connection with the CONEAU, the Comisión Nacional de Evaluación y Acreditación Universitaria (National Commission for University Evaluation and Accreditation)); developing proposals for minimum hourly charges, core curriculum and standards of professional practice; proposing criteria for national validity of academic degrees and titles; and performing the duties attached to the Technical Secretariat of the Council of Universities.

Chile has a parallel body Sistema Nacional de Aseguramiento de la Calidad de la Educacion Superior - this detailed document sets out its functions.

In Paraguay accreditation and quality assurance of higher education is carried out by ANEAES - the National Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education, an agency of the Ministry of Education and Culture. This body has technical and academic autonomy to produce

technical reports on projects and institutions, at the request of the Ministry
consultative documents on evaluation and accreditation
accreditation of programmes that ANEAES itself has evaluated.

Peru has a CONEAU that operates in a similar way to the Argentina agency of the same name.

Information society in Hispanic America

Due to the economic and social conditions of many of the countries in the region, ICT continues to be a tool used by the more educated and affluent sectors of society. Most countries have uneven digital access due to differences in income, age, gender, urbanisation, and socioeconomic disparities between regions. However, since mobile telephony is experiencing explosive growth across Hispanic America, this picture is beginning to change. The rapid growth of social media is contributing to this, but it is not unusual to find active, or semi-active Facebook pages for educational organisations, but an inaccessible website.

IT penetration in businesses is also variable, though again increasing rapidly. There are variations according to company size, geographic region and economic sector. Reasons for slow progress cited by various sources include telecommunications regulation, broadband rates, the unequal sizes of companies, and the lack of financing to acquire computer equipment. There is evidence from several countries of a continuing digital divide.

Most countries have formulated, or are formulating, a digital agenda in order to ensure equitable access. At present few of the region's countries have a comprehensive digital agenda, although government publications and websites frequently contain lofty aspirations. At central government level, in common with many European countries, there are often uncoordinated programmes and initiatives in different ministries. Where there is continuing armed conflict - e.g. in Colombia it is even more difficult to co-ordinate digital initiatives.

ICT in education initiatives in Hispanic America

In Argentina DiNIECE, the Ministry of Education department for quality assurance operates a Virtual Campus for internal training in evaluating educational policy, training education managers and teachers and facilitating public access to information. Its stated aims are improving quality and equity.

Virtual initiatives in schools

There have been many initiatives in the first decade of the 21st century in countries of the region. These have included:

national ICT programes fo schools, often part-funded and provided by EU countries and the USA;
commercial organisations establishing networks of telecentres;
specific projects targted at remote and rural areas;
online programmes and courses for expatriates.

In Argentina, El Surco Escuela Virtual, Mendoza appears to be a virtual school, but from its Facebook page, the web address is inaccessible. Also in Argentina ORT Virtual Campus offers virtual education at all levels from secundaria ciclo básico to higher education.

In Bolivia there is an IICD supported programme, the National ICT Programme for the Education Sector. The national ICT programme for education is focused on assisting and improving the quality of primary and secondary education in Bolivia through ICT. Key activities are:

> Enhancing access to ICT for teaching and learning. This is to be done by setting up of education community telecentres linked to primary and secondary schools in all nine departments of Bolivia
> Providing digital educational content through the education portal [1].

The ICT programme is a key pillar of the government's education policy next to a national digitisation programme. The Bolivian ministry of education is highly active in finding new ways to incorporate information and communication technologies. The ministry is a member of the IICD-supported national ICT network 'TIC Bolivia', a network that brings together people in various sectors (livelihoods, governance and education) who work with ICT.

Initially the national ICT for education programme has been implemented as a separate program of the Ministry of Education. In 2010, a new ICT directorate has been created under the Vice Ministry of Science and Technology.

For Colombia a journal article describes the founding in 1998 of the first virtual school in Bogotá -Colombia Virtual Ibero America, Virtual Century College XXI, with permission from the education authorities to certify students in primary and secondary education, who study at primary and secondary levels. Students may attend one day a week for tutorials and sports and cultural activities. It was accredited by ICFES, but there is no clear link to a current website. Source: [www.quadernsdigitals.net/index.php?accionMenu=hemeroteca...id...]

In Colombia Plataforma Escuela Virtual is the VLE for Escuela Virtual de Caldas. The last entry on the school blog is from 2008 and the VLE does not appear to have progressed beyond the first two stages of development.

Escuela 20 Uruguay offers a range of fully online courses across the secondary curriculum through its VLE. Courses start in February and August each year. It is aimed primarily at expatriate families.

Virtual initiatives in post-secondary education

There are a number of cross-border initiatives in the region, both at university and college levels. Interesting examples of these include:

1. Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) is a federation of online providers across the whole of South America, Central America, Mexico and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean which is active in Uruguay and many of the other countries in the region.
2. ECOESaD, based in Mexico, but operating not only across the country with the aim of creating a consortium of public universities in order to develop distance higher education by integrating each institution's training offer and sharing it nationally and internationally.

3. Universidad Latinoamericana de Ciencia y Tecnología which is developing substantial distance education, is based in Panama and also operates in Costa Rica and other Central America countries.
4. The American University of Paraguay ecampus is linked with the University for Development of Science and Technology of Panama, and through the Project Group SA has developed a learning platform for the development of undergraduate and graduate studies both fully online and part-tutored.
5. Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar has its headquarters in Ecuador with branch campuses in Bolivia and Peru.

Interesting initiatives in specific countries include:

Argentina: Universidad del Salvador and Universidad Maimónides have interesting virtual campus initiatives.
Bolivia has relatively few examples of highly developed online learning: the best example is the Universidad Andina Simón Bolivar.
In Uruguay:

1. Centro Nacional de Educación a Distancia offers a range of vocational training programmes online.
2. The Labour University of Uruguay offers a range of virtual training courses in industrial processes in association with local institutes and vocational training providers.
3. The School of Social Psychology of Montevideo offers an online programme of graduate courses. The website shows links with universities and institutes in Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Italy, Spain and Portugal but not all the weblinks are accessible.

Lessons learnt

General lessons

Notable practices

References

> VISCED supraregions
> Countries

>> VISCED

Retrieved from "http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Hispanic_America"

Categories: Spanish-speaking countries | VISCED

B2. A few Tier 2 and Tier 3 country reports

Over 100 country pages from the Re.ViCa era have been updated to a greater or lesser extent. For larger and more important/relevant countries, the standard VISCED country template was used. For other countries, typically the template originally used was adapted to include the new schools-related information. This may look less tidy but it is considerably more efficient than retrofitting pages to new templates. With over 150 UN members and over 200 recognised countries/territories in the world, efficiency is a key parameter.

The selection on the following pages is meant to give some flavour of the range of countries and varying levels of detail gone into.

B2.1 EU countries

Austria[37]

From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

by Daniela Proli, SCIENTER
original general and HE-related material by Theo Bastiaens

For university-related material see also Austria from Re.ViCa

For entities in Austria see Category:Austria

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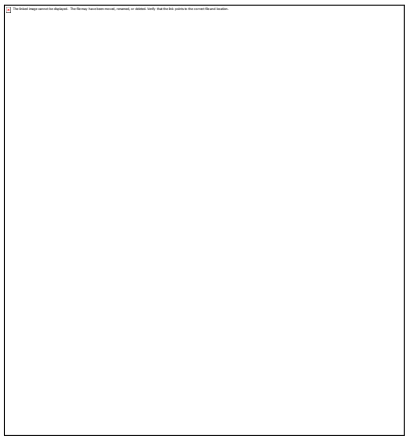
Experts situated in Austria

Country in a nutshell



Map of Austria

Austria (German: Österreich), officially the Republic of Austria (German: Republik Österreich), is a landlocked country in Central Europe. It borders both Germany and the

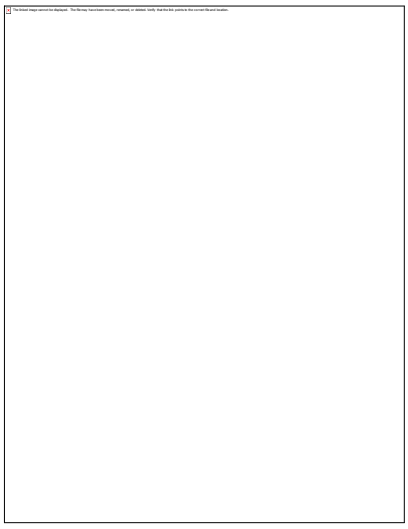
[37] A country in the EU, thus a Tier 2 country. Most EU countries are in the standard VISCED template.

Czech Republic to the north, Slovakia and Hungary to the east, Slovenia and Italy to the south, and Switzerland and Liechtenstein to the west. The capital is the city of Vienna on the Danube River.

The origins of modern Austria date back to the ninth century, when the territory of Upper and Lower Austria became increasingly populated. The name "Ostarrichi" is first documented in an official document from 996. Since then this word has developed into the Österreich.

Austria is a parliamentary representative democracy comprising nine federal states and is one of six European countries that have declared permanent neutrality and one of the few countries that includes the concept of everlasting neutrality in its constitution. Austria has been a member of the United Nations since 1955 and joined the European Union in 1995.

Education in Austria



Austrian educational system

The Republic of Austria has a free and public school system, and compulsory schooling last 9 years. Schools offer a series of vocational-technical and university preparatory tracks involving one to four additional years of education beyond the minimum mandatory level.

The legal basis for primary and secondary education in Austria is the School Act of 1962. The federal Ministry of Education is responsible for funding and supervising primary, secondary, and, since 2000, also tertiary education. Primary and secondary education is administered on the state level by the authorities of the respective states.

Kindergarten

Education starts long before school attendance becomes compulsory. The lowest level of education (ISCED 0) includes various child-care facilities such as crèches, kindergardens or nurseries. Attendance at these facilities is voluntary.

Primatry level (years 1 to 4)

In Austria, as in most other countries, compulsory schooling begins at the age of six and primary level lasts four years. Most children attend primary school (*Volkskschule*), cherged with imparting basic education for all. A small proportion of school-age children attend special schools (*Sonderschule*), which can be attended for the all period of compulsory education (age 6 to 15). School-age children who are not ready for school are taught in the pre-school level of primary schools.

Lower secondary education (years 5 to 8)

At the transition from the four-year primary level to the lower secondary level (ISCED 2), the general education system is divided into four types of schools:

lower secondary schools (*Hauptschule*). The lower secondary school [Hauptschule] is designed to provide all pupils with a basic general education within a four-year period. Its purpose is to prepare pupils for working life and to equip them with the necessary knowledge for transfer to upper-secondary schools
academic secondary schools, lower cycle (*allegemeinbildende höhere Schule*)
Special schools (*Sonderschule')*
new secondary school, pilot schools, recently introduced as a pilot scheems to create a new joint school for the 10-14 years age brackets which caters all pupils finishing year 4 of primary school

Upper secondary education (years 9 to 13)

The lower secondary level ends with the eighth school year and is followed by the upper secondary level (ISCED 3), which offers different options:

academic secondary schools, upper cycle, years 9-12
Polytecnique Schule (pre-vocational school), used as ninths school year by those students aged 14-15 who aim to enter working life as soon as they have completed compulsory schooling
Berufhschule part time compulsory vocational schools, years 10 to 13 maximum, parallel to in-company vocational training (dual system). A requirement for starting apprenticeship is completion of nine years of compulsory schooling; apprenticeship are at least 15 years old
intermediate technical and vocational schools (years 9 to 12 maximum)
Higher level technical and vocational schools 8 years 9 to 13)

Post-secondary non tertiary education (ISCED 4) includes:

the final year of the Higher Techical and vocational colleges
training schools for kindergarten teachers
Training schools for educators
Kollegs: Access to post-secondary courses [Kollegs] is conditional upon a "Reifeprüfung"-Certificate, a "Reifeprüfung"-Certificate and TVE-Diploma or the respective Higher Education Entrance Exam. Post-secondary courses run for four semesters (or six semesters for people under employment), provide students with the practical and theoretical education of a

secondary technical and vocational college and end with a diploma exam. Such courses are offered in engineering, business and the social and services sector. It is also possible to attend training courses in the fields of nursery school teaching and social education. Post-secondary courses are designed to provide mainly graduates of secondary academic schools who do not want to take up studies at university or at a "Fachhochschul"-course with the opportunity to acquire initial vocational qualifications within a relatively short time.

Tertiary education

At tertiary level (ISCED 5) university, Fachhochschule or post-secondary college are available. The secondary school leaving certificate (MATURA) or other certificated gained through special examinations (i.e. the Berufsreifeprüfung) allow students to gain access to tertiary education. The tertiary level has been significantly expanded in recent years, partly as a result of the introduction of Fachhochschulen and also due to the Bologna Process. This entails degree programmes being divided into bachelor programmes, which generally last for 6-8 semesters, and master programmes, which follow on from bachelor programmes and last for 2-4 semesters. In all probability, conventional diploma programmes will be gradually replaced by bachelor and master programmes in future.

The highest formal academic qualification, the doctorate, can be attained at ISCED level 6.

Mainly sourced from Statistics Austria and Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture

Schools in Austria

Further and Higher education

Higher education is offered at:

Public universities
Fachhochschulen, faculty of applied sciences (after accreditation of Fachhochschule study programmes)
The Krems University of Continuing Education (Danube University Krems)
Private universities (after accreditation)
University Colleges of Teacher Education
Medizinisch-technische Akademien und Hebammenakademien (colleges for higher-level paramedical professions and midwifery colleges)

Moreover, there are a number of educational institutions which offer university-type study programmes.

Admission to Fachhochschulen and universities as well as to the colleges for higher-level paramedical professions and midwifery colleges requires a Reifeprüfungszeugnis or a Reife- und Diplomprüfungszeugnis from a secondary higher school, or alternatively a Berufsreifeprüfungszeugnis or a Studienberechtigungsprüfungszeugnis, the latter being valid for a given study programme. Depending on the programme chosen, supplementary

examinations may be required. Admission tests are required for students wishing to enrol in studies of human and dental medicine, veterinary medicine and psychology where study places are limited. Admission to the arts universities is conditional on the passing of an admission test. Applicants to Fachhochschule study programmes, which generally require admission tests, must either have a Reifeprüfungszeugnis or equivalent certificate or relevant vocational qualifications. Additional examinations may be required. Austrians and students from EU countries currently do not pay tuition fees.

Universities in Austria

Polytechnics in Austria

Colleges in Country

Education reform

Schools

Austria is committed to implement an effective lifelong learning strategy by 2020, consistent with the european priorities. The action lines of a proposal for such a strategy cover all phases of life, from pre-school education to initial training at schools and universities and learning at a later stage in life. In view of fast growing life expectancy the important role of learning provess outside of traditional institutions is particularly emphasised; better recognition of non-formal and informally acquired learning is a priority.

Within this "lifelong learning" and "knowledge society" oriented framework, Austria has been paying growing attention to

> the importance of pre-primary education, by reinforcing kindergarten and making half-day attendance in the last year before primary education compulsory and free of charge
> the development of more competence-oriented education paths, including competence-driven curriculum and its assessment (through educational standards) and increased individualisation of learning paths in schools. In this context the 25+ initiative was launched for an individualisation of teaching by lowering class sizes, and the Ministry has been giving fresh inpetus to the joint furhter development of teaching practic at Austria's schools. Awareness is raised in this context on the potential of new media (i.e. Learning Platforms)

An important initiative in this context is the New Secondary School Pilot Scheme, which aimed to create a new joint school for the age 10-14, avoiding early choice of learning paths and widely oriented towards a learning culture based on individualisation and personalisation of learning processes. According to this approach, each child is supported to the best possible extent according to its individual talents and abilities, and pupils learn at their own pace, receiving early additional encouragement to unfold their specific talents. The "new secondary school reform" should in particular orient education towards key transversal competences, such as autonomy, responsibility, creativity, flexibility, communication, problem solving etc.

A great interest had been shown by both teachers and parents in this initiative. From school year 2008/2009 (lauch of the initiative) the number of New Secondary schools has quadrupled (244 in school year 2009/2010) and reached the statutory limits of 10% of compulsory school which may participate in the pilot scheme.

Post-secondary

Administration and finance

Schools

Administration and responsibilities

The Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture is the supreme supervisory body for the whole of primary and secondary education, which includes academic secondary schools and technical and vocational schools, as well as colleges of teacher education. The work experience part of initial vocational education is the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth.

As is the case with government administration in general, responsibilities for legislation and implementation in school education are split between federal and provincial governments. This split is based on the principles outlined below:

> The federal government has exclusive responsibility for legislation and implementation: this applies particularly to the entire field of academic secondary education (secondary levels I and II), but also to medium level and higher level technical and vocational schools (secondary level II), training schools for educators and training schools for kindergarten teachers, and to the conditions of service and staff representation of teachers at these schools.
> The federal government is responsible for legislation, whereas the provinces are responsible for implementation: this applies, among others, to the conditions of service and staff representation of teachers at public compulsory schools.
> The federal government is responsible for fundamental legislation, while the provinces are responsible for issuing and implementing by-laws: this particularly applies to the organisational structure of federal education authorities or the external organisation of public compulsory schools. The term 'external organisation' refers to the development, construction, maintenance and closing of schools, but also to the fixing of pupil numbers per class and teaching periods. All fundamental legislation is in the nature of a framework which has to be filled in by implementing by-laws promulgated by the respective provincial parliaments, the legislative bodies at provincial level.
> The provinces are responsible for legislation and implementation as, for example, with regard to kindergartens.

Separate federal bodies have been established wherever the federal government is responsible for implementation. These are:

> Bezirksschulräte (district school boards) at the level of political districts;

Landesschulräte (provincial school boards) at the level of the provinces; and
the Federal Minister for all of Austria.

School autonomy. In the academic year 1993/94 *Schulautonomie* (school autonomy) entered the mainstream education system. Flexibility of Austrian schools has gradually increased since and was put on a new legal basis. (The following applies only to a limited extent to years 1 to 4 of primary schools, with only two weekly lessons and optional exercises under school autonomy.) Individual schools are now allowed to decide certain school matters independently. A school may develop a certain profile, e.g. by specialising in foreign languages, ecology, intercultural focal points, information technology or generally by extending or supplementing curricular content.

Finance

The Federal Ministry of education is responsible for funding primary and secondary education.

Schools of compulsory education (primary schools, general secondary schools, special schools, pre-vocational schools and vocational schools) are maintained by the provinces, municipalities or municipal associations. While most of the schools in general compulsory education are maintained by municipalities or municipal associations, part-time compulsory vocational schools are maintained by the provinces.

Maintaining and operating a school includes the establishment, maintenance and repair of the school buildings, payment of overheads, purchase of equipment and teaching aids, provisions for the school doctor, and the employment of the necessary auxiliary staff (caretakers, maintenance staff, etc.).

The employment of teachers at compulsory schools is exclusively the responsibility of the provinces. Teachers in public sector schools of compulsory education are employed by the provinces, which pay the cost of their salaries. However, the provinces are fully compensated for this cost by the Federation in the process of fiscal adjustment. (The sole exception being teachers at compulsory vocational schools, where this refund is granted only up to 50 %.)

Public sector schools of compulsory education are not allowed to charge tuition fees. Transport to and from school using public transport facilities is free. Textbooks are provided to pupils free of charge, and they are entitled to keep them. In recent years, a contribution of 10 % from the pupils has been introduced both for transport to and from school and for textbooks.

Medium level and higher secondary schools are established and maintained by the Federation, which bears the full cost, including teachers' salaries. Teachers do not enter into an employment contract with the school in this case either, but with the Federation. The same is true for medium level and higher secondary schools with respect to the absence of tuition fees, free transport and textbooks as for compulsory education.

In 1996 the legal basis for extending the financial autonomy of schools was established. On certain conditions laid down by law, schools can rent out school rooms or parts of school property (e.g. gymnasium or sports grounds) to third parties and allocate the respective income at their own discretion as long as it is used for school purposes. The same applies to external funding received from sponsoring or commercial activities at school. Since 1998 federal schools have been entitled to establish quasi legal bodies which are authorised to perform certain activities in their own name (e.g. organisation and staging of certain events for third parties).

Austrian schools may, in a limited way, also choose how to use the funds allocated to them by the school authorities. For medium and higher level technical and vocational schools this can facilitate the procurement of computers and technical equipment (financial autonomy). This makes it easier to implement occupation-oriented forms of education centred on students (e.g. training firms).

Post-secondary

Quality assurance

Schools

The Federal Institute for Research on Education, Innovation and Development of the Austrian School System (Bundesinstitut für Bildungsforschung, Innovation und Entwicklung des österreichischen Schulwesens, BIFIE) is responsible for the following areas:

Applied research on education,
Education monitoring,
Quality development,
Regular reports on Austrian education.

In addition, the BIFIE is responsible for advising, on the basis of evidence collected, the decision-makers of Austrian education policy.

BIFIE has three different centres in Austria:

1. The BIFIE is headquartered in Salzburg where it focuses on education monitoring and education standards. The Salzburg centre mainly conducts international assessments such as PISA, PIRLS, TIMSS, etc. and reviews education standards. Furthermore the BIFIE's central service areas, i.e. the central management and the centre for data management and statistics, are located in Salzburg.
2. The Graz location mainly deals with educational research and evaluation, carrying out specific projects such as the evaluation of the 'new secondary school' and research-based projects on topics such as 'early language support'.
3. The BIFIE Vienna location ('innovation & quality development') concentrates particularly on the development and implementation of innovations in the school area. Model projects are

the development and implementation of a standardised Reifeprüfung (matriculation examination) and further development and implementation of education standards.

Tasks are coordinated between the Ministry for Education and BIFIE based on a revolving three-year plan. A two-member board of management, a nine-member supervisory board and the scientific board consisting of renowned Austrian and international scientists and scholars are the bodies of the BIFIE, which is a legal entity under public law.

Specific initiatives

Introduction of national education standards into the general education system The Austrian government has been working at introducing national education standards into the general education system in order to improve the pupils'/students' core competences in selected subjects and to secure returns to education in the long run. This is to be achieved especially through:

changing didactics and focussing on results in the planning and performance of school instruction (standards serve as orientation);
improving teachers' capabilities in diagnostics and remedial instruction (remedial function), as well as feedback concerning the proficiency level and targeted site-related quality development (evaluation function).

An amendment of the School Instruction Act of August 2008 provided the legal basis for the introduction of education standards: http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/recht/erk/novelle_schug.xml. The pertinent statutory regulation sets out the subject-specific proficiency pupils/students are expected to acquire upon completion of the 4th and the 8th grades. The standards were introduced in primary and general secondary (level I) schools on 1/1/2009: http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/recht/erk/vo_bildungsstandards.xml. Baseline surveys were conducted in spring 2009 (8th grade) and/or 2010 (4th grade). The first reassessments at grade 8 are scheduled to start as of 2012, at grade 4 as of 2013. The periodic reappraisal of the standards both guarantees and optimises the quality of classroom work, and provides feedback for teachers on the learning outcomes of pupils/students.

Introduction of a standardised, competence-oriented Reifeprüfung (matriculation examination) The new matriculation examination, which will be launched for academic secondary schools in the academic year 2013/14 and for the vocational and technical schools in the following year, consists of three pillars: standardised written examinations, compulsory pre-scientific paper and oral examinations. Standardised written examinations: all students in Austria take these standardised competence-oriented written examinations at the same time. Examinations in German, mathematics (taking account of curricular differences), English and foreign languages (Italian, French, Spanish, Latin and Greek) are centrally defined. Teachers' corrections and assessments are carried out locally at the school location in compliance with a set formula. The results are therefore comparable throughout Austria.

Quality assurance at schools The Quality in Schools (Q.I.S.) initiative was launched by the Federal Ministry for Education to promote school development and quality assurance within

the respective schools. Individual schools are stimulated and encouraged to monitor, check and further develop their quality standards themselves. The concept centres around preparing and implementing a school programme, which contains a model policy and development plans (actual situation, targets, actions, evaluation) for the school's specific projects. The background consists of four quality areas:

teaching and learning,
classroom and school as living environment,
school management,
school partnership and external relations,
professionalism and human resources development.

The initiative addresses all school types and highlights the importance of cooperation between teachers, pupils/students and parents. Internet: http://www.qis.at

The Quality Initiative for Vocational Education and Training (Qualitätsinitiative Berufsbildung, QIBB) is a further development, extending the concept to cover all levels of the education system (www.qibb.at). In 2009 the first National Education report prepared by the Austrian Federal Institute for Education Research, Innovation and Development of the Austrian School System was published.

Post-secondary

Information society

Some up-to-date information on this issue can be retrieved at Statistic Austria, a national agency which carries out regular survey on the use of ICT among householders and in enterprises in the country.

ICT in education initiatives

eFit Initiative

Between 2000 and 2006 the Ministry of Education took an initiative of consolidating and specifically funding the implementation of new media in education and culture with the eFit initiative. An important basis for eFit Austria was special funding by the federal government which financed significant improvements, particularly in the IT infrastructure for the education system. Under the auspices of eFit Austria, the Ministry has activated the enormous potential of those involved in the fields of education and culture and has helped to launch innovative ideas and projects. Numerous eFit targets, e.g. the comprehensive internet connectivity of Austrian schools, were achieved.

Future Learning

In 2007 the Ministry of Education launched the Futur(e)Learning initiative to support new forms of teaching and learning using ICT in education. Futur(e)Learning supports modern approaches to learning, moving away from the traditional teacher-centred classroom and promoting individual learning pathways. In order to allow schools to concentrate on pedagogy rather than technology, central services were provided, such as education portals, central services for learning platforms (Moodle, dotLRN, Ilias) and the collation and distribution of resources and software (both commercial and open source). The development of the "Edumoodle" programme, the central service to provide a free Moodle instance for all school locations, has shown that such offers are in great demand at the school locations. Successful ICT Projects already underway in schools served as the basis for Futur(e)Learning:

eContent Initiative

Subject oriented Portals Within the scope of the Austrian ICT policy, teaching/ learning software and eLearning materials are being developed specifically for teaching and are being offered not only via provider structures such as education servers in the federal provinces but also via independent subject servers and school servers (eContent clusters). Subject portals allow online access according to subject matter. As a result, it is important to involve all authors from publishing houses, school locations and education server editors among others and develop teaching materials for a wide range of subjects. The e-Content initiative (2007) aimed to supply approximately half the classes in Austrian schools with e-learning material in all subjects by the end of 2010. The Salzburg Research study (Salzburg 2006) on the use of e-Content materials established that approximately 20% of classrooms used e-learning resources (http://www.eduhi.at/gegenstand).

Bildungspool Austria

The Ministry's education portal (http://www.bildung.at) offers a one-stop-shop for all eLearning activities within the framework of the Ministry and it will undergo further development to become an eContent clearing house which offers an interesting range of quality web-based educational contents for Austria's teachers and pupils. A defined metadata specification is the base on whichthe distributed commercial and non-commercial content-servers are consolidated to form a logical eLearning Education Pool for all available elementary learning objects and resources. Metadata and permission rights are stored in the central repository.

Virtuelle Schule

The Virtual School project was initially established as an intermediary (interface) between Austria and the European Schoolnet (EUN). As part of this initial phase, pages of the Virtual School were set up nationally to present via the Internet an overview of the Austrian educational contribution and its involvement with ICT projects. Goals of ViS:AT:

1. Further develop ViS:AT as a centre for interdisciplinary IT projects nationwide by disseminating information about EU initiatives and possible cooperation partners.

2. That ViS:AT further contributes to e-content development and classification and takes an active and leading role in the development of the Austrian educational content pool.
3. Continue ViS:AT role in collecting, developing and presenting quality IT applications in education. Part of this role will also see ViS:AT initiate and enable projects with a thematic focus. These projects are designed to show how interdisciplinary teaching with the use of ICT can be implemented in class as well as in open learning environments.

An video introducing to Virtuelle Schule can be found at http://www.vimeo.com/2471413

Virtual initiatives in schools

eLSA eLearning Project

eLSA – e-learning in everyday school life – is a project launched by the Austrian Ministry of Education, Science and Culture to exemplarily test the nationwide introduction of e-learning and blended learning in secondary schools. the task of eLSA is, that all pupils in an eLSA-school in lower secondary education gain experience with eLearning in all subjects.

In 2002 eLSA started as a pilot project with nine schools, each located in one of the nine Austrian provinces. Teachers tried to implement E-teaching and E-Learning in the everyday teaching situation by offering the students E-learning sequences in very different and creative variations. Each of the participating schools established at least one core "eLSA class". This class had the focus to implement eLearning in all subjects; teachers had to act as a teaching team. One of the objectives of eLSA pilot project (as well as ELSA II) consists of the teachers' in-depth investigation of the learning platform (Blackboard in the pilot projects, different platforms in eLSA II as Moodle, WeLearn…) and the possible ways of using it in the everyday school routine (developing and testing e-learning teaching sequences).

eLSA Schools have an innovative reputation (seen by school partners, such as parents, school environment) and schools' equipment is always up to date and there is a certain interest in a functioning infrastructure. This can be found among teachers and students. Teachers' new media competence has grown considerably due to the project. Students appreciate new methods of learning, they are motivated and see their knowledge grow concerning new media as an important part of their future vocational development. eLearning benefits (such as being able to study whenever and wherever) are seen and accepted by students and teachers. eLSA supports collaboration in teams among teachers and strengthens students' ability to study under their own responsibility.

see also http://elsa20.schule.at/topmenu/english-site.html and report on eLearning im Schulalltag (eLSA)

Virtual initiatives in post-secondary education

Lessons learnt

General lessons

Notable practices

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Italy

From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

by Daniela Proli, SCIENTER
general and university-related information by Alessandro Caforio, UNINETTUNO

For the university-related material see Italy from Re.ViCa

For entities in Italy see Category:Italy

The regions of Italy are not yet incorporated into the structure of this wiki - for details see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regions_of_Italy

Contents

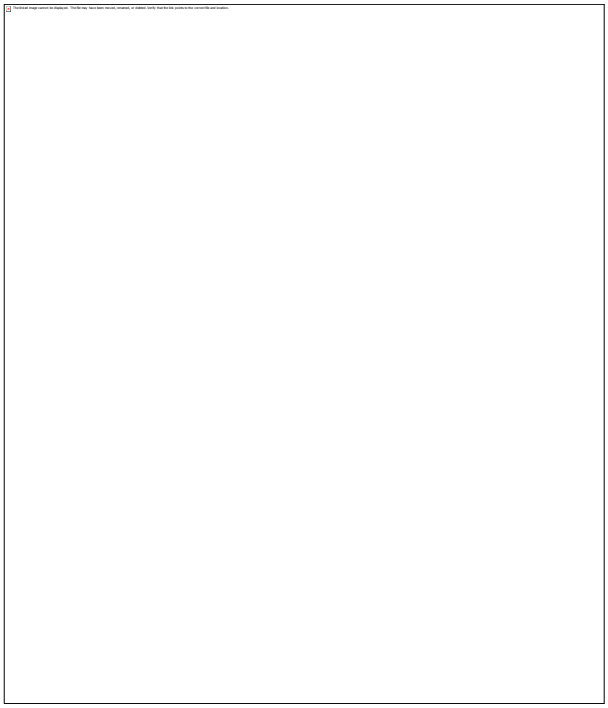
Experts situated in Italy

Italy in a nutshell

Italy is a parliamentary republic. The State's republican set-up was established by the referendum of the 2nd June 1946 by which the Italian people abolished monarchy in favour of Republic. The Constitution of the Republic is the fundamental and founding law of the Italian Republic. It was approved by the Constituent Assembly on the 22nd December 1947, promulgated by the Interim Head of State, Enrico De Nicola, on the 27th December 1947 and came into force on the 1st January 1948. It consists of the Republic's fundamental principles, the rights and duties of the citizens and lays down the organisation of the Republic also as it regards the national education system.

The Italian population is 59.715.627 (source: ISTAT, 2007) and the per-capita GDP is about 27,000 euro per year. Italy extends from the southern side of the Alps' arc and stretches out to the Mediterranean Sea; its territory includes also Sardinia and Sicily, two large islands, beside a range of smaller islands. The sea at the Eastern side of the peninsula is the Adriatic Sea, at Southeast there is the Ionian Sea; at the West, along the entire peninsula, there is the Tyrrhenian Sea, whereas in the Northwest of the peninsula there is the Ligurian Sea. From a

geographical viewpoint Italy's regions are divided into: northern regions (Valle d'Aosta, Piedmont, Liguria, Lombardy, Veneto, Trentino Alto-Adige, Friuli Venezia-Giulia, Emilia-Romagna); the central regions (Tuscany, Marche, Umbria, Latium, Abruzzo); the southern regions (Molise, Campania, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria) and the islands (Sicily and Sardinia).



Administrative division

The President of the Republic is the State highest charge and he represents national unity. He is appointed every seven years by the Parliament, convened in a joint sitting, integrated by the regional representatives. He does not have a policy-making role, nevertheless the Constitution entrusts him legislative, executive and judicial functions. In periods of political stability his role is actually limited to representative and monitoring functions. However, the powers conferred to him by the Constitution make the role of the President of the Republic get more importance in situations of political instability or of institutional drift of the State.

The State legislative power is entrusted to a bicameral Parliament composed of the Chamber of Deputies (630 Deputies) and of the Senate of the Republic (315 Senators elected, plus the life Senators). Both houses are elected by universal suffrage (at present, the electoral law provides for the allocation of the sieges among the candidates of different blocked competitive lists in proportion with the votes obtained, with a majority bonus assuring the governability to the most voted coalition lists). In Italy is in force a perfect bicameralism: the Houses have the same functions and the same powers. A law has to be approved, in its same text, by both Houses. In case of contrast between the Houses the law is not approved. As a consequence, the electoral laws of the two Houses are quite similar in order to avoid that differences in policy-making paralyse the Parliament. This system was conceived in order to have a higher balance of the decision-makers in approving the laws. The Houses hold office for 5 years, but the President of the Republic can dismiss them in before the term office.

The executive power is held by the Government, which, according to art. 92, paragraph 1 of the Constitution, comprises two distinct bodies: the President of the Council of Ministers, the Ministers and the Council of Ministers consisting in the union of the above-mentioned bodies. The Ministers are responsible on an individual basis of the acts of their offices and, on a collegial basis, of the acts of the Council of Ministers. The President of the Council directs the Government's policy, but in the framework of the Council he is primus inter pares among his colleagues. However, if he resigns, the entire Government resigns The President of the Republic, further to consultations with the main political leaders, appoints the President of the Council and, upon proposal of this last one, the Ministers. After taking office, the Government shall present itself to the Parliament and obtain confidence vote by both Houses. Since the Ministers cannot be revoked, sometimes. in order to force them to resign, each Chamber votes for no confidence for an individual minister.

The Magistrates exercises the judiciary power (both the inquiring and the judging one and it is an autonomous and independent body from any other power. The ordinary Magistrates have the jurisdictional function (see jurisdiction entry), which they govern in the name of the people. The Consiglio Superiore della Magistratura (the Higher Council of the Magistrates), elected for one third of its members by the Parliament in joint sitting and for two thirds by all Magistrates is chaired by rights by the President of the Republic and has self-governing tasks of the Magistrates.

Education in Italy

The Italian education systems has been under reform for years, being a critical field where changes in government have been reflected in a series of reforms being not always on a continuity line.

Compulsory education

Thanks to recent reforms dating back to 2007, education in Italy is now compulsory for ten years (up to 16 years of age), whereas each person has to remain in education or training up to 18 years of age or for a total of 12 years. Specifically, compulsory education includes the first cycle of education (5 years of primary school followed by 3 years of lower secondary school, with no exam in-between) and the first two years of the second cycle of education. The latter can be accomplished either in upper secondary schools ("licei", technical and vocational institutes) or within vocational training, namely in three-years courses run by the Regions which in Italy are responsible for managing and delivering vocational training. As far as upper secondary general education is concerned, a reform of 2010 has recently introduced a systematisation of upper secondary schools, in order to make clearer and more transparent the existing educational supply to students and parents, hereby counteracting a trend which in the last decades had produced - by means of experimentations - a huge number of different upper secondary school paths.

Overall the Italian education system includes:

Pre-primary education “Scuola dell’infanzia”, which is for children between 3 and 6 years of age and is not part of compulsory schooling;

The first cycle of education lasting 8 years, and organised in

Primary education (age 6-11)
Lower secondary school (age 11-14)

(It is worth stressing, that unlike several European school systems, primary and lower secondary education remains two different education levels in Italy, each with its’ own specificities, due to a quite recent re-organisation of school cycle dating back to 2003 .)

Second cycle of education consisting of two different pathways (with possibility to move from one to the other):

Upper secondary school, falling under the responsibility of the State, lasting 5 year and addressing students aged 15-19 (provided by licei, technical and vocational schools)
Initial vocational training (3-years courses) for students who have completed the first cycle of education, organised by the Regions and leading to a vocational qualification of first level.

The three-year vocational qualification obtained at the end of a vocational training path allows access to second level vocational training, which can be accessed also with an upper secondary education leaving certificate. Access to both tertiary education and AFAM (high level artistic, musical and chorus education), is reserved to students who passed the state exam at the end of upper secondary school .

Post-secondary non-tertiary education

Post-secondary non-tertiary education is available within the “higher technical education and training system” (Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore – IFTS). It offers

higher technical education and training pathways
courses provided by Higher Technical Institutes (Istituti Tecnici Superiori – ITS).

The system is designed to speed up the access of young people to the world of work and to retrain those who already have work experience. This is done through courses which are designed to provide young people and adults (employed or otherwise) with more specific cultural knowledge and in-depth and targeted technical and vocational training. Courses offered by the Higher Technical Institutes (ITS) are aimed at meeting the formative needs throughout the country, referred to the following 6 technological areas: energy efficiency, sustainable mobility, new technologies in life, new technologies 'made in Italy', innovative technologies for arts and cultural activities, ICT. IFTS courses, on the contrary, are planned by the Regions within their own exclusive competences.

Anyone (adults included) holding an upper secondary education leaving certificate, has access to courses offered by the High Technical Institutes (ITS) and to IFTS pathways. Access to IFTS pathways is also allowed to those in possession of a three-year vocational

diploma, to those who have been admitted to the fifth year of the liceo, as well as to those who do not hold any upper secondary certification. These latter are required to hold a certification of competences acquired through previous training and working experiences undertaken after the fulfilment of compulsory education.

Post-secondary non tertiary education also includes "Second-level vocational training" , addressing those who have obtained an upper secondary school leaving certificate or a first-level qualification in the three year vocational education and training courses. Second-level courses, offering a qualification and a specialisation in a profession of a specific area, foresee full time attendance in an accredited formative institute, which manages the courses, and a compulsory ‘stage’.

Higher education sector consisting of university and non-university higher education. The higher education system is divided into State and non-State establishments. The legal provisions in force for higher education in Italy are set out in Article 33 of the Italian Constitution, which recognises the right of universities and academies to act autonomously within the limits set by the law. Both public and private organisations have the right to establish schools and educational establishments. Universities have adopted new autonomy statutes which establish their governing bodies as well as their teaching and research structures. Academies and Afam institutes are the principal seats of high level education, specialization and research in the art and music sector. They have statutory legal status and autonomy in regards to the following fields; teaching, scientific, administrative, financial and accounting.

More information can be found at
http://www.istruzione.it/web/istruzione/famiglie/ordinamenti

Schools in Italy

Further and Higher education

Universities in Italy

Polytechnics in Country

Colleges in Country

Education reform

Schools

Two governments, belonging to two opposite political coalitions, have been in power since 2003. As a consequence, the education system has undergone various amendments. The reform of the Italian education system started with Law no. 53/2003. It took place within the

principle of Lifelong Learning, defining the main characteristics of the education system, divided into two cycles:

1st cycle: primary school and lower secondary school
2nd cycle: upper secondary school.

This law and its legislative decrees led to the reform of the 1st cycle of the educational system which has been into force since 2003. The reform of the 2nd cycle announced by the law was only realised in February 2010.

The National Guidelines for pre-primary school and the 1st cycle of education, introduced shortly after Law no. 53/2003, have been implemented by the Guidelines for the Curriculum, drawn up by a panel of experts in 2007 and supported by the new Ministry of the Government in power from 2006 until 2008.

The same Governement has raised in 2007 extended compulsory education by two more years (lasting now ten years isnetad of 8 as previously) and including the 1st cycle and the first two years of the 2nd cycle (which can be accomplished either in vocation training). The first two years of the second cycle are now meant to be oriented to the acquisition a fundamental body of knowledge and competences preparing for lifelong learning and active citizenship, in line with the european competences for lifelong learning (as adopted by Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on 18th December 2006).

These include the key competences (competences for citizenship) that students are expected to have acquired at the end of compulsory education, regardless of the school path, as well as a set of basic competences related to four 'cultural areas/axes'.

The aim of this reform was to homogenise different schools' curricula in the first two years in order to ensure the passage from teaching processes which were mainly subjects-centred to learning experiences centred on competences, so as to make different school paths more equal in terms of learning outcomes and "universal" preparation for the lifelong learning, active citizenship and employability.

The four axes are:

1. that of languages;
2. mathematical;
3. scientific-technological;
4. social-historical.

According to the indication of the Ministry of 2007, such axes "shall act as the basis to build learning paths headed towards the acquisition of related competences (including knowledge, skills and competence as in the EQF) as the result of the their integration".

The 8 key competences are on the other hand defined as "the result coming from the integration in a learning process of knowledge and skills related to the four cultural axes".

The 8 competences include:

1. Learning to Learn;
2. Planning;
3. Communicating;
4. Understanding messages of different nature and different complexity level, and coming from different media with different languages (mathematical, symbolical, scientific etc.);
5. Representing events, phenomenon, concepts, emotions etc, using different languages as above;
6. Collaborating and participating;
7. Acting in an autonomous and responsible way;
8. Solving problems;
9. Identifying connections and linkages;
10. Acquiring and interpreting information.

For more information see http://www.indire.it/obbligoistruzione/

Post-secondary

The offer at higher technical education and training level has been reorganised in 2008; according to this reorganisation the offer at this level is the following:

courses provided by the Higher Technical Institutes (Istituti Tecnici Superiori – ITS)
pathways offered by the Higher technical education and training institutes (Istruzione e formazione tecnica superiore – IFTS).

Administration and finance

Schools

Overall responsibility for school education lies within the Ministry of Education, University and Research (Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca), which works at central level, while regional and provincial education offices work at local level. Regions may delegate certain responsibilities to the provinces and municipalities. As regards school education, the Ministry carries out its own functions in the following areas:

the general organisation of school education;
school organisation and timetabling;
the legal status of the staff;
the definition of the criteria and parameters for the organisation of the school network;
the determination of the financial resources to be borne by the State budget and school staffing;
the assessment of the school system;
the identification of the training objectives and standards in the field of higher education, etc..

According to Law no. 59 of 15 March 1997, all schools are granted teaching autonomy, organizing autonomy and research, experimentation and development autonomy.

The Constitution establishes that the State has to provide for a state-owned education system, but it also establishes that also non-state school may exist. These can be of two different kinds:

schools with equal status (paritarie), these are schools managed by private subjects or public bodies. They have been granted equal status, as they have met specific requirements such as: carrying out an educational plan in coherence with the principles included in the Constitution and in the legislation, allowing everyone willing to be enrolled, hiring teaching staff holding a qualification to teach and according to the national contracts (law 62/2000). Schools with equal status are allowed to issue legally recognised certificates and are part of the national education and training system.

schools with non-equal status (non paritarie) (law 27/2006). These are schools that did not present a request for obtaining the equal status or do not meet the specific requirements. They are not allowed to issue officially recognised certificates, they cannot be called 'school' and they are not institutions for the fulfilment of the right/duty (diritto/dovere) to education.

In school year 2007/08, people enrolled in non-State school were the 5.5 % of the entire school population.

General administration at local level

The organisation of the MIUR provides for a ‘peripheral’ organisation made up of the Regional School Offices. They are autonomous centres of administrative responsibility exercising residual state functions, not transferred to the Regions and schools, as well as the functions involved in relationships with the Regions and local bodies, University and training agencies.

The Regional Administration Departments (Assessorati) deal with education and training issues at regional level. Furthermore, the Education Office of the Regional authorities is responsible for planning the integrated educational offer which includes general education and vocational training; school network planning, based on provincial plans; school calendar determination; funds destined to non-state schools. It is also responsible for vocational training.

Administration and management at local level

In each school, the management and administration functions are vested in the Consiglio di circolo (for pre-school establishments and primary schools) or in the Consiglio di istituto (for secondary schools) and in the Dirigente scolastico.

The Consiglio di circolo and the Consiglio di istituto are responsible for questions relating to the budget and the organisation and planning of school activities. As part of this autonomy, each educational establishment draws up the Educational offer plan (POF), which is the basic document that defines the school’s cultural identity and plans for the future. This document is

drawn up by the Collegio dei docenti (Teachers' Committee) and is approved by the Consiglio di circolo or by the Consiglio di istituto.

The principal handles the management of the school. He is its legal representative, and he is responsible for the management of the school's financial and material resources and for the results of the service. The principal has independent powers of management, coordination and use of the resources, and to this end he has the power to promote actions aimed at guaranteeing the quality of the training processes.

The Collegio dei docenti (Teachers' Committee) formulates teaching and educational plans for each school year, and in particular the Piano dell'Offerta Formativa. This Committee periodically reviews the overall teaching activity to ensure that it conforms to the planned objectives, proposing improvements where necessary.

Financing of the system

Although Law no. 59 of 15 March 1997 grants schools autonomy in regards to teaching methodology, organisation, research, experimentation and development, it does not give schools financial autonomy.

The State directly provides the administrative and didactic financing of the school, while the Regions provide services and assistance for pupils (school meals, transport, textbooks in primary school, grants for less well-off pupils and social care). The Provinces and the Municipalities, for their part, can provide assistance and services by way of delegation from the Regions. Enrolment and attendance in compulsory education are free of charge. For the pre-school level, even though it is not compulsory, tuition fees are not charged, while at upper secondary level pupils are expected to pay very low enrolment fees, examination fees and contributions towards the functioning of laboratories/workshops.

Post-secondary

IFTS The Regions plan the institution of IFTS courses in order to assure integration among educational systems. IFTS courses are free of charge. They are co-financed by the Ministry and by the Regions; however, private financing can also be foreseen. IFTS pathways are planned and carried by minimum four educational subjects: school, vocational training, university, enterprise or another public or private subject, formally associated in the form of a consortium

Course offered by Higher Technical Institutes (ITS) High Technical Institutes (ITS)are specific types of foundations (half-way between being associations and private foundations). They can be set up by: an upper secondary school, either State-funded or paritaria, belonging to the technical/vocational branch situated in the same province of the foundation; a training institution which has been accredited by the Region for the purpose of higher level training and situated in the same province of the foundation; an enterprise belonging to the same productive branch of the ITS; university department or any other body belonging to the technological/scientific research system; a local authority (municipality, province, extended urban area, etc).

Second level initial vocational training Regions are also responsible for the establishment of the post-diploma courses/post-vocational qualification courses (second level initial vocational training); they organise the courses by setting up a regional/provincial call and train professional profiles with a high specialization level to meet the needs of the local professional market. In most Regions, courses are financed through the European Social Fund, therefore they are offered free of charge

Quality assurance

Schools

In 2004 a National System for the Evaluation of the Education and Training System was established and the National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education and Training system (INVALSI) was put in charge of the evaluation process. The task of the Institute is to improve the quality of the education system, through the evaluation of its efficiency also in relation with the international context.

The Ministerial Directive on the action plan of INVALSI for the next three years, establishes that, as for the evaluation of the education system, INVALSI draws up an annual report on the school system, which must include both quantitative indicators (demand/supply ratio, resources, etc.) and qualitative indicators (analysis of exam outcomes, analysis of national and international surveys, etc.).

According to the three-year directive, the areas subject to intervention are the following:

education system evaluation;
schools evaluation;
evaluation of the learning outcomes of pupils and students

Post-secondary

Information society

Generally speaking, the action of the Italian government in the last decade with regards to information society is in line with the overall objectives of the Lisbon agenda and focuses on two main lines:

e-government
Infrastructure development to ensure access to information society and overcoming of digital divide in the territory

The report "Citizens and New Technologies 2010" published by ISTAT, The Italian National Institute of Statistics , provides an overview of the diffusion and use of ICT among the italian population. Italy performs bad with respect to many European countries, both on internet home diffusion/quality of available connections (59% of italian families have interner against

a european average of 70%) and broadband access (49% against 61%), although access in increasing over the years. A strong divarius still persists between the North and the South of the country in terms of access to information society and penetration of ICT

The "Digital Italy" Plan is the government current instrument to stimulate the development of digital infrastructure and promote the widespread use of digital technologies, services and processes, promoting greater competitiveness, productivity and efficiency, and resulting in greater economic growth and employment in the country. The plan has two main pillars:

> Broadband National Plan, aimed at eliminating the digital divide in the country, by supporting through public intervention the infrastructual development in those areas (around 6000) where development costs cannot be supported by market forces, due to low pay-off. The goal is to ensure within 2013 access to modern infrastructure to 8,5 millions of Italians who at the end of 2008 found themselved affected by "digital divide". see: Broadband National Plan
>
> Next Generation Networks Plan, aimed at ensuring that at least the 50% of the population has access to services with over 100mbps of speed wittin 2020, in line with the European Degital Agenda objectives.

More information can be found on Italian Digital Agenda, a dedicated space on the website of the Italian Ministry for Economic Development aimed at informing on national activities headed towards the development of an advanced information society.

In 2004 a Statistical Report on Society Information in Italy has been published by the former Ministry for innovation and technology, which is no longer existing.

ICT in education initiatives

Since 2000 the Ministry of Education, University and Research has supported schools in the use of ICT in teaching/learning processes. Widespread use of new technology in schools was introduced by means of the School System Reform in 2003 concerning the 1st cycle of education. ICT has then been included in 2007 as a key competence to be acquired during the first and second cycle of education

A wide offer of initiatives has had the aim of reforming the school administration and renewing and enhancing the teaching/learning methodology to better cope with the needs of teachers, students and families. The major initiatives have concerned:

> Supplying schools with multimedia equipment
> Connecting schools to the Internet
> Setting up networks and services
> Training teachers

The Ministry of Education has adopted several projects to develop the use of IT in the teaching/learning process: The most important is The Digital School action plan concerns the

support and spread of ICT tools and methodologies to innovate in schools and modify leatning environment. The plan is made up of three actions:

LIM -Multimedia Interactive Boards, supply of multimedia interactive boards to schools within classrooms and the development of digital classes

cl@ssi 2.0

Islands in Network

Virtual initiatives in schools

cl@ssi 2.0

Islands in Network

Islands in Network Scuole in rete is a project aimed at ensuring the integration and combating isolation of insular schools7classroom in Sicily by putting them in network with inland schools/classrooms.

The context in which insular schools act is problematic, since the absence of aggregation centres and the scarce connections could turn in cultural isolation and closure. These schools are also also affected by a high turnover of teachers which results in very low continuity in didactics. The idea of a distance network of schools was born exactly to combat such isolation and its consequences

HSH@Network (Hospital School Home)

A national portal aimed at ensuring the relationship between institutions and families so to ensure the possibility to study for students in hospital, in house therapy or in day hospital. The portal include a platform called HSH (hospital school home) which addresses teachers who can create ad hoc virtual learning group for their students

@urora

Scuol@Bardi

Scuola B@rdi is a project of the province of Parma of consortile and telematic school aimed at reducing students communiting in remote areas of the appenine and combating drop out. This consortile school was born from the initiative of a group of schools in the territory of the Parma province which have created a common path for the first two years of secondary education aimed at students who live in small municipalities which are far away from their schools, in order to reduce their commuting and combat drop out. In particular, students from these municipalities can follow some general courses at distance and are provided with a platform for studying on line and staying in touch with teachers of their school. For more specific courses they have to go to travel to their school.

Virtual initiatives in post-secondary education

Lessons learnt

General lessons

Notable practices

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Spain

From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

by Daniela Proli, SCIENTER
original general and HE-related material by members of Re.ViCa

For university-related material see also Spain from Re.ViCa

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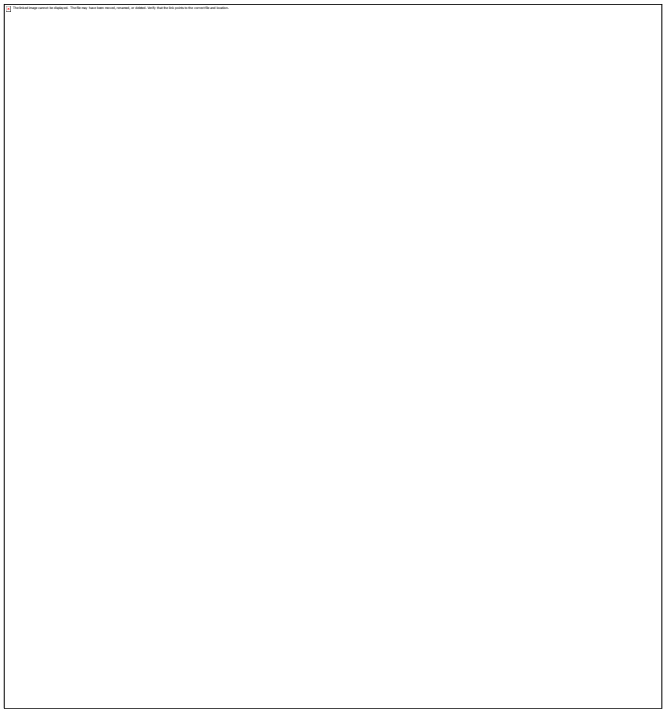
Experts situated in Spain

Begonia Arenas

Spain in a nutshell



Spain or the Kingdom of Spain, is a country located mostly in southwestern Europe on the Iberian Peninsula.

Spanish territory also includes the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean, the Canary Islands in the Atlantic Ocean off the African coast, and two autonomous cities in North Africa, Ceuta and Melilla, that border Morocco. With an area of 504,030 km², Spain is the second largest country in Western Europe after France.

After serving as a granary of the Roman Empire, much of Spain was later conquered by a Muslim people, the Moors. Christian kingdoms gradually rolled back Muslim rule, completing this Reconquista in 1492. Spain became the leading world power, with a global empire on a scale and world distribution that had never been approached by its predecessors and a legacy today of over 400 million Spanish-speakers worldwide.

Napoleon's invasion of Spain in the early 19th century triggered independence movements that tore the empire apart and left the country politically unstable. In the 20th century it suffered a devastating civil war and came under the rule of a dictatorship, leading to years of stagnation. Democracy was restored in 1978 and the country has subsequently experienced a cultural renaissance and steady economic growth. Spain is now a constitutional monarchy organised as a parliamentary democracy and has been a member of the European Union since 1986, and NATO since 1982.

Education in Spain

Mainly sourced from Eurydice

The education system in Spain is organised into mainstream education and Enseñanzas de Régimen Especial (specialised education). Primary education (6 to 12) and compulsory secondary education (12 to 16) correspond to basic education, which consists of ten years of free and compulsory schooling for all pupils. Mainstream education comprises:

Pre-primary education (Educación Infantil): it is the first stage in the education system and it is non-compulsory. It is divided into two stages: the first one, up to the age of 3, and the second, from 3 to 6 years of age

Primary education (Educación Primaria): it is the first compulsory stage of the system. It covers six years of instruction, divided into three two-year cycles. It is normally completed between the ages of 6 and 12.

Secondary education In the Spanish education system, secondary education is comprised of compulsory secondary and post-compulsory secondary. The former - Educación Secundaria Obligatoria (ESO) it is divided into four courses and it is ordinarily completed from the ages of 12 to 16, it covers four school years and must be completed after finishing primary education. Successful students are awarded a Secondary Education Certificate, which is necessary for entering further optional education as is Bachillerato for their University or Formacion Professional (Vocational Studies).

Post-compulsory secondary education includes two options: the two-year Bachillerato (form 16 to 18), and intermediate vocational training ciclos formativos, the duration of which varies between one and a half or two years. Secondary education also includes artistic professional Music and Dance education, intermediate professional Sports and Plastic Arts and Design education, which belong to enseñanzas de régimen especial. This also covers language education. This provision, although not regarded as part of secondary education, belongs to Enseñanzas de Régimen Especial, which may be started at the age of 16 or 14 if the language to be studied is different from the one studied during ESO. Enseñanzas de Régimen Especial are non-compulsory and structured into different levels and degrees leading to different qualifications and certificates.

The vocational training is also a common possibility after ESO or after the Spanish Baccalaureate. There are two different types of programs: Middle Grade Training Cycles (Ciclos Formativos de Grado Medio), which have the ESO diploma as a requirement, and Superior-level Training Cycles (Ciclos Formativos de grado Superior), which have the Spanish Baccalaureate as the principal requirement. After completion of the Superior-level Training Cycle, students are entitled to direct entrance to several related University degrees (source wikipedia)

University education: Once students have finished their Bachillerato, they can take their University Entrance Exam (Pruebas de Acceso a la Universidad, popularly called Selectividad) which differs greatly from region to region. University in Spain is organised

into three cycles, namely Bachelor, Masters and Doctorate, with variable duration and a minimum required number of ECTS credits.

Schools in Spain

Further and Higher education

Higher education includes university studies as well as higher vocational education and training. Universities are the main institutions that provide university studies, while higher vocational education is usually linked to secondary schools and to special vocational institutions. Vocational education and training can be delivered in both public and private schools. The latter can be subsidized. This educational level can also be delivered through distance courses.

Over the past three decades, the number of students and universities has increased three-fold, attaining one of the highest rates of university education in Europe: 30% of women and 22% of men between 24 and 34 years of age have graduated from university. The process of decentralising the university system in physical terms has been accompanied by political and administrative decentralisation: powers have been handed over to the autonomous regions in the area of tertiary education. Moreover, in the last years university research has developed and research output indicators have increased dramatically. Another outstanding fact is the increase in the international mobility of academic staff and students. In the last two decades, the number of universities in Spain has doubled. At present Spain has 50 public universities. Two are special universities focused on continuing education and summer courses. One is a distance learning institution. There are 23 private universities; one of them is a distance learning university. Seven of the private institutions belong to the Catholic Church.

There are 50 public and 23 private universities in Spain. They are distributed throughout the country but the cities with the highest number of universities are Madrid (13), Barcelona (8) and Valencia (4).

According to the legal form the typography of Spanish universities is the following one: • Public University. - It grants university official and accredited titles. It is financed by the State.

• Private University. - It grants official and accredited titles. It is financed by the registered students themselves. It is ruled by its norms of organization and operation.

• University of the Church. - It grants official and accredited titles. It is financed by the registered students themselves and the Church. It is ruled by its norms of organization and operation.In addition to the official degrees, they grant ecclesiastical titles.

Madrid has the highest number of private universities located there. These universities are very interested in the admission of foreign students to a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs.

There are four different types of university establishments in Spain:

university schools (escuelas universitarias), where 'short-term' three-year courses are offered;

university colleges (colegios universitarios) where the first three years of study leading to a licenciado is completed;

faculties (facultades) where long-term courses are offered in all academic disciplines (except technical courses) and

higher technical schools of engineering and architecture (escuela superior de ingeniería y arquitectura) where long-term technical courses are completed.

The Spanish university system is rigidly structured and students must choose a fixed curriculum and aren't permitted to change universities during their studies.

Undergraduate university studies are divided into different stages known as cycles. There are three types of programs:

Single-cycle programs (or short-cycle studies): These studies do not continue to the second cycle and degrees awarded are the Diplomatura (Bachelor degree). These are normally three-year programs.

Two-cycle studies with an intermediate diploma: The first cycle leads to the award of the Diplomatura (Bachelor), or Arquitectura Técnica and Ingeniería Técnica (Bachelor degree in Architecture or Engineering), and students have the option of continuing to the second cycle for the award of the degree of Licenciatura (Masters degree), or Arquitecto and Ingeniero (Architect and Engineer). These are five or six-year programs.

Two-cycle studies without an intermediate diploma (or long-cycle studies): These studies are divided into two cycles but it is necessary to complete both to be eligible for the award of the Licenciatura(Masters Degree). These are four or five-year programs.

In addition to these official degrees or diplomas, each university offers a wide range of unofficial degrees (Maestrias) as well as graduate programs in a wide range of subjects that qualify for the award of the degree of Doctor (Ph.D.). The unofficial degrees are typically one or two years and usually require having attained an undergraduate or graduate degree and are widely recognized for their labour market value, as these qualifications are highly practical in scope and geared to specialized sectors of the different professions. Spanish universities' offer of doctoral degree programs typically require four years of study and research.

The universities cover the whole spectrum of official degrees offered in Spain with the official recognition of its Ministry of Education, as well as a wide variety of non-official degrees in a large number of professional fields.

Universities in Spain

Polytechnics in Spain

Colleges in Spain

Advanced vocational training studies constitute non-university post-secondary level of education. These studies can be provided either in compulsory secondary education and Bachillerato institutions, which are called secondary education institutes, the so-called national reference centres, or vocational training integrated institutions.

Access to advanced vocational training may be obtained in the following ways:

Through direct access, for which it is necessary to hold the Bachiller certificate.
Through an entrance examination when candidates do not hold the Bachiller certificate. The examination is regulated by the Autonomous Communities and its objective is to prove that the candidate's maturity is appropriate to the objectives of Bachillerato and to assess his/her skills for the advanced ciclo formativo of the relevant professional field.

In the event that there are not sufficient places, admission will be prioritised according to the following criteria:

Having followed any of the types of Bachillerato determined for each ciclo formativo.
The academic record of the student, taking into account, firstly, the average mark and, secondly, having passed the Bachillerato subjects related to the ciclo formativo being applied for.

Education reform

Schools

Mainly sourced from Eurydice and European Schoolnet

The latest law reform in the Spanish System is the Ley Orgánica de Educación (LOE), dating from 2006, and it builds on the previous law, named Ley Orgánica de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo (LOGSE), from 1990. The LOGSE radically restructured the Spanish educational system prior to University education, as it raised the school-leaving age from 14 to 16, among other things. The LOE retains the system introduced by the LOGSE but tries to establish the legal framework for improving the quality of the system by addressing the new challenges facing Spanish society. In particular, it addresses the challenges of a more heterogeneous student population and more developed regional control in all autonomous communities, which by 2000 had all been given full responsibilities in education. It also strives to align the national educational objectives with those established by the European Union, which aims to achieve a leading position for Europe in our present international knowledge society.

The following points are priorities for education:

1. A National Political Agreement on Education among all political parties to guarantee the legal stability of the system in the long run as well as across the territories of different Autonomous Communities.
2. To lower the drop-out rates in the compulsory educational levels (pupils under the age of 16).
3. To promote quality in education while preserving an inclusive system with a strong emphasis on economic aid to compensate for social inequalities.
4. To promote vocational training through an increase in quality and social recognition and through flexible schemes that allow students to enter the system and transfer credits easily.
5. To enhance the use of ICT in schools by means of the plan Escuela 2.0 http://www.ite.educacion.es/es/escuela-20) which is aimed at transforming the way we teach and learn.

The LOE and the royal decrees which develop it have being gradually implemented, starting in the academic year 2006/07 and finishing in 2009/10.

Within the LOE framework, it bears mentioning that the Ministry of Education and the Autonomous Communities approved in 2008 the 'Plan para Reducir el Abandono Escolar' (Plan for the reduction of early school leaving), aimed at reducing the still high early school leaving rates to half between school years 2008/09 and 2012/13. The following measures are among the ones approved by this plan:

To increase the offer of places in initial vocational qualification programmes (PCPI)

To increase the offer of intermediate vocational training, Plastic Arts and Design and Sports Education, in order to fully meet the demand of this education.

To offer PCPI students who do not hold the Graduado en Educación Secundaria Obligatoria certificate the possibility of taking a personal aptitude test to access intermediate vocational training.

Likewise, to offer intermediate vocational training graduates the possibility of enrolling in advanced vocational training.

To promote reinforcement programmes, such as the reinforcement, guidance and support programmes, in order to increase the number of ESO graduates. Likewise, measures will be launched for young people between 16 and 22 years of age to take reinforcement and extra classes in order to obtain the Graduado en Educación Secundaria Obligatoria certificate in the minimum possible time.

To extend and reinforce counselling departments, in order to give students advice on the decisions they have to make at post compulsory levels. Moreover, guidance and monitoring services will be promoted for young people who left the education system with no qualification.

To develop teacher training programmes on techniques to make the most of pupils' potential, as well as techniques for early diagnosing difficulties, educational attention and monitoring students at risk of early school leaving.

To create support resources for teachers and other stuff involved in the educational attention of low achievers at risk of early school leaving.

To promote measures that enable parents' attendance at meetings with their children's teachers.

To create family support centres, or 'schools for parents', to promote a higher involvement and monitoring in children's education, as well as the cooperation of the administrations with the parents' associations.

To promote new technologies in all spheres of the education system, especially for unqualified people under 25, in order to promote the offer of distance and part-attendance courses.

To promote an education-work culture in which holding at least the Graduado en Educación Secundaria Obligatoria or an initial vocational qualification prevails for the access of young people to employment.

Some other new aspects which should be mentioned are the implementation of the 'School 2.0 Programme' and the 'Social and Political Pact for Education'. In September 2009, the Cabinet passed the 'School 2.0 Programme', an educational innovation initiative aimed at implementing the digital classrooms of the 21st century. The plan envisages that, for the 2009/10 academic year, 392,000 students and 20,000 teachers in more than 14,400 fully digitalised classrooms in all Spain would have a laptop they can use to be better educated. This programme will be developed through agreements between the Autonomous Communities and the Ministry of Education. Its objective is the transformation, in the next four years, of the traditional classrooms of the 5th and 6th years of primary education and the 1st and 2nd years of secondary education into digital classrooms equipped with interactive whiteboards and wireless Internet connection, where teachers will have laptops and each student will also work with his/her own laptop. The 'School 2.0 Programme' is based on the following principles:

Digital classrooms. Equip students and educational institutions with ICT resources: laptops for both students and teachers and digital classrooms with standardized efficient equipments.

Guarantee Internet connectivity and interconnectivity in the classroom regarding all equipments and facilitate Internet access from students' homes during special hours.

Ensure teacher training in technological, as well as in the methodological and social aspects of the integration of these resources into daily teaching practice.

Involve students and their families in the acquisition, custody and use of these resources.

As regards the 'Social and Political Pact for Education', from the beginning of the 2009/10 academic year, the Ministry of Education has held a series of conversations and meetings with the Autonomous Communities, the educational community, social and political groups, as well as the Sectorial Committee, with the main aim of providing the education system with stability regarding regulations. The Ministry of Education has drawn up a document with 104 specific proposals for action which constitutes the basis upon which work is to be continued. The following proposals should be mentioned:

The Pact has a clear and determining horizon: 2015-20. It is not only a pact for 2020, but there must also be an explicit commitment on the immediate measures to be taken. There must be an annual proposal which includes the specific measures to be taken, so that they are also linked to a report and an economic commitment.

The commitment to citizens that possible present and future changes on regulations which might be adopted regarding different questions which might be agreed will require a parliamentary majority of two thirds.

An improvement in the funding of Spanish education

The objective that all the population between 0 and 18 is receiving education.

A greater flexibility in the education system. A greater permeability between the different educational levels, both vertically and horizontally. One of the key elements where this rigidity is to be eradicated is the last stage of compulsory education.

The preparation of specific measures for vocational training to constitute a comprehensive training and a key instrument in order to move towards a new sustainable economic model.

Post-secondary

Administration and finance

Schools

Mainly sourced from Eurydice

Schools in Spain may be owned by an education administration or by a private party, either a person or a legal entity (mostly catholic organisations). Non-university publicly-funded schools provide the second cycle of Pre-primary education (3-6 years of age) and compulsory education free of charge. Private non-university schools may be financially independent or government dependent (*centros concertados*) and may offer any level of education. Publicly funded private schools are funded via educational agreements, which are signed with the education administration of the corresponding Autonomous Community. Schools may sign these agreements provided that the requirements laid down in the educational legislation are met.

In Spain, the education administration decentralized model distributes the education responsibilities among the State, the Autonomous Communities, local administrations and schools. The responsibilities corresponding to each of these levels are set out below:

Distribution of responsibilities in Education (Non University education)	
Central government	General organization of the education system, minimum requirements for schools, minimum core curriculum, international cooperation in education, policies to encourage and coordinate research. The central government also organizes the general planning of education and regulation of academic and professional qualifications, core curricula guaranteeing the right and duty to know the Spanish language (notwithstanding the Autonomous Communities' competence regarding the establishment of regulations to guarantee citizens' rights to use and know their own languages), High Inspectorate (whose duty is to monitor

	the observance of minimum requirements for education set by the State for the entirety of the national territory), state-wide general diagnostic evaluations, policies on financial aids for studies, ownership and administration of public schools abroad, establishment of the legal basis for foreign schools in Spain, education statistics for State purposes, etc.
Autonomous Communities	Administrative responsibility within their territories; schools creation, authorization and management; development of State regulations regarding syllabuses and regulation of levels, branches, grades and specializations; guidance and support for pupils; staff management; educational inspection; supervision of textbooks and other materials; diagnostic assessment in schools within their territory; facilitating information exchange and the promotion of good educational or management practices; providing the necessary data to the State to elaborate national and international educational statistics; publishing data and indicators contributing to facilitate transparency, good educational management and educational research; negotiation and awarding of subsidies to private schools; administration of scholarships and aids; regulation of the relevant Autonomous Community's School Council composition and functions, etc.
Local Administrations	Provision of sites for building public schools; maintenance and refurbishment of Pre-primary, Primary and special education schools; planning extra-curricular and supplementary activities, monitoring compulsory schooling; creation of School Councils within their municipality, representation at the Autonomous Communities' School Councils and at the schools' School Councils, etc.
Schools	Schools are autonomous in organizational, educational and financial matters, within the framework of current regulations, with the aim of achieving a better adequacy and use of the assigned resources, as well as the adjustment of the pedagogic action to pupils' specific needs and to the characteristics of the school environment.

Post-secondary

Quality assurance

Schools

Mainly sourced from Eurydice

In Spain, the evaluation of the education system is viewed as an essential element in order to improve the quality of education, since it constitutes a valuable instrument for the monitoring and assessment of both the functioning and the results of the education system, as well as for the improvement of processes delivering these results. This is evidenced by the fact that the legal framework stresses the need to evaluate all the elements making up the education

system: pupils' learning processes, educational results, curriculum, teachers' performance, teaching processes, the managerial function, the running of schools, educational inspection and education authorities themselves. The collection of objective data and their rigorous analysis facilitates the knowledge and appraisal of the achievements and deficiencies present in both the entire system and all its levels and elements. Thus, the necessary foundations are laid for an effective decision-making, which should have an effect on the process for the improvement of the education system.

The 2006 Ley Orgánica de Educación, LOE (Act on Education), devotes titles VI and VII to educational evaluation and inspection, respectively, and considers both to be key aspects to improve the education system. Thus, evaluation is an essential element to increase the education system's transparency, which must be applied to all its areas, including inspection. In turn, with the aim of ensuring the compliance with regulations on education, the educational inspection takes part in the evaluation of the education system and its elements. Evaluation procedures of all areas and elements of the education system have been established, which has committed the relevant authorities and the different agents of the system to account for the current situation and its evolution. All these evaluation tasks are aimed at improving the quality of the education system.

The general evaluation of the education system at the non-university levels is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, through the Institute of Evaluation (IE) (http://www.institutodeevaluacion.mec.es/). This body, reporting to the State Secretariat for Education and Vocational Training, works in collaboration with the relevant evaluation institutions of the different Autonomous Communities. The latter are responsible for the evaluation of the education system within their respective territory.

As far as ICT use in school is concerned, there are periodic national and regional surveys that estimate how many teachers use ICTs and what they use them for. All schools entering pilot plans are closely monitored and they have detailed evaluation plans.

Post-secondary

Information society

http://www.giswatch.org/reports/country/Spain

ICT in education initiatives

Virtual initiatives in schools

Mainly sourced from EUN

All autonomous communities are fully responsible for the schools in their territory and that includes the promotion of ICT in schools. ICT policies vary in emphasis and depth among the seventeen Autonomous Communities and the two Autonomous Cities (Ceuta and Melilla),

although all plans address the common challenges that the adoption of ICT in school entails within that range of variation. It is worth mentioning, for instance, that Extremadura has become known worldwide for its commitment to open software and its excellent rates of computers per pupil, and that all communities have their own plan to promote connectivity and hardware deployment, although open software may not play such a relevant role. For instance, Aragon has pilot plans for introducing tablet PCs and Interactive White Boards, and Catalonia for introducing netbooks in schools.

The Spanish Ministry of Education still coordinates some initiatives at a national level in collaboration with the autonomous communities, like the National repository for digital resources (www.proyectoagrega.es), federating content from nodes in each Autonomous Community, and the project ESCUELA 2.0.

ESCUELA 2.0

Escuela 2.0 is a nationwide ICT plan for school building on the developments already achieved in each region and going further, trying to generalize the access to hardware and digital content in school in order to pedagogically integrate ICT into school life. The program had a budget of 200 million euros for the 2009-2010 academic year, co-funded in equal parts by the Central Government of Spain and the various Autonomous Regions (2010/2011??').

The goal of the program is to transform the traditional fifth- and sixth-year Primary Education and first- and second-year Secondary Education classrooms into digital classrooms equipped with digital blackboards and wireless Internet connection, where the teacher will have a laptop computer and where each student will work with an ultra-mobile personal computer.

To that end, the Escuela 2.0 project is based on the following fundamental principles:

1. Providing ICT resources to the students and the centres.
2. Guaranteeing Internet connectivity in classrooms and homes.
3. Ensuring the proper training for teaching staff.
4. Generating and facilitating access to digital materials for teachers, students and families.

Proyecto Agrega

The Agrega project (Agrega is the Spanish word for "add") is a federation of learning Digital repository which is to be used by 19 educational authorities in Spain. Each educational authority will have its own repository loaded with curricular learning objects created according to standards, and each single repository will be able to integrate and interoperate with other learning systems locally and worldwide. The Agrega project has a clear focus on integration and interoperability between Agrega learning repositories and the rest of the world. Moreover, it is open to collaborative evolution based on a generic GPL licensing. It is the first step towards providing a nation-wide access to content generated by the education community in a consistent and interoperable way. Curricular content for Agrega is being developed under Creative Commons licensing schemes, can be experimented directly from a

web site, offline or by an LMS, and all the contents and application will be localised in Spanish, Euskera, Catalan, Valencian, Gallego and English.

RTE-Extremadura.org

http://www.unesco-ci.org/cgi-bin/portals/information-society/search.cgi?d=1&type=phrase&query=Spain

The Educational Technological Network represents the access of Extremadura (a region in Western Spain) School System (kindergarten, primary, secondary and high school) to the Information Society. This access includes the development of infrastructures (software, hardware and Intranet) and the establishment of an area where research, capacity building and innovation will be promoted in the domain of ICT. This will guarantee to all the citizens of the region the use of information resources and the access to opportunities.

Catalan Blog project "Escoles en Xarxa"

The idea of the Catalan project "Escoles en Xarxa" (Schools on the Net), originates from an initiative of a secondary school in Barcelona willing to establish a blog for their news service. Adapting journalism practices in high schools from printed newsletters to the web and then to blogs has been a logical evolution and a constant demand from Catalan schools. The project received support by the Catalan Department of education in charge of the coordination of ICT educational projects with two goals in mind. Firstly, to create a community based on the Catalan language in secondary schools, and secondly to spread social values using ICT. Fifty three schools are now connected to the project in the Catalan speaking Community (Andorra, Balearic Islands, French Eastern Pyrenees, Catalonia and Valencia). Escoles en Xarxa permitted the establishment of a community and network to promote a minority language.

Use of learning platform in teaching/learning

Moodle is widely used for online teacher training, but only a limited number of schools have also adopted it for their own purposes. Most Autonomous Communities provide their teachers with a virtual learning environment to upload and share resources with their pupils; they are hosted centrally, not at school, and often happen to be custom-made by software companies. They have been the most successful solutions for VLE since they are centrally administered and in this way schools do not have to devote resources (people and machines) to maintaining them. There is also regional support for schools in order to have a school portal and intranet; in those cases central servers host the school web sites, which the school manages through a pre-installed content management system. Sometimes, an open software solution like Joomla! is used, as in the case of the community of Castilla la Mancha.

Episteme: Soluciones Educativas para el siglo XXI

Episteme is a virtual school offering support for homeschooling, from primary to secondary education for those who needs a qualification but cannot obtain it through attending school in presence. It is linked to US qualifications.

Escuela Virtual de Padres

The Virtual school of Fathers is a Spanish web portal for parents, aimed at supporting them in their role through useful documents and spaces for dialogue around the issues of children education and related problems. The portal include a specific session called “Escuela Virtual”, where materials can be downloaded and a forum is available.

Virtual initiatives in post-secondary education

Lessons learnt

General lessons

Notable practices

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B2.2 Africa

Angola[38]

From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

Contents

Partners situated in Angola

None.

Angola in a nutshell

Angola, officially the Republic of Angola (Portuguese: República de Angola, Kongo: Repubilika ya Ngola), is a country in south-central Africa bordering Namibia to the south, Democratic Republic of the Congo to the north, and Zambia to the east, and with a west coast along the Atlantic Ocean. The exclave province Cabinda has a border with the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The official language is Portuguese.

(sourced from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angola)

[38] Angola is not a Tier 1 country or in any of the VISCED Supraregions, thus it is Tier 3.

Angola education policy

Angola education system

(sourced from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Angola)

Education in Angola has four years of compulsory, free primary education which began at age seven, and secondary education which began at age eleven, lasting eight years. Basic adult literacy continues to be extremely low, but there are conflicting figures from government and other sources. It is difficult to assess not only literacy but also other educational needs. Statistics available in 2001 from UNICEF estimate adult literacy to be 56 percent for males and 29 percent for women.

Higher education

Universities in Angola

These include:

University of Agostinho Neto, a large public university in Luanda and Huambo
Independent University of Angola (Universidade Independente de Angola), a private university based in Luanda
Catholic University of Angola, a small private university based in Luanda
Lusiada University, a small private Portuguese university with a campuses in Luanda, Benguela and Cabinda, Angola
Jean Piaget University of Angola, a small private university based in Luanda and Benguela (province)

Polytechnics in Angola

Higher education reform

The Bologna Process

Administration and finance

Quality assurance

Angola's HEIs in the information society

There is a report from infoDev at http://www.infodev.org/en/Publication.385.html

Towards the information society

Information society strategy

Virtual Campuses in HE

Interesting Virtual Campus Initiatives

UCB Virtual Pólo Angola is a department of the Universidade Católica de Brasília located in Brasilia, Brazil. UCB Virtual offers 16 Graduate Courses, 27 Post Grad Courses and 15 Short Courses available in Brazil, Japan, Angola and USA. In Angola, UCB Virtual works in partnership with [Escola Católica Dom Bosco in Luanda. Its main objective is to help the lower class population to continue with their studies. Examples of short courses available: Entrepreneurship, Tutor training, Instrumental English, Tourism Marketing, Public administration of tourism amongst others. UCB Virtual Pólo Angola web site is at <http://www.catolicavirtual.br>

UAN-CEAD Centro de Ensino à Distância da Universidade Agostinho Neto (Distance Learning Center - Agostinho Neto University. The UAN-CEAD is the distance learning department at the University Agostinho Neto located in Luanda, Angola. UAN-CEAD is integrated in the Lusophone Network, which aims to boost the global dissemination of training content in Portuguese and sharing of best practices among development institutions in the Portuguese Speaking Countries. UAN-CEAD website is at http://www.cead-uan.com

NEaD - Núcleo de Educação a Distância da UNESP The Distance Learning Center of the Universidade Estadual Paulista Julio de Mesquita Filho is located in São Paulo, Brazil. NEAD provides a framework to support academic courses, helping to keep the quality and credibility of University. Courses are available in the form of in the form of extension courses, undergraduate or postgraduate level and are available to students from Mozambique, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau and Sao Tome and Principe. UNESP website is at http://www.unesp.br/

FORMEDIA is a management development centre located in Lisbon, Portugal. FORMEDIA is specialized in management and entrepreneurship education, with onsite, online and blended learning. Established in 1988, they have regular activities in Portuguese-Speaking Countries, especially in Portugal, Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde and Mozambique. FORMEDIA website is at http://www.formedia.pt/

Interesting Programmes

CyaBite is a school of IT and Computer Science located in São Paulo, Brazil. Since 1988 CyaBite has been training thousands of students, initially in their units in São Paulo and more recently through distance learning. Vocational courses offered include Professional Administrative Assistant, Typing Course, Graphic Design, Web Design, Secretarial Course amongst others. CyaBite can be accessed by students in all Brazilian States, as well as students living in Portugal,

Angola, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Moçambique, Sao Tome and Principe, East Timor as well as Macau in China. CyaBite web site is at <http://www.ciabyte.com.br>

Imaginologia provides on line courses with emphasis in the medical field. The website aims provide further training to the medical community of the Portuguese language (Brazil, Angola, Portugal, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe, Guinea-Bissau and East Timor. Imaginologia web site is at <http://www.imaginologia.com.br/cursos-a-distancia.asp>

ACABA - Academia Aberta de Angola (Open Academy of Angola) operates in Angola and concentrates in providing training and developing courses using Information and Communication Technology (ICT). ACABA works in partnership with Angolan and foreign institutions and offers Undergraduate – Postgraduate – Masters degrees, as well as short vocational courses as Research methodology, practice of teaching Portuguese language, formation of e-tutors, lesson preparation and writing of educational records amongst others. ACABA website is at http://www.academia-aberta.com

Angolacursos.com is a project developed by Mit-marktec Ldt (Consulting, Training, Advertising and Marketing company based in Luanda, Angola) in partnership with the Estácio de Sá University, located in Rio de Janeiro Brazil. Angola Cursos offers a great variety of distance learning courses such as Balance sheet analysis, Basic Accounting, Telemarketing techniques , Customer relationship management - CRM , amongst others. The objective of the project is to offer qualification courses that will help the student to develop new skills, excelling in the job market and increasing the chances of getting a good job. National Certification with the same validity as classroom teaching is issued by Estácio de Sá University. Angola Cursos website is at http://www.angolacursos.com

Re.ViCa Case-study

Lessons learnt

None.

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Botswana[39]

From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

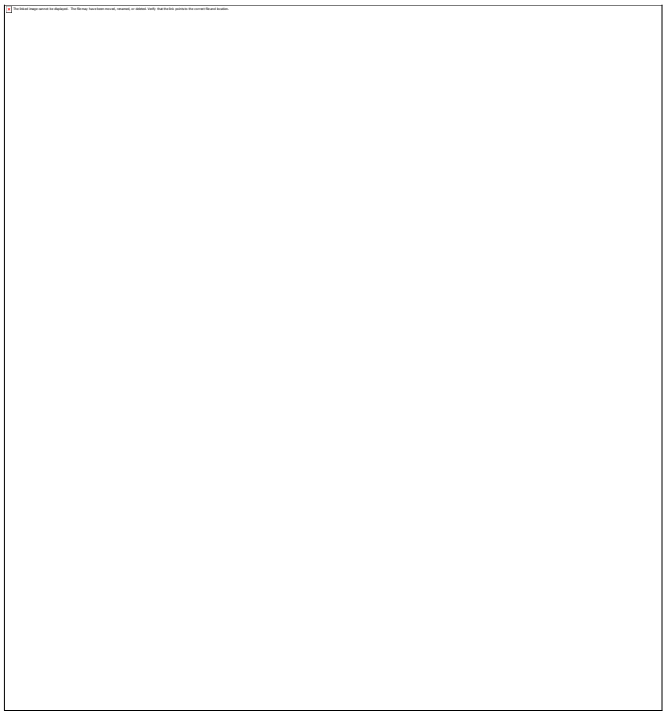
Contents

Partners situated in Botswana

None.

Botswana in a nutshell

(sourced from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Botswana)



[39] Botswana is in Anglophone Africa (http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Anglophone_Africa) – thus Tier 2.

Source : http://www.cia.gov

Botswana, in full the Republic of Botswana (Tswana: Lefatshe la Botswana) is a landlocked country in Southern Africa. Citizens of Botswana are called "Batswana" (singular: Motswana), regardless of ethnicity.

Formerly a British protectorate of Bechuanaland, Botswana adopted its new name after becoming independent within the Commonwealth on 30 September 1966. It is bordered by South Africa to the south and southeast, Namibia to the west, Zambia to the north, and Zimbabwe to the northeast.

The country is home to a relatively stable political system and a rapidly developing economy. Being closely tied with the economy of South Africa, the country's economy is one of the most successful in Africa and is dominated by the fast-growing service sector, world-renowned diamond industry, tourism, and manufacturing.

Its population is 1.6 million.

The capital is Gaborone and the country is divided into nine districts.

Botswana education policy

Botswana has made great strides in educational development since independence in 1966. At that time there were very few graduates in the country and only a very small percentage of the population attended secondary school.

With the discovery of diamonds and the increase in government revenue that this brought, there was a huge increase in educational provision in the country. All students were guaranteed ten years of basic education, leading to a Junior Certificate qualification. Approximately half of the school population attends a further two years of secondary schooling leading to the award of the Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE). After leaving school, students can attend one of the six technical colleges in the country, or take vocational training courses in teaching or nursing. The best students enter the University of Botswana, Botswana College of Agriculture, and the Botswana Accountancy college in Gaborone. Many other students end up in the numerous private tertiary education colleges around the country. A high majority of these students are government sponsored.

The quantitative gains have not always been matched by qualitative ones. Primary schools in particular still lack resources, and the teachers are less well paid than their secondary school colleagues. The Government of Botswana hopes that by investing a large part of national income in education, the country will become less dependent on diamonds for its economic survival, and less dependent on expatriates for its skilled workers.

In January 2006, Botswana announced the reintroduction of school fees after two decades of free state education though the government still provides full scholarships with living expenses to any Botswana citizen in university, either at the University of Botswana or if the

student wishes to pursue an education in any field not offered locally, such as medicine, they are provided with a full scholarship to study abroad.

Botswana education system

Public spending on education was 9.7% of GDP in 2006. There are ten years of compulsory education starting at age six. Net enrolment ratios are 85% for primary and 60% for secondary, and gross enrolment ratio for all levels combined 71% (2005). The pupil-teacher ratio for primary is 25:1 and for secondary, 14:1 (2005). The private sector provides about one-third of secondary places. The school year starts in January. The Brigades movement, now established throughout the Commonwealth, was founded in Serowe by Patrick van Rensburg to provide vocational training in skilled trades for early school-leavers.

About 5% of the relevant age group is enrolled in tertiary education (2005). There are about 30 vocational and technical training centres, four teacher training colleges, two colleges of education and one university, the University of Botswana. A second public university, the Botswana International University of Science and Technology, is set to enrol its first students in 2010, and will be located at Palapye. The Institute of Development Management accepts students from throughout the region. Illiteracy among people age 15-24 is 5.9% (2007).

The Government of Botswana's philosophy of basic education asserts that high quality education is a fundamental human right. It aims to promote all-round development of the individual; fostering of intellectual growth and creativity; empowerment of citizens to achieve their full potential; encouragement of moral, ethical and social values, cultural identity, self-esteem and good citizenship; and preparation of citizens to participate actively in further developing the principle of democracy.

In line with the government's philosophy, the Ministry of Education and Skills Development has a dedicated Special Education Division to ensure equal access to and quality of education for learners with special needs, including children with visual or hearing impairment, mental handicap, learning disabilities and physical disabilities. The ministry also offers grants to NGOs offering educational rehabilitation.

In January2009, the Ministry of Education's Teacher Capacity-building Programme for HIV/AIDS was selected as a finalist in the 2009 Commonwealth Education Good Practice Awards. Through a 'talk-back' television programme, teachers are able to confront their own fears, denial and secrecy surrounding the pandemic. The skills, knowledge and attitudes which they require are strengthened in the war against HIV/AIDS in which education plays a major role. (http://www.commonwealth-of-nations.org/Botswana/Education)

Higher education

HEIs in Botswana

The best known is the University of Botswana.

Another one is the Botswana College of Agriculture.

Higher education reform

The Bologna Process

Administration and finance

Quality assurance

Botswana's HEIs in the information society

Towards the information society

Information society strategy

Botswana established the Science and Technology policy in 1998 through which all ICT related developments could be coordinated. The development of a national ICT framework is intended to pave the way to an innovation driven economy. Botswana's first National Information and Communications Technology Policy was approved by Parliament in 2007 [Maitlamo National Policy for ICT Development 2007].

Virtual Campuses in HE

Interesting Virtual Campus Initiatives

None known.

Interesting Programmes

No programmes are known with a focus on tertiary education but the following programme is for lifelong learning and has a distance education aspect.

At several places in rural Botswana, digital citizenship and participation is becoming more and more tangible through an ambitious national development initiative. With the so-called Kitsong Centres, Botswana has mobilised a project for the establishment of information centres equipped with a broad range of digital services across the country, including access to local and community information; eGovernment offerings such as requesting birth certificates , passport applications and school registration; as well as access to distance learning facilities. At the moment 25 centres are functional – most of them in post offices – and an additional 25 centres are being set up.

Botswana Technology Centre

The Botswana Technology Centre (BOTEC) is the initiator of the Kitsong Centres. It is a research and technology organisation that was established by the Botswana government in 1979 and operates under the Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology. BOTEC supports the national development goals by aligning research, science and technology products and services with the Botswana Vision 2016 ideals and the National Development Plans. With the Kitsong Centres (knowledge centres), BOTEC embarked on a project to develop a computer communication system that enables access to integrated e-mail and online information for rural people in Botswana, with emphasis on the online dissemination of locally generated, user-friendly, relevant information and knowledge resources. The idea is to collect, store and use locally generated information relevant to specific community needs. There are 25 centres throughout the country, which have been made part of the Botswana postal system. Their location makes it possible for the community to access them easily. The post charges ten Pula (P 10.00), which is about US$ 1.00 for one hour's use of the workstations connected to the Internet. BOTEC decided to give the centres the name "Kitsong Centres" to try and associate them with "acquiring knowledge" for the socio-economic development of rural communities.

Interview with Ms Leatile Nthaga, an IT consultant from the Botswana Technology Centre

(with acknowledgements to eLearning Africa)

eLA: Ms Nthaga, with the so-called Kitsong Centres, the Government of Botwana, together with BotswanaPost, is about to implement a large network of rural facilities to drive ICT usage in the country, especially in remote areas. What are the main challenges to be addressed in your centre or in the others you know?

According to studies done by BOTEC, computer illiteracy in rural communities is one of the inhibiting factors delaying the uptake of computer services. To intercede with dedicated trainings, though, is the main future objective. The fact that the patrons of these centres are young people up to 40 years of age shows the need of bringing the adult community onboard. Another task is to address and to invite women to actively participate in the field of ICT. Female patrons running such a facility, for example, are generally fewer compared to male patrons, though they make up the majority of the population in the rural villages.

eLA: What role does eLearning play in your centre? How many people use it and for what purposes?

The Kitsong Centre in the village of Sikwane is used mainly by students of institutions of higher education. These are the University of Botswana and the Limkokwing University of Technology. Members of the public use it for research and communication over the Internet. Since these are public facilities, there is no particular eLearning programme that is run by the centre. Patrons use it to access eLearning materials offered by other institutions. Some use it to access accounting programmes, like AAT, run by other institutions.

eLA: About half the number of the intended Kitsong Centres have opened in the last few years. What would you say are the basic findings and achievements so far?

I think the project has been able to mobilise a significant number of people in villages to use the centres, and these numbers continue to grow. On the one hand, the communities have been sensitised about the value of ICT services to improve their lives and business activities. On the other hand, the Kitsong initiative enhanced the awareness of various corporate stakeholders about the potential benefits of ICT to rural communities and how they could be used to enhance service delivery in those places. And it also gave clear indicators about the need for additional sensitisation or training of the communities still needed in order to appreciate ICT applications

eLA: Where is the future of the Kitsong Centres going?

It is evident that there are growing information needs in the rural areas. Therefore, the Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology has now started rolling out the Kitsong Centres throughout Botswana. These centres have been made part of the Botswana Postal Services (BPS). However, as BPS has 113 offices and only 25 Kitsong Centres have opened their doors so far, much potential is left to drive the initiative forward. The most salient needs I see are to offer trainings for ICT usage as well as making more local content available in each village.

eLA: Ms Nthaga, many thanks for your time!

Re.ViCa Case-study

None.

Lessons learnt

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Tunisia[40]

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Partners situated in Tunisia

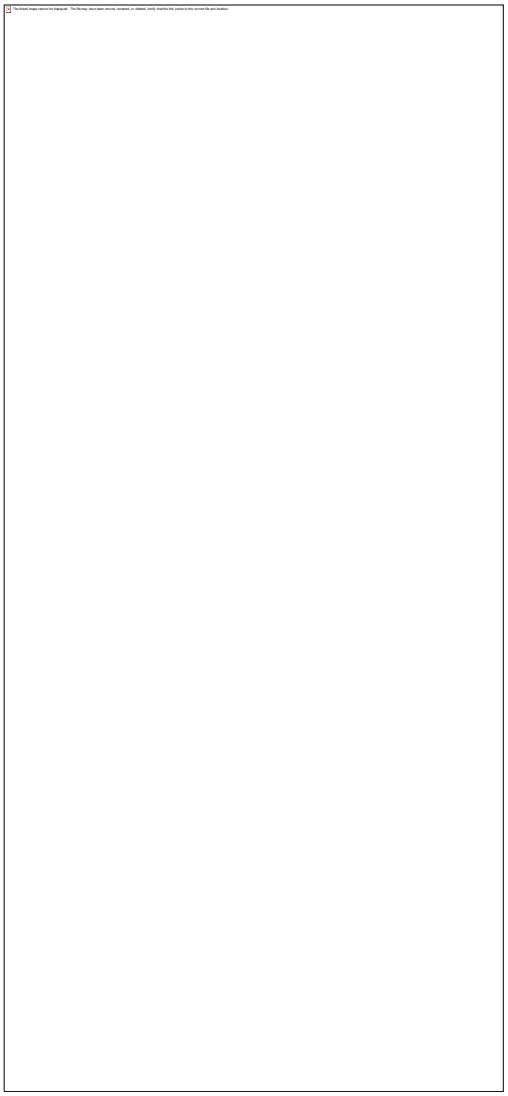
None.

Tunisia in a nutshell

(sourced from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tunisia)

Tunisia (Arabic: تونس - Tūnis), officially the Tunisian Republic (الجمهورية التونسية - al-Jumhūriyya at-Tūnisiyya), is a country located in North Africa. It is bordered by Algeria to the west and Libya to the southeast. It is also located southwest of the two main islands of Italy - Sicily and Sardinia.

[40] Tunisia is in North Africa (http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/North_Africa) – thus Tier 2.



Source : http://www.cia.gov

Its size is almost 165,000 km² with an estimated population of just over 10.3 million.

The capital of Tunisia is Tunis.

Tunisia is the smallest of the nations situated along the Atlas mountain range. The south of the country is composed of the Sahara desert, with much of the remainder consisting of particularly fertile soil and 1,300 kilometres (810 mi) of coastline. Both played a prominent role in ancient times, first with the famous Phoenician city of Carthage, then as the Roman province of Africa, which was known as the "bread basket" of Rome. Later, Tunisia was occupied by Vandals during the 5th century AD, Byzantines in the 6th century, and Arabs in the 8th century. Under the Ottoman Empire, Tunisia was known as "Regency of Tunis". It passed under French protectorate in 1881. After obtaining independence in 1956 the country took the official name of the "Kingdom of Tunisia" at the end of the reign of Lamine Bey and the Husainid Dynasty. With the proclamation of the Tunisian republic on July 25, 1957, the nationalist leader Habib Bourguiba became its first president.

The country was governed by the authoritarian regime of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali from 1987 to 2011 before he fled during the Tunisian revolution. Tunisia, an export-oriented country in the process of liberalizing and privatizing an economy that has averaged 5% GDP growth since the early 1990s, had suffered corruption benefiting the former president's family.

Tunisia has relations with both the European Union—with whom it has an association agreement—and the Arab world. Tunisia is also a member of the Arab League and the African Union. Tunisia has established close relations with France in particular, through economic cooperation, industrial modernization, and privatisation programs. The government's approach to the Israel-Palestine conflict has also made it an intermediary in Middle Eastern diplomacy. Some 98%of modern Tunisians are Arab-Berber, and are speakers of Tunisian Arabic. However, there is also a small (1% at most) population of Berbers located in the Jabal Dahar mountains in the South East and on the island of Jerba, though many more have Berber ancestry. The Berbers primarily speak Berber languages, often called Shelha. The small European population (1%) consists mostly of French and Italians. There is also a long-established Jewish community in the country, the history of the Jews in Tunisia going back some 2,000 years. In 1948 the Jewish population was an estimated 105,000, but by 2003 only about 1,500 remained.

Tunisia is subdivided into 24 governorates.

Tunisia education policy

Education is given a high priority and accounts for 6% of GNP. A basic education for children between the ages of 6 and 16 has been compulsory since 1991. Tunisia ranked 17th in the category of "quality of the [higher] educational system" and 21st in the category of "quality of primary education" in The Global Competitiveness Report 2008-9, released by The World Economic Forum.

While children generally acquire Tunisian Arabic at home, when they enter school at age 6, they are taught to read and write in Standard Arabic. From the age of 8, they are taught French while English is introduced at the age of 12.

Since gaining independence from the French in 1956, Tunisian education sector has shown great progress. The government of Tunisia has focused on developing an education system which produces a solid human capital base that could respond to the changing needs of a developing nation. Sustained structural reform efforts since the early 1990s,prudent macroeconomic policies ,and deeper trade integration in the global economy have created an enabling environment for growth .This environment has been conducive to attain positive achievements in the education sector which placed Tunisia ahead of countries with similar income levels, and in a good position to achieve MDGs. According to the HDI 2007, Tunisia is ranked 98 out of 182 countries and is ranked 2nd in MENA region just below Jordan. Education is the number one priority of the government of Tunisia, with more than 20 percent of government’s budget allocated for education in 2005/06. As of 2006 the public education expenditure as a percentage of GDP stood at 7 percent.

Tunisia education system

Tunisian education system was built on the French model , therefore, the focus of the education reformers was to Arabize curriculum and faculty at nation's schools and universities. Tunisia adopted a phased approach towards Arabization . Given the number of Francophone nationals and the absence of qualified Arabized teachers to teach scientific subjects, policy makers maintained French both as foreign language and as a medium of instruction for math and science in primary education. Humanities and social sciences were Arabized incrementally, initially in primary and subsequently in secondary education. In the 1970s, the decision was made to extend Arabization to all subjects in post-primary education, except vocational, professional, and technical tracks. At the university level French was maintained as the language of instruction in technical institutes and science faculties. There have also been several other reforms since independence to further improve the education system at all levels:

1. Education reform Law of 1958 emphasized technical and vocational education, and the training of a new breed of educators who are qualified to teach the new curriculum emphasizing Arabic language, literature, Islamic thought and history and geography of the Tunisian and North African region.
2. Then in 1969 a Higher Education Law was passed that placed all government recognized institutions of higher learning and scientific research under the umbrella of University of Tunis, an institute that was established in 1960, by incorporating several existing higher schools and institutes.
3. In the academic year of 1990-91, the New Education Act introduced an increased length of instruction at the primary and secondary levels from 12 to a total of 13 years. It also made it mandatory for students of ages between 6–16 years of age to attain basic education training.
4. Tunisia introduced competency-based approach in school curriculum in 2000, and revised textbooks accordingly.
5. The 2002 Education Act emphasized the importance of ICT in the education sector.

The academic year runs from October to June and examinations are held in late June or early July. The official language of instruction at the school level is Arabic; French and English are introduced as a foreign language in the third year of school studies. Students are tested at the end of each trimester in all subjects through oral, written and practical tests.

Early Childhood Care and Education(ECCE)

Tunisian government has shown strong commitment towards pre-school education. Pre-school education is to be imparted in establishments or specifically designated places to the children from three to six years of age. In Tunisia the pre-school education is provided primarily in three settings: Kindergartens. These are socio-educational institutions that come under the supervision of Ministry of Women, Family and Childhood and they belong to either private sector, the quasi-public local authorities or specialist associations. There has been considerable improvement in the coverage of kindergartens from 7.1 percent in 1990 to 14 percent in 2000.But this rate is still low primarily because most 3 to 6 year olds do not attend kindergarten. Kouttabs. These religious institutions also cater for children between 3 and 5

years of age. Their task is to initiate them into learning the Quran as well as reading, writing, and arithmetic. They are under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Reforms have enabled to increase the number of these schools from 378 in 1987 to 961 in 2007. These Kottabs host 25,194 children,11,138 of whom are girls. They are run by mouaddibs(teachers)among whom 121 hold degrees in Islamic Sciences, and 60 hold university degrees. A presidential project, “Tomorrow Tunisia” , has been launched to further support Kouttabs so that they fulfill their education mission of consolidating values of religion. Preparatory yearIt is also an integral part of basic education but it is not compulsory. It is supervised by the Ministry of Education and Training and is provided in public, private and quasi-public primary schools. The gross enrollment rate at pre-primary has increased steadily since 2000 from 15 percent to 22 percent in 2003.

Basic Education

Enseignement de base consists of nine years of school education, and is divided into two distinct stages: 6 years of primary and 3 years of preparatory education (lower secondary). At the end of 9 years students sit for examen national de fin d’études de l’enseignement de base, success in which leads to the Diplôme de Fin d’Études de l’Enseignement. Students are required to score above 50 percent at the end of sixth grade to progress to the lower secondary level. Although there is a high percentage of students who fail the important grade 6 examinations. Now due to government efforts, the number of students who have to repeat grade 6 is decreasing. In 1991-92, 26 percent of students had to repeat grade 6 .But in 1999-2000 that number has dropped to 18 percent. The drop out rate at the primary level is 6 percent and it halved from the drop out percentage of 12 percent in 2000.The gross enrollment ratio at primary and secondary is greater than 1 which shows that more girls than boys are enrolled at these two education levels. The share of private enrollment at primary level has been slowly increasing from 0.7 percent in 2000 to 0.9 percent in 2003 and in 2007 the private enrollment share was 1.4 percent.The gross enrollment ratio at lower secondary level in 2007 stood at 113 percent, a jump of about 7 percentage points from the GER in 2006. Also at the beginning of the 2007/208 school year, 9 pilot middle schools were launched to offer gifted students early care that will allow them to pursue their studies in pilot schools in scientific, literary and art fields, with competent and experienced teachers.

Secondary (upper) education

The four years of secondary education are open to all holders of Diplôme de Fin d’Etudes de l’Enseignement de Base where the students focus on entering university level or join the workforce after completion. The Enseignement secondaire is divided into two two-year stages: general academic and specialized. In the academic stream all students follow a common curriculumn for two years after which they choose one of the five specializations from: language arts, mathematics, technical sciences, experimental sciences ,and economics and mnagement. The language of instruction in technical, scientific and mathematics fields is French. At the end of the fourth year of secondary studies students take Examen National du Baccalauréat. Students are tested on average on six subjects. Those students who complete the secondary cycle, but fail the baccalaureate are awarded a certificate of completion that can later be used for entry into the workforce or for entry to further studies in a private school. In 1995 42.5 percent of baccalaureate takers were successful. However, Tunisia has

been appearing in TIMSS since 1999 and has been one of the top performing countries in the Arab region. In 2007, Tunisia ranked second in mathematics and third in science in all of Arab countries appearing in TIMSS ,with scores 420 and 445 respectively. gender parity index of gross enrollment ratio at the secondary level was 1.1 percent in 2006, implying higher female enrollment than male enrollment at the secondary level.

Technical and Vocational Track

Professional and vocational programs are administered by the Ministry of Employment, and in more specific disciplines by individual ministries such as agriculture and tourism. Students can opt to enroll in a two year vocational program leading to the award of dice the Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle. These students who have completed the first two years of secondary education may enroll in two-year vocational programs leading to the award of the Brevet de Technicien Professionnel, which in turn gives access to two-year Brevet de Technicien Supérieur programs. The enrollment in TVET at the secondary level has also been rising since 2004.The current(2007) enrollment ratio in TVET is almost 10 percent, with a higher percentage of males enrolled in these programs.

Higher education

The higher education system in Tunisia has experienced a rapid expansion and the number of students has more than tripled over the past 10 years from approximately 102,000 in 1995 to 365,000 in 2005.The gross enrollment rate at the tertiary level in 2007 was 31 percent, with gender parity index of GER of 1.5. The private university system in Tunisia, accounting for about one percent of students, remains small because the regulatory environment does not encourage foreign investment or the use of part-time teachers in private universities.

In Tunisia in 2005–2006, there were 178 public institutions of higher education among which there were 13 universities, 24 higher institutes of technological studies and six higher institutes of teachers' training. The Higher Education Ministry (HEM) supervises 155 institutions and 23 are under the co-supervision of the HEM and other ministries. In addition HEM recognizes 20 university-level private institutions. The public university system is virtually free and student loans are not available for students enrolled in a private university, making it difficult for private universities to attract students who cannot afford to pay the fees.

During the last decade, in addition to creating seven new universities, the Government of Tunisia (GOT) has made progress in i)in improving the internal efficiency of programs and pass rates in applied science programs and selected short-term programs such as at the higher institutes of technology (Instituts supérieurs des études technologiques) (ZSETS) (ii)introducing shorter term professional programs with more relevance; and(iii)granting greater autonomy to universities to give them the flexibility to respond to the changing environment and adapt academic programs to the needs of the economy.

Access to post secondary education is guaranteed to all students holding the Diploma zdu Baccalaureat. The admission process is centrally controlled through the national university

orientation system. The pass rate of the Baccalaureate is not very high in Tunisia. On average 60 percent of students fail the baccalaureate each year. Recently since 2005–06, the government has been trying to implement reform that is based on the European three-tier model of bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees.This reform is known as LCD:licence (three years) master's (two-years), doctorate(five years). The new academic credit hour system is meant to give students greater flexibility in designing their study tracks, while allowing them to earn and transfer credits between institutions both domestically and internationally.

At the university level the first cycle of studies in the academic stream is of two years, which leads to the award of Diploma d'Etudes Universitaires du Premier Cycle. This first degree is regarded as a preparatory one. Then in most other fields, the second cycle leads to the award of Maitrise, which is considered the first degree in Tunisian university system. Later the Diplome d'Etudes Approfondies (DEA) is awarded to Maitrise holders after a further two-year study and the preparation and defense of a thesis. DEA is also a prerequisite for entry into a doctoral program.

Despite this progress, however, numerous challenges remain, as student enrollments in public universities are projected to increase by about 6.6 percent annually, reaching approximately 470,000 (all categories) in 2010, while at the same time, the quality and relevance of education are in need of updating. At 2 percent of GDP, public spending on higher education is already higher than in most countries in the world. Unemployment among university graduates is increasing and the employability of graduates in modern, export-oriented sectors is weak. Mechanisms and incentives to promote quality at the university level are for the most part inadequate and universities cannot fully exercise the autonomy that will help them to better respond to the changes in the labor markets and requirements of a global economy. In sum, due to the projected increase in enrollment, the GOT is faced with a challenge of meeting public demand for higher education in an equitable way, and improving quality in a cost-efficient manner, while responding to existing and new labor market needs.

Universities in Tunisia

The main university-level institutions in Tunisia include:

1. Ecole Polytechnique de Tunisie
2. International University of Tunis
3. Université Libre de Tunis
4. Université de l'Aviation et Technologie de Tunisie
5. Institut National d'Agronomie de Tunis
6. Université des Sciences de Tunis

Others include

1. Ez-Zitouna University, Tunis
2. University of Gabès, Gabès
3. Tunis University, Tunis

4. Tunis El Manar University, Tunis
5. Carthage University, Carthage
6. Manouba University, Manouba
7. University of Sousse, Sousse
8. University of Monastir, Monastir
9. University of Gafsa, Gafsa
10. University of Jendouba, Jendouba
11. University of Kairouan, Kairouan
12. University of Sfax, Sfax

There is also the Université Virtuelle de Tunis.

Polytechnics in Tunisia

There are many Higher Institutes of Technological Studies and Higher Institutes of Teacher Training.

Higher education reform

The Bologna Process

Administration and finance

Quality assurance

Tunisia's HEIs in the information society

Towards the information society

Information society strategy

Tunisia is supported by international organizations (e.g., the World Bank, Microsoft , and Apple in incorporating ICT at all levels of education. These organizations provide support to the government in implementing ICT staff training programs, supporting professional development, providing networking opportunities; researching , developing and evaluating new policy approaches in setting up ICT infrastructure in the country. Some of the innovative projects were the Mobile laboratories and Mobile Internet Buses connected to the internet via satellites that target schools in rural and remote areas so as to reduce the digital divide. In 1999 Global Teenager Project was launched that led to global classsroom debates in cyber space. Tunisia also hosted the second phase of the world summit on information systems. In 2004, there were 22,000 computer (0.28 computers for every class), but by 2006 there were 57,000 computers(0.71 computers for every class).Although the presidential election program

is working towards achieving 1 computer per class by 2009.It is foreseen that the number of trained teachers will increase to 80,0000 in 2009 from 60,000 in 2006. All higher education institutes are connected to the internet by El Khawarizmi Calculus Center, which is the official public internet service provider to higher education institutes. The integration of ICT in education is further reinforced by Tunisian Virtual School and the Virtual University of Tunis.

Virtual Campuses in HE

Interesting Virtual Campus Initiatives

Université Virtuelle de Tunis

The Université Virtuelle de Tunis (UVT) was established in 2002 as a government initiative and forms the country's tenth public university. The English name (on its web site) is Virtual University of Tunisia. This provides open and distance education using multimedia technologies, and is an attempt to co-ordinate ICT in higher education across the country, provide additional student places (public higher education enrolments alone have risen five-fold over the past 15 years), and widen participation. It offers a growing number of its own awards, but is also working with other Tunisian universities to spread good practice in use of ICT for teaching and learning.

Its web site is http://www.uvt.rnu.tn/

Interesting Programmes

Tunisia was one of the first countries in North Africa and Arab countries to pioneer in the field of distance education and e-learning through the launch of Tunisian Virtual School in January 2002. It provides fee interactive courses, revision modules, assistance and ICT training.

Re.ViCa Case-study

None.

Lessons learnt

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Categories: Tunisia | Africa | Northern Africa | Countries with Programmes

B2.3 Asia

Israel[41]

From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

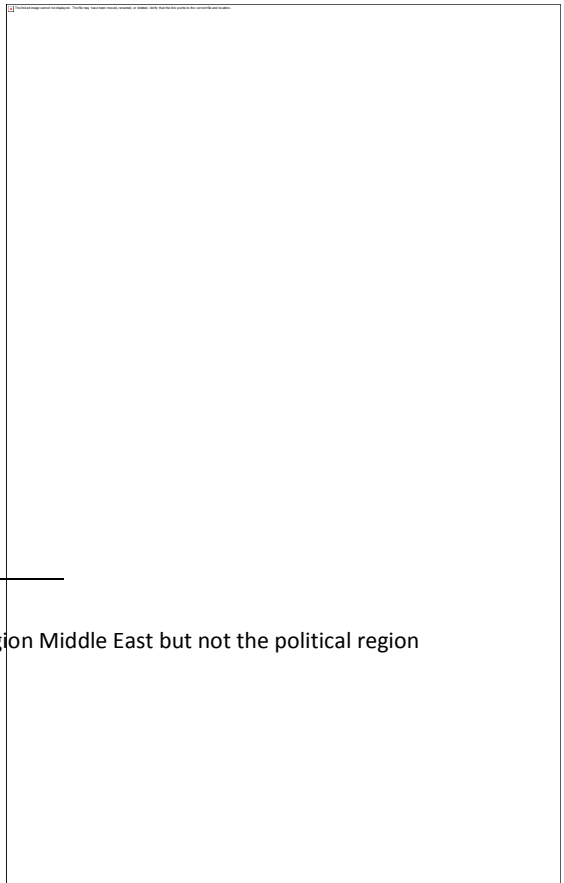
Contents

Partners situated in Israel

None.

Israel in a nutshell

Israel (Hebrew: יִשְׂרָאֵל, Yisra'el; Arabic: إِسْرَائِيلُ, Isrā'īl) officially the State of Israel (מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל, Medinat Yisra'el; Arabic: دَوْلَةُ إِسْرَائِيلَ, Dawlat Isrā'īl), is a country in the Middle East located on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. It borders Lebanon in the north, Syria in the northeast, Jordan in the east, and Egypt on the southwest, and contains geographically diverse features within its relatively small area. Also adjacent are two areas of Palestine - the West Bank to the east and Gaza Strip to the southwest.



[41] Israel is in the geographical region Middle East but not the political region

B2.4 Island regions

(http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Middle_East) – thus it is Tier 3.

Aruba[42]

From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

by Paul Bacsich, Sero
additional schools-related contributions by Cristina Brecciaroli, SCIENTER

For entities in Aruba see Category:Aruba

Aruba is an island in the Caribbean which is a separate member state of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Geographically, it is a 33-kilometre (21 mi)-long island of the Lesser Antilles in the southern Caribbean Sea, 27 km (17 mi) north of Venezuela. Together with Bonaire and Curaçao it forms a group referred to as the ABC Islands of the Leeward Antilles, the southern island chain of the Lesser Antilles. It has a land area of 193 km2 (75 sq mi).

Its population is just over 100,000.

Its capital (and largest city) is Oranjestad.

Aruba has no administrative subdivisions.

Unlike much of the Caribbean region, Aruba has a dry climate and an arid, cactus-strewn landscape. This climate has helped tourism as visitors to the island can reliably expect warm, sunny weather - it lies outside the hurricane belt.

Most of the Arubans speak four languages; Dutch, Spanish, English and Papiamento.

[42] Aruba is a country in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, in French/Dutch LAC (http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Category:French/Dutch_LAC) – hence Tier 2. The political organisation of the Dutch-speaking countries in the Caribbean has been fluid in the last year – see http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Caribbean_Netherlands and http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Netherlands_Antilles

Contents

Education in Aruba

(sourced mainly from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aruba)

Aruba's educational system is patterned after that in the Netherlands - and provides for education at all levels. The Government finances the national education system, except for private schools, such as the International School of Aruba (ISA), which finance their own activities. The percentage of money earmarked for education is higher than the average for the Caribbean/Latin American region.

Arubans benefit from a strong primary school education. A segmented secondary school programme includes vocational training (VMBO), basic education (MAVO), college prep (HAVO) and advanced placement (VWO).

There are 68 schools for primary education, 12 schools for secondary education and 5 higher education institutions. In 2007, there were 22.930 fulltime students registered.

Schools

In addition to the state schools, there is the International School of Aruba. This is a non-profit, co-educational, English language school. It was founded in 1929. In 2005, a new campus was constructed, and ISA was relocated to the centreof the island of Aruba. The school is a US State Department assisted school. The school is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS-CASI). A full successful accreditation review was conducted in May, 2008. The school has approximately 155 students from Montessori (3 yrs. old) through grade 12. The student body represents 22 countries. The average class size is 10.

Higher education

Higher education goals can be pursued through the Professional Education programme (EPI), the teachers college (IPA) and through the University of Aruba (UA) - http://www.ua.aw - this offers bachelors and masters programmes in law, finance and economics and hospitality and tourism management.

There are also two private universities in Aruba:

1. All Saints University of Medicine - http://www.asumaruba.org

2. Xavier University, School of Medicine (XUSOM) - http://edu.xusom.nl

All courses are presented in English. Both school curricula are based on the United States medical school model and will lead to a Doctor of Medicine degree that is recognized in North America.

Since the choice for higher education on the island itself is limited, many students choose to study abroad in countries in North America, South America as well as Europe. Favoured countries are Netherlands, the United States, Venezuela and Columbia.

ICT in education in schools

Systemwide use of ICT in schools in **Aruba** has not progressed at a rate commensurate with the country's economic success. Chief barriers are the absence of ICT policy or ICT prioritization in education, a concomitant lack of funds, and teachers' inadequate mastery of ICT skills. However, the Aruba Pedagogical Institute (IPA), trains all primary teachers and houses the School of Tomorrow project (www.schooloftomorrowipaaruba.com), which supports two ICT pilot schools as well as a technology-rich model classroom that facilitates experimentation with ICT integration, teaching to multiple intelligences, and development of collaborative and project-based learning activities.

In primary education, not all schools have computers and even less internet access.

As for secondary education, over 33% of secondary schools have computers and Internet connections (WAN). Students primarily use these computers to build ICT skills and to prepare for ICT exams. IT curricula include use Microsoft Office productivity tools.

Educational software is available in both primary and secondary school to reinforce learning in Dutch language, math, language arts, and science.

Non-formal, distance, and open modes of education are not currently factors in Aruban school education at this time.

Source: Gaible E., 2008, Survey of ICT and Education in the Caribbean: A summary report based on 16 Country Surveys. Washington DC, InfoDev

Distance learning at post-secondary level

There is a Centre for Lifelong Learning and some plans for developing this in future - see http://www.ua.aw/ua/getPage.do?page=ABOUT_UA

Some students in Aruba study with the Dutch Open University - see for example http://dspace.ou.nl/bitstream/1820/1035/1/Dissertation%20Dewiyanti%202005.pdf

However, the LOI seems to be the most popular choice - http://www.loi.nl/index.htm.

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2. Aruba, http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/74/Aruba.html
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4. Gaible E., 2008, Survey of ICT and Education in the Caribbean: A summary report based on 16 Country Surveys. Washington DC, InfoDev

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Jamaica[43]

From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

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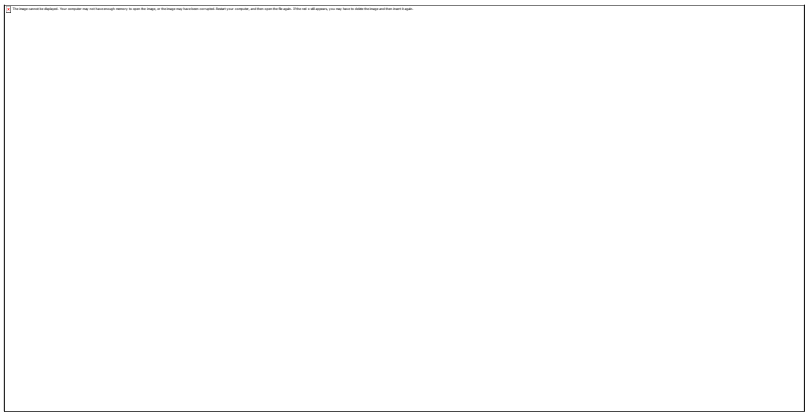
Partners situated in Jamaica

None.

Jamaica in a nutshell

(sourced from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamaica)



Source : http://www.cia.gov

Jamaica is an island nation of the Greater Antilles, 234 kilometres (145 mi) in length and as much as 80 kilometres (50 mi) in width, amounting to 11,100 km2. It is the third largest island and the fourth largest country in the Caribbean.

[43] Jamaica is in Commonwealth LAC (http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Commonwealth_LAC) – thus Tier 2.

Jamaica is about 145 kilometres (90 mi) south of Cuba, and 190 kilometres (120 mi) west of Haiti on the island of Hispaniola, on which the Dominican Republic is also located.

Its indigenous Arawakan-speaking Taíno inhabitants named the island Xaymaca, meaning the Land of Wood and Water, or the Land of Springs. Formerly a Spanish possession known as Santiago, it later became the British Crown colony of Jamaica.

Jamaica has a population of 2.8 million - it is the third most populous anglophone country in North America, after the United States and Canada.

Its capital is Kingston.

It remains in the Commonwealth of Nations with Queen Elizabeth II as Head of State.

Jamaica is divided into 14 parishes. The parishes are grouped into three historic counties (Cornwall, Middlesex and Surrey) - but these have no administrative relevance.

Jamaica's population mainly consists of people of African descent. Multiracial Jamaicans make up much of the population also. The Indian and Chinese population is together around 160,000. Some 20,000 Latin Americans and 7000 US Americans also reside in Jamaica.

The official language of Jamaica is English. In informal discourse, Jamaicans primarily speak an English-African Creole language known as Jamaican Patois, which has become known widely through the spread of Reggae music.

Christians make up somewhat over half of the population, approximately 59% percent - the remainder are spread among several religions.

Jamaica is a mixed economy with both state enterprises and private sector businesses. Major sectors of the Jamaican economy include agriculture, mining, manufacturing, tourism, and financial and insurance services. Tourism and mining are the leading earners of foreign exchange. An estimated 1.3 million foreign tourists visit Jamaica every year.

Jamaica education policy

(the following sections are sourced mainly from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamaica and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Jamaica but with further research on specific institutions)

Education foolows the UK model and in particular that of England. Education is free from early childhood to secondary levels.

Children are taught Spanish in school from primary school: about 40-45% of Jamaicans know some form of Spanish

Education at all levels is looked after by the Ministry of Education - see http://www.moec.gov.jm/about.shtml

Jamaica education system - education in Jamaica (schools)

Presently the following categories of schools exist:

> Early childhood – Basic, Infant and privately operated pre-school. Age cohort – 1-5 years.
> Primary – Publicly and privately owned (privately owned being called Preparatory Schools). Ages 5–12 years.
> Secondary – Publicly and privately owned. Ages 12–18 years. The high schools in Jamaica may be either single-sex or co-educational institutions, and many schools follow the traditional English grammar school model used throughout the British West Indies.

For further details see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Jamaica

Higher education in Jamaica

There are Community Colleges, Teachers Training Colleges, Vocational Training Centres, Community Colleges and Universities (publicly and privately owned).

Universities are typically the only degree-granting institutions; however, many colleges have been creating joint programs with universities, and thus are able to offer some students more than a college diploma.

For a fullish but incomplete list of universities and colleges in Jamaica see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_universities_and_colleges_in_Jamaica - some of these are described in more detail below.

Universities in Jamaica

Generally, A-Level or CAPE examinations are not required to enter the nation's Universities. One may also qualify after having earned a 3-year diploma from an accredited post-secondary college. (The word "college" usually denotes institutions which do not grant at least a bachelor's degree.)

There are four local tertiary institutions called universities:

1. University of the West Indies (Mona Campus)
2. University of Technology, Jamaica - http://www.utech.edu.jm - formerly the College of Art Science and Technology (CAST)
3. Northern Caribbean University, formerly West Indies College, a leading Seventh-day Adventist, English-speaking university - http://www.ncu.edu.jm (private non-profit)
4. International University of the Caribbean - but there is no information on its web site

A few universities in the United States have extension programmes in various parts of Jamaica. Most of the students who enroll in these part-time programmes are working professionals who want to continue their education without having to relocate closer to the nation's Universities.

University of Technology, Jamaica

There is no evidence of distance learning or online or e-learning in the course prospectus (http://www.utech.edu.jm/ProsStudents/ProgSum_Ja.pdf) but see the entry on co-operative education (Work-Based Learning in the UK sense) - http://www.utech.edu.jm/Academic/OCE/index_new.htm

Northern Caribbean University

Northern Caribbean University is a tertiary level academic facility in Mandeville, Manchester (west-central Jamaica). It is run by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Founded in 1907 as the West Indian Training School (in Bog Walk, St Catherine), it is the oldest private tertiary institution in Jamaica. The institution offers courses at both the graduate and undergraduate levels in six colleges and schools: Arts and General Studies, Natural and Applied Sciences, Graduate Education and Leadership, Business and Hospitality Management, Teacher Education and Behavioural Science and Religion and Theology.

Its web site is at http://www.ncu.edu.jm

There is a locally-developed VLE called AEorion Learning Management System (AEorion LMS) which is described as "a complete, secure, web-based training and e-learning solution from Northern Caribbean University that employs a simple and intuitive user interface" (source:http://aeorionde.ncu.edu.jm/corp/about.aspx).

There is a section on "Online and Distance Courses" but no courses listed - perhaps they will be offered soon, developed from the correspondence courses (http://www.ncu.edu.jm/academics/c-courses.aspx). The site also offers a number of podcasts (http://news.ncu.edu.jm/Podcasts.aspx).

Polytechnics in Jamaica

There is the:

University College of The Caribbean - http://www.uccjm.com/

Additionally, there are several teacher training colleges including

MICO University College, formerly MICO Teachers' College, founded in 1836 - http://www.themicouniversitycollege.edu.jm
Shortwood Teachers' College - http://www.stcoll.edu.jm

MICO University College

This is now running Moodle for various online courses including teacher training - http://thelvws1.mine.nu/moodle2/course/category.php?id=5

Colleges in Jamaica

There are also some Community Colleges including:

> Montego Bay Community College - http://www.mbcc.edu.jm (site under construction as at early February 2010)

Finally, there is also an interesting lifelong learning site http://www.lifelonglearningja.org

Higher education reform

The Bologna Process

No information.

Administration and finance

There are opportunities for those who cannot afford further education in the vocational arena through the Human Employment and Resource Training-National Training Agency (HEART Trust-NTA) programme and through an extensive scholarship network for the various universities.

Quality assurance

No information as yet.

Jamaica HEIs in the information society

Towards the information society

Information society strategy

The Mission of the Ministry of Education is

> To provide a system which secures quality education and training for all persons in Jamaica and achieves effective integration of educational and cultural resources in order to optimise individual and national development.

It has seven objectives, of which the 7th (the last) is about ICT:

1. To devise and support initiatives striving towards literacy for all in order to extend personal opportunities and contribute to national development;
2. To secure teaching and learning opportunities that will optimize access, equity and relevance throughout the education system;
3. To support student achievement and improve institutional performance in order to ensure that national targets are met;
4. To maximize opportunities throughout the Ministry's purview that promote cultural development, awareness and self-esteem for individuals, communities and the nation as a whole;
5. To devise and implement systems of accountability and performance management in order to improve performance and win public confidence and trust;
6. To optimize the effectiveness and efficiency of staff in all aspects of the service in order to ensure continuous improvement in performance;
7. *To enhance student learning by the greater use of information and communication technology as preparation for life in the national and global communities.*

It has an Educational Technology Resource Centre which merits more investigation - http://www.moec.gov.jm/overview_of_the_education_technology-resource_centre.shtml

Virtual Campuses in HE

Interesting Virtual Campus Initiatives

None so far found except of course for the University of the West Indies.

Interesting Programmes

Possibly MICO University College.

At the top level of analysis the use of e-learning at the other university-level tertiary institutions is at an early stage.

There is not enough information yet on community colleges to make a judgement.

In contrast, there does seem significant activity at the schools level.

Re.ViCa Case-study

None.

Virtual Learning

KBC Learning Centre based in Jamaica.

Cyberschool Jamaica

E-Learning Jamaica Company Limited

Lessons learnt

It might have been expected that Jamaica would have several Programmes but energies appear to have been taken up by the developments at the University of the West Indies.

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3. Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_universities_and_colleges_in_Jamaica
4. Ministry of Education, http://www.moec.gov.jm/about.shtml

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Tonga[44]

From Researching Virtual Initiatives in Education

Contents

Experts situated in Tonga

None so far.

Tonga in a nutshell

Tonga, officially the Kingdom of Tonga (Tongan: Pule'anga Fakatu'i 'o Tonga), an archipelago in the South Pacific Ocean, comprises 169 islands, 36 of them inhabited. The Kingdom stretches over a distance of about 800 kilometres (500 miles) in a north-south line. The islands that constitute the archipelago lie south of Samoa, about one-third of the way from New Zealand to Hawaii.

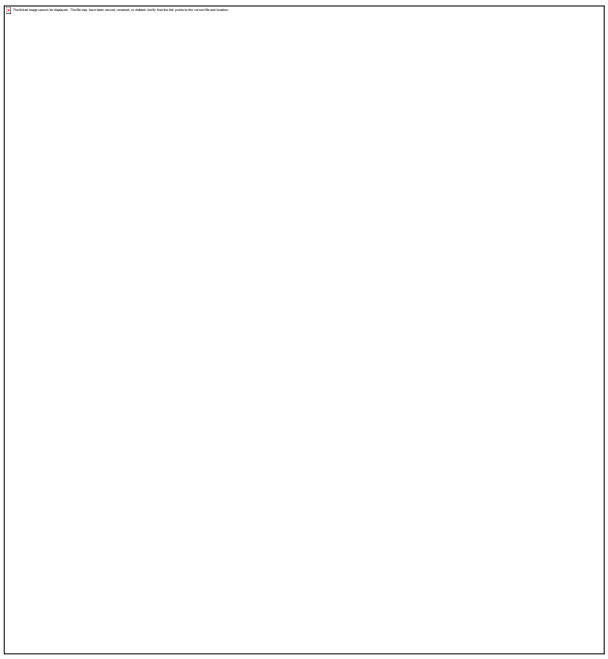
Tonga also became known to geographers as the Friendly Islands because of the friendly reception accorded to Captain James Cook on his first visit in 1773. He happened to arrive at the time of the ʻinasi festival, the yearly donation of the first fruits to the Tuʻi Tonga, the islands' paramount chief, and received an invitation to the festivities.

Tonga, the only sovereign monarchy among the island nations of the Pacific Ocean, has a unique history as the only island nation in the region to have avoided formal colonial tutelage. Tonga is poised to become a constitutional monarchy after legislations reforms, and a more fully representative election, takes place in 2010.

The population of Tonga is 105,916 (July 2011 estimate according to CIA's World Factbook)

The capital(and largest city) is Nukuʻalofa.

[44] Tonga is in Commonwealth Oceania (http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Commonwealth_Oceania) – hence Tier 2.



Source : http://www.cia.gov

Over 70% of the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Tonga live on its main island, Tongatapu. Although an increasing number of Tongans have moved into the only urban and commercial centre, Nukuʻalofa, where European and indigenous cultural and living patterns have blended, village life and kinship ties continue to be important throughout the country. Everyday life is heavily influenced by Polynesian traditions and especially by the Christian faith; for example, all commerce and entertainment activities cease from midnight Saturday until midnight Sunday, and the constitution declares the Sabbath to be sacred, forever. Some Tongans are Methodists with a significant Catholic minority and a number of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons).

The Tongan language is the official language of the islands, along with English. Tongan is a Polynesian language which is closely related to Wallisian (Uvean), Niuean, Hawaiian, and Samoan.

Education in Tonga

The Ministry of Education, Women Affairs and Culture is responsible for the general administration and implementation of various policies and programmes in regards to formal education.

Churches and other private organizations play important roles complementary to the Government's role in education.

Primary education has been compulsory since 1876. The 1974 Education Act requires that every child between the ages of 6 and 14 must attend school. In 1995, the gross primary enrollment rate was 122.2 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 95.3 percent.

Primary school attendance rates were unavailable for Tonga as of 2001. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.

(sourced from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Education_in_Tonga and links from there)

Schools in Tonga

Tonga High School was established in 1947. The aim of the school was to provide an opportunity for students to achieve a level of education equivalent to that offered in neighbouring countries such as New Zealand and Australia. The school is situated in Tonga's capital, Nuku'alofa. The current school buildings were built with assistance from the Chinese Government. The buildings were officially opened on 2 July 2005. The facilities include 34 classrooms and 18 laboratories and can accommodate over a thousand students. There is a planned second phase of reconstruction which is due to begin in 2009 with the building of a gymnasium, swimming pool and a sports stadium. There were 1154 students enrolled at the school in 2005. Students can be members of four houses: Nua (Yellow), Kava (Red), Sangone (Blue) and Tele'a (Green).

Tupou College is a Methodist boys' secondary boarding school in Toloa on the island of Tongatapu, Tonga. Established in 1866 by James Egan Moulton, it claims to be the oldest secondary school in the Pacific Islands. Enrolment is some 1,000 pupils. From 1924 to 1937, the school expanded from 30 students to almost 400. The College has a 750-acre (3.0 km2) campus, on which crops of vegetables and fruit are grown.

The Ocean of Light International School is a private internationalist Bahá'í school dedicated to the development of the spiritual, intellectual, and physical potential of the students and to the fostering of a new world society identifying itself with the principles of a world citizenship, a universal value system, a world embracing administrative, economic, social and educational systems based on the concept of unity in diversity. To achieve this the School aims to develop in the students those capacities, skills, habits and attitudes necessary to enable them to provide for their families; to effectively contribute to the peace, prosperity and tranquillity of mankind and society; and to participate in the creation of new institutions, processes and relationships as they are defined and established. The School is directly administered by a non-profit Board of Education nominated by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Tonga. The school is known as a Baha'i school and is striving to incorporate Baha'i ideals, principles and concepts into the curriculum and organization of the school. The school is located in Kolomotu'a / Hofoa - about 3 kilometers from the centre of Nukuʻalofa. It offers classes from kindergarten (3 years old) to high school diploma using Cambridge International Examinations including the International General Certificate of Secondary Education. The school is listed by the Australian Defense Department as a Primary and Secondary "Benchmark school" for those posted to Tonga.[

Further and Higher education

Universities in Tonga

'Atenisi University is the only university in Tonga and it was established in August 1975 by professor Futa Helu. It is part of the 'Atenisi Institute. Its web site is at http://www.atenisi.edu.to/ - and the courses offered for 2010 are listed at http://www.atenisi.edu.to/university/2010.html

There is also a study centre of the University of the South Pacific, and according to its website, Tongan students can complete almost up to two thirds of some of the degree programs without travelling to the main campus in Suva, Fiji.

Polytechnics in Tonga

The Tonga Institute of Higher Education is a tertiary education institution. Its remit spans a number of programmes that focus on educating students in a variety of professional aptitudes and vocations. Its web site is http://www.tihe.org

Colleges in Tonga

Education reform

Schools

Post-secondary

Administration and finance

Schools

Post-secondary

According to the Ministry for Education's website, the government pays 73% of tuition for Tongan USP private students

Quality assurance

The ministry's Quality Assurance division looks after four main activities, namely Minimum Service Standard (MSS), the Tongan Monolingual Dictionary, Examinations and Curriculum Development

Schools

Post-secondary

Information society

ICT in education initiatives

The Kingdom of Tonga has fostered ICT education for a number of years. The Ministry of Education created the Community Development and Training Centre (CDTC) in the 1970s. As an ICT programme developed with the growth of the field, it was incorporated within the CDTC in 1997. In 2002, a new facility was built to encourage the further expansion of the program. At this time the Tonga Institute of Higher Education was created to unify tertiary education programmes within the country. It is in this current incarnation where the majority of tertiary ICT education is provided to students. The Tonga Institute of Higher Education offers a two-year Diploma programme in Information Systems and Computer Science.

The *Tonga Institute of Higher Education* (TIHE) is a part of the Ministry of Education, which has provided and obtained ample funding in the past, resulting in the largest deployment of ICT education within Tonga.

Tupou High School, a Wesleyan school, offers a two-year Diploma program that is accredited with New Zealand schools.

The University of the South Pacific (USP) also has a Centre in Tonga where they offer first-year courses in ICT, before students relocate to Fiji to complete their studies.

The Unuaki o Tonga Royal Institute also offers a Diploma programme in ICT. These programs are all located on Tongatapu and are not available on outer islands.

Many other programmes that the Ministry of Education (MOE) offers use ICT within their own programmes. The Accounting programme offers a number of courses in computerised accounting. Additionally, Agriculture, Tourism and Hospitality, and Teacher Training schools each require students to take basic computing courses in order to familiarise them with basic tasks. The Ministry of Education, and thus the government of Tonga, is primarily responsible for all education in Tonga. They also provide funds to the other private ICT programmes.

ICT Curriculum

The Technical Insitute of Higher Education's Information Technology programme has two tracks, Information Systems (IS) and Computer Science (CS). Both were modelled on programmes offered by the University of the South Pacific, but have been further developed to reflect local needs as well as keep up to date with changing trends within technology. IS was created to address the need for skilled managerial positions, capable of making informed decisions regarding ICT as well as recognising and implementing possibilities by utilising ICT solutions. CSI is focused on creating students capable of critical thinking so that they can develop information systems able to be deployed in a professional environment.

Another goal of both programmes is to create students capable of setting up, maintaining and upgrading computer hardware, software and networks.

The curriculum for the Technical Institute of Higher Education is revised on a yearly basis to reflect new changes as well as to re-evaluate the worth of different segments. The full-time and part-time tutors within the programme will discuss these changes, as well as soliciting the input of professionals within the field of ICT in Tonga in order to garner feedback on the qualities they desire in future employees.

The primary concern presently is the retention and recruitment of skilled ICT professionals as tutors. There is a dire need of qualified ICT staffing in Tonga, thus the brightest and best often will move out of education and into the private sector.

Virtual initiatives in schools

Virtual initiatives in post-secondary education

Lessons learnt

General lessons

Notable practices

References

1. Ministry of Education, Women Affairs and Culture http://www.tongaeducation.gov.to

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