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Practical Information

Education in Morocco

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Morocco gained independence in 1956 and a year later the Royal Commission for Education Reform laid down the basic principals of post-independence Moroccan education. Chief among the goals of education reformers was the Arabization of curriculum and faculty, the widening of access at all levels, and the unification of disparate educational systems. These education systems included the pre-colonial model of instruction at Koranic schools concentrating on Islamic studies and Arabic literature, and a French colonial model that had primarily served the educational needs of the European minority.

Developed during fifty years of colonial rule, the French educational model was adopted by the newly independent Moroccan state and reorganized to introduce a technical track in addition to a “modern” track and “original” track. The modern track was essentially a continuation of the French system, maintaining French as the language of instruction. The original track incorporated the traditions of Koranic-based education, emphasizing Islamic culture and civilization and using Arabic as the language of instruction. The technical track was introduced to develop a cadre of skilled workers capable of serving the needs of the rapidly developing state. At the secondary level, all three tracks were modeled on the French system and divided into two cycles culminating in the *baccalauréat* examination.

The [Ministry of National Education](#) was established in 1959 to begin the task of training a native teaching corps to replace foreign teachers, build new schools and implement governmental education reforms. Compulsory basic education was introduced in the early 1960s and, by 1985, enrollments of school-age children had reached 85 percent as compared to 17 percent at independence. Although schooling is compulsory and free (at state schools) many children — particularly in rural areas — still do not attend school. Overall literacy rates have remained at around 50 percent for some years, and numbers are heavily skewed in favor of the male population and urban areas. Among school-age children the literacy rate has been increasing, but at 70 percent (2002) it is still low when compared to 86 percent for the North African region.



The basic education cycle lasts nine years and is followed by three years of secondary education. Classical Arabic is the main language of instruction, but French is still used in technical disciplines at some secondary schools and university faculties. French is introduced into the curriculum in the third grade. Spanish is spoken by many Moroccans in the north of the country, while English is increasingly becoming the foreign language of choice for youth attending private schools. A second foreign language is introduced into the state curriculum in grade ten (first year of secondary school).

In academic year 2002/03, there were 290,000 students enrolled at 68 public institutions of higher education, of which 14 are universities. This figure represents growth of almost 50,000 students from the 1997-98 academic year. Morocco has

one private university, Al-Akhawayn, which was founded in 1993 as an English-language, American-style university. The private sector is also represented at the tertiary level by an increasing number of for-profit higher institutes and schools, the first of which date back to the early 1980s. Higher education is also offered at public professional training institutions (*établissements de la formation des cadres*) and vocational training institutions (*centres de formation professionnelle*).

BASIC EDUCATION (*Enseignement Fondamental*)

The first nine years (ages 6-15) of education in Morocco are compulsory and guaranteed as a fundamental right by the Constitution. This is preceded by optional preschool education. Beginning with basic education, all levels of education in Morocco are offered on two parallel tracks: the modern track (*l'enseignement général moderne*) and the original track (*l'enseignement originel*). The latter emphasizes Islamic disciplines, national identity and the sciences, and enrolls far fewer students than the former, although at the preschool level two times the numbers of students attend Koranic schools than modern schools.

In the modern track, basic education is divided into two cycles of six and three years respectively. Arabic is the language of instruction and French is introduced as a second language in the third grade. The first six-year cycle is taught at primary schools (*école primaire*) and students attend class for 28 hours a week. The second stage of basic education (*enseignement collégial*) is generally taught at colleges (*collèges*), and students attend class for 33-35 hours a week.

Students are assessed on the results of their coursework, and progression between grades is based on these results. Promotion to the second cycle of basic education is based on student coursework in the sixth grade and the results of a standardized examination (*examen normalisé*) taken at the end of sixth grade. At the end of the ninth grade, students are assessed on their performance during the school year as well as on their performance on an end-of-year school examination and an end-of-year state examination. Based on the results of grade nine assessments, students are streamed into either the general, technical or professional secondary tracks. Students who successfully complete basic education but do not continue to the secondary level are awarded a ***Certificat d'Etudes Secondaires***.

In the original track, studies focus on Islamic disciplines which include Islamic law, Arabic, history, Arab civilization, Islamic thought and philosophy, and sciences. The schema of studies is composed of two basic education stages: a first cycle of four years duration, and a second three-year cycle, which is also open to children who have completed the first cycle of the modern track. The weekly workload is between 27 and 41 hours depending on the discipline.

Although only a small percentage of students follow the original track, the government stresses its importance as a means of maintaining a sense of national and regional identity.

Duration: Nine years divided into a first cycle of six years and a second cycle of three years.

Curriculum:

Primary school

Subject	1st and 2nd Year	3rd and 4th Year	5th and 6th Year
Islamic education	4 hrs.	3 hrs.	3 hrs.
Arabic	11 hrs.	6 hrs.	6 hrs.
French	-	8 hrs.	8 hrs.
Art and technical studies	2 - 2.5 hrs.	1 - 1.5 hrs.	-
Civics, Hist.-Geo.	-	-	1.5 hrs.
Mathematics	5 hrs.	5 hrs.	5 hrs.
Physical education	2 hrs.	2 hrs.	2 hrs.

Sciences	1.5 hrs.	1.5 hrs.	1.5 hrs.
Recreation	2 hrs.	2 hrs.	2 hrs.

Ministry of National Education, retrieved from <<http://194.204.205.38/den/home>> March 2006

Enseignement Collégial

Subject	# of weekly hours per grade		
	7th Year	8th Year	9th Year
Arabic	6 hrs.	6 hrs.	6 hrs.
Islamic Education	2 hrs.	2 hrs.	2 hrs.
Social studies	3 hrs.	3 hrs.	3 hrs.
French	6 hrs.	6 hrs.	6 hrs.
Mathematics	6 hrs.	6 hrs.	6 hrs.
Natural sciences	2 hrs.	2 hrs.	2 hrs.
Physical sciences	2 hrs.	2 hrs.	2 hrs.
Physical education	3 hrs.	3 hrs.	3 hrs.
Art (Optional)	1 hr.	1 hr.	1 hr.
Feminine culture or introduction to technology	2 hrs.	2 hrs.	2 hrs.
Music	2 hrs.	-	-
TOTAL	35 hrs.	33 hrs.	33 hrs.

Ministry of National Education, retrieved from <<http://194.204.205.38/den/home>> March 2006

Leaving Certificate: *Certificat de Fin d'Etudes de l'Enseignement Fondamental*

SECONDARY EDUCATION (*L'Enseignement Secondaire*)

The secondary cycle of school studies in Morocco is three years in duration and is open to students who have successfully completed nine years of basic education. Students are streamed into one of two tracks: either the general and technical tracks leading to the *baccalauréat*, or the vocational track leading to the award of professional qualifications. Baccalaureate-track instruction is offered at *lycées*.

The general secondary track is geared toward training students in the humanities and sciences to prepare them for postsecondary studies. Students are streamed into one of three broad fields: language arts, experimental sciences and mathematics. Students receive between 27 and 33 hours of weekly instruction depending on their field of study.

The objective of the technical track is to prepare students for postsecondary studies or for the workplace. Studies are organized into six main concentrations:

- Mechanic engineering (sciences and techniques, mechanical production, casting and smelting)
- Electrical engineering (electrotechnology, electronics)
- Civil engineering (buildings and concepts, plastics, arts and industrial graphics)
- Chemical engineering (chemistry)
- Economics (Economic theory, financial administration, accountancy)
- Agriculture (Agricultural sciences)

In addition to technical studies, students receive training in general academic subjects. Students receive between 30 and 36 hours of weekly instruction depending on their field of study.

All students follow a common curriculum (*tronc commun*) in the first year of secondary studies followed by the two-year *baccalauréat* cycle. During the *tronc commun*, students choose or are directed towards their particular area of specialization through a process called *orientation*. In the final two years of secondary schooling, students take a mixture of compulsory and optional classes depending on their area of specialization.

Students are assessed on the basis of six biannual *baccalauréat* examinations (in February and June). The overall grade is calculated as an average of the three year-end averages, but with weightings of 1, 2 and 4 applied to the results from the first-, second- and third-year examinations respectively. Students are awarded the *baccalauréat* if they achieve an overall average of 10 or better on a 20-point scale.

In 1999, just over 60 percent of secondary school students – across all disciplines – passed the *baccalauréat*.

Students studying the original secondary curriculum at *instituts d'enseignement original* (institutes of theology) choose one of three tracks: Sharia, original language arts (heavy emphasis on Arabic language and Koranic literature), and original experimental sciences. Weekly class hours are between 27 and 41 hours depending on the discipline. Students who pass the *baccalauréat de l'enseignement originel* may pursue tertiary studies at the University of Al-karaouiyne or at other universities in the faculties of *lettres* and law.

Duration: Three years

Leaving Certificate: Baccalauréat, Baccalauréat Technique, Baccalauréat Lettres Originales

Curriculum (General Secondary Education):

Subject	Weekly hours in each year by stream and concentration												
	Language Arts					Experimental Sciences			Mathematics				
	Core Curr.	Lang Arts		Langs					Core Curr.	Option A		Option B	
	1st	2nd	3rd	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd	2nd	3rd
Arabic	5	5	5	5	5	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	1
Islamic Studies	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
Social Sciences	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
French	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
2nd Foreign Language	5	4	4	6	6	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	3
Islamic Thought and Phil.	-	2	4	2	4	-	1	2	-	1	2	1	2
Math	2	2	2	2	2	5	5	6	6	7	8	7	8
Natural Sciences	2	2	1	2	1	3	4	4	2	2	-	1	-
Physical science	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	5	4	5	6	5	6

Translation	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Industrial Design	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2
Physical Education	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total	27	28	29	30	31	30	30	32	30	31	31	33	33

Vocational Studies

Students who have completed at least grade six and passed an entrance examination can enter a two-year program leading to the award of the **Certificat de Formation Professionnelle**. This level of training is known as *specialization*.

Students who have completed the basic education cycle (nine years) and passed an entrance exam may enter a two-year program leading to the award of **Diplôme**(or *Certificat*) **de Qualification Professionnelle** (DQP) in an area of specialization. The DQP is also open to those who have not completed the basic education cycle but have relevant work experience and wish to upgrade their skills. Admission to the second year of *baccalauréat* studies is open to holders of the DQP who have spent a period of time in the workforce and passed an entrance examination.

Students who have completed the full 12 years of schooling, but not necessarily passed the *baccalauréat*, can undertake a two-year vocational program that leads to the award of the **Diplôme de Technicien**. Admission to *technicien* programs requires an entrance examination. Students who have dropped out of secondary studies after completing at least the first year of studies may also be eligible for entry into *technicien* programs. This is a terminal degree.

Training is offered at a variety of institution types including institutes of applied technology, vocational qualification centers, and vocational training centers. Approximately 40 percent of vocational schools are privately run. Vocational training includes technical training, workshops, and apprenticeships in addition to general education classes. Progression between levels of *specialization*, *qualification* and *technicien* is possible for students showing particular talent.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Admission

Admission to postsecondary institutions is open to *baccalauréat* holders and many schools and faculties require that students also pass an entrance examination. Most institutions or faculties will also require that students have minimum grades in their proposed majors. Furthermore, some institutions will only accept students who have obtained their *baccalauréat* in the year of application for registration. These extra requirements have been introduced over the last 10 to 15 years as schools have become unable to meet the burgeoning demand created by the official Moroccan policy of open access for *baccalauréat* holders.

The school year runs from October to June. The language of instruction in the humanities and social sciences is Arabic, while French is the language of instruction in scientific subjects. Curriculums in all fields are for the most part standardized by the Ministry of Higher Education.

All Moroccan universities use a 20-point grading scale. Any score over 10 is considered a passing grade; very few students average higher than 14 across all subjects. Students must score above 50 percent on end-of-year written and oral examinations to progress to the next year of studies. The proportion of students required to repeat a year is high, especially in the first year of studies and it is not uncommon for students to take more than six years to complete a four-year degree.

Institutions

According to the Ministry of National Education, higher education in Morocco is offered at institutions that can be classified into three broad categories: universities, *grandes écoles* and other institutes under the tutelage of the higher education branch of the ministry; *grandes écoles* and institutes under the direction of other ministries (relevant to the technical or professional orientation of the school); and private higher education.

University education is offered at 14 universities encompassing a combined total of 49 faculties and schools. Three main types of university have been established in Morocco: public institutions set up immediately after independence and during the 1970s; newer universities established during the 1980s in response to the burgeoning demand for higher educational opportunities; and the private not-for-profit university of which [Al Akhawayn](http://www.wes.org/ewenr/PF/06apr/pfpractical_morocco.htm) is currently the only one.

In both the private and public non-university sector, training is offered at specialized professional training institutions (*établissements de la formation des cadres*) and vocational training institutions in three broad fields: science and technology, law/economics/administration/social sciences, and teacher training. Access to some is by entrance examination, while access to the eight highly competitive *grandes écoles d'ingénieurs* is reserved for those who have completed two-year preparatory courses offered at 13 select preparatory schools known as *classes préparatoires aux grandes écoles* (CPGE). CPGE classes are open only to holders of the *baccalauréat sciences mathématiques* and *baccalauréat technique* (with electrical or mechanical engineering concentrations). Admission is highly competitive and students must pass a competitive entrance examination and have exceptional grades on the *baccalauréat*.

A list of universities is available from the ministry website: <http://194.204.205.38/Des/Universites>

Programs and Degrees

Stage I: Most first degrees in the university system are two years in duration and considered as a preparatory phase for further studies. The most common first degrees are the **Diplôme d'Etudes Universitaires Générales** (DEUG) and the **Diplôme d'Etudes Universitaire de Technologie** (DEUT), which can also be defined by the faculty awarding them. Those graduating from language arts faculties are awarded a **Certificat Universitaire d'Etudes Littéraires** (CUEL), from science faculties a **Certificat Universitaire d'Etudes Scientifiques** (CUES), and from law faculties either a **Certificat Universitaire d'Etudes de Droit** (CUED) or **Certificat Universitaire d'Etudes Economiques** (CUEE). The **Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie** (DUT) requires the *baccalauréat* for admission and is awarded after two years of study in the faculties of law, economics and social sciences. The DUT is a terminal degree. Students wishing to enter a *grande école* must complete two years of preparatory training in *classes préparatoires aux grandes écoles* (see above).

Stage II: The second stage of studies is open to holders of the DEUG, DEUT, CUEL, CUES, CUEE or CUED and provides in-depth training in the student's area of specialization. Successful completion of the second cycle leads to the award of the **Licence** and the **Maîtrise**. The **Diplôme d'Ingénieur d'Etat** is awarded after a total of five years of study – including two years of preparatory CPGE classes – by *grandes écoles d'ingénieurs* in the fields of engineering and agriculture. A four-year **Diplôme d'Ingénieur** degree is also awarded – in a broader range of fields – and requires the *baccalauréat* for admission. The **Diplôme Supérieur** is a four-year degree awarded in business, and the **Diplôme d'Architecte** is a degree awarded after six years of study in the field of architecture.

Stage III: Studies leading to the award of the **Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures** (DES), the **DES Spécialisées** (DESS – two years) and the **Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures Approfondies** (DESA – two years) are two to three years in length. The program incorporates one year of study toward the **Certificat d'Etudes Approfondies** and requires the preparation and defense of a thesis. Students wishing to study for the **Doctorat** must first complete the DES(S/A). Doctoral studies require at least two years of research beyond the DES and the writing and defense of a dissertation. The **Doctorat en Médecine** and **Doctorat en Médecine Dentaire** require a *baccalauréat* from the science track for entry and studies last seven and five years respectively.

VOCATIONAL

Holders of the technical *baccalauréat* are eligible for entry into two-year technical programs leading to the award of the **Brevet de Technicien Supérieur** (BTS). In academic year 1999/2000, the BTS was offered in 20 specializations, an increase from 1992-93, when it was first introduced, of 13 specializations. Equivalent diplomas are the *Diplôme de Technicien Supérieur*, *Technicien Spécialisé*, *Adjoint Technique Spécialisé*. All these programs are terminal, and require the *baccalauréat* for admission (technical *baccalauréat* for the BTS).

University 'LMD' Reforms

Beginning in 2004, a pilot group of faculties at Morocco's universities have been undergoing reforms aimed at bringing them closer into line with universities from around the world, especially Europe, while offering students increased flexibility in their studies and universities more autonomy in their program offerings. The reforms will be phased in at other faculties over time.

Studies are being re-organized and offered under a new degree structure, allowing interdisciplinary studies, and quantified through a system of credits and modules measured by the semester rather than the year. Semesters are 16 weeks long and students are examined at the end of each semester rather than at the end of each academic year. With the introduction of a credit hour system, students are now able to take classes from different departments and different schools, and are also able to leave university and resume their studies later. A revision of curricula has also allowed the introduction of new subjects more attuned to the needs of a modern economy while also allowing students to be more proactive in choosing their courses of study.

Studies are being reorganized under a structure based on three years of first-cycle studies (*Licence*), two years of second-cycle studies (*Master*), and three years of doctoral studies (*Doctorat*). Although the first degree is the *licence*, students will still be awarded the DEUG if they choose to end their studies after the four semesters that constitute the core curriculum of university studies. Central to the new structure is the introduction of elective modules in addition to required modules, which can be chosen from single or multiple disciplines. A core curriculum (*tronc commun*) will still remain common to all university programs and constitute a majority of classes, but universities and students will be given greater flexibility in offering and choosing elective classes and modules.

Under the new structure, three-year post- *baccalauréat* programs (introduced in 2003/04) culminate in the award of either a ***Licence d'Etudes Fondamentales*** or a ***Licence Professionnelle***, with the latter giving access to the workforce and the former to either a two-year ***Master*** or ***Master Spécialisé*** program. Students who have graduated from a *licence professionnelle* program may enter a master's program if they have relevant work experience and pass an entrance examination. Graduates from master's programs are eligible for admission to doctoral programs although the general aim of specialized master's programs is to train students for a profession.

Four modules constitute a full-time workload per semester (16 modules = a master's degree), and it is recommended that one module should require a minimum of 75 hours of student work. Students must pass three modules to pass (*valider*) the semester. The student can then transfer a "validated" module between institutions or programs.

The modularization of degree programs is divided into three broad blocks:

- The major, representing 70 percent of overall workload;
- Transferable skills such as languages, communication skills, management and information technology, representing 15 percent of the workload;
- Ancillary and optional modules, representing 15 percent of overall workload.

At the master's level, students must complete a practical component. In the specialized stream this would generally be an internship; in the academic stream it might constitute a period at a research laboratory or at a public or private research institution.

Universities wishing to establish new master's programs must submit the proposed program to an accreditation process overseen by *La Commission Nationale de Coordination de l'Enseignement Supérieur* (National Higher education Coordination Committee) under the aegis of the Ministry of Higher Education.

Teacher Training

First cycle of Basic Education

Primary school teachers are trained at *centres de formation des instituteurs* (CFI). A *baccalauréat* is required for admission to two-year teacher-training programs and students must also pass an entrance examination. Holders of the DEUG or its equivalent can enter the second year of studies, which is mainly focused on pedagogical training. Graduates are awarded the ***Diplôme d'Instituteur***.

Second Cycle of Basic Education

Lower secondary teachers are trained in one of two different programs at *centres pédagogiques régionaux*. The first is a two-year program open to *baccalauréat* holders who have passed an entrance examination. Training is offered in subject specialties as well as in theoretical and practical areas. This program is only offered in subject areas where there is a particular manpower shortage, most notably this is the case in mathematics and French. One-year pedagogical training is also offered to DEUG (or equivalent) holders who have passed an entrance examination. Graduates are awarded a ***Diplôme de Professeur de Premier Cycle***.

Secondary Education

Secondary school teachers in the general education stream are taught at *écoles normales supérieures* (ENS, higher teacher training schools); technical school teachers are trained at *écoles normales supérieures de l'enseignement technique* (ENSET). The Faculty of Education at [Mohammed V University](http://www.wes.org/ewenr/PF/06apr/pfpractical_morocco.htm) also trains secondary school teachers. Programs can be one, two or four years in length depending on the student's qualifications upon entry into the program. Four-year programs are open to holders of the *baccalauréat* who have passed an entrance examination. Two-year programs are open to graduates of the DEUG (or equivalent) and to teachers of the second cycle of basic education who

have sufficient work experience and have passed an entrance examination. One-year pedagogical programs are available through the Faculty of Education to graduates of the CPGE or the *licence*. Graduates from all programs are awarded a ***Diplôme de Professeur de Deuxième Cycle***. Technical secondary teachers are trained exclusively in four-year programs, which require an entrance examination for admission.

WES Grade Conversion Guide

World Education Services offers the following suggested US equivalencies for Moroccan university grades:

Scale	Grade Description	U.S. Grade Equivalents
15+	Très Bien (Very Good)	A+
13 - 14.9	Bien (Good)	A
12 - 12.9	Assez Bien (Quite Good)	B+
11 - 11.9	Passable (Satisfactory)	B
10 - 10.9	Moyen (Sufficient)	C
8 - 9.9	-	*

* May be considered passing grade if entire year is passed.

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