

Education system

Chile

described and compared with
the Dutch system

This document contains information on the education system of Chile. We explain the Dutch equivalent of the most common qualifications from Chile for the purpose of admission to Dutch higher education.

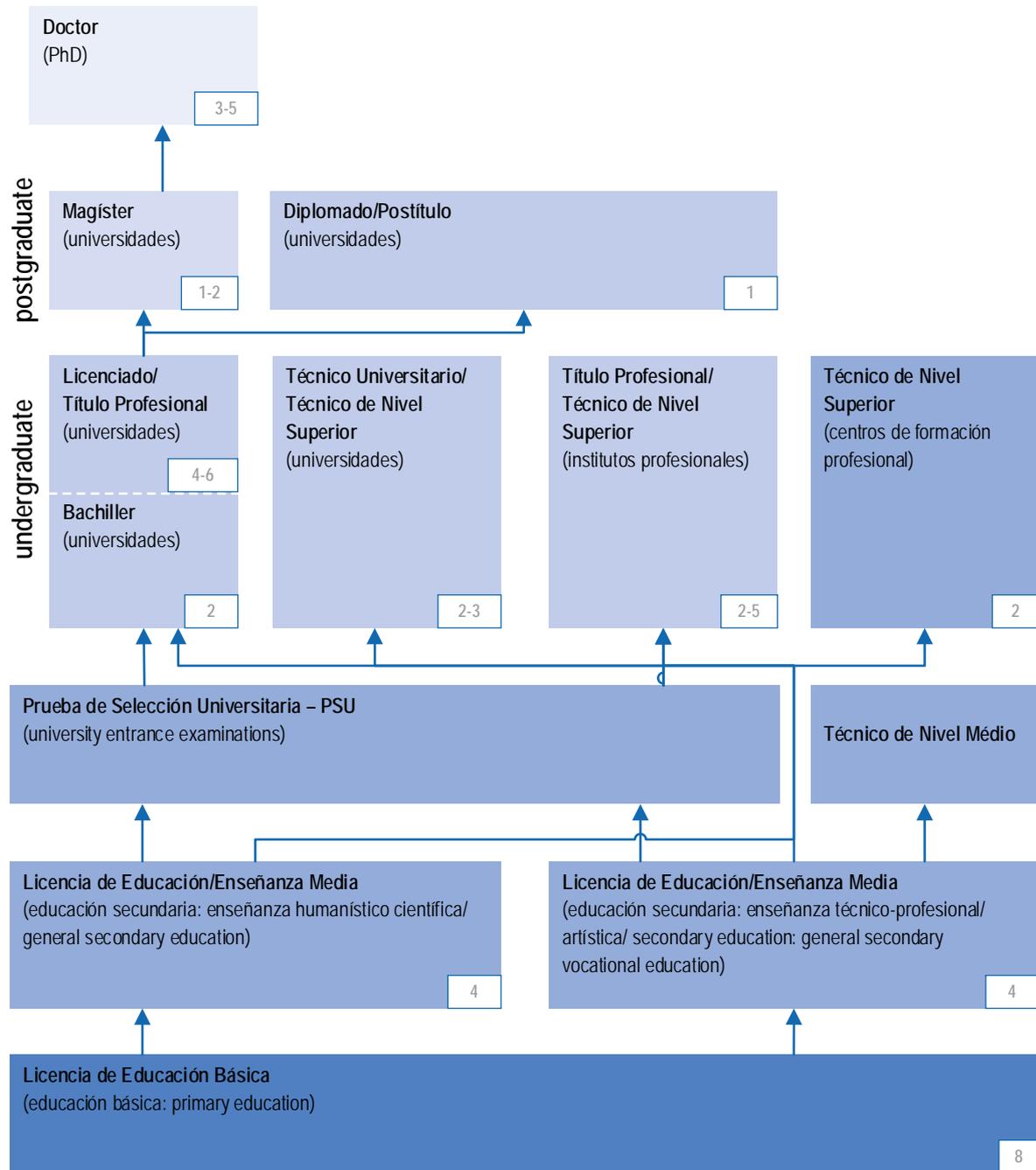
Disclaimer

We assemble the information for these descriptions of education systems with the greatest care. However, we cannot be held responsible for the consequences of errors or incomplete information in this document.



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 Duration of education

Evaluation chart

The left-hand column in the table below lists the most common foreign qualifications applicable to admission to higher education. The other columns show the Dutch equivalent along with the comparable levels in the Dutch and European qualifications frameworks.

| Degree or qualification | Dutch equivalent and NLQF level | | EQF level |
|--|---|-----|-----------|
| Técnico de Nivel Médio | MBO diploma (qualification levels 1, 2, 3 or 4) | 1-4 | 1-4 |
| <i>Licencia de Educación Media/Licencia de Enseñanza Media (humanístico-científica)</i> | approximately HAVO diploma | 4 | 4 |
| <i>Licencia de Educación Media/Licencia de Enseñanza Media (técnico-profesional/artística)</i> | approximately HAVO diploma with vocational subjects | 4 | 4 |
| <i>Técnico de Nivel Superior</i> | at least MBO diploma (qualification level 4) | 4 | 4 |
| <i>Titulo Profesional (Instituto Profesional)</i> | at most HBO bachelor's degree | 6 | 6 |
| <i>Licenciado/Titulo Profesional (Universidad)</i> | HBO or WO bachelor's degree | 6 | 6 |
| <i>Diplomado/Postítulo</i> | at least HBO or WO bachelor's degree | 6 | 6 |
| <i>Magister</i> | HBO or WO master's degree | 7 | 7 |

NB

- The information provided in the table is a general recommendation from which no rights may be derived.
- NLQF = Dutch Qualifications Framework. EQF = European Qualifications Framework.
- The EQF/[NLQF level](#) is not so much a reflection of study load or content; rather, it is an indication of a person's knowledge and skills after having completed a certain programme of study.
- Information about Dutch equivalent qualifications can be found on our website: [the Dutch education system](#).
- [The Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market \(SBB\)](#), evaluates statements on foreign qualifications and

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training at VMBO and MBO level. The evaluation may vary if SBB evaluates the diploma for admission to VET schools or the labour market in the Netherlands.

■ Introduction

Chile is a presidential republic comprising 13 regions, including 1 metropolitan region (Santiago). The regions consist of over 50 provinces, which are subdivided into municipalities.

The population is represented in the parliament (*Congreso Nacional*), which consists of two houses: the Senate (*Senado*) and the House of Representatives (*Cámara de Diputados*). The country has a population of over 16 million. Its capital city is Santiago de Chile. The majority of the population speak Spanish.

The *Ministerio de Educación* (MINEDUC), Ministry of Education, is the body responsible for primary, secondary and higher education. The Ministry formulates the basic curricula for primary and secondary education, and grants higher education institutions permission to offer programmes and award degrees.

The *Consejo Nacional de Educación* (CNED) works in support of the Ministry's education policy activities. Its tasks include approval of the basic curricula formulated by the Ministry. Amongst other duties, the *Consejo Nacional de Acreditación* (CNA) is responsible for the institutional accreditation procedure and accreditation of higher education study programmes.

The legal framework of the Chilean education system lies in the constitution and various education acts. The basic principles of and rights to education are laid down in the education acts. Key acts include the *Ley N° 18962*, the 1990 education act most recently amended in 2006: *Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Enseñanza* (LOCE), the 2006 *Ley N° 20.129*, which establishes a national quality assurance system for the higher education sector: *Sistema Nacional de Aseguramiento de la Calidad de la Educación Superior* and *Ley No. 20.370*, the new 2009 education act: *Ley General de Educación* (LGE).

Chile has a unitary higher education system which does not apply a clear distinction between academic education and higher professional education. Programmes contain elements of both higher professional education and academic education.

Education has been compulsory for children aged 6 to 18 since 2003. The language of education is Spanish.

The academic year consists of 2 semesters, and runs from 1 March to 31 December.

■ Primary and secondary education

Primary and secondary education has a total duration of 12 years (8 + 4) and is compulsory for all pupils. Education is compulsory for children aged 6 and up. The system comprises 2 types of education: *educación básica* and *educación media* with a duration of 8 and 4 years, respectively. The education act features provisions on the future modification of this structure. Under the new system, a 6-year *Educación básica* will be followed by another 6 years of *educación media*. The first 4 years will consist of general education (*formación general*), while the final 2 years will consist of differentiated education (*formación diferenciada*).

Primary and secondary education is available at both private and public schools. The Ministry of Education [website](#) features information on the various schools.

Primary education - *Educación básica*

Educación básica (primary education) is offered at a *liceo*, *colegio* or *instituto*. The study programme has a nominal duration of 8 years and is compulsory for pupils aged 6-13. The programme consists of 2 phases: an initial phase (*primer ciclo básico*) – grades 1-4 with a duration of 4 years – for pupils aged 6-9. The second phase (*segundo ciclo básico*) – grades 5-8 – also has a duration of 4 years and is intended for pupils aged 10-13.

The basic curriculum was set by law. As of 2011, the basic curriculum consists of 11 subjects for grades 1-6:

- *lenguaje y comunicación* (language and communication)
- *inglés* (English)
- *matemática* (mathematics)
- *historia, geografía y ciencias sociales* (history, geography and social sciences)
- *ciencias naturales* (natural sciences);
- *artes visuales* (art education)
- *música* (music)
- *educación física y salud* (physical education and health)
- *orientación* (orientation)
- *tecnología* (technology)
- *religión* (religion)

The curriculum for grades 7 and up consists of 10 subjects. As of grade 7, music is no longer taught as a separate subject. The total study load is 1444 hours per year, divided into at least 38 hours per week.

Upon completion, pupils generally receive the *Licencia de Educación Básica* certificate.

Secondary education - *Educación media*

Secondary education (*educación secundaria* or *educación/enseñanza media*) is also offered at a *liceo*, *colegio* or *instituto* and is intended for pupils aged 14-18. This type of education currently has a nominal duration of 4 years and is divided into two 2-year cycles. The first 2 years consist of a common core curriculum comprised of 11 subjects:

- *lenguaje y comunicación* (language and communication)
- *idioma extranjero inglés* (English as a foreign language)
- *matemática* (mathematics)
- *biología* (biology)
- *física* (physics)
- *química* (chemistry)
- *historia, geografía y ciencias sociales* (history, geography and social sciences)
- *educación tecnológica* (technology)
- *artes visuales o artes musicales* (art or music education)
- *educación física* (physical education)
- *orientación* (orientation)
- *religión* (religion)

The subjects during the final 2 years will depend on the chosen specialisation:

- *enseñanza media humanístico-científica* (general secondary education)
- *enseñanza media técnico-profesional* (technical vocational education)
- *enseñanza artística* (art education)

The *enseñanza media humanístico-científica* is aimed at acquiring more in-depth knowledge of general education subjects. The education represents a study load of 36-42 hours per week. The curriculum consists of 12 subjects:

- *lengua castellana y comunicación* (Spanish language and communication)
- *idioma extranjero* (foreign language)
- *matemática* (mathematics)
- *historia y ciencias sociales* (history and social sciences)
- *filosofía y psicología* (philosophy and psychology)
- *biología* (biology)
- *física* (physics)
- *química* (chemistry)
- *artes visuales o artes musicales* (art or music education)
- *educación física* (physical education)
- *consejo de curso* (study programme orientation)
- *religión* (religion)

The *enseñanza media técnico-profesional* has a study load of either 38 or 42 hours per week, divided over 12 hours of general education and 26 hours of education in the chosen field of study. This type of education prepares pupils for

a specific specialisation. Pupils can choose various specialisations in the area of agriculture, technology, industry, commerce and shipping.

General education consists of 4 subjects:

- *lengua castellana y comunicación* (Spanish language and communication)
- *idioma extranjero* (foreign language)
- *matemática* (mathematics)
- *historia y ciencias sociales* (history and social sciences)

Pupils taking *enseñanza artística* specialise in art education.

Upon completion of the secondary education programme, pupils receive a *Licencia de Educación, Media* or *Licencia de Enseñanza Media* certificate. This certificate provides access to the Chilean higher education system. Access to university education is generally also subject to a compulsory entrance examination (*Prueba de Selección Universitaria* – PSU).

In terms of level, the *Licencia de Educación Media* or *Licencia de Enseñanza Media (humanístico-científica)* is approximately comparable to a HAVO diploma.

In terms of level, the *Licencia de Educación Media* or *Licencia de Enseñanza Media (técnico-profesional/artística)* is approximately comparable to a HAVO diploma with vocational subjects.

Pupils who have opted for technical vocational education may also be eligible for a *Técnico de Nivel Medio* certificate stating the relevant specialisation.

In terms of level, the *Técnico de Nivel Medio* is comparable to an MBO diploma at qualification level 1-4, depending on the specialisation.

Post-secondary education

Amongst other institutes, post-secondary education is offered by *Centros de Formación Técnica* (technical training centres) and *Institutos Profesionales* (professional institutes).

In Chile, these institutes are part of the higher education system. Both institutes offer vocational education programmes (*carreras técnicas de nivel superior*). Students must have a secondary school diploma in order to qualify for admission.

The programmes currently have a duration of 2 to 3 years and require at least 1600 hours of study. Upon completion of the programme, students will receive the *Técnico de Nivel Superior* certificate. This certificate offers access to the labour market and to advanced higher education programmes. In some cases, students may also qualify for exemptions on the basis of the certificate. Evaluation of the *Técnico de Nivel Superior* may vary depending on the type of study and duration of the programme.

In terms of level, the *Técnico de Nivel Superior* is comparable to at least an MBO diploma at qualification level 4.

Institutos Profesionales also offer programmes leading to the *Título Profesional*, a professional qualification. See under [Higher professional education](#).

■ Admission to higher education

Admission to higher education requires a secondary school diploma: *Licencia de Educación Media* or *Licencia de Enseñanza Media*.

In the period from 1967 to 2003, many universities required in addition to the secondary school diploma, completion of an entrance examination for admission to higher education: *Prueba de Aptitud Académica* (PAA). Since late 2003, this entrance examination has been replaced by another examination, the *Prueba de Selección Universitaria* (PSU). The PSU is currently applied by all universities affiliated with the *Consejo de Rectores de las Universidades Chilenas* (CRUCH). The entrance examination consists of 2 compulsory tests in the area of *matemática* (mathematics) and *lenguaje y comunicación* (language and communication), supplemented with a third test on the subject of *ciencias* (sciences: biology, physics) or *historia, geografía y ciencias sociales* (history, geography and social sciences).

This will depend on the chosen programme of study. The entrance examination is based on a scale from 150 to 850 points, with an average of 500 points. Admission to universities affiliated with CRUCH requires a minimum score of 475 points. The requisite results for admission to higher education will vary depending on the institution. Supplementary requirements may also apply, depending on the programme.

The development and management of tests is the responsibility of the *Departamento de Evaluación, Medición y Registro Educacional* at *Universidad de Chile*. Further information on the PSU is available on the CRUCH [website](#) and *Universidad de Chile* [website](#).

■ Higher education

Unlike the Netherlands, Chile does not have a binary higher education system. Higher education institutions offer programmes containing elements of both higher professional education and academic education.

The education system comprises 3 types of institutions:

- *Universidades* (universities)
- *Institutos Profesionales* (professional institutes)
- *Centros de Formación Técnica* (technical training centres)

Universities may offer programmes at every level, including PhD level. They have the exclusive right to award academic degrees: *Licenciado*, *Magíster* and *Doctor*. Universities also have the exclusive right to award qualifications for legally protected professions. These professions require prior education in the form of an academic degree. *Institutos Profesionales* exclusively offer professional programmes that do not lead to an academic degree.

These programmes lead to the *Título profesional*, a professional qualification. *Institutos Profesionales* also offer vocational programmes at the level of *Técnico de Nivel Superior*. *Centros de Formación Técnica* exclusively offer vocational programmes leading to the *Técnico de Nivel Superior*. For further information on this type of study, see the section on Post-secondary education.

Higher education is available at both private and public institutions. Chile also has various military academies: *Instituciones de Educación de las Fuerzas Armadas*. These institutions are legally recognised and fall under the responsibility of the *Ministerio de Defensa*, the Chilean Ministry of Defence.

There are currently a total of 173 higher education institutions in Chile, including 60 *universidades*, 44 *institutos profesionales* and 58 *centros de formación técnica*. There are 3 types of universities: 16 state universities and 9 state-funded private universities.

These 25 universities are all members of the *Consejo de Rectores de las Universidades Chilenas* (CRUCH), the Chilean organisation for traditional universities. The other 35 universities, all established since 1980, are private institutions.

■ University and higher professional education

Universidades

The universities offer academic and technological research programmes up to and including PhD level, as well as higher professional education programmes. In

the Netherlands, comparable programmes are classified as either academic (WO) or higher professional (HBO) education programmes, depending on the relevant specialisation. Programmes are offered at 2 levels: *pregrado* and *postgrado*.

Pregrado programmes

Admission to these programmes requires a secondary school diploma, and is generally subject to an entrance examination. Most programmes have a duration of 4 to 5 years, and prepare students for a specific field. The curriculum may consist of both theoretical and practical subjects. The programmes are concluded with a graduation project (*memoria de titulo* or *tesis*). After having completed the programme, students are awarded a *Licenciado* degree stating the relevant specialisation, or a *Titulo profesional* – professional qualification – such as *enfermero* or *diseñador*.

In Chile, programmes leading to legally regulated professions may only be offered by universities. Access to such professions always requires an academic degree. The nominal duration of these programmes is generally 6 years. Programmes offering access to these regulated professions include programmes in the area of architecture, medicine, dentistry and psychology.

These programmes lead to either a *Licenciado en Arquitectura* degree with an *Arquitecto* professional qualification, a *Licenciado en Medicina* degree with a *Médico Cirujano* professional qualification, a *Licenciado en Odontología* degree, with a *Cirujano Dentista* professional qualification, a *Licenciado en Psicología* degree with a *Psicólogo* professional qualification.

Some universities also apply an intermediate qualification: the *Bachiller*. The *Licenciatura* programme consists of two 2-year cycles: students receive an intermediate certificate after 2 years: *Bachiller*. This is followed by another 2 years of study, leading to a *Licenciado* degree. Students may then opt to study for another year in order to obtain a professional qualification. Universities also offer the option of obtaining a *Técnico Universitario* certificate. This will require completion of a professionally-oriented programme (with an average duration of 3 years) offering access to an academic programme with a professional focus in the same field.

In Chile, a *Licenciado* degree or professional qualification offers access to advanced programmes in higher education: *postgrado*.

Students with a *Licenciado* degree are also eligible to pursue a PhD. However, they will be required to study longer than those admitted on the basis of a *Magister* degree.

In terms of level, the *Licenciado/Título profesional* is comparable to an HBO or WO bachelor's degree, depending on the duration and type of programme.

Postgrado programmes

Postgrado programmes include the *postítulo*, *magíster* and *doctorado*.

Postítulo

In order to be admitted to this advanced programme, students must have completed the relevant *pregrado* programme and – in some cases – taken an entrance examination. These programmes have a nominal duration of 1 year, and are focused on further specialisation in a specific profession or discipline. The curriculum generally does not include a thesis. The programme leads to a *Diplomado* or *Postítulo* certificate.

In terms of level, the *Diplomado/Postítulo* is comparable to at least an HBO or WO bachelor's degree, depending on the duration and type of programme.

Magíster

Admission to this programme requires a *Licenciado* degree or professional qualification. *Magíster* programmes are offered in all fields, including technical and economic specialisations (*ingeniería y tecnología, economía y administración*) and programmes in the area of social and health sciences (*ciencias sociales y salud*).

There are 2 types of master's programmes: The *Maestría Académica* (academic master's) and *Maestría Profesional* (professional master's). The 2 types of master's programmes can also be combined in the form of a *Magíster Mixto*.

The *Magíster Académico* offers a thorough grounding in one or more fields. A *Magíster Profesional* focuses more on improving skills for a particular profession or field of work. A master's programme can be completed through a thesis (*tesis de grado*) or a graduation assignment (*trabajo final*).

The nominal duration is 1 to 2 years. Students to have completed the programme will be awarded a *Magíster* degree, which offers access to PhD programmes.

In terms of level, the *Magíster* is comparable to an HBO or WO master's degree, depending on the duration and type of study programme.

Doctorado

A *Doctor* degree is the highest academic qualification obtainable in Chile. Admission to this programme requires a *Licenciado* or *Magíster* degree. It usually takes 3 to 5 years to pursue a doctorate. The programme comprises various subjects and research activities and leads to a dissertation. After successful defence of the doctoral thesis, the degree of *Doctor* is awarded.

Institutos Profesionales (IP)

These institutions offer *carreras profesionales*, programmes preparing students for professions that do not require a separate *Licenciado* degree. These programmes generally have a nominal duration of 4 to 5 years. The curriculum largely consists of professionally-oriented subjects. Upon completion of the programme, students are awarded a professional qualification (*Título Profesional*), offering immediate access to the labour market.

In terms of level, the *Título Profesional* obtained at an *Instituto Profesional* is comparable to at most an HBO bachelor's degree, depending on the content and duration of the programme.

Institutos Profesionales also offer programmes leading to a *Técnico de Nivel Superior* certificate. For further information on this type of programmes, see the section on Post-secondary education.

■ Assessment systems

Secondary education

Secondary schools use the number system below, with a 4 as a minimum passing grade.

| In numbers | Description | Definition |
|------------|--------------|----------------|
| 6.0 - 7.0 | Muy Bueno | Very good |
| 5.0 - 5.9 | Bueno | Good |
| 4.0 - 4.9 | Suficiente | Satisfactory |
| 3.0 - 3.9 | Insuficiente | Unsatisfactory |

Higher education

Higher education institutions use a scale from 1-7, with a passing grade of 4 or higher.

| In numbers | Description | Definition |
|------------|--------------|----------------|
| 6.0 - 7.0 | Muy Bueno | Very good |
| 5.0 - 5.9 | Bueno | Good |
| 4.0 - 4.9 | Suficiente | Satisfactory |
| 0 - 3.9 | Insuficiente | Unsatisfactory |

Qualification frameworks

Chile has not yet established a qualifications framework. The CNED has prepared a report on the importance of developing and implementing a national qualifications framework (*Marco Nacional de Cualificaciones – MCN*).

Further information is available on the *Consejo Nacional de Educación* (CNED) [website](#) (in Spanish only).

Quality assurance and accreditation

In Chile, the *Consejo Nacional de Educación* (CNED) and *Comisión Nacional de Acreditación* (CNA) are responsible for quality assurance in education. In order to offer study programmes, institutions must be accredited by the Chilean Ministry of Education: without official accreditation (*reconocimiento oficial*) from the Ministry, institutions are not entitled to offer study programmes.

As of 2006, autonomous institutions also have the option of applying for accreditation, at both institutional level (*acreditación institucional*) and programme level (*acreditación de carreras*).

This accreditation procedure is not mandatory, except for new higher education institutions and programmes in the fields of medicine and teacher-training. All universities that hold membership of the *Consejo de Rectores de las Universidades Chilenas* have institutional accreditation. Accreditation can be awarded for a maximum period of 7 years. The CNA is the institution responsible for the accreditation procedure. In order to qualify for accreditation, a number of quality criteria must be met. Further information on the accreditation procedure and an overview of all accredited programmes is featured on the CNA [website](#).

An overview of all Chilean higher education institutions is available on the [website](#) of the Ministry of Education.

■ Composition of file

A complete file in secondary and in higher education must include the diploma and the corresponding grade list.

■ Overview of higher education institutions

[Website](#) of the Ministry of Education, containing an overview of all higher education institutions (in Spanish only).

■ Useful websites

- [Website](#) of the *Ministerio de Educación* (MENUD), the Chilean Ministry of Education (in Spanish only).
- [Website](#) of the *Universidad de Chile* featuring extensive information on the university entrance examination: PSU/*Prueba de Selección Universitaria* (in Spanish only).
- [Website](#) of the Ministry of Education, containing extensive information on higher education in Chile (in Spanish only).
- [Website](#) of the *Consejo de Rectores de las Universidades de Chile* (CRUCH), the organisation for traditional Chilean universities.
- [Website](#) of the *Comisión Nacional de Educación* (CNED), the National Education Council.
- [Website](#) of the *Comisión Nacional de Acreditación* (CNA), the National Council of Accreditation (in Spanish only) featuring an overview of accredited study programmes.