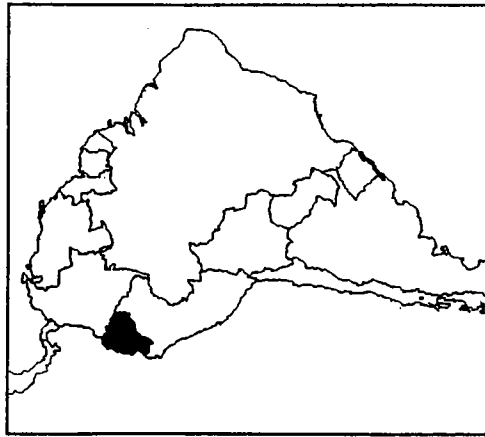




Once the northernmost part of the Inca empire, Ecuador has a diverse population of Amerindian (25%), Spanish (10%), African (10%) and mixed European-Amerindian (55%) descent. The country has an unsettled political history shaped by an inequitable distribution of wealth and power, and has been governed since 1968 by civilian and military dictatorships. Although Spanish is the language of instruction, many Indians speak only *Quechua* or other dialects and live primarily in rural areas which have been poorly served. Compulsory education extends for six years between ages 6-

11 and is free. About 80 percent of the age group was enrolled in primary school in 1989 when the literacy rate in the population of 10,490,000 was estimated at 90 percent. Only about a third of rural students attended secondary school in 1989. Secondary education is divided into two three-year cycles called *ciclo básico* and *ciclo diversificado*. Technical and vocational education is offered at both secondary and postsecondary level. In 1974, the government created intermediate institutions offering two-year technical and teaching programs at *institutos técnicos superiores* and at *escuelas*

normales superiores, respectively. Higher education is offered at 20 universities and four polytechnical institutes, which have equal status. The oldest university, the *Universidad Central del Ecuador*, was established in 1826, while the *Universidad del Azuay* was founded in 1990. Both private and public institutions are subject to state supervision through the Ministry of Education. In 1982, the *Consejo Nacional de Universidades y Escuelas Politécnicas* (CNUPEP) was established to unify the programs and titles awarded by universities and polytechnics.

Credential Name	Entrance Requirement	Length of Program	Type of Program	Gives Access to
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Level: Ciclo diversificado (Upper Secondary Cycle) following 6 years of primary education and 3 years of lower secondary education

<i>Bachillerato:</i> <i>en Humanidades Modernas, Industrial,</i> <i>en Ciencias de la Educación,</i> <i>en Comercio y Administración</i>	Completion of <i>ciclo básico</i>	3 years	academic/technical/ vocational	further study
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Level: Educación Superior (Higher Education)

Non-university <i>Técnico</i> <i>Docente Primario</i>	<i>Bachillerato</i> <i>Bachillerato</i>	2 years 2 years	technical teacher training	further study further study
University <i>Técnico/Tecnólogo en (specialization)</i> <i>Licenciatura/Título Profesional</i> <i>Arquitecto</i> <i>Ingeniero</i> <i>Doctor en Medicina</i> <i>Economista</i> <i>Administrador Público</i> <i>Doctorado</i>	<i>Bachillerato</i> <i>Bachillerato</i> <i>Bachillerato</i> <i>Bachillerato</i> <i>Bachillerato</i> <i>Bachillerato</i> <i>Bachillerato</i> <i>Licenciatura/Título Profesional</i>	2-3 years 3-7 years 5-6 years 6 years 7 years 6 years 5 years min. 2 years + dissert.	academic/prof. academic/prof. academic/prof. academic/prof. academic/prof. academic/prof. academic/prof. academic	further study further study further study further study further study further study further study