

Education system

# Cameroon

described and compared with  
the Dutch system

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

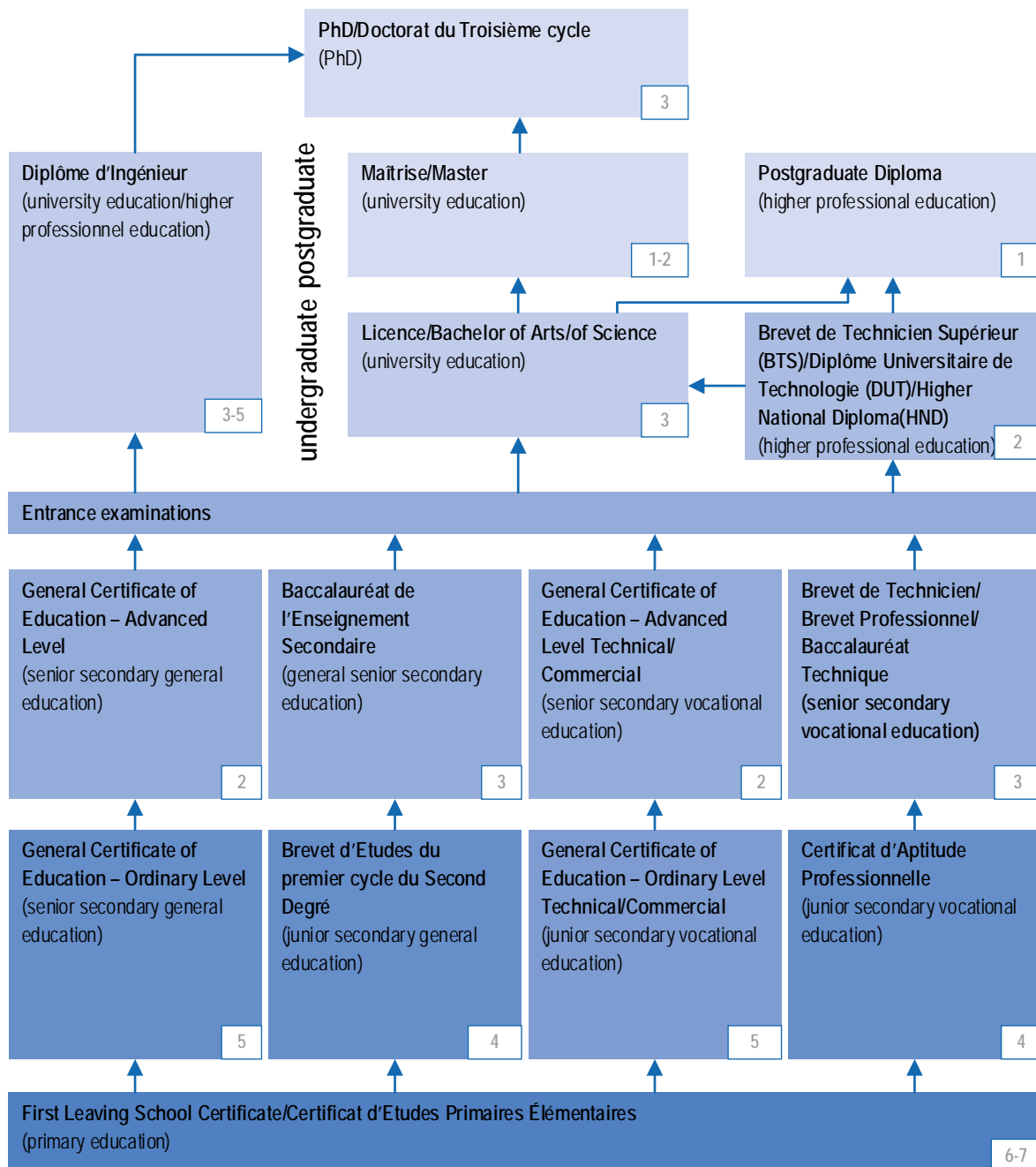
### Disclaimer

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.



With the exception of images and illustrations, the content of this publication is subject to the Creative Commons Name NonCommercial 3.0 Unported licence. Visit [www.nuffic.nl/en/home/copyright](http://www.nuffic.nl/en/home/copyright) for more information on the reuse of this publication.

## Education system Cameroon



0 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 |
|--|---|-----------|
| General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level (at least 6 subjects with a final result of Grade A, B or C)  | At least VMBO-t diploma                                     | 2         |
| General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level (at least 4 subjects with a final result of Grade A, B or C) + General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level (at least 2 subjects) | At least HAVO diploma                                       | 4         |
| <i>Brevet d'Études du premier Cycle du Second Degré</i>  | VMBO-T diploma or junior secondary education                | 2         |
| <i>Baccalauréat de l'Enseignement Secondaire</i>   | At least HAVO diploma                                       | 4         |
| General Certificate of Education (Technical/Commercial) Ordinary Level   | At least VMBO-t diploma for the general education component | 3         |
| General Certificate of Education (Technical/Commercial) Advanced Level   | At least HAVO diploma for the general education component   | 4         |
| <i>Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle</i>   | MBO diploma (qualification level 1 or 2)                    | 1/2       |
| <i>Probatoire</i>  | MBO diploma (qualification level 2 or 3)                    | 2/3       |
| <i>Brevet de Technicien/Brevet Professionnel/Baccalauréat Technique</i>  | MBO diploma (qualification level 3 or 4)                    | 3/4       |
| <i>Diplôme de Technicien</i>   | MBO diploma (qualification level 3 or 4)                    | 3/4       |
| <i>Diplôme d'Etudes Universitaires Générales/Associate Degree</i>  | 2 years of HBO  | 5         |

## Education system Cameroon

|  |  |     |     |
|--|--|-----|-----|
| <i>Diplôme de Technicien Supérieur de la Santé/Diplôme en Soins Infirmiers (2 years)</i>                     | 1 year of HBO  | 5   | 5   |
| <i>Diplôme de Technicien Supérieur de la Santé/Diplôme en Soins Infirmiers (3 years)</i>                     | At most 2 years of HBO                                 | 5   | 5   |
| <i>Brevet de Technicien Supérieur/<br/>Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie/<br/>Higher National Diploma</i> | 1 to at most 2 years of HBO                            | 5   | 5   |
| <i>Diplôme d'Ingénieur des Travaux</i>   | At most 3 years of HBO                                 | 6   | 6   |
| <i>Diplôme d'Ingénieur de Conception</i>   | 3 years of HBO   | 6   | 6   |
| <i>Licence/Bachelor of Arts/of Science (after 2007)</i>  | Approximately HBO bachelor's degree or 2 years of WO   | 6   | 6   |
| <i>Diplôme d'Ingénieur Agronome</i>  | (at least) WO bachelor's degree or HBO master's degree | 6/7 | 6/7 |
| <i>Postgraduate Diploma/Maitrise professionnelle</i>   | At least HBO bachelor's degree                         | 6   | 6   |
| <i>Maitrise/Master (until 2007)</i>  | WO bachelor's degree or HBO master's degree            | 6/7 | 6/7 |
| <i>Maitrise (without final paper) (after 2007)</i>   | WO bachelor's degree or HBO master's degree            | 6/7 | 6/7 |
| <i>Master (with final paper) (after 2007)</i>  | 4 years of WO  | 7   | 7   |
| <i>Diplôme de Docteur en Médecine</i>  | 4 years of WO  | 7   | 7   |
| <i>Diplôme d'Études Approfondies/<br/>Diplôme d'Études Supérieures Spécialisées</i>                          | At least HBO master's degree 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.
- NLOF = Dutch Qualifications Framework. EQF = European Qualifications Framework.
- The EQF/[NLOF 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](#).

## Education system Cameroon

---

- [The Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market \(SBB\)](#), evaluates statements on foreign qualifications and 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

### **The Republic of Cameroon is a country in West Africa.**

What used to be East Cameroon was ruled by France from 1916 to 1959. The territory gained its independence in 1960 and was renamed the Republic of Cameroon. The British administered provinces of South Cameroon joined the republic in October 1960, after which the country was renamed the Federal Republic of Cameroon before its name reverted to the Republic of Cameroon in 1984.

Political responsibility for education rests with the Anglophone and Francophone Ministries of Education. Secondary education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Secondary Education/*Ministère Enseignements Secondaires*, while the Ministry of Higher Education/*Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieure* bears responsibility for higher education.

The Republic of Cameroon has 2 education systems, the British system (in the southwestern and northwestern provinces) and the French system (in the former French provinces), and the languages of instruction are accordingly English and French.

The academic year runs from September to June.

## ■ Primary and secondary education

### Primary education

Education is compulsory for children aged 6 to 12. Primary education in the Anglophone system lasts for 7 years (age group of 6-12) and culminates in a First School Leaving Certificate. In the Francophone system it lasts for 6 years (age group of 5-12) and culminates in a *Certificat d'Etudes Primaires Elémentaires*.

### Secondary education

Secondary education can be divided into general secondary education and secondary vocational education.

#### General secondary education – British system

The secondary education qualifications of the British system (*General Certificate of Education, Ordinary and Advanced Level*) are awarded by the General Certificate of Education Board (GCE Board).

#### Lower secondary education

Diploma : *General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level*

Age group : 12 – 17

Duration of programme : 5 years

In terms of level, the *General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level* awarded with Grade A, B or C in at least 6 subjects is comparable to at least a VMBO-T diploma.

#### Upper secondary education

Diploma : *General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level*

Age group : 17 – 19

Duration of programme : 2 years

In terms of level, the *General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level* awarded with Grade A, B or C in at least 4 subjects, together with the Advanced Level in at least 2 subjects, is comparable to at least a HAVO diploma.

#### General secondary education – French system

The secondary education qualification of the French system (*Baccalauréat de l'Enseignement Secondaire*) is awarded by the *Office du Baccalauréat du Cameroun*.



**General secondary education**

Diploma : *Brevet d'Etudes du premier Cycle du Second Degré*

Age group : 12 – 16

Duration of programme : 4 years

In terms of level, the *Brevet d'Etudes du premier Cycle du Second Degré* is comparable to a VMBO-T diploma (theoretical pathway) or to junior secondary education, depending on the subjects taken.

**Upper secondary education**

Diploma : *Baccalauréat de l'Enseignement Secondaire*

Age group : 16 – 19

Duration of programme : 3 years

In terms of level, the *Baccalauréat de l'Enseignement Secondaire* is comparable to at least a HAVO diploma.

**Secondary vocational education – British system**

Diploma : *General Certificate of Education (Technical/Commercial)*

Age Group : 12 – 19

Duration of programme : 7 years (5 plus 2 years)

A General Certificate of Education Commercial or Technical is offered at both Ordinary and Advanced Level.

In terms of level, the *General Certificate of Education (Technical/Commercial) Ordinary Level* is comparable to at least a VMBO-T diploma for the general education component.

In terms of level, the *General Certificate of Education (Technical/Commercial) Advanced Level* is comparable to at least a HAVO diploma for the general education component.

Examinations are administered by the GCE Board. These certificates grant access to higher education in Cameroon.

**Secondary vocational education – French system**

Diploma : *Brevet de Technicien, Brevet Professionnel, Baccalauréat Technique*

Age group : 12 – 19

Duration of programme : 7 years (4 junior and 3 senior years)

Junior secondary education is taught by *Collèges d'Enseignement Technique Industrielle* (CETIs). This type of education has a duration of 4 years and culminates in a *Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle* (CAP) in commercial and industrial fields of study. A holder of this qualification is eligible to enrol in an advanced senior secondary vocational programme.

In terms of level, the *Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle* is comparable to an MBO diploma at qualification level 1 or 2, depending on the specialization.

Senior secondary education is taught by private *Collèges d'Enseignement Technique Industriel* (CETIs) and *Lycées Techniques*. The first 2 years culminate in a *Probatoire*. A *Probatoire* does not grant access to higher education in Cameroon.

In terms of level, the *Probatoire* is comparable to an MBO diploma at qualification level 2 or 3, depending on the specialization.

Completion of the third and final year results in the award of a *Brevet de Technicien, Brevet professionnel* or *Baccalauréat Technique*. The *Diplôme de Bachelier de Technicien* and *Brevet de Technicien* are equivalent to the *Baccalauréat* in technical programmes of study or subjects.

Students that enrol in a programme culminating in a *Brevet de Technicien* can specialize in one of the following programmes of study: manufacturing engineering, automobile engineering, surveying or metalwork. In a *Baccalauréat Technique* programme, students can specialize in civil engineering, electronics, electrotechnology, mathematics and technology, industrial cooling systems or general mechanics. Examinations for the *Baccalauréat Technique* qualification are administered by the GCE Board.

These diplomas grant access to an advanced higher professional education programme.

In terms of level, the *Brevet de Technicien*, *Brevet Professionnel* or *Baccalauréat Technique* are comparable to an MBO diploma at qualification level 3 or 4, depending on the specialization.

The *Diplôme de Technicien* programme lasts for 2 years and is designed to qualify graduates for work in subdivisional services or routes, construction, town planning, community development or rural engineering.

The admission requirement is a *Probatoire Technique* or *GCE, Advanced Level* in one subject (mathematics/physics), together with at least 4 subjects at *GCE, Ordinary Level*. A *Diplôme de Bachelier de Technicien* is not required for admission to this 2-year programme, though in some cases holders of a *Bachelier* qualification can be granted an exemption of up to at most 1 year. This diploma grant access to an advanced higher professional education programme in Cameroon in a similar programme of study.

In terms of level, the *Diplôme de Technicien* is comparable to an MBO diploma at qualification level 3 or 4, depending on the specialization.

## ■ Admission to higher education

A *Baccalauréat Technique*, *Brevet de Technicien*, *Brevet Professionnel* or *General Certificate of Education* grant access to higher professional education programmes in Cameroon.

A *Baccalauréat*, *General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level* in 2 subjects and *Ordinary Level* in at least 4 subjects and, in some cases successful completion of an entrance examination, grant access to university education in Cameroon.

## ■ Higher education

Higher education is divided into university and higher professional education and is provided in both English and French. Higher education in technical fields and higher professional education with a focus on administration, technology, social work and public works are provided mainly at specialized schools and institutions.

The academic year runs from September to June and comprises 2 semesters of 14 to 16 weeks each. 45 to 60 lesson hours are provided per semester. Higher education is divided into 3 cycles.

## ■ University education

As of the academic year 2007-2008 higher education at universities is divided according to the three-stage LMD structure (*Licence, Master, Doctorat*). In this system, based on the current French system, the DEUG with a nominal duration of 2 years and the subsequent 1-year *Licence* are replaced by a *Licence* with a nominal duration of 3 years.

In the second cycle of the higher education at universities the 1-year *Maitrise* and the subsequent DEA or DESS, which grant both access to the PhD, are replaced by a 2-year *Master*, also granting access to the PhD. The University of Buea already has implemented this new system for a while.

### **Premier cycle/First cycle**

In the French system the first cycle consist of the nominal 3-year *Licence*. The *Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Arts* are awarded after 3 years by English-speaking universities.

In terms of level, the *Licence/Bachelor of Science/of Arts* are approximately comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree or to 2 years of university education (WO), depending on the specialization.

### **Deuxième cycle/Second cycle**

In the French system the second cycle culminates in the *Maitrise* degree after completion of an advanced programme with a nominal duration of 1 year, or 2 years if a final paper was part of the programme. The 2-year programme grants access to the PhD.

In terms of level, the *Maitrise* (without final paper) is comparable to a WO bachelor's degree or HBO master's degree, depending on the programme of study.

In terms of level, the *Maitrise* (with final paper) is comparable to 4 years of university education (WO).

In the British system the second cycle leads to the degree of Master after a follow-up study programme of usually 2 years.

In terms of level, the Master is comparable to a WO master's degree or HBO master's degree, depending on the study programme of study.

### Medical programmes

The *Diplôme de Docteur en Médecine* represents a special category. It is a second cycle diploma obtained after a programme of study with a nominal duration of 6 years (after completion of secondary school). No first cycle diplomas are awarded in medical programmes.

In terms of level, the *Diplôme de Docteur en Médecine* is comparable to 4 years of university education (WO) in medicine study.

### Troisième cycle/Third cycle

The *Master* (with final paper) grants access to the *Doctorat du Troisième Cycle* in the French system and to the PhD in the British system. These qualifications are awarded after at least 3 years of research. The level of the *Doctorat du Troisième Cycle*/PhD is comparable to that of a doctoral degree in Dutch terms.

### Situation until 2007

#### Premier cycle/First cycle

*Diplôme d'Études Universitaire Générales* (DEUG) and *Associate Degree*. These certificates grant access to *Licence* or bachelor's programmes in Cameroon.

In terms of level, the *DEUG* and *Associate Degree* are comparable to 2 years of higher professional education (HBO).  
The content of the programme can also be research-oriented.

In the French system a further year of study after obtaining a DEUG culminates in a *Licence* degree. 3 years of further study in university education of the British system culminates in a *Bachelor of Science/Arts* degree.

In terms of level, the *Licence* and a *Bachelor of Science/Arts* are comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree or to 2 years of university education (WO), depending on the specialization.

Deuxième cycle/Second cycle

In the French system, another year of study culminates in the *Maitrise* degree, which is the equivalent of the master's degree of English-speaking universities.

In terms of level, the *Maitrise/Master* is comparable to a WO bachelor's degree or HBO master's degree, depending on the programme of study.

Troisième cycle/Third cycle

Programmes culminating in the *Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies* (DEA) and the *Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures Spécialisées* (DESS) are usually specialized, advanced programmes with a duration of 1 year after obtaining a *Maitrise* degree.

These programmes grant access to the PhD (*Doctorat du Troisième Cycle/PhD*). A *Doctorat du Troisième Cycle/PhD* is comparable to a Dutch PhD degree.

In terms of level, the *Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies* and a *Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures Spécialisées* are comparable to at least an HBO or WO master's degree, depending on the specialization.

## ■ Higher professional education

**Premier cycle/First cycle**

The *Brevet de Technicien Supérieur* (BTS), the *Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie* (DUT) and the Higher National Diploma (HND) with a nominal duration of 2 years grant access to the third year of higher professional education in Cameroon.

In terms of level, the *Brevet de Technicien Supérieur* (BTS), the *Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie* and the Higher National Diploma are comparable to 1 or at most 2 years of higher professional education (HBO), depending on the programme of study.

**Medical programmes**

The *Diplôme de Technicien Supérieur de la Santé* (BTS) is a programme in medicine with a nominal duration of 2 to 3 years. The *Diplôme en Soins Infirmiers* is a programme for nurses, which also has a nominal duration of 2 to 3 years. Both programmes are offered by *Centres Universitaires des Sciences de la Santé*.

In terms of level, the 2-year *Diplôme de Technicien Supérieur de la Santé* and the *Diplôme en Soins Infirmiers* are comparable to 1 year of higher professional education (HBO).

In terms of level, the 3-year *Diplôme de Technicien Supérieur de la Santé* and the *Diplôme en Soins Infirmiers* are comparable to at most 2 years of higher professional education (HBO).

### Engineering programmes

The *Diplôme d'Ingénieur des Travaux* (site engineer) with a nominal duration of 3 years and the *Diplôme d'Ingénieur de Conception* (design engineer) with a nominal duration of 4 years are awarded by the *Ecole Nationale Supérieure Polytechnique*.

In terms of level, the *Diplôme d'Ingénieur des Travaux* is comparable to at most 3 years of higher professional education (HBO).

In terms of level, the *Diplôme d'Ingénieur de Conception* is comparable to 3 years of higher professional education (HBO).

### Deuxième cycle/Second cycle

The *Postgraduate Diploma* and the *Maîtrise Professionnelle* are obtained after an advanced programme (usually after a *Licence*) with a nominal duration of 1 year.

In terms of level, the *Postgraduate Diploma* and the *Maîtrise Professionnelle* are comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree.

### Engineering programmes

The *Diplôme d'Ingénieur Agronome* is awarded after an advanced programme with a nominal duration of 2 years (or in total 5 years of study after secondary school education) by the *Ecole Nationale Supérieure Agronomique*.

In terms of level, the *Diplôme d'Ingénieur Agronome* is comparable to (at least) a WO bachelor's degree or an HBO master's degree, depending on the programme of study.

## ■ Assessment systems

### British system

#### General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level

Grading scale: A, B, C, D, E, U

A, B and C are all passing grades, A being the highest and C the lowest. Grades lower than C are not stated on the certificate.

#### General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level

Grading scale: A, B, C, D, E, O or F

A, B, C, D, and E are all passing grades, A being the highest and E the lowest. An F (fail) is not a passing grade and is not stated on the certificate.

An O is stated on the certificate if an Advanced Level examination has been taken for a given subject without sufficient success but the result achieved can nevertheless be deemed to be equivalent to an Ordinary Level Grade C.

### French system

#### Secondary and higher education

| Numerical grade | Description       | Meaning      |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 16 – 20         | <i>Très bien</i>  | Excellent    |
| 14 – 15         | <i>Bien</i>       | Good         |
| 12 – 13         | <i>Assez bien</i> | Satisfactory |
| 10 – 11         | <i>Passable</i>   | Passable     |
| 0 – 9           | <i>Fail</i>       | Fail         |

Master's and Doctoral degrees can be awarded with one of the following qualifications:

- *Très honorable avec félicitations du jury*
- *Très honorable*
- *Honorable*



## ■ Quality assurance and accreditation

Responsibility for secondary education rests with the Ministry of Secondary Education/*Ministère Enseignements secondaires*, while that for higher education rests with the Ministry of Higher Education/*Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur*.

The Minister of Education in question makes the definitive policy decisions relating to universities, though each university has its own governing council. These councils are responsible for recruiting staff. New departments, degrees, courses and changes to regulations must be approved by the ministry concerned. Each university receives funding from the state. The University of Buea is governed by a vice-chancellor who is appointed by the government and who is also chairman of the Administrative Council.

Other public universities are likewise governed by vice-chancellors.

The chairman of the Administrative Council of the *Universités de Yaoundé I, de Yaounde II, de Dschang, de Ngaoundéré* and *de Douala* and the pro-chancellor of the University of Buéa are appointed.

Some higher education institutions are not under the direct responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education/*Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur*, though the minister must still ensure that they meet proper academic standards. Some institutions are under the direct responsibility of other ministries and provide specialized training in the areas of agriculture, health, post and telecommunications, forestry and public works.

## ■ Composition of file

Secondary school diplomas usually consist of several pages. Besides the results slip belonging to the General Certificates of Education in the British system, the diplomas are also awarded. The General Certificates of Education achieved in 2016 were published later than usual for unclear reasons. After completing a higher education program, the diploma is awarded with usually a course overview with the obtained study and exam results

## ■ List of higher education institutions

- [Université de Bamenda](#) (BUST)
- [University of Buea](#) (UB)
- [Université de Douala](#) (UDLA)
- [Université de Dschang](#) (UDS)
- [Université de Maroua](#) (UMa) (opgericht augustus 2008)
- [Université de Ngaoundéré](#) (UNDERE)
- [Université de Yaoundé I](#) (UY I)
- [Université de Yaoundé II](#) (UY 2)

## ■ Useful links

- [Website](#) of the Ministry of Higher Education/*Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur*.
- [Website](#) of the Ministry of Secondary Education/*Ministère des Enseignements Secondaires*.