



St. Thomas College of Teacher Education, Pala



A LOOK AT THE DIVERSE SCHOOL SYSTEMS



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**FAMILIARIZING THE DIVERSITY IN SCHOOL SYSTEM
IN INDIA**



FAMILIARIZING THE DIVERSITY IN SCHOOL SYSTEM IN INDIA

India, with over 1.5 million schools, over 8.7 million primary and secondary teachers and more than 260 million enrolments, is home to the largest and most complex education system in the world. Imagine a vast and vibrant classroom, where ancient wisdom meets modern needs. This is the story of India's educational system, a journey that stretches back centuries. In the beginning, there were gurukuls, residential schools where students learned not just from books, but from life itself. Fast forward to today, and classrooms hum with activity as students prepare for a globalized world.

The National Education Policy 2020 is a new chapter, one that emphasizes creativity, problem-solving, and real-world skills alongside core subjects. It's a vision for classrooms that empower students to become not just literate, but well-rounded individuals ready to take on the future.

Levels of School Education in India

India's school system follows a **K-12 model**, encompassing kindergarten to grade 12.

- **Pre-Primary (Age 3-6):** Optional programs like preschool and kindergarten focus on play-based learning and development of foundational skills.
- **Primary Education (Age 6-11, Grades 1-5):** Mandatory under the Right to Education Act. Introduces core subjects like math, science, social studies, and languages (typically Hindi and English).
- **Secondary Education (Age 11-14, Grades 6-8):** Also mandatory, expands on core subjects and may introduce new ones.
- **Upper Secondary Education (Age 14-18, Grades 9-12):** Students choose academic streams (Science, Arts, Commerce) or vocational options based on their interests. Public exams at Grades 10 and 12 determine eligibility for higher education.

Functioning of various Boards

India's school education system operates with a unique structure involving multiple boards, each with its own role and reach.

National Boards:

- **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE):** A government body under the Ministry of Education, CBSE sets curriculum, conducts exams, and affiliates schools nationwide. It's known for its standardized approach and focus on core subjects like math and science.

- Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE): An independent, non-government board, CISCE offers a more holistic curriculum with emphasis on project-based learning and a wider range of subjects.
- **State Boards:**
 - Each Indian state has its own education board that governs schools within its borders. These boards develop curriculum aligned with the state's specific needs and languages. This ensures some regional relevance but can lead to variations in difficulty and content compared to national boards.
- **Open Schooling:**
 - The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) provides flexible and open education opportunities for students who cannot attend regular schools. NIOS offers courses for secondary and senior secondary levels, allowing students to learn at their own pace.

How it Works:

- Schools choose to affiliate with a specific board based on factors like curriculum, exam pattern, and their educational philosophy.
- Each board has its own governing body that sets curriculum guidelines, develops textbooks, and conducts examinations.
- Students enrolled in affiliated schools prepare for board exams set by their chosen board at the end of Grades 10 and 12. These exams determine eligibility for higher education.

Functional Differences of School Boards

India's school system offers a diverse landscape with multiple boards, each catering to different educational approaches.

Curriculum:

- *CBSE & CISCE:* These national boards have a more standardized curriculum with a focus on core subjects like mathematics, science, and social studies. CBSE may have a slight edge in preparing students for national competitive exams.
- *State Boards:* These boards have more flexibility in curriculum design, often incorporating regional languages and local contexts. Difficulty levels and content can vary compared to national boards.

Examinations:

- *CBSE & CISCE:* These boards conduct their own standardized exams at the end of Grades 10 and 12. These exams are widely recognized by universities across India.

- *State Boards*: State boards conduct their own exams, which may have varying formats and recognition levels compared to national boards.

Affiliation and Reach:

- *CBSE*: Affiliates schools pan-India, making it a popular choice for families seeking a uniform curriculum and portability between locations.
- *CISCE*: Has a smaller network of affiliated schools, often concentrated in urban areas. It's known for its emphasis on project-based learning and a wider range of subjects.
- *State Boards*: Limited to schools within their respective states. This can be beneficial for students seeking a curriculum with local relevance.

Teaching Methodology:

- *CBSE & CISCE*: Generally focus on a traditional teacher-centric approach with emphasis on textbooks and exams. However, both boards are evolving to incorporate more interactive methods.
- *Some State Boards*: May be experimenting with more progressive pedagogies that encourage critical thinking and activity-based learning.

Assessment Systems

Assessment plays a crucial role in India's school system, evaluating student learning and informing instructional practices.

- ***Summative vs. Formative Assessment:***
 - *Summative Assessment*: Conducted at the end of a unit, term, or year, summative assessments measure a student's overall learning and achievement. Examples include written exams, practical projects, and standardized tests. These assessments determine grades, promotion to higher grades, and eligibility for higher education.
 - *Formative Assessment*: Ongoing and integrated with teaching, formative assessments provide feedback to both students and teachers. They help identify areas of strength and weakness, allowing teachers to modify instruction to meet individual needs. Examples include quizzes, class discussions, observations, and homework assignments.
- ***Shifting Focus:*** Traditionally, a strong emphasis has been placed on summative assessments, particularly high-stakes exams. However, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 advocates for a more balanced approach.

- ***Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE)***: This approach, endorsed by NEP 2020, encourages the use of a variety of assessment methods throughout the learning process. It incorporates both scholastic (academic) and co-scholastic (life skills, values) aspects to provide a holistic picture of student development.

Norms and Standards

India's school system establishes norms and standards to ensure a baseline level of quality and consistency across the vast network of schools.

- ***Infrastructure***: The Right to Education Act (RTE) lays down norms for pupil-teacher ratios, ensuring adequate staffing. Standards are set for school buildings with guidelines for space, ventilation, and safety features like fire alarms.
- ***Curriculum and Learning Outcomes***: The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) prescribes broad learning objectives and competencies students should develop at different stages. Boards like CBSE and ICSE further define curriculum content and learning outcomes for affiliated schools.
- ***Teacher Qualifications***: Minimum qualifications are mandated for teachers, often requiring a specific degree in education and teacher training programs.
- ***Teacher Workload and Practices***: Norms aim to prevent overburdening teachers with non-educational tasks, allowing them to focus on instruction. Policies may discourage physical punishment and promote child-centered learning practices.
- ***Examinations***: Boards set standardized examinations at Grades 10 and 12, ensuring a minimum level of academic achievement for promotion and higher education eligibility.

State-wise Variations in India's School System

India's vastness is reflected in its school education system, where national policies meet regional contexts.

- ***Curriculum***: While a national framework exists, state boards have the flexibility to adapt it to local needs and languages. This can lead to differences in subjects offered, learning emphasis, and exam content across states.
- ***Language of Instruction***: The RTE Act emphasizes mother tongue education in primary grades. However, the choice of language varies by region. Hindi and English are widely used, but states also promote regional languages like Tamil, Marathi, or Bengali.

- **Infrastructure Disparities:** Government schools, especially in rural areas, might face limitations in infrastructure, resources, and teacher availability compared to urban counterparts. This can create an uneven playing field for students.
- **Government Initiatives:** States implement their own education programs and initiatives. These can target specific needs like computer literacy in urban areas or tribal education programs in remote regions.
- **Board Affiliation:** While national boards like CBSE and CISCE have a presence across India, some states have a higher concentration of schools affiliated with their own state boards. This can influence the overall educational experience within a state.

International and Comparative Perspective India's School System

India's school system, with its vast reach and unique structure, presents an interesting case study in an international context.

Structure:

- **K-12 Model:** Similar to many countries, India follows a K-12 model from kindergarten to Grade 12.
- **Focus on Examinations:** A strong emphasis on standardized exams at Grades 10 and 12 is a distinct characteristic compared to some countries with a more continuous assessment approach.

Curriculum:

- **Centrality of Core Subjects:** The system prioritizes subjects like math, science, and social studies, resembling some East Asian models.
- **Shifting Priorities:** The recent National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes a more holistic approach, similar to trends in developed nations, with a focus on critical thinking, life skills, and vocational training.

Challenges:

- **Teacher Quality and Infrastructure:** Issues like teacher attendance and disparities in infrastructure between urban and rural areas are challenges shared by developing countries.
- **Rote Learning:** Overcoming rote learning and promoting a more inquiry-based approach is a concern also addressed by educational reforms in many nations.

Strengths:

- *Universal Access:* India's commitment to providing free and compulsory education (RTE Act) aligns with global efforts towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education).
- *Multilingualism:* The use of regional languages alongside Hindi and English fosters inclusivity and cultural identity, a strength not commonly seen in many countries.

The Indian school education system stands at a crossroads. While it has made significant strides in achieving near-universal access to primary education, ensuring quality and inclusivity remains an ongoing endeavor. The National Education Policy 2020 serves as a roadmap for a more holistic and future-oriented education system.

The focus on critical thinking, life skills, and vocational training equips students to navigate the complexities of the 21st century. Technological advancements have the potential to bridge geographical divides and personalize learning experiences.

However, the success of these reforms' hinges on effective implementation. Addressing teacher training, infrastructure disparities, and socioeconomic inequalities will be crucial. Continuous monitoring and adaptation will ensure the system stays relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of students and the nation.

India's school education system, with its inherent dynamism, holds immense promise. By embracing innovation and addressing existing challenges, it has the potential to empower future generations and propel India towards a brighter future.



**FAMILIARIZING THE DIVERSITY IN SCHOOL SYSTEM IN
DIFFERENT COUNTRIES**



FAMILIARIZING THE DIVERSITY IN SCHOOL SYSTEM –PORTUGAL

Development of School Education System in Portugal

Portugal's school system has evolved significantly over time, with reforms aimed at modernization and inclusivity. The system has transitioned from traditional models to more comprehensive approaches, focusing on universal access to education. Educational context educational outcomes in the Portuguese education system have improved but there remain challenges in terms of grade repetition and disparities between regions in the past three decades, the Portuguese education system has witnessed significant improvements. The share of 25-64-year-olds in Portugal who completed at least secondary education increased from 20% in 1992 to 47% in 2016 and 55% in 2019. The upper secondary out-of-school rate decreased from 17% in 2005 to less than 1% in 2019, the lowest rate among OECD countries. In addition, at least 90% of the students aged 4 to 17 were enrolled in education in 2019, while in 2010, at least 90% of the students aged 4 to 14 were enrolled in education.

Furthermore, 15-year-old students in Portugal saw significant improvements in their reading, mathematics, and science abilities as measured by the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) between 2006 and 2015, although there was a slight decrease in reading and science in 2018. In reading, the score increased from 472 in 2006 to 496 in 2015 and 492 in 2018; in mathematics, it increased from 466 in 2006 to 492 in 2015 and remained stable in 2018; in science, it increased from 474 to 501 in 2015 but decreased to 492 in 2018. In 2018, the score of Portuguese students was close to the OECD average in all subjects. However, the Portuguese education system still faces considerable challenges. For example, grade repetition is a major concern in Portugal. In PISA 2018, 26.6% of 15-year-old students reported having repeated a grade at least once in either primary or secondary education, which places the country considerably above the OECD average of 11%. There are also significant variations between regions. For instance, in 2019 there were on average 7.9% early school leavers in the Centre, but 19.9% in the Algarve. Nearly all students are enrolled in mainstream schools, which are increasingly diverse, but students' backgrounds have a significant impact on outcomes According to PISA 2018, on average across OECD countries, 13% of students had an immigrant background, compared to 10% in 2009. In Portugal, about 7% of students had an immigrant background in 2018, up from 5% in 2009. The High Commissioner for Migrations (Alto Comissariado para as Migrações, ACM) estimates that during the 2018/2019 school year, there were 52 641 students with a foreign nationality in

Portuguese schools, which represents an increase of 18.5% from the previous school year. In Portugal, an exceptionally high rate of students with special education needs (SEN) attends mainstream schools. The latest available data show that, in 2018, 98.9% of students with SEN were enrolled in mainstream schools, while the remaining 1.1% of students were enrolled in private special schools.

Functioning of Various Boards of School Education:

Portugal has several boards responsible for different educational levels, including basic, secondary, and higher education. Each board oversees curriculum development, teacher training, and assessment within its jurisdiction.

In Portugal, the education system is overseen by various boards and entities, each with its own roles and responsibilities. Here's an overview:

1. **Ministry of Education:** The Ministry of Education is the highest authority responsible for education policy and regulation in Portugal. It sets the overall framework for education in the country, including curriculum standards, assessment policies, and educational goals.
2. **Provisional Boards of Education (Conselhos Provisórios de Educação):** These are temporary bodies established during transitional periods or in situations where there's a need for immediate governance in educational institutions. They typically consist of representatives from the government, teachers, parents, and sometimes students.
3. **School Boards (Conselhos de Escola):** School boards are decision-making bodies within individual schools. They often consist of teachers, parents, students (in higher grades), and sometimes community members. School boards are responsible for matters such as budget allocation, curriculum decisions, and school policies. They play a crucial role in fostering community involvement in education.
4. **Private School Boards:** Private schools in Portugal are often governed by boards of directors or trustees. These boards are responsible for the overall management and administration of the school, including hiring staff, setting tuition fees, and ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. Private school boards may also include representatives from the school's parent body or other stakeholders.
5. **Public School Boards:** Public schools in Portugal are typically overseen by their respective school boards, as mentioned earlier. These boards operate within the framework set by the Ministry of Education and are responsible for managing the affairs of the public school, including educational programs, budgeting, and staff management.

Overall, these various boards play essential roles in ensuring the effective governance and management of education at different levels in Portugal, whether it's at the national, school, or private institution level.

Assessment Systems:

Assessment in Portugal combines continuous evaluation, national exams, and teacher assessment. National exams are standardized and play a crucial role in determining student progression and certification. The assessment system in Portugal's educational framework serves as a critical tool for evaluating student learning outcomes, informing instructional practices, and guiding educational policy decisions. With a focus on holistic development and the acquisition of key competencies, the assessment system is designed to promote student success and ensure educational quality across all levels of schooling.

1. **Formative Assessment:** Formative assessment plays a crucial role in the Portuguese educational system by providing ongoing feedback to students and teachers to support learning and instructional improvement. Teachers use a variety of formative assessment strategies, such as classroom observations, questioning techniques, and informal assessments, to gauge student understanding, identify areas for growth, and adjust instruction accordingly. Formative assessment fosters a dynamic learning environment where students are actively engaged in their own learning process and receive timely support to achieve academic goals.
2. **Summative Assessment:** Summative assessment is conducted at key points throughout the academic year to evaluate student achievement and determine mastery of learning objectives. In Portugal, summative assessment often takes the form of standardized tests, national exams, and end-of-year assessments administered by the Ministry of Education. These assessments measure students' proficiency in core subjects, such as mathematics, Portuguese language, science, and foreign languages, and provide valuable data for monitoring educational outcomes and informing curriculum development. Summative assessment results are used to measure school performance, track student progress over time, and identify areas of improvement at the individual, school, and national levels.
3. **Competency-Based Assessment:** In recent years, Portugal has placed increased emphasis on competency-based assessment, which focuses on evaluating students' mastery of essential skills, knowledge, and competencies required for success in the 21st century. Competencies such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and digital literacy are integrated into the curriculum and assessed through authentic

performance tasks, projects, and portfolios. Competency-based assessment promotes deeper learning, higher-order thinking skills, and real-world application of knowledge, preparing students to thrive in an ever-changing global society.

4. **Assessment for Inclusion and Equity:** Portugal is committed to ensuring that the assessment system promotes equity and inclusion by addressing the diverse needs and backgrounds of all students. Special accommodations and support mechanisms are provided to students with disabilities, learning differences, or socio-economic challenges to ensure fair and equitable access to assessment opportunities. Alternative assessment methods, such as oral exams, project-based assessments, and differentiated tasks, are used to accommodate diverse learning styles and preferences, fostering an inclusive learning environment where all students can succeed.

The assessment system in Portugal's educational system is a comprehensive framework that encompasses both formative and summative assessment methods to support student learning, measure achievement, and promote educational excellence. By embracing competency-based assessment, fostering inclusion and equity, and leveraging assessment data to inform decision-making, Portugal is committed to providing high-quality education that prepares students for success in the 21st century.

Norms and Standards:

The Ministry of Education sets norms and standards for educational institutions, ensuring quality and consistency. These standards encompass curriculum requirements, infrastructure, and teaching methodologies.

1. Curriculum Standards: Curriculum standards in Portugal are established by the Ministry of Education and outline the learning objectives, content, and competencies that students are expected to achieve at each grade level. The curriculum is designed to promote holistic development, critical thinking, and key competencies essential for success in the 21st century.

Subtopics under curriculum standards may include:

- **Subject Areas:** Standards for core subjects such as mathematics, Portuguese language, science, social studies, foreign languages, arts, and physical education.
- **Cross-Curricular Themes:** Integration of cross-cutting themes such as sustainability, citizenship, digital literacy, and multiculturalism into the curriculum.
- **Competency-Based Learning:** Emphasis on developing key competencies such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills.

2. Teacher Qualifications: Teacher qualifications are regulated by the Ministry of Education to ensure that educators possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies to deliver high-quality instruction. Subtopics under teacher qualifications may include:

- **Academic Credentials:** Requirements for obtaining a teaching degree or certification from accredited teacher education programs.
- **Professional Development:** Expectations for ongoing professional development activities to enhance teaching effectiveness and keep educators abreast of current pedagogical practices and subject-area knowledge.
- **Licensing and Certification:** Procedures for obtaining teaching licenses or certifications based on academic qualifications, pedagogical training, and assessment of teaching competencies.

3. Student Assessment and Evaluation: Student assessment and evaluation practices in Portugal aim to measure learning outcomes, provide feedback for improvement, and inform instructional decision-making. Subtopics under student assessment and evaluation may include:

- **Formative Assessment:** Strategies for ongoing assessment and feedback to support student learning and inform instructional planning.
- **Summative Assessment:** Methods for evaluating student achievement at key points in the academic year, such as standardized tests, national exams, and end-of-year assessments.
- **Alternative Assessment:** Consideration for alternative assessment methods, such as projects, portfolios, presentations, and performance tasks, to accommodate diverse learning styles and preferences.

4. Facilities and Infrastructure: Standards for school facilities and infrastructure ensure that learning environments are safe, conducive to learning, and equipped with the necessary resources and technology. Subtopics under facilities and infrastructure may include:

- **Classroom Design:** Guidelines for classroom layout, seating arrangements, and instructional materials to support effective teaching and learning.
- **Technology Integration:** Standards for integrating technology into the curriculum and providing access to digital resources and tools for both students and teachers.
- **Safety and Accessibility:** Regulations for ensuring the safety, accessibility, and inclusivity of school buildings, facilities, and equipment for students with disabilities or special needs.

By adhering to these norms and standards, the Portuguese school education system strives to uphold high-quality educational practices, promote equity and inclusivity, and prepare students for success in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

Statewise Variations:

While Portugal is a relatively small country, there are regional variations in educational practices and priorities. Some regions may emphasize specific subjects or teaching methodologies based on local needs and traditions.

In Portugal, the education system is primarily centralized and governed by national policies and standards set by the Ministry of Education. However, there may be some regional variations in the implementation of these policies, particularly in the autonomous regions of Azores and Madeira. Here's an overview of potential state-wise variations within the Portuguese school system, with subheadings representing different regions:

1. Mainland Portugal: Mainland Portugal encompasses the majority of the country's territory and includes various districts and municipalities. While the overall structure and curriculum of the education system remain consistent across mainland Portugal, there may be some differences in the allocation of resources, availability of extracurricular activities, and local educational initiatives.

- **Lisbon Metropolitan Area:** As the capital city and largest urban area in Portugal, the Lisbon Metropolitan Area may have more diverse educational offerings, including specialized schools, international schools, and educational partnerships with cultural institutions and businesses.
- **Northern Region:** The northern region of Portugal, including cities such as Porto, Braga, and Guimarães, may have a strong emphasis on vocational education and training, particularly in sectors such as tourism, agriculture, and manufacturing.
- **Alentejo and Algarve:** The southern regions of Alentejo and Algarve may prioritize educational programs related to sustainable development, environmental conservation, and tourism, given their natural landscapes and economic activities.

2. Azores Autonomous Region: The Azores Autonomous Region consists of nine volcanic islands located in the Atlantic Ocean. While education policies are aligned with those of mainland Portugal, there may be some adaptations to meet the unique needs and challenges of island communities.

- **Island-Specific Initiatives:** Each island in the Azores may have its own educational initiatives and projects tailored to local cultural heritage, environmental sustainability, and economic development.

- **Distance Learning:** Given the geographic dispersion of the Azorean islands, distance learning and online education programs may be more prevalent to ensure equitable access to education for students in remote areas.

3. Madeira Autonomous Region: Madeira is an archipelago situated southwest of mainland Portugal and consists of two inhabited islands, Madeira and Porto Santo. Similar to the Azores, the Madeira Autonomous Region may have some variations in the implementation of education policies.

- **Tourism and Hospitality Education:** Madeira's economy is heavily reliant on tourism, so educational programs related to hospitality management, tourism marketing, and sustainable tourism practices may receive special emphasis.
- **Marine Sciences:** Given its maritime location, Madeira may offer specialized educational opportunities in marine sciences, oceanography, and maritime studies, leveraging the region's rich marine biodiversity and research institutions.

While Portugal's education system is largely centralized, regional variations may exist in terms of local priorities, resources, and initiatives, reflecting the diverse cultural, economic, and geographical characteristics of different states and regions.

An International and Comparative Perspective:

Portugal's education system is often compared to those of other European countries, particularly in terms of academic performance and equity. International assessments such as PISA provide insights into Portugal's educational strengths and areas for improvement.

An international and comparative perspective of the school system in Portugal offers insights into its structure, policies, and performance in other countries worldwide.

1. Structure and Organization: The Portuguese school system follows a 12-year compulsory education model, consisting of three cycles: basic education (1st to 9th grade), secondary education (10th to 12th grade), and tertiary education (higher education). This structure is similar to many other European countries, including Spain, France, and Germany.

2. Curriculum and Standards: Portugal's curriculum emphasizes a broad range of subjects, including mathematics, Portuguese language, science, social studies, arts, physical education, and foreign languages. The curriculum is aligned with European standards and frameworks, such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). Comparatively, countries like Finland and Singapore are often recognized for their innovative and flexible curriculum designs, focusing on interdisciplinary learning and 21st-century skills.

3. Teacher Qualifications and Training: Portuguese teachers typically undergo rigorous training and certification processes, including completion of higher education degrees in education or specific subject areas. Teacher professional development is emphasized to enhance teaching effectiveness and keep educators abreast of best practices. In comparison, countries like Finland and South Korea are known for their highly selective teacher training programs and ongoing support for teacher development.

4. Student Assessment and Evaluation: Portugal employs a combination of formative and summative assessment methods to measure student learning outcomes. National exams and standardized tests are used for summative assessment purposes, while formative assessment practices provide ongoing feedback to support student progress. In contrast, countries like Finland prioritize formative assessment and discourage high-stakes testing.

5. Equity and Inclusion: Portugal strives to promote equity and inclusion in its education system, providing support and accommodations for students with diverse learning needs. However, achievement gaps persist, particularly among students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Countries like Canada and the Nordic countries are often cited as leaders in promoting equity and social inclusion in education.

6. International Rankings and Performance: Portugal's performance in international education rankings, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), has been relatively stable in recent years. While not topping the rankings, Portugal's education system performs comparably to other European countries and demonstrates improvements in certain areas over time. In contrast, countries like Finland, Singapore, and South Korea often rank highly in international assessments due to their strong emphasis on educational equity, teacher quality, and student well-being.

From an international and comparative perspective, Portugal's school system exhibits strengths in its comprehensive curriculum, teacher training, and commitment to equity and inclusion. While there are areas for improvement, such as addressing achievement gaps and enhancing student outcomes, Portugal remains on par with many other developed countries in terms of educational standards and performance. By learning from the experiences of other countries and adopting best practices, Portugal can continue to strive for excellence and innovation in its education system.

Structure and student enrolment

Since the 1986 Education Act, the Portuguese education system has been organized in three subsequent levels:

1. Pre-primary education (educaçãopré-escolar) - level 02 of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) - for children aged 3 to 6. It is offered in either public, private governmentdependent or private independent schools. Private pre-primary schools often offer both early childhood care (children aged 0 to 3) and pre-primary education.

2. Basic education (ensinobásico) - Compulsory education starts at the age of 6, when children enroll in basic education (ISCED 1-2). Basic compulsory education is organized in three study cycles, with varying lengths. The first cycle – elsewhere called primary education – comprises the first four years of ISCED 1 under the responsibility of a single teacher. The second cycle lasts for two years and is organised in curriculum areas under the responsibility of one teacher per subject/curriculum area (e.g. a natural sciences teacher can also teach mathematics). The third cycle of basic education is comparable to lower secondary education (ISCED 2) and lasts three years.

3. [Upper] Secondary education (ensinosecundá rio) - After a common curriculum taught throughout the nine-year basic education, at the end of the third cycle, students (typically aged 15) transition to secondary education, corresponding to ISCED Level 3 (i.e. upper secondary education). It comprises three years of schooling, and students can choose between different education and training offerings, which mainly include four different general courses and 239 vocational courses. In the context of curricular flexibility, two teachers can cooperate to teach a cross-curricular subject throughout compulsory schooling.

Diversity, equity, and Inclusion in education in Portugal While there have been considerable improvements in academic performance and early school leaving on average across the student population, students' backgrounds and personal characteristics still have a significant impact on their educational outcomes in Portugal. Dimensions such as socio-economic background and immigrant background are strong predictors of student performance. This section of the chapter discusses in detail the composition and outcomes of diverse student groups in Portugal. While many dimensions of diversity can have an impact on student outcomes in Portugal, this section highlights in particular students with an immigrant background, students with special education needs (SEN), and students from Roma communities as these groups are at the core of the analysis of the review

Educational goals for diversity, equity and inclusion Portugal has a specific history of inclusive education policies that has led to its current educational priorities. After the 1974 revolution, based on previous small and local experiments, more intensive efforts to integrate students with special education needs (SEN) in mainstream schools started in Portugal.

Education and Training Courses

The Education and Training Courses (Cursos de Educação e Formação - CEF) were first implemented during the school year 2004/2005. They aim to support young people who:

- Are at risk of early school leaving.
- Left school before completing 12 years of schooling.
- Are interested in obtaining a professional qualification before entering the labour market.

CEFs are mainly aimed at young people aged 15 or over but are also offered to students under 15 in exceptional circumstances. The courses have a specific curriculum design, tailored to the profile and individual features of each student. They provide academic and/or professional certification at different levels, depending on the student's starting point. Education and Training Integrated Programme (PIEF) Created in 1999, the Education and Training Integrated Programme (PIEF) 6 is an exceptional measure for students up to 15 years old in a situation of abandonment that has been redesigned over the years. The PIEF is a socio-educational measure, of a temporary and exceptional nature, to be adopted after all other school integration measures have been exhausted. It aims to promote the fulfillment of compulsory education and social inclusion, granting a qualification in a second or third school cycle. The programme aims to reintegrate students into education and promote the completion of compulsory education and/or integration into the labor market. Each student is specifically targeted through the development of an Individual Education and Training Plan. It differs from Education and Training Courses (CEF) in that it does not confer double academic and professional certification. The two also differ in terms of curriculum and study scope. The main objective of PIEF is to recover students who have left the education system early.

Distance learning (ED)

Drawing on a previous educational provision entitled Mobile School (Escola Móvel) in 2005, distance learning (Ensino a Distância, ED)⁷ formally became an official educational provision in 2014 through Ministerial Implementing Order no. 85/2014, of the 14th April, which was repealed by the Ministerial Implementing Order no. 359/2019, on the 8th October. Distance learning aims to adapt an educational and training offer to students for whom face-to-face teaching is not possible. A virtual education platform was put in place for:

- Children of travelling professionals.
- Student-athletes attending distance learning in the network of schools with High-Performance Support Units at School.

- Students integrated in social solidarity institutions that establish cooperation agreements with the ED school.
- Students with health problems or physical conditions that limit their regular attendance at school.
- Other specific cases.

The ED aims to ensure equal access to education, stable educational paths, quality learning, and students' educational success in the above circumstances. It is offered from the second cycle of primary education until the end of secondary education. It provides an organisational, curricular, pedagogical and learning structure suitable for this type of teaching, functioning on a b-learning model.

In conclusion, Portugal's educational system is characterized by a commitment to providing inclusive, high-quality education that prepares students for success in a rapidly changing world. With a structured curriculum, rigorous teacher training, and a combination of formative and summative assessment practices, Portugal strives to foster holistic development and critical thinking skills among its students.

While the system faces challenges such as achievement gaps and resource disparities, ongoing efforts to promote equity and inclusion are evident. By prioritizing initiatives to support students from diverse backgrounds and providing professional development opportunities for educators, Portugal aims to create a supportive learning environment where all learners can thrive.

Furthermore, Portugal's alignment with European standards and participation in international assessments contribute to its ongoing efforts to benchmark and improve its educational outcomes. While there is always room for growth and innovation, Portugal's educational system stands as a testament to the country's commitment to investing in the future of its citizens and maintaining a competitive edge in the global arena.

Moving forward, continued collaboration with international partners, adoption of best practices from high-performing education systems, and a steadfast dedication to continuous improvement will be key to ensuring that Portugal's educational system remains responsive to the needs of students, educators, and society as a whole. By leveraging its strengths and addressing areas for development, Portugal can continue to enhance the quality and effectiveness of its educational system for generations to come.

FAMILIARIZING THE DIVERSITY IN SCHOOL SYSTEM – CANADA

❖ Development of School education system in the country Canada

The Canadian school education system has evolved significantly over time. Initially, education was primarily provided by religious institutions and was often based on European models. However, in the 19th century, the Canadian government began to take a more active role in education, leading to the establishment of publicly funded schools.

The development of the school education system in Canada has been characterized by a commitment to providing accessible and high-quality education to all citizens. This commitment is reflected in the widespread availability of public schools across the country, as well as efforts to promote inclusivity and diversity within the education system.

Over the years, there have been various reforms aimed at improving the quality and relevance of education in Canada. These reforms have included changes to curriculum standards, the introduction of new teaching methods and technologies, and efforts to address issues such as equity and inclusion.

Today, the Canadian school education system is known for its emphasis on critical thinking, creativity, and holistic development. It encompasses a range of educational institutions, including public schools, private schools, and homeschooling options, allowing families to choose the best educational path for their children. Additionally, Canada places a strong emphasis on bilingualism, with many schools offering instruction in both English and French.

❖ Functioning of various boards of school education in Canada

In Canada, the education system is decentralized, meaning that each province and territory has its own department or ministry of education responsible for overseeing education within its jurisdiction. As a result, the functioning of school boards varies across the country. However, there are some commonalities in how school boards operate:

1. **Provincial and Territorial Boards:** Each province and territory typically has its own school boards or districts responsible for overseeing public education within their borders. These boards are responsible for implementing provincial/territorial curriculum standards, managing school finances, hiring staff, and ensuring that schools within their jurisdiction meet educational standards.
2. **Public School Boards:** Public school boards are responsible for administering publicly funded schools within their district. They are typically elected bodies, with trustees elected by local residents to represent their interests in education. Public school boards

oversee everything from curriculum development to budget allocation and may also be responsible for setting policies related to student conduct, transportation, and extracurricular activities.

3. **Separate (Catholic) School Boards:** In some provinces, there are separate school boards that administer Catholic schools. These boards operate alongside public school boards and receive funding from the government to provide education based on Catholic principles. Separate school boards may have their own elected trustees and oversee the operation of Catholic schools within their district.
4. **Independent/Private School Boards:** Independent or private schools in Canada operate independently of the public school system and are typically overseen by their own governing boards. These boards may include parents, educators, and community members who are responsible for setting school policies, managing finances, and ensuring that the school meets educational standards.
5. **First Nations Education Authorities:** In some regions, particularly in the northern territories and areas with significant Indigenous populations, First Nations education authorities may oversee education for Indigenous students. These authorities may operate schools on reserves or work in partnership with provincial/territorial governments to provide culturally relevant education.

❖ **Functional differences of different boards of school education in Canada**

The functional differences among various boards of school education in Canada can vary depending on the province or territory, but here are some general distinctions:

1. **Public School Boards:**

- Public school boards administer publicly funded schools within their district.
- They follow the curriculum set by the provincial or territorial government.
- Public school boards are typically overseen by elected trustees who represent the interests of the community.
- They manage school finances, staffing, facilities, and policies related to student conduct and activities.

2. **Separate (Catholic) School Boards:**

- Separate school boards administer Catholic schools and provide education based on Catholic principles.
- They receive government funding and operate alongside public-school boards.
- Similar to public school boards, they have elected trustees and manage all aspects of school operation.

3. **Independent/Private School Boards:**

- Independent or private school boards govern schools that operate independently of the public system.
- They have more autonomy in curriculum development, teaching methods, and policies compared to public and separate school boards.
- These boards may include parents, educators, and community members, and they oversee school finances, admissions, and academic standards.

4. **First Nations Education Authorities:**

- In regions with significant Indigenous populations, First Nations education authorities may oversee education for Indigenous students.
- They may operate schools on reserves or in partnership with provincial/territorial governments.
- These authorities focus on providing culturally relevant education and may have unique governance structures tailored to the needs of Indigenous communities.

5. **Language-Based School Boards:**

- In some provinces like Quebec, there are language-based school boards that administer schools where the primary language of instruction is French or English.
- These boards play a crucial role in preserving linguistic and cultural heritage while following provincial curriculum guidelines.

❖ **Assessment systems of school education in Canada**

The assessment systems of school education in Canada typically involve a combination of formative and summative assessments to evaluate student learning and progress. Here are some key components of the assessment systems:

1. **Formative Assessment:**

- Formative assessments are ongoing assessments used to monitor student learning and provide feedback to improve instruction.
- Teachers use a variety of strategies, such as quizzes, discussions, observations, and homework assignments, to gauge student understanding and adjust their teaching accordingly.
- Formative assessments help identify areas where students may need additional support and allow teachers to tailor instruction to meet individual learning needs.

2. Summative Assessment:

- Summative assessments are typically conducted at the end of a learning period to evaluate student achievement and determine mastery of content.
- Common types of summative assessments include standardized tests, final exams, projects, presentations, and essays.
- These assessments provide a summary of student learning and are often used for grading and accountability purposes.

3. Standardized Testing:

- Many provinces and territories in Canada administer standardized tests to assess student proficiency in core subjects such as mathematics, reading, and writing.
- These tests are typically developed by the provincial or territorial government and are used to measure student performance against established standards.
- Standardized testing helps identify trends in student achievement, assess the effectiveness of educational programs, and inform policy decisions.

4. Provincial and Territorial Assessments:

- In addition to standardized tests, provinces and territories may also implement their own assessment frameworks to evaluate student learning.
- These assessments often align with provincial/territorial curriculum standards and may include both standardized tests and performance-based assessments.
- Provincial and territorial assessments provide valuable data to inform curriculum development, teacher professional development, and school improvement efforts.

5. Assessment for Learning (AfL):

- Assessment for Learning (AfL) is an approach that emphasizes the use of assessment to support and enhance student learning.
- AfL focuses on providing timely, specific feedback to students to help them understand their strengths and areas for improvement.
- By involving students in the assessment process and encouraging self-assessment and reflection, AfL promotes student engagement and ownership of learning.

❖ Norms and Standards of school system in Canada

The norms and standards of the school system in Canada are established to ensure quality, consistency, and equity in education across the country. While specific regulations may

vary by province or territory, there are common elements that define the norms and standards of the Canadian school system:

1. Curriculum Standards:

- Each province and territory in Canada has its own curriculum standards outlining what students should know and be able to do at each grade level.
- Curriculum standards are typically developed by education ministries or departments in consultation with educators, experts, and stakeholders.
- These standards define the learning outcomes, core subjects, and essential skills that students are expected to achieve.

2. Teacher Qualifications:

- Canadian provinces and territories have established standards for teacher qualifications and certification to ensure that educators are adequately prepared to teach.
- Teachers must meet specific education, training, and certification requirements set by provincial or territorial regulatory bodies.
- Ongoing professional development is often required to maintain certification and stay current with best practices in teaching and learning.

3. Student Assessment and Evaluation:

- Norms and standards for student assessment and evaluation are established to ensure fair and consistent practices across schools and districts.
- Assessment policies typically include guidelines for both formative and summative assessments, standardized testing, grading, and reporting.
- Assessment practices aim to provide accurate and meaningful feedback to students, parents, and educators to support student learning and growth.

4. School Facilities and Resources:

- Norms and standards govern the physical infrastructure, safety, and accessibility of school facilities.
- Standards may include requirements for classroom size, equipment, technology, libraries, and recreational areas to support effective teaching and learning.
- Regulations also address health and safety measures, emergency preparedness, and accessibility for students with disabilities.

5. Equity and Inclusion:

- Canadian education systems prioritize equity and inclusion to ensure that all students have access to high-quality education and opportunities for success.

- Norms and standards promote inclusive practices, diversity, and cultural responsiveness to meet the needs of diverse student populations.
- Policies may include measures to address barriers to learning, support students with special needs, and promote diversity and anti-discrimination efforts.

❖ **State wise variations of school system in Canada**

The school system in Canada exhibits variations from one province and territory to another. Here's a brief overview of some state-wise differences:

1. **Ontario:**

- Ontario has a publicly funded education system that includes English-language public schools, French-language public schools, and separate (Catholic) schools.
- The province operates under a two-tiered system with elementary (kindergarten to grade 8) and secondary (grades 9 to 12) levels.
- Ontario has standardized testing in grades 3, 6, 9, and 10.

2. **Quebec:**

- Quebec has its own unique education system, with French-language instruction predominating.
- The province has language-based school boards, with separate boards for French and English instruction.
- Quebec follows a different curriculum and assessment system compared to other provinces.

3. **Alberta:**

- Alberta has a decentralized education system with locally elected school boards.
- The province emphasizes school choice, with options for public, separate (Catholic), and private schools.
- Alberta has implemented its own standardized testing, including the Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs) and Diploma Exams for high school students.

4. **British Columbia:**

- British Columbia follows a K-12 education system with elementary (grades K to 7), middle (grades 8 to 9), and secondary (grades 10 to 12) levels.
- The province has a standards-based curriculum focused on personalized learning and flexibility.
- British Columbia emphasizes assessment for learning (AfL) practices and includes performance assessments as part of its evaluation system.

5. **Nova Scotia:**

- Nova Scotia has a publicly funded education system with both English and French instruction available.
- The province follows a standard K-12 education structure and curriculum, with assessments aligned to provincial standards.
- Nova Scotia has its own teacher certification and professional development requirements.

6. **Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut:**

- These northern territories have unique education systems that reflect the cultural diversity and needs of Indigenous populations.
- Education may include Indigenous language and cultural instruction, and there is a focus on supporting remote and Indigenous communities.

❖ **An international and comparative perspective of school education system in Canada**

Taking an international and comparative perspective, the school education system in Canada is often regarded favourably for several reasons:

1. **High-Quality Education:** Canada consistently ranks among the top countries in international assessments such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). This reflects the overall quality of education provided in Canadian schools.
2. **Equity and Inclusivity:** Canada's education system is known for its commitment to equity and inclusivity. Efforts to accommodate diverse student populations, including Indigenous students and newcomers, contribute to a more inclusive learning environment.
3. **Decentralized System with Local Control:** The decentralized nature of Canada's education system allows for flexibility and innovation at the local level. Provincial and territorial governments have significant autonomy in setting curriculum standards, assessment practices, and education policies, which can adapt to regional needs and priorities.
4. **Bilingualism and Multiculturalism:** Canada's bilingualism policy, with English and French as official languages, is reflected in the education system. Many schools offer instruction in both languages, promoting linguistic diversity and multicultural understanding.

5. **Strong Emphasis on Student Well-Being:** Canadian schools prioritize the holistic development and well-being of students, with a focus on social-emotional learning, mental health support, and inclusive education practices.
6. **Teacher Professionalism and Training:** Canadian teachers typically undergo rigorous training and professional development to meet certification requirements. This emphasis on teacher professionalism contributes to the overall quality of instruction and student learning outcomes.
7. **Community Engagement and Parental Involvement:** Canadian schools often foster strong partnerships with families and communities, encouraging parental involvement in education and creating a sense of collective responsibility for student success.
8. **Adaptability and Resilience:** Canada's education system has demonstrated resilience and adaptability, particularly in response to challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools have implemented innovative strategies for remote learning, hybrid instruction, and support for vulnerable students.

FAMILIARIZING THE DIVERSITY IN SCHOOL SYSTEM - FRANCE

To study in Europe is to embrace a culturally stimulating atmosphere in which the vibrant hub of France provides an interesting and striking blend of creative and artistic thinking complemented by the modern education system. The country provides a multitude of French and English language courses encouraging international student participation as well.

The French education system is known for its centralized structure and focus on academic achievement. Children in France embark on a structured learning path that begins as early as age three and continues through higher education. This system emphasizes strong foundational skills and prepares students for a rigorous academic journey.

French Education System: Overview

Putting a greater focus on education, the French government has made it compulsory for children belonging to the age bracket of six to sixteen to attend school education. Further, the school system is neatly divided into primary level, middle school and high school roughly similar to the prevalent educational arrangement in India.

After graduating from high school, students can choose to pursue higher education through various diploma routes as well. Most of the educational institutions in France are public and therefore focus on providing quality education at an affordable cost.

Development and Stages of the French Education System

The French education system is structured in three main stages:

- **Primary Education (*école primaire*):** This is mandatory for all children from ages 6 to 11. It focuses on foundational skills like reading, writing, and maths. Preschool (*école maternelle*) is available from ages 2 to 6, but not compulsory.
- **Secondary Education (*enseignement secondaire*):** This consists of two parts:
 - **Collège (lower secondary):** Lasts four years (ages 11-15) and provides a general curriculum. Students receive a national diploma (Brevet) upon completion.
 - **Lycée (upper secondary):** Lasts three years (ages 15-18) with more specialization. Students choose a track (general, technological, or vocational) and take the Baccalaureate exam (Bac) to graduate.
- **Higher Education (*enseignement supérieur*):** Universities and specialized institutions offer various degrees, including Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctorates.

Functioning of Various Boards of School Education in France

France's education system is centralized, meaning there's not a board of education structure like in some other countries.

While France doesn't have a traditional board of education system, the Ministry of National Education sets the national guidelines, with regional and local authorities playing a role in implementing those guidelines and managing the schools themselves. This centralized approach ensures a consistent curriculum throughout the country, but with some regional flexibility.

Functional Differences among Various Boards of School Education

France has a centralized education system, but there are several boards that play a role in shaping education at different levels:

- **Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research (MENESR):** This ministry sets the national curriculum guidelines, oversees the training of teachers, and allocates resources to schools throughout France. It defines the overall direction for education.
- **Regional Academic Boards (Rectorats):** These boards manage schools at the regional level. They are responsible for implementing the national curriculum guidelines set by the MENESR, as well as overseeing teacher recruitment in their region. They act as an intermediary between the national government and the schools.
- **Departmental Boards of Education (Conseils Départementaux de l'Éducation Nationale - CDEN):** These boards advise on matters related to primary and secondary education within their department. They provide recommendations on things like teacher training and resource allocation for schools within their department. They offer localized advice and support.
- **School Councils (Conseils d'École):** These councils are composed of parents, teachers, and school staff. They participate in making decisions about the day-to-day management of the school and contribute to the school's educational project. They focus on decision-making at the school level.

Assessment Systems in School Education in France

France's education system utilizes a blend of continuous assessments by teachers alongside standardized tests at key points. This combination aims to provide a comprehensive picture of student learning and inform decisions about their academic progress.

- **Continuous Assessments:** Teachers play a central role, regularly assessing students' performance in various subjects throughout the year. This evaluation incorporates a

variety of methods like homework, projects, class participation, and written or oral exams. Grades are typically reported on a scale with terms like "Not achieved," "Partially achieved," "Achieved," and "Exceeded" to give a clear picture of a student's progress towards learning objectives set out in the curriculum [3].

- **Standardized Tests:** Standardized assessments are administered at specific stages to gauge overall understanding and identify areas needing improvement.
 - **Repères:** These mandatory tests are taken by students in first (CP) and second (CE1) grade to assess foundational skills in French language and mathematics.
 - **Brevet National (DNB):** Conducted at the end of lower secondary school (collège), this exam covers core subjects like French, mathematics, science, and history. It plays a role in determining a student's path to upper secondary education.
 - **Baccalauréat (Bac):** This high-stakes exam taken at the end of upper secondary school (lycée) is crucial for obtaining a diploma and pursuing university studies. Students are tested across all their chosen subjects, with a score of 10 or higher needed to pass each one.

Norms and Standards of French Education

French schools prioritize a structured and knowledge-based approach to learning.

Centralized System: The Ministry of Education sets the national curriculum, ensuring consistency across the country.

Free and Secular: Public primary and secondary schools are free to attend and uphold secularism, meaning religious instruction is not part of the curriculum.

Structured Approach: French education leans on a teacher-centered approach, with emphasis on clear explanations, memorization, and applying learned rules. There's less focus on fostering creative or individual learning styles.

Standardized Curriculum: The national curriculum dictates the subjects taught at each level, with core subjects like French language, math, history, geography, and a foreign language (often English) being common across schools.

Assessment: Teachers play a big role in student assessment, with national standardized tests existing at key points like the end of primary school.

Primary vs Secondary: Primary schools (école élémentaire) allow some flexibility in how the week is structured, while secondary schools (collège, lycée) tend to be more rigid with set class schedules.

Focus on Language: Mastering French is a primary goal in elementary school, equipping students for further learning.

Later Specialization: Unlike some countries, French students don't specialize in academic tracks until after middle school (collège).

This is a general overview, and it's important to note that there are ongoing discussions about adapting the French system to address areas like fostering creativity and tackling performance declines in science and mathematics.

State-wise Variations in School Education

France's state-run education system boasts a high degree of centralization. State variations in French education are subtle. The core curriculum and educational philosophy remain consistent nationwide. However, regional and local authorities can influence aspects like school resources, and there are some performance variations between schools.

An International and Comparative Perspective of French Education

France's education system boasts a strong centralized structure and emphasis on academic achievement. Let's delve into its unique features through an international comparative perspective:

Centralized Curriculum: Unlike some countries with more regional variations, France has a nationally mandated curriculum. This ensures a consistent knowledge base across the country but can be seen as less adaptable to individual student needs.

Focus on Meritocracy: French schools traditionally prioritize academic ability, with high-stakes exams determining future educational paths. This approach aims to cultivate intellectual excellence but can be argued to create pressure and limit opportunities for students with different strengths.

Teacher Training and Status: French teachers undergo rigorous training, garnering high social respect. This focus on professional development contributes to a strong teaching force but may differ from countries with less centralized teacher training models.

International Comparisons: Compared to some systems that emphasize early childhood development (e.g., Finland), France's focus intensifies at later stages. Additionally, French schools might be seen as stricter than those in countries promoting a more play-based approach.

Looking Ahead: France's education system faces challenges like social mobility and integration of immigrant students. Recent reforms aim to address these issues, while the nation grapples with balancing its strong traditions with the evolving needs of the globalized world.

France's education system offers a unique perspective on in school education. It prioritizes academic excellence through a centralized approach, sparking both admiration and discussions about its impact on student development and social mobility.

In conclusion, the French education system boasts a strong foundation in academic achievement, fostering critical thinking and a well-rounded knowledge base. Its emphasis on equality provides opportunity for many. However, challenges remain in fostering creativity, addressing high-pressure exams, and incorporating curricular diversity. Moving forward, France's educational system must strive for a balance between tradition and innovation, ensuring a future generation equipped with the critical thinking skills and adaptability to thrive in an ever-changing world.

FAMILIARIZING THE DIVERSITY IN SCHOOL SYSTEM - SWITZERLAND

Switzerland's education system is renowned for its high quality and diversity. It's decentralized, with each canton responsible for its own system. There are three main types of school: public, private and international. Students typically attend primary school from age 6 to 12, followed by secondary school until age of 15 or 16. After that, they can choose between vocational training or continuing with academic education, leading to university or a specialized school. This flexibility allows for personalized paths tailored to student's interest and abilities.

Primary Education

In Switzerland, primary education typically begins at around age 6 and last for 6 years. It's compulsory for all children. Primary schools focus on foundational skills such as literacy, numeracy, and social development. Instruction is primarily in the local language of the canton, which could be German, French, Italia or Romansh. The curriculum often includes subjects like mathematics, science, history, geography, and physical education. Teachers play a crucial role in fostering a supportive learning environment and helping students transition to further education.

Secondary Education

In Switzerland, secondary education is divided into lower secondary and upper secondary levels. Lower secondary education generally lasts for 3 to 4 years and provides a broad, general education to students aged around 12 to 15. At this level, students continue to study a range of subjects, including mathematics, sciences, languages, and humanities.

After the lower secondary education, students can choose between different educational paths. Some may continue with upper secondary education, which typically lasts for 3 to 4 years and prepares students for higher education or vocational training. Upper secondary education offers various specialized tracks, such as academic, vocational or technical programs.

The academic track focus on preparing students for university studies and typically includes rigorous coursework in subjects like mathematics, language, sciences and humanities. Meanwhile, vocational and technical tracks provide practical training and skills development in specific trades or professions, often through apprenticeships or vocational schools.

Switzerland's secondary education system aims to provide students with a solid foundation of knowledge and skills while offering flexibility to pursue diverse educational and career paths.

Higher Secondary Education

In Switzerland, higher secondary education refers to upper secondary level of education, which prepares students for higher education or vocational training. It typically lasts for 3 to 4 years following lower secondary education.

Higher secondary education offers various specialized tracks tailored to students' interest and career goals. One prominent track is the academic track, which focuses on preparing students for university studies. This track involves rigorous coursework in subjects such as Mathematics, languages, Sciences, and humanities. Students in academic track may pursue the Swiss Matura an examination that qualifies them for admission to Swiss Universities.

Public Education in Switzerland

Public education in Switzerland is characterized by several distinct features that reflect the country's commitment to high quality education and vocational training. Here are some key aspects

- 1. Vocational Education and Training (VET):** A significant emphasis is placed on vocational education, with 31% of young adults aged 25-34 having a VET qualification as their highest level of educational attainment.
- 2. Integration into Labor Markets:** VET programs are designed to integrate learners into the labor market effectively and provide pathways for further personal and professional development.
- 3. Low unemployment Rates:** Young adults with vocational upper secondary attainment have lower unemployment rates compared to their peers with general upper secondary attainment.
- 4. Tertiary Attainment:** In Switzerland, 45% of individuals aged 25-64 have tertiary education, which is a larger share than those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment.
- 5. Compulsory Education:** Education is compulsory for all children for at least 9 years, and 95% of children attend public schools in their local municipality.
- 6. Cantonal School System:** The education system is diverse, with the constitution delegating authority for the school system mainly to the cantons.

Private Education

Private education in Switzerland is known for its high quality and international orientation. Some key features of Private education in the country:

- 1. International Baccalaureate (IB):** Many private schools offer the IB program, which is recognized worldwide and prepares students for global higher education opportunities.

2. Bilingual and Multilingual Education: Private schools often provide bilingual or multilingual education, with a focus on English, French, German, and Italian, reflecting Switzerland's linguistic diversity.

3. Personalized Education: Private schools' pride themselves on offering personalized education with small class sizes and individual attention to students.

4. Global Student Body: Private schools in Switzerland cater to a diverse international student population, with students from over 100 different nations.

These features make private education in Switzerland attractive to both local and international families seeking a comprehensive education for their children.

International Schools

International schools in Switzerland offer a diverse and globally recognized education, catering to both local and international students. International School of Zug and Luzern, college Champittet, and Zurich International School are among the top choices, each providing unique educational experiences and facilities. Schools are renowned for their high-quality education and offer a range of features that cater to a diverse student body. Curriculum flexibility, multilingual education, cultural diversity, extra-curricular activities, high quality education, networking opportunities, global recognition, etc., are t some of the key features of international schools in Switzerland.

In conclusion, the Swiss education system is characterized by its diversity, equality, and flexibility. It is designed to cater a wide range of educational needs and preferences, offering paths that lead to both vocational and academic excellence.

FAMILIARISING THE DIVERSITY IN SCHOOL SYSTEM BAHRAIN

Bahrain, small Arab state situated in a bay on the southwestern coast of the Persian Gulf. It is an archipelago consisting of Bahrain Island and some 30 smaller islands. Its name is from the Arabic term al-baḥrayn, meaning “two seas.”

Located in one of the world’s chief oil-producing regions, Bahrain itself has only small stores of petroleum. Instead, its economy has long relied on processing crude oil from neighbouring countries, and more recently the financial, commercial services, and communications sectors have grown markedly, as has tourism. The country’s chief city, port, and capital, Manama (Al-Manāmah), is located on the northeastern tip of Bahrain Island. A strikingly modern city, Manama is relaxed and cosmopolitan and is a favourite destination for visitors from neighbouring Saudi Arabia; on weekends, crowds of Saudis converge on the city to enjoy its restaurants and bars. Yet the people of Bahrain remain conservative in their lifeways. This sentiment is enshrined in the country’s constitution, which affirms that “the family is the cornerstone of society, the strength of which lies in religion, ethics, and patriotism.”

Development of School System

Languages

Arabic is the official language of Bahrain. English is widely used, however, and is a compulsory second language at all schools. Persian is also common, although it is spoken mostly in the home. A number of other languages are spoken among expatriates in Bahrain, including Urdu, Hindi, and Tagalog.

Education

Bahrain’s public education system, founded in 1932, is the oldest in the Arabian Peninsula. Public education is free for both boys and girls at the primary, intermediate, and secondary levels and is mandatory for all children aged 6 to 14. Private and religious schools are available as well. The University of Bahrain, Arabian Gulf University, and the College of Health Sciences are institutions of higher learning. The vast majority of the population is literate, and Bahrain has the highest female literacy rate in the Persian Gulf.

Bahrain is often recognized as the arbiter of modernization and liberalism within the GCC. The Kingdom boasts the oldest public education system in the Gulf and literacy rates are cited to be among the highest in the Arab world. As per the latest figures published by UNESCO, Bahrain’s literacy rate was a staggering 99.77% in 2015. The basis of this high literacy rate is that Bahrain’s laws make education compulsory between ages 6 to 15, and

parents who do not admit their eligible children to school may be referred to the general prosecutor and even face criminal punishment.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) maintains four key tenets at the core of its overarching role in regulating and overseeing all education-related activities in Bahrain. It lists these as “learning to be, learning to know, learning to work and learning to live with others”. In order to help facilitate these principles, the MoE has taken several steps to shape the Kingdom’s young minds into worldly and active members of society. Technology, in particular, is increasingly revolutionizing the education system in a vast array of ways. For example, the convenience of carrying laptops, smart-phones and iPads has enabled students of the present day to be further engaged with creating their own knowledge, whilst making academic research far more accessible than ever before. The principle to learn to “live with others” is no longer merely applicable to a person’s immediate surroundings. To ensure that students in Bahrain’s public schools are familiar with electronic education, public schools have been provided with computers through projects like the 2004 “King Hamad Schools of the Future”. The MoE has also implemented a large scale project to train thousands of teachers, administrators and specialists on the use of IT. Some of its potential measure of success include independent quality reviews, national examinations and scores in international tests of school performance (i.e. TIMSS, PISA and PIRLS).

A Brief History of Education in Bahrain

The first public school for boys was established in 1919 “Alhedayah AlKhaleefeyyah School”. Following in 1928 the first public school for girls “Khaddeejah AlKobra School” was established. In a 2015/16 report issued by the MoE shows that there are currently a total of 208 government schools, 75 private schools and 14 universities within the Kingdom. As a testament to the country’s rich diversity, the MoE provides free education for both Bahraini and non-Bahraini students in public schools. Education has always been compulsory in Bahrain, and so as a means of encouraging people to take advantage of the public schools presented to them, the MoE has also provided textbooks in all subjects free of charge at the beginning of each academic year.

Functioning of Various Board of School Education

The first international school to open in the Kingdom was the ‘American Dutch Reformed Church’, in 1892. As evidence of the country’s long-standing acceptance of multiculturalism and respect for freedom of religion, the school’s syllabus was primarily shaped around English, Mathematics and the study of Christianity.

Initiated as an immediate response to educate the children of a growing expatriate community in Bahrain, St Christopher's school tells an interesting narrative of how a small Church School of 39 pupils has developed into an internationally acclaimed institution; considered to be one of the top 10 international schools in the world (according to English newspaper The Guardian in 2008) – the only school in the region to make it on the list.

Functional Difference Among Them

Of the 75 private schools in Bahrain, 35 are international. In order to set up a private institution there are certain requirements that must be met including a prior approval and a final site inspection from the Private Education Directorate within the MoE, examining set building specifications which include site approval from the Municipality, Civil Defence approval in relation to fire safety, and Traffic Directorate approval for parking and road accessibility to the premises. The investors themselves must also meet a range of personal requirements, such as being a minimum of 25 years of age, having a General Secondary School Certificate or its equivalent and not being civil servants or employees of any private institutions or public organizations. Additionally, there is a minimum capital requirement of BHD50,000. Unlike the rest of the GCC, educational and higher educational institutions (HEI's) in Bahrain can be 100% foreign owned, which may be a key factor in the success and growth of the Kingdom's many international institutions. There are various forms of activities that a school or institution may choose to conduct under the umbrella of 'education.' For instance, within the private education sphere, founders may choose to establish a National Private School (which teaches up to secondary school) or a National Educational institute.

Bahrain's first university, the Gulf Polytechnic, opened to both national and international students in 1968 as a public Gulf Technical College. Alongside the four main public universities in which international students can study, there are several private institutions for them to enrol in. The Application Procedures and General Conditions for setting up a private higher Educational Institution ('HEI') in Bahrain is identical to that of any national private school or national educational institute.

The Kingdom's track record of being a leading financial hub of the region for the last 40 years gives it outstanding potential to attract students from the GCC. Its attractive quality of life and key geographical location are some of the factors being considered by the MoE in an effort to introduce new quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms, which are likely to significantly reduce concerns from neighbouring countries over the quality of private HEI's. This was addressed in the National Higher Education's Strategy of 2014 – 2024, and the implementation was reflected in the Ministerial Decree no. 38 of 2015 defining the framework

of the institutional review of higher education institutions by the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training, setting eight standards for the review; mission and governance, quality assurance, information technology and infrastructure, teaching and learning quality, students supporting services, human resources, research and community participation.

Assessment System In Bahrain

Bahrain has focused on increasing student learning outcomes by improving the quality of education in the country. An effective student assessment system is an important part of improving education quality and learning outcomes as it provides the necessary information to meet stakeholders' decision-making needs. In order to gain a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of its existing assessment system, Bahrain decided to benchmark this system using standardized tools developed under The World Bank's Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) program. SABER is an evidence-based program to help countries systematically examine and strengthen the performance of different aspects of their education systems. SABER-Student Assessment is a component of the SABER program that focuses specifically on benchmarking student assessment policies and systems. The goal of SABER-Student Assessment is to promote stronger assessment systems that contribute to improved education quality and learning for all.

An International and Comparative Perspective

There were more than 38 thousand students in Bahraini universities, of which 65% were state universities. The majority of students (78%) receive education in undergraduate programs, 4.5% - master's programs, 16% - in short-term courses. Only 0.6% are enrolled in postgraduate education programs, due to the fact that Ph.D. not yet developed so widely and are available only in three universities: Bahrain University, University of Ahliya and the University of the Arabian Gulf.

The distribution of students in the areas of education in the universities of Bahrain coincides with global trends: the main most popular programs are business education and engineering specialties.

In recent years there has been great interest and an increase in the number of students in such areas as the humanities, law, information technology. However, according to the Bahrain Higher Education Council, in the Kingdom there is an imbalance in the courses offered, student preferences, and demand in the labor market (Higher education council of Bahrain, Electronic resource). Particular attention should be paid to such areas of training as health, engineering and law, for which high demand for specialists is expected in the future. This implies the

creation of new courses, i.e. expanding the offer of educational programs in these areas. In recent years, activities to work with schools have intensified: the Bahrain Higher Education Council attends both public and private schools in order to inform schoolchildren, their parents and teachers about the current situation in higher education. Bahrain University has the status of the only national university and is the largest university in the country. The university consists of 10 colleges (faculties):

1. College of Humanities (College of Arts)
 2. College of Business Administration
 3. College of Engineering
 4. College of Information Technology (College of Information Technology)
 5. College of Law
 6. College of Science
 7. College of Applied Sciences (College of Applied Studies)
 8. Bahrain College of Education (Bahrain Teachers College)
 9. College of Physical Education and Physiotherapy (College of Physical Education and Physiotherapy)
 10. College of Health Science
- More than 20 thousand students study at the university, i.e. half of all students of the kingdom. Estimated since the founding of the university has released more than 60 thousand specialists. In 2002, the King of Bahrain issued a decree according to which any Bahraini student who scored more than 70% in a high school diploma has the right to a place at

Bahrain University. These are the minimum requirements necessary for entering a university. The faculty of the university consists of 835 people, of whom 58% are men, 42% are women and 34% are foreign teachers. The university annually sends 15 teachers abroad for a degree. Strategic Development Plan of the University of Bahrain in 2015-2018 reflects the general direction of the reform of education in the country and includes a number of initiatives (University of Bahrain Strategic plan 2015-2018, Electronic resource) namely:

- improving the quality of teaching and learning includes the following activities;
- development of science and innovations in order to advance the knowledge economy;
- improving the organization of the educational process;
- increased outreach and involvement;
- infrastructure improvement;
- modernization of management processes.

The university uses a blended approach to learning, including individual training, online support, project activities, employment, and internships. The emphasis is on the practical form of education. The development of the higher education sector in Bahrain is closely linked to the international activities of universities, and therefore the issue of student mobility holds a special place. Research emphasizes that stimulating educational migration replenishes the working-age population, attracts qualified specialists, and stimulates the development of the educational system (Ryazantsev, Pismennaya, 2016; Luchinskaya et al, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Among the key factors that stimulated the development of the educational sphere in Bahrain, was the financing of the education system, made possible by the discovery of oil in the kingdom. Bahrain is the first Gulf country to start developing education. The development of the economy, depending on changes in the global oil market, has affected the need to form a state system of higher education in the country. The need to reduce dependence on the oil and gas sector and the diversification of the economy, implying the creation of new industries and services, presented new requirements for the training of specialists, which led to the emergence of new universities and the expansion of the educational offer at the expense of private and foreign players. At the present stage in the development of higher education in Bahrain, as in some other Arabian countries, focused on the formation of the private sector, which solved the problem of accessibility, but gave rise to the problem of quality. The main goal in the near future in the country is to improve the quality of education, qualifications and skills of the teaching staff and improve the management system in universities. A distinctive feature of Bahrain is the orientation in teaching students for employment in the private sector and entrepreneurship. In order to develop human resources for business, Tamkeen was created, offering training programs, thereby stimulating entrepreneurship and innovation. With a number of competitive advantages, turning Bahrain into a regional education center is another strategic priority. The main directions in this area is to improve the quality of education to attract foreign students and to stimulate the opening of foreign universities in its territory. In the export of educational services Bahrain focuses on the experience of the United States and the United Kingdom.

FAMILIARIZING THE DIVERSITY IN SCHOOL SYSTEM – AUSTRALIA

Australia, officially the Commonwealth of Australia, is a sovereign country comprising the mainland of the Australian continent, the island of Tasmania, and numerous smaller islands. Australia is the largest country by area in Oceania and the world's sixth-largest country. Capital is Canberra. The Government is a Parliamentary system, Representative democracy, Constitutional monarchy. Population is 2.6 crores (2022). There were 554,179 international students of 192 nationalities studying in Australia in 2016. Approximately 43 per cent of international student enrolments were at the higher education level.

❖ Development of school system in Australia

There is a comprehensive system of education, with private and public primary and secondary schools serving children between the ages of about 5 and 18 years. Some three-fifths of primary school, half of high school, and two-thirds of secondary college enrolments are in government schools; more than half of the remainder are in Roman Catholic schools. Secondary colleges provide education in a setting designed to facilitate the transition from secondary school to higher education or work during the final two years of government secondary schooling. The territory has high retention of students to the end of secondary education compared with other states and territories. A higher proportion of children in Canberra attend preschools than in most parts of Australia. The Australian education system is distinctive in that it is highly privatized in both the school and higher education sectors compared with the systems in other countries. In terms of student enrolment, in 2016 34.6 per cent of school student enrolments were in private schools but the majority of higher education enrolments (93 per cent) were in public universities.

The Structure of Australian Education System

Four sub-sectors

The Australian education system is broadly structured as follows:

1. Primary school: seven or eight years, starting at Foundation (also called kindergarten/preparatory/pre-school) through to Year 6 or 7
2. Secondary school: four years from Years 7 or 8 to 10
- 3 Senior secondary school: two years from Years 11 to 12
5. Tertiary education: includes higher education and vocational education and training (VET).

❖ **Functioning of various Boards of School Education**

Under the Commonwealth Constitution, education in Australia is primarily the responsibility of the State and Territory Governments. They are largely responsible for the funding of government schools. State and Territory Governments regulate the public and private (including faith-based) schools within their States/ Territories, oversee course accreditation, student assessment and awards for both government and non-government schools and early childhood learning centers. Responsibilities for child care and pre-school are also shared between the Australian, State and Territory Governments, as follows:

- The Australian Government has policy responsibility for formal care (long day care, family day care, outside school hours care, and some occasional care)
- The Australian Government administers fee subsidies for child care and provides some funding to Australian Government approved services for specific purposes. The Australian Government oversees quality accreditation systems in early childhood education and care
- The Australian Government support specialized pre-school for Indigenous Australians
- State and Territory Governments are responsible for the policy and funding of pre-schools. Pre-school education is delivered using a variety of funding and delivery models, including private provision
- State and Territory Governments are responsible for some occasional care centers. Some State and Territory Governments contribute financially to outside school hours care, long day care and other such services.

State and Territory Governments are responsible for the administration and major funding of VET and for legislation relating to the establishment and accreditation of higher education courses. Each State has a VET system, consisting of government-funded Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutes and private registered training organizations (RTOs). VET qualifications are transferable between all States and Territories. Study undertaken in one State/Territory gains the same status in another. Significant organizations and agreements focused on improving school education at a national level include:

- The Council of Australian Governments
- The Department of Education and Training
- The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
- National Partnership Agreements.

The Council of Australian Government

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has representation from State and Territory Governments and sets key policy directions to be adopted nationally. COAG's Education Council is one of eight Councils responsible to COAG through their Chair. The COAG Education Council provides a forum through which strategic policy on school education, early childhood and higher education can be coordinated at the national level and through which information can be shared, and resources used collaboratively, to address issues of national significance.

The Department of Education and Training (DET) The key Australian Government agency responsible for national education policies and programs is the Department of Education and Training (DET) whose responsibilities include:

early childhood

- Schooling
- Higher education
- Higher education teaching and research
- Vocational education and training (VET)
- International Education.

DET delivers the Australian Government's priorities and goals through the development and implementation of education policies and programs. The goals are achieved in conjunction with the State, Territory and regional networks, and through engagement with non-government stakeholders.

Early Childhood and Compulsory School education

Early childhood education The role of early childhood education is to provide care and supervision of children, to prepare children for school, and to ensure that children are able to effectively participate in subsequent learning opportunities. Early childhood education programs are conducted in community programs, pre-schools and other child-care settings. Australia's participation rates at age four have risen markedly since 2005 (from 53 per cent in 2005 to 89 per cent in 2016) representing the fourth highest increase in the OECD.

Primary and secondary schools

It is compulsory for children to have commenced school by the time they have turned six years of age. Most children start between four-and-a-half and five-and-a-half years. Children generally attend primary school until they are 11 or 12 years of age. Primary schools offer programs from Foundation to Years 6 or 7.

Since 2010, it has been mandatory in all States and Territories for students to complete Year 10 and participate full time in education, training or employment, until they are at least 17 years old. Primary schools focus on developing essential literacy, numeracy and social skills, and provide foundational knowledge to children about the world around them.

In some jurisdictions middle schools have been introduced. Middle schools offer programs for students in Years 7 to 10 (although this varies from school to school). On leaving middle schools, students often attend high schools or colleges to complete the Years 10, 11 and 12. In jurisdictions where there are only primary and secondary schools, students between the ages of 13 and 18 years attend high schools or secondary schools. Progressively, as students move from primary into secondary schools, subject matter becomes increasingly specialized.

Students who complete their secondary school program at Year 12 or equivalent are awarded a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education. They then leave school to undertake vocational or higher education courses and/or start work. The secondary retention rate in Australia in 2016 (i.e. the number of school students who commenced Year 7/8 and completed Year 12, expressed as a percentage) was 80.9 per cent for male students and 87.8 per cent for female students.

❖ **Functional Differences of Different Boards of School Education in Australia**

In Australia, each state and territory has its own educational system and corresponding board of education, which can lead to some functional differences between them. Here's a brief overview:

1. New South Wales (NSW)

- The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) oversees education in New South Wales.
- NESA sets the curriculum and administers assessments, including the Higher School Certificate (HSC) for secondary students.
- It also accredits teachers and regulates schools.

2. Victoria

- The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) is responsible for curriculum development, assessment, and certification in Victoria.
- It oversees the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) for secondary students and the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) for vocational education.

3. Queensland

- The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) manages the curriculum, assessment, and certification in Queensland.
- It administers the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) for secondary students.

4. Western Australia

- The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) is responsible for curriculum, assessment, and standards in Western Australia.
- It oversees the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) for secondary students.

5. South Australia

- The South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) Board manages the curriculum, assessment, and certification in South Australia.
- It administers the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) for secondary students.

6. Tasmania

- The Tasmanian Qualifications Authority (TQA) oversees curriculum, assessment, and certification in Tasmania.
- It administers the Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE) for secondary students.

7. Australian Capital Territory (ACT)

- The ACT Education Directorate manages education in the Australian Capital Territory.
- It oversees the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate for secondary students.

8. Northern Territory

- The Northern Territory Curriculum and Assessment Authority (NTCAA) is responsible for curriculum, assessment, and certification in the Northern Territory.
- It administers the Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET) for secondary students

❖ **Assessment systems of school education in Australia**

The assessment systems in Australian school education vary somewhat between states and territories, but they generally follow similar principles and frameworks. Here's an overview:

1. Formative Assessment:
 - Teachers regularly assess student progress through formative assessment methods, such as quizzes, classwork, homework, projects, and discussions.
 - Formative assessment provides ongoing feedback to students to support their learning and informs instructional decisions.
2. Summative Assessment:
 - Summative assessments typically occur at the end of a learning period, unit, or course to evaluate student achievement.
 - These assessments may include exams, tests, essays, presentations, and practical demonstrations.
3. External Standardized Tests:
 - Some states and territories administer external standardized tests to measure student achievement and school performance.
 - Examples include the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).
 - These tests assess student proficiency in core subjects like literacy, numeracy, science, and problem-solving.
4. Certificate Examinations:
 - Secondary education in Australia typically culminates in certificate examinations, such as the Higher School Certificate (HSC) in New South Wales, the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) in Victoria, and the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) in Queensland.
 - These examinations assess student knowledge and skills across a range of subjects and determine eligibility for further education or employment.
5. Vocational Education and Training (VET) Assessment:
 - Vocational education programs often involve competency-based assessment methods.
 - Students demonstrate their skills and knowledge through practical tasks, workplace assessments, and written assessments aligned with industry standards.
 - Assessment may be conducted by both educators and industry professionals.

6. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):

- RPL allows students to gain credit for skills and knowledge acquired through prior learning or work experience.
- Assessment methods may include portfolio review, interviews, practical demonstrations, and workplace observation.

7. Continuous Reporting:

- Many schools in Australia use continuous reporting systems to provide ongoing feedback on student progress to parents and caregivers.
- These systems often involve regular updates on student achievement, strengths, areas for improvement, and learning goals.

❖ Norms and Standards of school system in Australia

In Australia, the norms and standards of the school system are established and regulated by various educational authorities at the federal, state, and territory levels. While there are overarching principles and guidelines, specific standards may vary slightly between jurisdictions. Here are some key norms and standards of the school system in Australia:

1. National Curriculum:

- The Australian Curriculum sets out the core knowledge, understanding, skills, and general capabilities that students should acquire as they progress through schooling.
- It provides a framework for consistent and high-quality education across the country, covering subjects such as English, mathematics, science, humanities and social sciences, languages, and the arts.

2. Quality Teaching Standards:

- Each state and territory has its own set of quality teaching standards that outline the knowledge, skills, and attributes expected of educators.
- These standards typically cover areas such as subject content knowledge, pedagogical practices, assessment and reporting, professional learning, and ethical conduct.

3. School Accreditation and Registration:

- Schools in Australia must meet certain accreditation and registration requirements to operate legally.

- These requirements vary between jurisdictions but generally include provisions for facilities, curriculum delivery, student welfare and safety, staffing, governance, and financial management.
4. Assessment and Reporting Standards:
- Educational authorities establish standards for student assessment and reporting to ensure consistency and fairness.
 - Standards may cover assessment design, marking criteria, moderation processes, reporting formats, and the provision of feedback to students and parents.
5. Inclusion and Diversity:
- The school system in Australia is committed to inclusive education practices that cater to the diverse needs of students.
 - Standards related to inclusion may address accessibility, equity, differentiation of instruction, support for students with disabilities or special needs, and promotion of cultural diversity and respect.
6. Health and Wellbeing:
- Norms and standards related to health and wellbeing focus on creating safe, supportive, and healthy learning environments.
 - They may cover areas such as student welfare and pastoral care, mental health support, bullying prevention, nutrition and physical activity, and the promotion of positive relationships and resilience.
7. Compliance and Accountability:
- Educational authorities enforce compliance with norms and standards through regulatory processes, monitoring, and quality assurance mechanisms.
 - Schools are accountable for meeting established standards and may undergo periodic audits, reviews, or inspections to assess their performance and identify areas for improvement.

❖ **State wise variations of school system in Australia**

The school systems in Australia exhibit variations across states and territories due to differences in governance structures, education policies, curriculum frameworks, and administrative practices. Here's a summary of some of the key state-wise variations:

1. New South Wales (NSW):
 - NSW operates under the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), which oversees curriculum development, assessment, and certification.
 - The NSW curriculum is aligned with the Australian Curriculum but may have additional state-specific content and requirements.
 - High school students in NSW undertake the Higher School Certificate (HSC) examination at the end of Year 12.
2. Victoria:
 - Victoria follows the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), responsible for curriculum development, assessment, and certification.
 - The Victorian Curriculum is based on the Australian Curriculum but may include state-specific enhancements.
 - Students in Victoria complete the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) or the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) in their final years of secondary school.
3. Queensland:
 - Queensland operates under the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA), which oversees curriculum, assessment, and certification.
 - The Queensland curriculum is based on the Australian Curriculum with adaptations for local contexts.
 - Students in Queensland work towards the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) in their senior years.
4. Western Australia:
 - Western Australia's education system is governed by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA), responsible for curriculum, assessment, and certification.
 - The Western Australian curriculum aligns with the Australian Curriculum but may include state-specific elements.
 - Students in Western Australia undertake the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) upon completing secondary school.
5. South Australia:
 - South Australia follows the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) Board, responsible for curriculum, assessment, and certification.

- The South Australian curriculum aligns with the Australian Curriculum but may have state-specific adaptations.
- Students in South Australia work towards the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) in their final years of schooling.

6. Tasmania:

- Tasmania operates under the Tasmanian Qualifications Authority (TQA), which oversees curriculum, assessment, and certification.
- The Tasmanian curriculum is aligned with the Australian Curriculum but may include state-specific content.
- Students in Tasmania complete the Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE) at the end of secondary school.

7. Australian Capital Territory (ACT):

- The ACT Education Directorate manages education in the Australian Capital Territory.
- The ACT curriculum aligns closely with the Australian Curriculum, with some adaptations for local needs.
- Students in the ACT complete the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.

8. Northern Territory:

- The Northern Territory Curriculum and Assessment Authority (NTCAA) oversees education in the Northern Territory.
- The Northern Territory curriculum is aligned with the Australian Curriculum but may incorporate local perspectives and priorities.
- Students in the Northern Territory work towards the Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET).

❖ **An international and comparative perspective of school education system in Australia**

Taking an international and comparative perspective, the school education system in Australia exhibits several distinctive features and comparisons with other countries can provide insights into its strengths and areas for improvement. Here are some key points:

1. Curriculum Framework:

- Australia's curriculum framework, while developed independently, shares similarities with other countries' frameworks, such as the United Kingdom's

National Curriculum and the Common Core State Standards in the United States.

- The Australian Curriculum emphasizes both disciplinary knowledge and cross-curricular skills, aligning with global trends in education.

2. Assessment Practices:

- Australia's assessment practices, including external standardized testing (e.g., NAPLAN) and certificate examinations (e.g., HSC, VCE), are comparable to assessment systems in countries like the United Kingdom (GCSEs, A-levels) and the United States (SATs, ACT).
- The focus on both formative and summative assessment aligns with international best practices for evaluating student learning.

3. Inclusive Education:

- Australia's commitment to inclusive education is reflected in policies and practices that aim to support the diverse needs of all students, including those with disabilities or special needs.
- This focus on inclusion is consistent with global efforts to promote equitable access to education and ensure that all students receive appropriate support and accommodations.

4. Vocational Education and Training (VET):

- Australia's integration of vocational education and training within the school system is relatively unique compared to many other countries.
- While vocational pathways exist in other countries, such as Germany's dual education system, Australia's VET programs provide opportunities for students to gain practical skills and industry qualifications alongside academic studies.

5. Teacher Professional Development:

- Australia invests in ongoing professional development for teachers, with initiatives aimed at enhancing teaching quality and supporting teacher wellbeing.
- This emphasis on teacher professional learning is consistent with international efforts to strengthen teacher effectiveness and improve student outcomes.

6. Indigenous Education:

- Australia's approach to Indigenous education, including initiatives to promote Indigenous perspectives and cultural understanding, is relevant within the

context of global efforts to address educational disparities among Indigenous populations.

- Comparisons with countries like Canada and New Zealand, which also have significant Indigenous populations, can provide insights into effective strategies for Indigenous education.

7. Global Competence and Citizenship:

- Australia's education system increasingly emphasizes the development of global competence and citizenship skills, preparing students to thrive in an interconnected world.
- This focus aligns with international efforts to foster 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and cultural awareness.

FAMILIARIZING THE DIVERSITY IN SCHOOL SYSTEM - DENMARK

Denmark, a Scandinavian country in Northern Europe, is known for its rich history, modern design, and high standard of living. It's famous for its picturesque cities like Copenhagen, charming villages, and coastal landscapes. Denmark is also renowned for its cultural contributions, including influential thinkers like Kierkegaard and the fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen. The country boasts a strong welfare state, sustainable practices, and a thriving bicycle culture.

Standard of Education

Denmark's education system is highly regarded for its emphasis on innovation, critical thinking, and student-centered learning. It offers free primary and secondary education, along with accessible higher education opportunities. The country is known for its innovative teaching methods, which prioritize collaboration, problem-solving, and interdisciplinary approaches. Denmark consistently ranks high in international education assessments, reflecting its commitment to providing quality education for all. Additionally, the system promotes lifelong learning through various adult education programs and vocational training opportunities, ensuring that its workforce remains adaptable and skilled in a rapidly changing global economy.

State Wise Variations

Denmark doesn't have states or provinces in the same way as some other countries like the United States or Canada. Instead, it's divided into regions and municipalities. However, the education system in Denmark is highly centralized, with the Ministry of Education setting the overall framework and guidelines.

That said, there can still be some variations in the implementation of education policies at the regional or municipal level, such as differences in school resources, local priorities, or approaches to teaching. However, these variations are typically minor compared to the overall consistency of the education system across the country.

Functioning of Various Boards of School Education

In Denmark, the educational system operates differently from traditional boards of school education found in other countries. Instead, education is primarily overseen by the Ministry of Education, which sets national guidelines and frameworks for curriculum, teaching standards, and assessment practices. However, Denmark does have municipal school boards responsible for implementing these national guidelines at the local level. These boards work closely with schools to ensure that educational standards are met while also accommodating

the specific needs and circumstances of each municipality. The Danish education system emphasizes flexibility and autonomy for schools and teachers, allowing them to tailor their approaches to best meet the needs of their students. Additionally, Denmark places a strong emphasis on continuous evaluation and improvement, with regular assessments and feedback mechanisms in place to monitor educational outcomes and identify areas for development.

From daycare to primary schools: An emphasis on social skills

Danish children begin public daycare as early as 9 months, and by age 3 98 % of children in Denmark are attending public kindergartens. Staffed by professionals with training in early childhood education, these institutions teach basic academic concepts like letters and numbers, as well as social rules like taking turns and helping others. Most of the day is spent on "free play" and activities outdoors.

At age 6, Danish children begin their formal schooling. The educational approach in Denmark avoids class rankings and formal tests; instead, children work in groups and are taught to challenge the established way of doing things. Teachers are called by their first names. The emphasis is on problem-solving, not memorisation.

All children in Denmark have access to tuition-free government folkeskole (people's school) until they are 16 years old. Some parents choose private schools because they are smaller, or because they have a particular educational approach.

Others choose private schools for religious reasons: Denmark is home to Jewish, Christian, and Muslim schools. English-language international schools and French and German-language schools are also available on a paid-for basis. All schools are required to follow the national government's basic requirements for primary education. Choosing a secondary education: Academic or trade school?

Near the end of their time in primary school, Danish children take a nationwide test to help them choose the next step in their education.

Pupils with strong academic abilities often select a gymnasium for their secondary education, where they can focus on languages, sciences, math or similar subjects to prepare them for university.

More practically-oriented pupils often prefer a trade school that can train them in high-paying skills like metalworking, electrical technology, or mechanics, or a business school where they can learn about accounting or software development.

Other pupils delay the decision for a year, choosing an efterskole (after school) where they live away from home and study topics of interest like theatre or sports alongside their academic requirements.

Universities and "getting paid to go to school" Once they have completed their secondary education, Danes can choose from a variety of tertiary options, including a standard university that grants bachelors, masters', and PhD degrees; a university college that awards bachelors degrees in hands-on subjects such as social work; or a public arts and architecture academy, like The Royal Academy of Music.

Full-time students in Denmark are eligible for Statens Uddannelsesstøtte, or SU (limited income support) from the government alongside other work they do to help pay their expenses while studying.

It is common for Danes to begin working in their future job roles while they are still in the process of education, either as a paid praktikant (intern) or apprentice.

Lifelong learning for fun and profit

Education in Denmark does not stop with graduation; at any given time, one out of three Danish adults age 25-64 is taking some kind of continuing education course.

Many Danish workplaces pay for their employees' additional training, and there are also public and private providers of classes that help build business and professional skills. Unemployed people in Denmark are often required to take courses that will prepare them to return to the job market.

Denmark's public and private investment in the development of new qualifications and skills is one of the highest in Europe. The idea is to maintain a highly-qualified and well-educated workforce that can succeed in a global knowledge economy.

Of course, not all education is for professional reasons. Many adults in Denmark take classes in cooking, painting, foreign languages, music, or dance just for fun. A lot of these classes are publicly funded and offered for a minimal fee.

"Folk high schools": A fundamental part of Danish culture

Adult education is nothing new in Denmark: since 1844, folkehøjskoler or højskoler (folk high schools) around Denmark have helped ordinary people develop the skills they needed to thrive as citizens.

The schools were inspired by the influential Danish educational leader Niels Grundtvig (1783-1872), who believed that offering higher education to rural people was as important as cultivating the urban intellectual elite. Grundtvig's ideas were widely copied in other Scandinavian countries.

These days, there are 70 højskoler around Denmark, many specialising in subjects like film, design, sports, theatre, and politics.

The schools are voluntary and require no grades or exams. Many offer "live-in courses" for a week or more, and while they are not tuition-free, prices are low and the cost of attending includes room and board.

Assessment of Denmark School System

Denmark's primary and secondary schools, called Folkeskole, use a variety of tools and evaluation methods to support students' development. The goal is to identify students' strengths and weaknesses so they can make the most of their education.

Here are some assessment methods used in Danish schools: Ongoing evaluation, Examinations, Folkeskole leaving examination, 10th form examination, and Seven compulsory examinations at the end of form level 9.

Norms And Standard

Denmark's education system has several norms and standards, including:

Free and equal access- All Danish citizens have access to free, high-quality education at all levels.

Compulsory education- Education is compulsory for 10 years, consisting of one year of preschool and nine years of primary and lower secondary education.

High standards- All public educational institutions are evaluated and approved on an ongoing basis to ensure quality.

Lifelong learning- Education is available for all citizens throughout their lives.

Active participation

Students have the right to form their own opinions and are expected to participate in discussions.

Project work- Project work and interdisciplinary activities are an integrated part of Danish education.

Student-centered training- Training is student-centered, with open debate during class, teamwork among students and teachers, and active assistance and problem solving.

An International and Comparative Perspective

Here are some international and comparative perspectives of Denmark's education system:

Education approach- Denmark's education system focuses on problem-solving, collaboration, and working in groups, rather than memorization and formal tests. Teachers are called by their first names, and children work in groups. The emphasis is on challenging the established way of doing things.

Grading system- Since 2007, all education levels in Denmark have used a seven-step grading scale, with the top grade being 12, which corresponds to an "A" on the ECTS scale.

Public education- Denmark's public education system is free from primary to higher education, and more than 80% of students go on to study in the following education levels, even though compulsory education is only up to 16 years of age. Private schools take in around 15% of students in Denmark.

Higher education- Denmark's higher education system is the second best in Scandinavia and the fifth best in the world. Bachelor's programs are the most popular programs for new entrants to tertiary education, and short-cycle tertiary programs are the second most common level of education.

OECD indicators- 81% of entrants into general upper secondary education complete their program within the theoretical duration, but this share increases to 87% after allowing an additional two years.

FAMILIARIZING THE DIVERSITY IN SCHOOL SYSTEM - GERMANY

The Federal Republic of Germany is located in the heart of Europe. The nation-state now known as Germany was first unified in 1871 as a modern federal state, the German Empire. In the first half of the 20th century, two devastating World Wars, of which Germany was responsible for, left the country occupied by the victorious Allied powers. With the advent of the Cold War, two German states were formed in 1949: the western Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the eastern German Democratic Republic (GDR). With the unification of the two German states, the country became Europe's most populous nation (situated entirely in Europe) and strengthened its role as a key member of the European Union and the continent's economic, political, and security organizations.

The German Education System

The German education system stands out for its unique combination of academic rigor, hands-on learning, and commitment to individual development. The German education system operates under the framework of the Grundgesetz. At the federal level, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research plays a coordinating and supporting role in education matters. However, education in Germany is primarily the responsibility of the individual federal states (Bundesländer). Each federal state has its own Ministry of Education or equivalent authority responsible for education policy and legislation within its jurisdiction. These state-level authorities determine many aspects of education, including curriculum, teacher qualifications, and school organization.

Compulsory education in Germany is a fundamental commitment to ensure that every child receives an education. All children in the Federal Republic of Germany must start school once they reach the age of **six** until they complete nine years of full-time schooling at the Gymnasium or 10 years of full-time schooling for other general education schools. After compulsory education, those who don't continue to full-time general or vocational schools at the upper secondary level must still attend part-time schooling which typically lasts three years. Compulsory education applies to children and youth with disabilities as well. Depending on their special educational needs, they can either join regular schools with non-disabled peers or attend special education institutions.

Development of School System in Germany

The German school system is structured into five main stages:

1. **Early Childhood Education.** This stage is optional but widely attended. Children typically start kindergarten at age three or four, focusing on socialization and early learning.
2. **Primary Education.** Beginning at age six and spanning grades 1 to 4 (or 1 to 6 in Berlin and Brandenburg), this stage marks the start of compulsory schooling and aids the transition from pre-school to formal education.
3. **Secondary Education.** Secondary education in Germany is divided into lower secondary (Sekundarstufe I) and upper secondary level (Sekundarstufe II), aiming to prepare students for vocational qualifications or higher education.
4. **Tertiary Education.** Tertiary education in Germany includes universities, colleges, and vocational academies offering degrees and vocational qualifications. It's highly respected for its academic quality and research opportunities.
5. **Continuing Education.** Continuing education in Germany offers non-degree courses and workshops for skill development and lifelong learning. It caters to diverse individuals and aims to enhance personal and professional growth.

Functions of Various Board of School Education

The German education system operates under the framework of the Basic Law (Grundgesetz). At the federal level, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF) plays a coordinating and supporting role in education matters.

Functional Differences Among Different Stages

For Children Under the Age of 3

The core educational mission of the German preschool education (age under 3) is enhancing communication skills among kids. Secondly, it is the development of their language skills through social interaction with other toddlers and adults.

Communication and language skills are taught by language role models (educators), finger plays, singing, picture books, and additional teaching practices/instruments.

Furthermore, an important part of pre-educating children is given to motor development. This includes increasing body awareness, self-acceptance, self-confidence, and concentration among toddlers.

Motor development is reached through physical activities, visiting public environments, rhythmic early education programs, singing, and movement playing.

For Children Over the Age of 2

Core values that preschool education seeks to develop amongst children are the enhancement of their teamwork skills, along with their level of integration in daily life activities.

Key areas of German preschool education for children older than 2 are:

1. Language, writing, communication,
2. Personal and social development,
3. Development of values and religious education,
4. Mathematics, natural sciences, (information) technology
5. Fine arts/working with different media
6. Body, movement, health, and
7. Nature and cultural environments.

Such values are taught through self-organized learning, creative learning, teamwork-building activities, investigation, and experimental activities.

Supervising Bodies of Preschool Education

Preschool education in Germany is supervised by the State Youth Welfare Offices (Landesjugendämter) in each state (Länder). Providers must meet specific requirements, such as appropriate staff ratios, qualified educators, adequate facilities, hygiene standards, and age-appropriate educational programs.

Kindergarten (early childhood education) in Germany is not entirely free, but the costs are heavily subsidized. Parents typically pay a monthly fee, which can vary depending on the state (Land) and the specific kindergarten.

The fees are income-dependent, with lower-income families paying less and sometimes receiving exemptions. Some states have also moved towards making kindergarten education entirely free.

Primary School Education

Primary school, or Grundschule, offers mandatory education through mixed-ability classes for children aged six until they complete grade 4 (or 6 in Berlin and Brandenburg).

As kids finish grade 4/6, primary school marks an important transition phase, as together with parents and teachers, they are placed into different types of secondary schools depending on academic performance and goals.

Primary School Grades	Child's Age
Grade 1	6
Grade 2	7
Grade 3	8
Grade 4	9

Grade 5 (Berlin and Brandenburg)	10
Grade 6 (Berlin and Brandenburg)	11

Primary education in Germany follows standards set by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (Kultusministerkonferenz).

It includes subjects such as:

- German,
- Mathematics,
- General studies,
- Foreign language,
- Art,
- Handicrafts,
- Music,
- Sport,
- Religion, or ethics.

The curriculum includes topics like intercultural education, sustainability, values education, and more. Parents are encouraged to stay involved in their children’s education.

Learning objectives in primary schools are attained through the engagement of pupils in planning, running, and analyzing study subjects (lessons) in an adapted way, which goes along with their knowledge, interest, curiosity, and concerns. Students are also encouraged to participate in organizing initiatives and interdisciplinary projects of the school.

Germany has **two** primary school education systems: **a 5-day school week** with 188 teaching days per year and **a 6-day school week** with 208 teaching days per year, which includes classes on two Saturdays every month.

Primary school classes typically start between 7:30 AM and 8:00 AM and end at 11 AM or 12 PM. Each lesson lasts for 45 minutes, with breaks for eating and socializing. Most public primary schools don’t have uniforms, and children can wear whatever they want.

In German primary schools, students are initially promoted to the next grade without formal grading after completing grade 1.

From grade 2 onward, they receive grades based on their knowledge level, ranging from 1 (very good) to 6 (very poor). These grades in Germany are reflected in a school report (Zeugnis), and promotion to the next grade depends on their performance. If a student fails, they may need to repeat the grade.

he Grundschule, the first mandatory school for all children in Germany, operates under legal provisions outlined in the Basic Law and state constitutions regarding schools. These provisions cover inspection, parental rights, compulsory education, religious instruction, and privately-maintained schools.

The federal government funds public primary schools in Germany, which means they do not charge tuition fees. However, parents may be asked to contribute toward some expenses, like school supplies or extracurricular activities.

Secondary Education

In the German school system, secondary education follows the primary school stage and is marked by a division into different educational paths, each leading to specific leaving certificates and qualifications. Secondary education is divided into **lower secondary** (Sekundarstufe I) and **upper secondary** (Sekundarstufe II).

The lower secondary level is offered for pupils aged 10–12 until they are 15–16 in grades 5–7 to 9–10 and focuses on general education.

On the other hand, the upper secondary level is offered to pupils who have completed the prior level (from the age of 15–16 until 18–19) and prepares students for university or vocational qualifications, with various schools available based on abilities and prior education.

Governance of Secondary Education

In Germany, secondary education is governed by legal frameworks, including the Education Acts and Compulsory Schooling Acts of the German Länder. These laws define curriculum content and qualifications granted upon completing lower and upper secondary education in both general and vocational schools.

Vocational training is regulated by the Vocational Training Act and the Handicrafts Act, addressing matters like contracts, certificates, and trainee rights. Special legislation, like the Protection of Young Persons at Work Act, ensures the protection of young trainees.

Public education in Germany is funded through taxation, and students are not required to pay tuition fees at these levels of education. Private secondary schools may charge tuition fees, but the majority of students in Germany attend public secondary schools, which are free of charge. The Federal Country of Germany offers secondary education in public and private schools. Various secondary schools in Germany cater to students with varying abilities and prior primary education qualifications.

The German educational system is traditionally divided into three main tracks (the Gymnasium, Realschule, and Hauptschule), with some states introducing the Comprehensive School (Gesamtschule) as an alternative or addition to the existing system.

German secondary vocational schools are institutions that provide specialized vocational education and training to students who have completed their general secondary education (usually Realschule or Hauptschule). They offer lessons and practical placement, known as a dual system.

These are the types of vocational schools available in Germany

- **Fachoberschule.** Offers a 2-year program for “Mittlerer Schulabschluss” holders, leading to “Fachhochschulreife” for entry to universities of applied sciences. A 13th grade option can result in “Fachgebundene Hochschulreife” or “Abitur.”
- **Berufoberschule.** Provides 2-year general and in-depth education, enhancing previous vocational knowledge, leading to vocational qualifications or, with proficiency in a second foreign language, “Abitur.” Also offers 3/4-year courses for dual vocational and higher education qualifications.
- **Berufsfachschule.** Offers education for specific professions requiring formal recognition or vocational training qualifications.
- **Berufsschule.** Delivers practical, interdisciplinary lessons preparing students for further vocational education or professions based on the dual education and training system.
- **Berufliches Gymnasium.** A 3-year secondary education program leading to the “Abitur” qualification.

German Private Secondary Schools

Private secondary schools in Germany fall into two categories: “Ersatzschulen,” which offer the same curriculum as public schools but with private funding, and “Ergänzungsschulen,” which provide additional courses beyond public school offerings.

Tertiary Education

Tertiary education in Germany encompasses post-secondary education at various institutions, including **universities**, **universities of applied sciences**, and **specialized institutions**, offering a wide range of academic and vocational programs.

It emphasizes academic excellence, research-oriented education, and practical skills development, leading to **Bachelor’s**, **Master’s**, and **Doctorate** degrees.

Under the Basic law, higher education institutions enjoy the autonomy to independently manage the scholarship awarding, research, and teaching activity. For administrative issues, such as academic and governmental matters, these institutions have to be in accord with the Lander’s ministry.

Tertiary education at public universities in Germany is generally tuition-free, with nominal semester fees ranging from €100 to €300. Private universities, however, charge varying tuition fees ranging from a few thousand to more, so students should inquire about costs and available financial aid.

Universities offer a wide range of academic programs and research opportunities leading to bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, with a strong emphasis on research and theoretical knowledge. Universities focus on **all types of subjects**, including medicine, law, pharmacy, etc.

Colleges of Art, Music, and Film are specialized institutions focusing on arts, music, and film education, offering programs tailored to aspiring artists, musicians, and filmmakers. Basically, they focus on artistic subjects such as fine arts, design, architecture, music, theater, etc.

Assessment Systems in Schools

Assessment in the German school system is regular, systematic, and officially controlled through legislation. It emphasizes that even strict grading levels combine criterion and norm referencing because teacher determination must include a subjective element.

Norms and Standards in School System

In Germany it is compulsory to attend school: children must attend school for 9 years. In some federal states, compulsory school attendance also applies to children whose residence status is unclear. A school year begins in August or September and continues until June or July, depending on state. Children usually attend state-funded schools.

State – wise Variations in the School System

The federal republic of Germany consists of 16 states, each having its own school system. The governing of each 'state' is organized according to a rather traditional bureaucratic governing model over three to four years. The traditional assessment system of school quality in Germany consists of school supervisory authorities. As in many other Western countries there has been a trend towards decentralization in the German education system giving the schools increased responsibilities. It is a mixture of 'top – down' stipulations to prescribe, evaluate and control quality standards, and 'bottom – up' school development processes based on a greater number of competencies ascribed to schools.

An International and Comparative Perspective

Germany maintains good collaborative relations in developing joint programmes, even with South Africa and Brazil. With their long-term, collaborative transnational activities German universities are in a position to enhance the international education landscape with a lasting effect.

Furthermore, the activities of German universities abroad are also relevant in terms of development policy. The Federal Government's internationalisation strategy of February 2008 envisages transnational education as a measure to achieve the defined strategic goal of "sustainably strengthening cooperation with developing countries in education, research and development": "Cooperation in the area of initial and continuing training is reviewed and coordinated on the basis of development goals and existing instruments for individual support (fellowships), institutional cooperation between education institutions, education marketing and export promotion for German training programmes.". German university projects abroad give stimuli for modernising higher education structures and offer models for updating curricula, creating a connection to practice, and enhancing the relevance of degree courses for the employment market.

FAMILIARIZING THE DIVERSITY IN SCHOOL SYSTEM- FINLAND

Finland is part of Scandinavia, a geographical region in northern Europe, and shares land borders with Norway, Sweden, and Russia. The Baltic Sea borders the country to the south and southwest. The coastline in this part of the country is speckled with nearly 180,000 small islands. Finland is a Nordic welfare state that aims to be carbon neutral by 2035. It's also. Finland has its own official languages, which the Finnish government recognizes. However, even though English is not their official language. English has become widely spoken, especially in urban areas and among the younger generation. Known for its expansive forests, beautiful lakes and sauna culture, there is plenty here for expats to experience and enjoy here. The currency in Finland is. The living costs certainly depend on which city you live in and what kind of accommodation you specifically choose.

Development of School System

Finland's education system is often regarded as one of the best in the world, and it's known for its focus on equity, high-quality teaching, and innovative practices. The educational system in Finland consists of daycare programmes (for babies and toddlers), a one-year "preschool" (age six), and an 11-year compulsory basic comprehensive school (age seven to age eighteen). Nowadays secondary general academic and vocational education, higher education and adult education are compulsory. During their nine years of common basic education, students are not selected, tracked, or streamed. There is also inclusive special education within the classroom and instructional efforts to minimize low achievement. After basic education, students must choose to continue with secondary education in either an academic track or a vocational track both of which usually take three years and give a qualification to continue to tertiary education. Tertiary education is divided into university and polytechnic (also known as "university of applied sciences") systems. Formerly, only university graduates could obtain higher (postgraduate) degrees, however, since the implementation of the Bologna process, all bachelor's degree holders can now qualify for further academic studies. There are 17 universities and 27 universities of applied sciences in the country.

Finland has consistently ranked high in the PISA study, which compares national educational systems internationally, although in the recent years Finland has been displaced from the very top. In the 2012 study, Finland ranked sixth in reading, twelfth in mathematics and fifth in science, while back in the 2003 study Finland was first in both science and reading and second in mathematics. Finland's tertiary Education has moreover been ranked first by the World Economic Forum.

Early Childhood Education

In Finland, high class daycare and nursery-kindergarten are considered critical for developing the cooperation and communication skills important to prepare young children for lifelong education, as well as formal learning of reading and mathematics. This preparatory period lasts until the age of 7. Finnish early childhood education emphasizes respect for each child's individuality and chance for each child to develop as a unique person. Finnish early educators also guide children in the development of social and interactive skills, encourage them to pay attention to other people's needs and interests, *to care about others*, and to have a positive attitude toward other people, other cultures, and different environments. The purpose of gradually providing opportunities for increased independence is to enable all children to take care of themselves as "becoming adults, to be capable of making responsible decisions, to participate productively in society as an active citizen, and to take care of other people who will need his (or her) help."

To foster a culture of reading, parents of newborn babies are given three books - one for each parent, and a baby book for the child - as part of the "maternity package." According to Finnish child development specialist Eeva Hujala, "Early education is the first and most critical stage of lifelong learning. Neurological research has shown that 90% of brain growth occurs during the first five years of life, and 85% of the nerve paths develop before starting school (NB: at the age of seven in Finland).""Care" in this context is synonymous with upbringing and is seen as a cooperative endeavor between parents and society to prepare children physically (eating properly, keeping clean) and mentally (communication, social awareness, empathy, and self-reflection) before beginning more formal learning at age seven. The idea is that before seven they learn best through play, so by the time they finally get to school they are keen to start learning.

Finland has had access to free universal daycare for children aged eight months to five years in place since 1990, and a year of "preschool/kindergarten" at age six since 1996. "Daycare" includes both full-day childcare centers and municipal playgrounds with adult supervision where parents can accompany the child. Municipalities also pay mothers who wish to do so to remain at home and provide "home daycare" for the first three years. In some cases this includes occasional visits from a care worker to see that the environment is appropriate. The ratio of adults to children in local municipal childcare centres (either private but subsidized by local municipalities or paid for by municipalities with the help of grants from the central government) is, for children three years old and under: three adults (one teacher and two nurses) for every 12 pupils (or one-to-four); and, for children age three to six: three adults

(one teacher and two nurses) for every 20 children (or circa one-to-seven). Payment, where applicable, is scaled to family income and ranges from free to about 200 euros a month maximum.

Early childhood education is not mandatory in Finland, but is used by almost everyone. We see it as the right of the child to have daycare and preschool, It's not a place where you dump your child when you're working. It's a place for your child to play and learn and make friends. Good parents put their children in daycare. It's not related to socio-economic class.

The focus for kindergarten students is to "learn how to learn. It is strongly believed that when children develop learning to learn as a life skill and see the real-life applications of the knowledge they gather, they will become lifelong learners.

Basic Comprehensive Education

The compulsory educational system in Finland consists of a nine-year comprehensive school from 1st to 9th grade, and with new legislation, the compulsory education was expanded to ages of 7 to 18 and to include upper secondary school or vocational school. There are no "gifted" programs, and the more advanced children are expected to help those who are slower to catch on. In most countries, the term "comprehensive school" is used to refer to comprehensive schools attended after primary school, and up to 12th and 13th grade in some countries, but in Finland this English term is used to include primary school, i.e. it is used to refer to all of the grades 1 to 9 (and not higher grades). One can of course also describe the Finnish grades 1 to 6 in English as being comprehensive schools, but this is unnecessary and confusing because primary schools have always been comprehensive in almost all countries, including Finland. Although this division of the peruskoulu into two parts was officially discontinued, it is still very much alive — the distinction is made in everyday speech, the teachers' training and classification and teaching, and even in most school buildings. In addition, the use of two different terms for grades 1–6 and 7–9 is easier to understand for people from most other countries, most of which do not have a single term for primary and middle schools. On the contrary, middle schools and high schools are usually included in the term secondary education in English, which is why the use of this term in English is often confusing for Finns. Schools up to the university level are almost exclusively funded and administered by the municipalities of Finland (local government). There are few private schools. The founding of a new private comprehensive school requires a decision by the Council of State. When founded, private schools are given a state grant comparable to that given to a municipal school of the same size. However, even in private schools, the use of tuition fees is strictly prohibited, and selective admission is prohibited, as well: private schools

must admit all its pupils on the same basis as the corresponding municipal school. In addition, private schools are required to give their students all the education and social benefits that are offered to the students of municipal schools

Classes are small, seldom more than twenty pupils. From the outset pupils are expected to learn two languages in addition to the language of the school (usually Finnish or Swedish), and students in grades one through nine spend from four to eleven periods each week taking classes in art, music, cooking, carpentry, metalwork, and textiles. Small classes, insisted upon by the teachers' union appear to be associated with student achievement, especially in science. Inside the school, the atmosphere is relaxed and informal, and the buildings are so clean that students often wear socks and no shoes. Outdoor activities are stressed, even in the coldest weather; and homework is minimal to leave room for extra-curricular activities. Reading for pleasure is actively encouraged

During the first years of comprehensive school, grading may be limited to verbal assessments rather than formal grades. The start of numerical grading is decided locally. Most commonly, pupils are issued a report card twice a year: at the ends of the autumn and spring terms. There are no high-stakes tests. If a comprehensive school pupil receives a grade of 4 for a particular subject at the end of the spring term, they must show that they have improved in the subject by sitting a separate examination at the end of summer term. If the pupil receives multiple failing grades, they may have to repeat the entire year, though it is considered far preferable to provide a struggling student with extra help and tutoring. In the rare case where a student needs to repeat, the decision is made by the teachers and the headmaster after interviewing the pupil and the parents.

Comprehensive school students enjoy a number of social entitlements, such as school health care and a free lunch every day, which covers about a third of the daily nutritional need. In addition, pupils are entitled to receive free books and materials and free school trips, or even housing in the event that they have a long or arduous trip to school.

Upper Secondary Education

Upper secondary education begins at 15 or 16 and lasts three to four. Finnish upper secondary students may choose whether to undergo occupational training to develop vocational competence and/or to prepare them for a polytechnic institute or to enter an academic upper school focusing on preparation for university studies and post-graduate professional degrees in fields such as law, medicine, science, education, and the humanities. Admissions to academic upper schools are based on GPA, and in some cases academic tests and interviews.

The system, however, is not rigid and vocational school graduates may formally qualify for a university of applied sciences or, in some cases, university education; conversely, academic secondary school graduates may enroll in vocational education programs. It is also possible to attend both vocational and academic secondary schools at the same time. Tuition is free, and vocational and academic students are entitled to school health care, a free lunch, books and a transport to the school.

Upon graduation, vocational school graduates receive a vocational school certificate. Academic upper secondary school graduates receive both secondary school certification and undergo a nationally graded matriculation examination. Polytechnic institutes require school certification for admission, whereas the matriculation examination is more important in university admissions. However, some tertiary education programs have their own admission examinations, and many use a mixture of both.

Advanced Curricula in the Upper Academic School

In relation to mathematics, the second national language and foreign languages, a student can choose to study a curriculum from different levels of difficulty. Students choose their relevant levels at the beginning of school, when selecting appropriate courses, and at the end of school, when registering for the matriculation exam in order to receive the relevant exam paper. These two choices are not directly linked, but students generally keep the level the same for the matriculation exam. One common exception to this rule of thumb occurs when a student has barely completed a higher level course and is unsure of their performance in the matriculation exam. In those cases, a student may elect to take an easier exam. In mathematics, the advanced level is in practice a prerequisite for the more competitive university science programs, such as those of the universities of technology, other university mathematical science programs, and medicine. The nationwide matriculation exam together with entirely percentile-based grading provides an easy way to objectively classify each student based on their mathematical ability, regardless of the year when the exam was taken.

Teachers

Both primary and secondary teachers must have a master's degree to qualify. Teaching is a respected profession and entrance to university programs is highly competitive. A prospective teacher must have very good grades and must combat fierce opposition in order to become a teacher. Only about 10% of applicants to certain programs are successful.

Tertiary education

There are two sectors in the tertiary education: traditional universities and universities of applied sciences. Admissions are based on the high school final GPA, the high school final exam and the university entrance examinations. The selection process is fully transparent, merit-based, and objective; there are no application essays, no human factor in selection, no underrepresented minority support (except for preset quotas for Swedish speakers), and no weight on extracurricular activities. Moreover, the entrance examinations are rarely long multiple-choice exams, and instead consist of a smaller number of longer and more complicated questions that are supposed to test more than memorization and quick mechanical problem solving. Therefore, the selection process is very different from many other countries.

The focus for universities is research in science, and they give theoretical education. In many programs graduating with a master's degree is expected, with no separate admissions process between Bachelor and master's degrees. The universities of applied sciences focus more on responding to the needs of the world of work and they engage in industry development projects. The nature of research is more practical and theories are applied to advanced problem solving. A bachelor's degree takes about three–four years. Depending on the programme, this may be the point of graduation, but it is usually only an intermediate step towards the master's degree. A bachelor's degree in a university of applied sciences (a polytechnic degree), on the other hand, takes about 3.5–4.5 years. Polytechnic degrees are generally accepted as equivalent to university degrees.

Graduates from universities and universities of applied sciences are able to continue their studies by applying to master's degree programmes in universities or universities of applied sciences. After bachelor's degree graduates have completed two years' work experience in their field, they are qualified to apply for master's degree programmes in universities of applied sciences which are work- and research-oriented. Lower university degree graduates are also qualified to apply, but with additional studies. The master's degree programme in universities of applied sciences takes two years and can be undertaken in conjunction with regular work. After the master's degree, the remaining degrees (Licentiate and Doctor) are available only in universities. All master's degrees qualify their recipients for graduate studies at doctoral level. The equivalence discussed above is only relevant when applying for public sector jobs. In universities, membership in the students' union is compulsory. Students' unions in universities of applied sciences are similarly recognized in the legislation, but membership is voluntary and does not include special university student health care (which is organised and partly financed by the students' unions). Finnish students are entitled to a student benefit, which may be revoked if there is a persistent lack of progress in the studies.¹

Some universities provide professional degrees. They have additional requirements in addition to merely completing the studies, such as demonstrations of competence in practice. After the master's degree, there are two further post-graduate degrees— an intermediate postgraduate degree, called *Licentiate*, and the doctoral (Doctorate) degree. A Licentiate programme has the same amount of theoretical education as a Doctor, but its dissertation work has fewer requirements. On the other hand, the requirements for a doctoral dissertation are a little bit higher than in other countries.

Adult Education

Completing secondary school on a vocational programme with full classes on a three-year curriculum provides a formal qualification for further studies. However, it may prove necessary to obtain post-secondary education before being admitted to a university, as the entrance examinations require a relatively high level of knowledge. Post-secondary education is provided by municipal schools or independent 'adult education centres', which can give either vocational education or teaching at comprehensive or upper secondary school levels. It is possible to obtain the matriculation diploma, or to better the comprehensive school grades, in these programmes. In universities, the "Open University" programme enables people without student status to enroll in individual university courses. There are no requirements, but there is a modest tuition fee (e.g., 60 euros per course). Universities of applied sciences have their own similar programme. While "Open University" students cannot pursue studies towards a degree, they may, after passing a sufficient number of separately determined courses with a sufficiently high-grade point average, be eligible for transfer into an undergraduate degree program.

A third branch of adult education is formed, the "Free Education". This is formed by the partially state-funded, independent educational institutes offering diverse courses varying in length and academic level. The purpose of the "Free Education" is not to provide professional or degree-oriented education but to "support the multi-faceted development of personality, the ability to act in the community and to pursue the fulfilment of democracy, equality and diversity in the society. Historically, the "Free Education" stems from the late 19th century efforts to educate the general populace with little previous academic experience.

Functioning of Various Boards of School Education

In Finland, the education system is primarily governed by the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI). While Finland doesn't have traditional "boards of school education" in the same way as some other countries, there are still various bodies and organizations that play significant roles in the administration and development of education policies and standards. Here's an overview:

1. Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI):
 - EDUFI is the central administrative agency responsible for overseeing education policies and implementing national education reforms.
 - It provides guidance and support to educational institutions, develops curricula, and conducts research on education.
 - EDUFI also manages teacher training and professional development programs.
2. Municipal Education Departments:
 - Education in Finland is primarily organized and funded by municipalities.
 - Each municipality has its own education department responsible for managing schools, allocating resources, and implementing local education policies.
3. Finnish Board of Education (Opetushallitus):
 - The Finnish Board of Education is a government agency responsible for ensuring the quality and equity of education in Finland.
 - It works closely with EDUFI and other stakeholders to develop national education policies and standards.
 - The Board of Education also oversees the administration of national assessments and exams.
4. Universities and Higher Education Institutions:
 - Finland has several universities and institutions of higher education that play a role in teacher training, educational research, and curriculum development.
 - These institutions often collaborate with EDUFI and other agencies to improve the quality of education and develop innovative teaching practices.
5. Finnish National Curriculum Framework:
 - The Finnish National Curriculum Framework provides guidelines for the development of school curricula and educational practices.
 - It outlines the core competencies and learning objectives that students should achieve at different stages of their education.

While Finland doesn't have multiple boards of school education like some other countries, the collaboration between EDUFI, municipal education departments, government agencies, universities, and other stakeholders ensures the effective functioning of the education system and the continuous improvement of educational outcomes for all students.

Assessment Systems

In Finland, assessment in education is approached in a manner that is distinct from many other countries. Here are the key aspects of assessment systems in Finnish education:

1. **Minimal Standardized Testing:** Unlike many other countries where standardized testing is pervasive, Finland places minimal emphasis on standardized tests. There are no standardized tests administered to students until the end of their secondary education (typically around age 18).
2. **Holistic Assessment:** Assessment in Finnish schools is holistic and multifaceted. It focuses on assessing not only academic knowledge but also skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and collaboration. Teachers use a variety of assessment methods, including project work, portfolios, presentations, and group discussions, to evaluate students' progress.
3. **Teacher-Led Assessment:** Teachers play a central role in assessment. They continuously assess students' learning progress through observation, formative assessments, and feedback. Teachers have the autonomy to adapt assessment methods to suit the needs of individual students and to provide timely feedback to support their learning.
4. **Narrative Feedback:** Instead of assigning grades or scores, Finnish teachers often provide narrative feedback to students. This feedback focuses on strengths, areas for improvement, and suggestions for further learning. The emphasis is on supporting students' growth and development rather than ranking or labeling them based on their performance.
5. **National Matriculation Examination:** At the end of secondary education, students take the national matriculation examination (Ylioppilastutkinto). This examination is the only standardized test in the Finnish education system. It assesses students' knowledge and skills in various subjects and serves as the primary criterion for university admissions.
6. **Self-Assessment and Peer Assessment:** Finnish students are encouraged to engage in self-assessment and peer assessment. They learn to reflect on their own learning process, set goals for improvement, and provide constructive feedback to their peers. This fosters a sense of responsibility for their own learning and develops their metacognitive skills.
7. **Emphasis on Learning Outcomes:** Finnish education emphasizes learning outcomes rather than performance indicators. The focus is on ensuring that students acquire the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to succeed in life, rather than on achieving specific test scores or grades.

Overall, the assessment system in Finnish education is designed to support student learning, foster a growth mindset, and promote equity and fairness. It emphasizes formative assessment, teacher professionalism, and a holistic approach to evaluating students' progress and achievements.

Norms and standards

The Finnish education system is guided by a set of norms and standards that prioritize equity, quality, and innovation. These norms and standards are reflected in various aspects of the education system, including curriculum development, teaching practices, and educational policies. Here are some of the key norms and standards of the Finnish education system:

1. **Equity and Equality:** Finnish education is founded on the principle of providing equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, geographic location, or individual differences. The system aims to minimize achievement gaps and ensure that every student has access to high-quality education.
2. **High-Quality Teaching and Learning:** The Finnish education system emphasizes the importance of high-quality teaching. Teachers are highly trained professionals who undergo rigorous education and continuous professional development. Teaching practices focus on student-centered learning, collaboration, and critical thinking.
3. **Holistic Development:** Finnish education prioritizes the holistic development of students, including intellectual, social, emotional, and physical aspects. The curriculum is designed to support the development of a wide range of competencies, including problem-solving skills, creativity, and resilience.
4. **Autonomy and Trust:** The Finnish education system values teacher autonomy and trusts educators to make decisions about curriculum design, assessment, and instructional methods. This autonomy fosters innovation and creativity in teaching practices and allows teachers to adapt their approaches to meet the needs of diverse learners.
5. **Continuous Improvement:** Finland has a culture of continuous improvement in education. Educational policies and practices are regularly reviewed and updated based on research and evidence of effectiveness. The system is responsive to changing societal needs and global trends in education.
6. **Collaboration and Partnership:** Collaboration and partnership are central to the Finnish education system. Schools, municipalities, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders work together to support student learning and well-being. There is a strong sense of community and shared responsibility for education.

7. **Inclusion and Support Services:** Finnish education is inclusive, with a commitment to providing support and resources for students with special needs or learning difficulties. Special education services are integrated into mainstream schools, and efforts are made to ensure that every student receives the support they need to succeed.
8. **Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC):** Finland places a strong emphasis on early childhood education and care as the foundation for lifelong learning. ECEC programs are high-quality, play-based, and accessible to all children, laying the groundwork for future academic success.

These norms and standards contribute to Finland's reputation for having one of the best education systems in the world, with high levels of student achievement, well-being, and equity.

State Wise Variations at Finland Education System

In Finland, the education system operates at a national level, and there are no significant state-wise variations as seen in some other countries. However, there may be some variations or flexibility in implementation at the municipal level. Here's how the Finnish education system maintains consistency while allowing for some local adaptations:

1. **National Curriculum Framework:** Finland has a national curriculum framework that provides guidelines for the content, objectives, and principles of education. This framework ensures consistency in education standards across the country, regardless of location.
2. **Autonomy for Municipalities:** While the national curriculum framework sets the overall direction for education, municipalities have a degree of autonomy in implementing educational policies and practices. This allows for some flexibility to address local needs and preferences.
3. **Teacher Professionalism:** Finnish teachers are highly trained professionals who have autonomy in designing their teaching methods and approaches. While they follow the national curriculum, they have the flexibility to adapt their practices to meet the needs of their students and local context.
4. **Support Services:** Finland's education system provides comprehensive support services for students, including special education, counseling, and health services. These services are integrated into schools and are available to all students, regardless of their location.

While there may be some variations in the implementation of education policies at the municipal level, the Finnish education system is characterized by its consistency, equity, and high standards across the country.

Conclusion

The Finnish education system emphasizes equality, providing equal opportunities for all students regardless of their socioeconomic background or location. Finnish children start school at the age of seven and attend comprehensive school (grades 1-9), which is compulsory. There are no standardized tests until the end of high school. Teaching is a prestigious profession in Finland, and teachers are required to have a master's degree. They enjoy autonomy and respect in their profession. The education system focuses on the holistic development of students, emphasizing creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills rather than rote memorization. Finnish schools have shorter school days and minimal homework, allowing students more time for extracurricular activities and hobbies. Play is considered essential for learning, even in older grades. Teachers in Finland have significant autonomy in designing their curriculum and assessments, which allows them to tailor their teaching methods to the needs of their student. Finnish schools do not have a culture of high-stakes standardized testing or academic streaming. Instead, they focus on personalized learning and continuous assessment. Finland provides comprehensive support services for students, including special education and counselling, to ensure that every student receives the assistance they need to succeed. Finland places a strong emphasis on early childhood education and care, recognizing its importance in laying the foundation for later academic success. Teachers in Finland engage in continuous professional development throughout their careers to stay updated with the latest research and teaching methodologies. Overall, Finland's education system prioritizes equity, individualized learning, and teacher professionalism, which have contributed to its success on the global stage.



SHARING OF EXPERIENCE





Rosmy Mathew, Alumna
Doha Qatar

I am working as teacher and activity coordinator in the Mathematics Department of Loyola International School, Doha Qatar.

Loyola International School, founded in September 2014 in Al Nasr, Doha Qatar, offers holistic education within a nurturing environment. Following the CBSE curriculum, our focus is on developing students' overall personality through comprehensive facilities and a natural campus setting. We prioritize physical activities to foster a love for learning. Safety measures include CCTV surveillance, fire alarms, regular drills, and a well-equipped nurse room for first aid care.

We also have a reading room with Library facility provided to the students, to improve in their reading skills. Transport facility is provided by the School and every bus is supervised by a bus attender while travelling.

Our curriculum integrates the latest global insights, employing both formative and summative assessments for continual evaluation. Empowering students to devise their own success strategies, we prioritize confidence-building to enhance their overall growth. Aligned with CBSE and international standards, our approach emphasizes early learning goals and value-based education guidelines from MOEHE, Qatar, fostering a positive atmosphere for holistic student development.

At LIS, KG and Primary levels utilize diverse assessment methods, such as class tests, monthly tests, biannual periodic tests, and half-yearly and annual exams, to monitor student progress comprehensively. Promotion is contingent upon continual assessment, with worksheets and assignments used for regular progress monitoring. Ipsative assessment is pivotal, enabling students to compare current performance with past scores. Our core objective is to respect the needs of students, parents, and staff, ensuring equal opportunities for all students, devoid of discrimination. We prioritize a supportive environment conducive to holistic development.



Anjaly Elizabeth Xavier, Alumni
Kochi

I have been working at KV INS DRONACHARYA, KOCHI for the academic year 2023 -2024 as a PGT Economics. Kendriya vidyala schools are very different from the state schools..They are following CBSE syllabus. Their Academic year start from April 1st to March 31st in the southern region. Their school time tables changed according to the climate conditions. But in the southern region they normally begin their classes from morning at 8 am and end at 2.45 pm. Second Saturdays and Sundays considered as holiday. Some state related holidays are not applicable to this school. Centrally determined holidays are applicable for them. Unit exam and PTM is followed by every month.Students must keep all notes, text books along with their homework book and multidisciplinary activity book.

Teacher are always assessed by Principal and Sangathan Committee.

OTHERS

Sangathan - It means the KendriyaVidyalaya Sangathan, an autonomous body (registered as a Society under the Societies Registration Act, XXI of 1860) set up by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, to establish, administer and manage the Kendriya Vidyalayas. Vidyalaya means a Kendriya Vidyalaya - set up under the scheme of Kendriya Vidyalays.

Academic year - a period of 12 months beginning from the 1April to 31 March.

The KVS shall function through its General Body called the Sangathan, its Board of Governors and four standing Committees constituted by the Board viz. the Finance Committee, the Academic Advisory Committee

The Works Committee and Administration and Establishment Committee.

Morning Assembly – The school day shall begin with the Morning Assembly. All students, teachers and the Principal shall attend the Assembly.

The morning Assembly shall begin with the common prayer which shall include a Sanskrit Shloka ‘ असतो मा सदगमय, तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय, मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय’

Managed and organized by students themselves under the overall guidance and Supervision of the concerned teachers. Various Houses shall be given the responsibility Of organizing the Assembly on a rotation basis.

Common Uniform - All students of Kendriya Vidyalayas shall have a common uniform. Kendriya Vidyalayas being composite co-educational schools having classes form I to XII,

ACADEMIC SUPERVISION: There shall be two levels of supervision:

- (i) At the level of the school
- (ii) At the level of the Assistant Commissioner



Sojo John, Alumni

Doha, Qatar

I am working as a PGT Economics in one of the reputed CBSE schools in Doha, Qatar. This feedback is based on a one-year experience as a teacher in an Indian school in Qatar.

Indian schools in Qatar typically follow the CBSE curriculum, meaning they use the same textbooks, syllabus, and standardized tests (like the AllIndia Senior School Certificate Examinations) as schools in India. This ensures a consistent learning experience and prepares students for higher education opportunities in either country. Both systems emphasize academic achievement, with a focus on core subjects like math, science, and social studies.

Differences:

- **School Time:** 7.30 am to 1.30 pm (Qatar time)
- **Cultural Context:** Schools in India will naturally integrate more Indian history, culture, and social values into their curriculum. Indian schools in Qatar may incorporate some aspects of Qatari culture as well.
- **Examinations:** While the core exams are the same, there might be slight variations depending on the specific regulations of Qatar's education ministry.
- **Learning Environment:** Schools in Qatar may have a more diverse student body and potentially more resources due to funding differences. They might also have a slightly different approach in terms of extracurricular activities or class schedules due to factors like weather and local holidays.
- **Cost:** On average, Indian schools in Qatar tend to be more expensive than schools in India.
- **Standardization:** CBSE schools in India are subject to stricter standardization and regulations compared to Indian schools in Qatar, which may have some flexibility based on local requirements.
- **Socialization:** Children in Indian schools in Qatar may have the opportunity to connect with

a broader range of cultures compared to schools in India.

- **Teacher development:** Many programmes and activities to foster professional development in teachers
- **Class observations:** The classes will be observed by Principal/Vice Principal, Session Coordinator and Head of the Department at least twice in a term and will give feedbacks
- **Activity based learning:** Classes will be focused more on activity based learning

The school in which I worked for a period of 7 months (June- December 2023) was in Vellore, Tamil Nadu. It is a CBSE school with classes from Montessori to grade 12 with Commerce and Science batches and Science batch is yet again classified as NEET and JEE along with the regular batches. I handled grade 10 and 9 students. The school is run by a single family making it a more profitable family business than service.

Due to extreme competition among schools, unlike Kerala, the school timings are lengthy and hectic. The school timing in general is from 08:45 am - 4:30 pm from Monday to Saturday except for Montessori (half working) and lower classes (09:30 am - 3:30 pm) who are given off on all Saturdays too. There are 9 periods of 45 minutes duration. However the NEET/JEE batches will stay till 7:45 pm. Grade 10 onwards will have full working days except for Sundays and special coaching classes for all subjects are arranged post the school timing (5- 06:30 pm) on all working days and during public holidays and Sundays whenever required. They do not have any term breaks or winter holidays or study holidays between exams. Hence the school works for all 12 months and there will be classes for higher grades and the child psychology (different needs etc) is unknown to the schools.

There is no room for any extracurricular (the school doesn't consider them as co-curricular) activities (art and craft, dance, drama, music, games, sports or other clubs) and a limited choices are arranged for students up to grade 8 (whose last period is usually taken by class teacher which can be an activity period) and for grade 9 on request, for a huge amount once in a fortnight wherein the grade 9 participants alone will miss their regular class during the activity time. Hence, they prefer not to join such activities. Though the students are admitted to some very limited and basic school clubs (hardly 4 or 5), these club activities take place only once in a year mainly towards the end of the academic year - any one Saturday (that too half a day), making it sheerly a namesake activity. There is no sports or arts coaching in particular and the students randomly play just for the sports day or arts day or the like. The school doesn't have any official sports and games team to represent for any Sahodaya events and there is no such practice. Students randomly participate on their own in any competitions conducted district wide or more if their parents are ready for it. The school only focuses on academic related competitions like SOF Olympiads, Spelling Bee and the like.

Although the school follows the CBSE curriculum in general, it begins only from grade 6 and till then i.e., from Montessori to grade 5, it follows Chrysalis curriculum and focuses mainly on speaking skills and ignores writing skills of the students which makes it difficult when they

enter into grade 6. There are five to six divisions per grade as each division contains about 40 students. One of the divisions right from grade 6 to 9 i.e, C division is labelled as the foundation (FNT) class. They are labelled so because they deviate from the CBSE- NCERT syllabus for Science and Maths subjects and follow advanced alternative textbooks which lay a foundation for NEET - JEE entrance exams. Hence the topper students are sorted out and placed in those divisions (students either pay an additional fee than other divisions or study for free on a yearly scholarship basis for which they have to clear and top in the yearly scholarship exam conducted by the school). The less prepared (euphemism for the weak students) are shifted to other sections after one academic year. FNT will have a separate question paper for all the exams (mid term, half yearly and annual) while other divisions (non-FNT) follow NCERT pattern. They are also given a fixed number of worksheets on a weekly basis for foundation subjects. The non-FNT (till grade 9 and class 10) will receive 2 worksheets per subject (monthly) prepared by the respective subject teachers in addition to textbook exercises. However this is an unhealthy practice as it creates a label (topper class) and a divide between students based on their academic ability.

In addition to general periods, the students up to grade 9 have two continuous robotics periods and school cinema (for grade 10 also) once in a week on an alternative basis. The value education class was replaced by the school cinema. Weekly Inter-house indoor activities (IHA) like dumb charades or spelling bee, logos quiz, debate etc are conducted during the 4th and 5th period on a fixed weekday by the class teacher. However, they will not be strictly done as teachers do utilise them for completion of portions or other works too.

In general, the school doesn't give any importance for the overall development of a child. The students do miss such activities in their golden age and there are lots of behavioural issues in them as a result which is brushed under the carpet. They are not even given any behavioural corrections as the school focuses on not losing their business for which they want the students to remain, giving them an unhealthy freedom to act upon their will without fear of being questioned.

The assessment pattern (3 midterm, quarterly, half yearly and annual) is the same as that of the CBSE for students up to grade 9. In addition they will have a quota of class tests which will be more for foundation students.

Being the board students, there is continuous assessment from Grade 10 onwards.

They include: 1. Cycle tests - every week - 6 days - 6 subjects - 1 hr duration - 20 marks

2. Monthly tests - 2 hr duration - 40 marks
3. Term tests - twice a year - 3 hrs - 80 marks
4. 5 Pre Board exams - 3 hrs - 80 marks

As stated, the students are deprived of proper break between exams and are supposed to be present in school and do their revisions along with the teacher even during the alternative break days between exams.

The students spend more time in school which causes high fatigue in them and Vellore is one of the hottest places in Tamil Nadu. Despite the weather conditions, they are accustomed to be in school as the general psyche of the people are conditioned so, by the schools functioning in and around the city due to unhealthy competition which compete for top ranks in district levels. Hence the schools focus more on ranks rather than working for 100% pass and failures are brushed under the carpet. Hence the working environment is also very toxic as teachers are bestowed with targets throughout the year. Hence both teachers and students are apt for the proverb, “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy”.



Anila Antony, Alumni
United Kingdom

The British curriculum which established in 1988 is one of the most widely used educational systems in the world. Schools from Madrid to Manila choose the British curriculum because they believe it as the best choice for providing their students with a first quality education. The UK education system is apparently student-centred and well balanced, giving emphasis on both breadth and depth of the subject matter. The curriculum structures the learning in such a way that guides students through a variety of subjects including not only the core subjects such as Maths, Science and Literature but also the Arts, Humanities and more.

Generally the UK education system has five stages of education - Early years, Primary years, Secondary education, Further education and Higher education. Education is compulsory for all children in UK between the ages of 5 (4 in Northern Ireland) and 16. The education system in UK is also known for its research intensive universities and a strong focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects. The curriculum is designed to provide all round education for a student focusing on academics and on personality development as well. The students are encouraged to develop critical thinking, problem-solving and analytical skills in the curriculum.

An educator should peep into the UK education system during his/her studies. This document gives you a brief idea about the system of education in the UK. The document contains different types of schools in UK, the education system in UK schools, the assessment, the standards and norms of the education system and difference between the Indian education system and the UK education system.

Types of Schools in UK

In UK at both primary and secondary levels, there could be several different types of schools and colleges from state-funded free schools and academics to technical colleges and private schools. All children in UK aged between 5 and 16 are entitled to a free place at a state school

which is funded by the government either directly or via the local authority. Of the 8.8 million UK children attending regular school, 99.4 percent go to the state schools. The most common ones among them are as follows:

Community Schools

Community schools also known as Local authority maintained schools are wholly owned and maintained by local authorities. The schools must follow the national curriculum and the admissions to these schools are governed by the local authority.

Foundation schools and voluntary schools

These schools are funded by the local authority but are run by the school governing body. They have more freedom to change the curriculum. Sometimes these schools are even supported by representatives from religious groups. The governing body employs the staff and has primary responsibility for admissions.

Faith Schools

Faith schools are schools with a religious character. These schools are funded by both the local authority and the supporting body (Example: the Roman Catholic Church). They follow the national curriculum but can choose what they teach in Religious studies. They have a different admissions criteria and staffing policies although anyone can apply for a place.

Academies

Academies are publicly-funded independent schools at either primary or secondary level. They receive funding directly from the government and are run by an academy trust. These academy trusts can be supported by sponsors such as business, universities, other schools, faith groups or voluntary groups. A trust can have more than one school under it. The trusts are not for profit companies rather work with sponsors to improve the performance of their schools and the education is completely free for students. They can employ staffs and have trustees who are responsible for the performance of the academies in the trust.

These schools have much more independence than other schools including the power to direct their own curriculum like term dates and change of schools hours. But they have to follow the same rules on admission, special educational needs, and exclusions as other state schools and students attend the same exams. The academies are inspected by Ofsted – the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s services and skills.

Free Schools

Free schools which operates similar to academies receive their funding directly from the government, have control over the curriculum, teacher’s pay and length of a term or a school day. They are all ability schools so they cannot use any academic selection process. These

schools can be set up by groups like charities, universities, independent schools, community and faith groups, teachers, parents and business but these groups are only made to ensure the quality of the schools and not for financial profits. These schools are also inspected by the Ofsted. There are two types of free schools. They are as follows:

University Technology Colleges (UTC) are secondary schools which specialise in subjects like engineering and construction and are taught along with business skills and use of IT. These schools are sponsored by Universities supported by local business and employers who also provide work experience for students. The curriculum is even designed by the university and employers and it gives more significance to practical subjects leading to technical qualifications in addition to the academics.

Studio Schools are specialised secondary schools which are small usually with around 300 pupils. They provides mainstream qualifications through project based learning. Students get more opportunity to work in realistic life situations guided by local employers and a personal coach. This gives the students the skills and qualifications they need in work or to take up further education.

Grammar Schools

Grammar schools are state-funded, non-fee paying selective secondary schools whose admissions are strictly based on students' academic ability assessed by an exam called 11 plus. These schools were set up to enable brightest students in the state system to receive the highest quality of education so that students from less wealthy background could have the same opportunities as that of the private schools but without any cost.

City Technology Schools

City Technology Colleges (CTC) and the City College for the technology of arts are independent schools in urban areas for students aged 11 to 18. The schools are funded by the government but private business sponsors can also contribute and the schools charge no fees to the students. The city technology colleges emphasise teaching science and technology while the city college for the technology of arts teaches technology related to creative arts and performing.

State Boarding Schools

State boarding schools are schools which provide free education but charge fees for boarding. Most state boarding schools are academies, some are free schools and some are run by local authorities. They give priority to students who have a particular need to board and will assess their suitability for boarding.

Private Schools

Private schools also known as independent schools charge fees to attend instead of being funded by the government. They do not have to follow the national curriculum. However, these schools must be registered with the government and are inspected regularly. All school reports are published online by the organisation responsible for inspecting them.

Special Schools

Special schools are the schools which provide education for children with special needs or learning difficulties. Section 316 of the Education Act 1996 states that a child with special educational needs should be educated in a mainstream school, unless a parent indicates that they do not want their child educated in mainstream school or it is incompatible with the efficient education of other children. Special schools can be local authority funded, academies, free schools and even independent schools.

Special schools with children aged 11 and older can specialise in any areas such as

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- social, emotional and mental health,
- sensory and physical needs.

The schools can even further specialise within these categories according to the special needs for instance Autistic spectrum disorders, visual impairment or speech, language and communication needs.

Structure of School Education System in UK

The UK education system can broadly be defined as following five principal stages: Early years, Primary education, Secondary education, Further Education and Higher education. The early years of education are vital for laying the foundations for a child's development. So UK government has given priority to improve the standards in the early years education. Moreover, all children in UK between the ages 3 and 4 are entitled to 15 hours of free education or child care per week. Higher education for students aged 18 and above is provided by colleges and universities that offers undergraduate degrees in various fields of study.

In UK, the schools are required to teach a curriculum created by the government known as the National Curriculum of UK and it sets out what should be taught in each year group. In the national curriculum, Maths, Science and English are the core subjects. In addition to this, the schools must offer a broad and balanced curriculum which includes technology, humanities, languages, arts, physical education and religious education. The basic curriculum of UK

includes the national curriculum as well as relationships, sex and health education and religious education.

The Primary education and Secondary education are mandatory in UK. The national curriculum divides these primary and secondary education into blocks of years known as Key stages (KS).

Primary Education

Primary school education in UK begins at the age of 5 and continues to the end of year 6 at the age of 11. The year groups covered in Primary education are Reception, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6. The main aim of primary education is to achieve the basic literacy and numeracy skills across all pupils as well as to establish basic foundation in science, maths and other core subjects.

Primary school education include Key stage 1 (KS 1) and Key stage 2 (KS 2). Key stage 1 covers the year groups Year 1 and Year 2 and Key stage 2 covers Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6. The compulsory national curriculum subjects at primary school are: English, maths, science, design and technology, history, geography, art and design, music, physical education (including swimming), computing and ancient and modern foreign languages (at key stage 2). In addition to this, schools must also provide relationships and health education and religious education.

Secondary Education

Secondary education in UK begins in Year 7 at the age of 11 and continues to the end of Year 11 at the age of 16. The year groups covered in secondary schools are Year 7, Year 8, Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11. This education focuses to get students ready for their GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) exams which is necessary for furthering one's education or entering the work force.

Secondary education comprises two key stages: Key stage 3 (KS 3) and Key stage 4 (KS 4). Key stage 3 consists of three year groups – Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9. In this stage, all students study English, maths, science a humanity and a modern language. Besides these subjects, schools provide a list of optional subjects such as art, drama, Latin, sport science, design technology, computer science and the students need to choose a few subjects that interests them. Year 9 is a very important year in British school system as it is the foundation for the GCSE programme.

Key stage 4 consists of the last two year groups – Year 10 and Year 11. This stage is very significant as the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) exam is conducted at the end of this stage. GCSE programme is considered as a two year programme in which

students prepare for their GCSE exams which is conducted at the end of year 11. The compulsory subjects for this stage are the core subjects - English, maths and science and the foundation subjects – computing, physical education and citizenship. The schools must also offer at least one from these optional subjects – arts, design and technology, humanities and modern foreign languages. They must also provide relationships, sex and health education and religious education. Students study around 9 to 12 subjects during the GCSE programme. The chosen subjects and the GCSE results are very important for their further studies.

Further Education

Further education is a two year programme for students aged 16 and above comprising of year groups – Year 12 and Year 13 and this leads to A (Advanced) level examinations. These two years together forms the key stage 5. This stage also known as A level study is the university preparation stage in which students specialise in 3 or 4 subjects they wish to follow at university. At the end of year 13, following the examinations in each subject, the students receive A level certificate which is recognised by all UK universities and by institutions worldwide.

Apart from this, students can also opt for other vocational qualifications at this stage if they are not interested in pursuing higher education. The further education curriculum offers a range of options to students who want to continue their studies. Moreover, there are many other different courses available ranging from short evening classes to two year diploma. The main goals of further education are to provide students with skills and knowledge needed to enter the workforce as well as to prepare them for their further study at a higher level.

Assessment

In UK, students will be continuously assessed on their progress throughout primary and secondary education. These assessments will be done through a combination of exams and course works with each stage becoming increasingly exam – based. At the end of each key stage, students are assessed by national tests or teacher assessments to measure their progress.

SATs (Standard Assessment Tests) are standardised tests administered by primary schools to students in Year 2 and Year 6 to check their educational progress. In key stage 1, there is a phonics test in Year 1 and a national test KS 1 SATs in Year 2. The phonics test in year 1 is assessed by the teacher and it also checks whether the child needs any extra help with reading. The KS1 national test in Year 2 covers English reading and maths. In addition to this, there is teacher assessments in maths, science and English reading and writing.

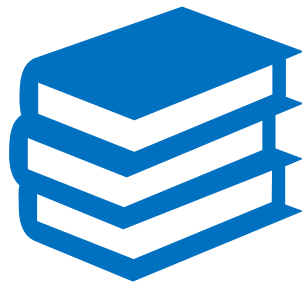
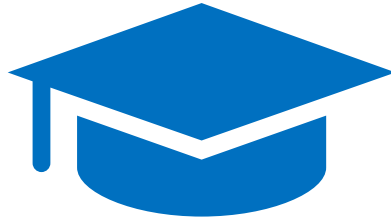
In key stage 2, there is a Multiplication Table Check (MTC) in Year 4 and KS2 SATs in Year 6. The multiplication table in Year 4 check recalls of times table up to 12 at the age of

eight or nine. SATs in KS2 are national test conducted at the end of Year 6. This assessment is used to measure school performance and to make sure the students are being supported in the best way possible as they move into secondary school. The assessment tests the child's skills in English reading, English grammar, punctuation and spelling and maths. Besides these, there is teacher assessments in English writing and science.

In key stage 3, there is no notable assessments other than some informal teacher assessments to check the knowledge of students. In key stage 4, GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) exams are conducted. GCSE is an academic qualification which is highly valued by schools, colleges and employers so its results has a significant bearing on a child's future endeavours. In GCSE, students take 7 to 10 subjects and it checks the English language and English literature, Mathematics and Science (Core subjects), history or geography, a modern language and some other optional subjects according to them. Grades are awarded to each subject from numbers 9 to 1 with 9 being the highest. The knowledge and skills assessed in GCSE varies depending on the subjects but in almost all subjects, general knowledge, fundamental writing and numerical skills are tested.

In key stage 5, there are two main assessments AS (Advanced Subsidiary)-levels in Year 12 and A (Advanced)-levels in Year 13 offering students a pathway to higher education or to the work force. An A-level is a school leaving qualification and the subjects of this level are generally studied over two years. Students can choose 3 to 4 subjects in their further education. The AS level is an advanced qualification of a fourth subject on the top of the three other subjects and this exam is conducted at the end of Year 12. Then students only study the other three A-levels in the second year and the A or A2 level exams are conducted on these specialised subjects. These are generally more in depth and academically rigorous than AS. The AS and A2 marks are combined for full A- level award.

A Look at the Diverse School Systems



St. Thomas College of Teacher Education, Pala