Education system

Rwanda

described and compared with the Dutch system
This document contains information on the education system of Rwanda. We explain the Dutch equivalent of the most common qualifications from Rwanda 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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Education system Rwanda

Education system Rwanda

Postgraduate

- PhD
  
- Master

Undergraduate

- Bachelor with Honours
- Bachelor (Ordinary)
- Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education (senior secondary education)
- Professional Certificate of Secondary Education A2 (technical secondary education)
- Ordinary O' Level Certificate (junior secondary education)
- Primary Leaving Certificate (primary education)

Diploma in Higher Education
Certificate of Higher Education
Advanced Diploma in Higher Education

Duration of education

3
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree or qualification and NQF level</th>
<th>Dutch equivalent and NLQF level</th>
<th>EQF level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education</td>
<td>HAVO diploma</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Certificate of Secondary Education A2</td>
<td>HAVO diploma for its general education component</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Diploma in Higher Education</td>
<td>3 years of HBO</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor with Honours</td>
<td>HBO bachelor’s degree or 2 years of WO</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master (2 years)</td>
<td>HBO or WO master’s degree</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NB**
- The information provided in the table is a general recommendation from which no rights may be derived.
- 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 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

Rwanda is a presidential republic located in Central Africa. The country gained independence from Belgium in 1962.

Rwanda experienced protracted civil wars, which claimed hundreds of thousands of victims in the mid-1990s. This also led to the destruction of the country's existing education system. Primary schools had already reopened within 2 months of the end of conflicts, in July 1994. The country's secondary schools and university followed soon after. As a result of these developments, investment in education is key to the country's current economic growth strategy.

Rwanda is divided into 5 provinces: Nord, Est, Sud, Ouest and Kigali. Rwanda's official languages are Kinyarwanda, English and French. Kinyarwanda is the official language of education during the first 3 years of primary education, after which all education is provided in English.

General responsibility for education lies with the Ministry of Education. The Ministry's primary objective is to offer all Rwandan nationals an equal opportunity to enjoy qualitative education, shaping them into educated citizens equipped to contribute to the country's socio-economic development. Amongst other aspects, the Ministry is responsible for developing strategies and national programmes and coordinating collaborations with international partners.

The Rwanda Education Board (REB) is one of the Ministry of Education's key bodies. The REB was established in 2011 as the result of a merger between 5 organisations: the National Examination Council (RNC), National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), Student Financial Agency Rwanda (SFAR), General Inspection of Education (GIE), and Teacher Service Commission (TSC). All tasks formerly carried out by these 5 organisations now fall under the responsibility of the REB.

The Higher Education Council (HEC) is another important Ministry of Education body. Amongst other aspects, the HEC is responsible for the quality of higher education institutions and the organisational structure and performance of the higher education system, as well as providing advice on higher education policy.

Education is compulsory for 9 years (for children aged 7-15). The school year runs from the end of January through November, while the academic year runs from October through June.
Primary and secondary education

Until 2011, the Rwanda National Examination Council (RNEC) was responsible for organising national examinations for the final 2 years of primary and secondary education. The Rwanda Education Board (REB) has held responsibility for national examinations since January of 2011.

In Rwanda, primary education and lower secondary education is known as 'nine years basic education' (9YBE). This consists of 6 years of primary education and 3 years of lower secondary education. Primary education starts at age seven, and concludes with a national examination. The Primary Leaving Certificate provides access to lower secondary education. At the end of their lower secondary education, pupils take a national examination providing admission to the senior secondary level. These examinations are at Ordinary 'O' Level.

Secondary education lasts a total of 6 years, for pupils aged 13 - 18. It consists of the aforementioned 3-year lower secondary education and a 3-year senior secondary level. For these final 3 years, pupils can choose between general education, technical secondary education or education at a Teacher Training College (TTC). Since 2010, there have been plans to integrate the 3-year senior level with the 9YBE in order to create a continuous '12 years basic education' (12YBE) learning track. Efforts are currently underway to implement these plans.

Pupils in the senior levels of general secondary education take subjects including English, French, mathematics and several subjects from their chosen specialisation such as sciences, humanities or languages. The national exams leading to the Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education are administered at the end of the third year, in November.

Pupils take exams in at least 3 predetermined subjects from their chosen specialisation. They are also required to write a General Paper and take the subject of Entrepreneurship. Exam results are expressed in letters, whereby A through E are passing grades. Grades for the subject General Paper are limited to an S (Subsidiary). An S grade for any other subject should be taken to mean that the student did not complete the subject at Advanced Level. Diplomas also specify the total number of points. This total is calculated on the basis of the grades to be obtained (see Assessment systems) and is relevant in terms of admission to higher education.

In terms of level, the Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education is comparable to a HAVO diploma.
Technical secondary education also has a duration of 3 years. The curriculum for this type of education consists of both general subjects and subjects focusing on a specific area of specialisation. Pupils who successfully complete their national examination at the end of the third year are awarded a Professional Certificate of Secondary Education A2 (Diplôme d’Etudes Secondaires Professionnelles A2). This certificate also provides access to higher education in Rwanda.

In terms of level, the Professional Certificate of Secondary Education A2 is comparable to a HAVO diploma for its general education component.

### Admission to higher education

In principle, the Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education and Professional Certificate of Secondary Education A2 grant access to higher education. Institutions and degree programmes may also apply specific requirements in terms of the student's exam grades.

### Higher education

Higher education is provided by both public and private institutions. Most institutions fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education.

There are a total of 5 institutions:
- University of Rwanda
- Integrated Polytechnic Regional Centres
- Institute of Legal Practice and Development (ILPD)
- Nursing Schools
- Private Higher Learning Institutions

The University of Rwanda was established in 2013 as the result of a merger between Rwanda’s public universities, of which the National University of Rwanda (NUR) was the largest. The new institution also absorbed the Kigali Institute of Science and Technology (KIST), Kigali Institute of Education (KIE), Institute of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry (ISAE), School of Finance and Banking (SFB), Higher Institute of Umutara Polytechnic (UP) and Kigali Health Institute (KHI).

The University of Rwanda consists of 6 departments:
- UR - College of Arts and Social Sciences
- UR - College of Education
- UR - College of Sciences and Technology
- UR - College of Medicine and Health Sciences
- UR - College of Business and Economics
- UR - College of Agriculture, Animal Sciences and Veterinary Medicine
The academic year consists of two 15-week semesters.

**University and higher professional education**

Students starting a higher education programme have the option of obtaining a diploma at the end of each year. The diploma awarded upon completion serves as confirmation that the student has obtained the required number of credits.

Prior to the bachelor's degree, the following diplomas may be obtained:
- Certificate of Higher Education: awarded after 1 year of studies and obtainment of at least 120 credits;
- Diploma in Higher Education: awarded after 2 years of studies and obtainment of at least 240 credits;
- Advanced Diploma in Higher Education: awarded after 2.5 years of studies and obtainment of at least 300 credits.

In terms of level, the Advanced Diploma in Higher Education is comparable to 3 years of higher professional education (HBO).

**Bachelor's degree programmes**

Degree programmes leading to a bachelor's degree have a minimum duration of 3 years (at least 360 credits) for an Ordinary degree and 4 to 5 years (at least 480 credits) in the case of an Honours degree. The medicine programme (Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery) is an exception to this rule, with a duration of 6 years plus a 1-year internship at a hospital. One academic year equals 120 credits and 1 credit represents 10 hours of study.

In terms of level, the Bachelor with Honours is comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree or 2 years of university education (WO), depending on the specialisation.

**Master's degree programmes**

The nominal duration of master's degree programmes is 1 or 2 years. Admission to master's degree programmes will require a Bachelor with Honours, Secondary Class Upper Division. Master's degree programmes with a duration of 1 year generally have a duration of 1 calendar year (from September through August) and result in obtainment of 180 credits. After having attended lessons over the course of the academic year, students are required to spend the remaining weeks writing their final paper. The programmes lead to a Master of Arts or Master of Science degree in a specific specialisation.
Two-year master's degree programmes are structured on the basis of the academic calendar. The degree is awarded once a total of 240 credits have been obtained. Students write a final paper during the final semester.

There are also various undivided bachelor's-master's degree programmes that directly lead to a master's degree. These programmes consist of 600 credits of which at least 120 credits must be obtained at Level 6 (master's degree level). The various levels are part of the Rwandan Qualifications Framework. For more information, see the chapter on Qualification frameworks. Available degrees include the Master of Engineering, Master of Science, Master of Technology and Master of Computing.

In terms of level, the 2-year master's degree is comparable to an HBO or WO master's degree, depending on the specialisation.

**PhD**

A doctorate is awarded following a period of at least 3 years of study and research. The doctoral thesis must be defended in public before an examinations board. In principle, admission requires a master's degree.
Assessment systems

Secondary education
Examination subjects are graded A - F, with each grade representing a specific number of points: A (6), B (5), C (4), D (3), E (2), F (0).

The General Paper subject is a standard component of the national examinations at Advanced Level. The subject can only be completed with an S grade and counts for one point. An S grade for any other subject should be taken to mean that the student did not complete the subject at Advanced Level. Examined subjects at Advanced Level are counted three times when determining the total number of points.

Higher education
The public higher education system applies the following grade system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>80 - 100%</td>
<td>First Class Honours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>70 - 79%</td>
<td>Second Class Honours, Upper Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>60 - 69%</td>
<td>Second Class Honours, Lower Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>50 - 59%</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 - 49%</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final classification of honours bachelor's degrees is calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Class Honours</td>
<td>A grade of at least 80% for more than half of the modules at Level 4 and 5 (including the final paper) and no grade lower than 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Class Honours, Upper Division</td>
<td>A grade of at least 70% for more than half of the modules at Level 4 and 5 (including the final paper) and no grade lower than 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Class Honours, Lower Division</td>
<td>A grade of at least 60% for more than half of the modules at Level 4 and 5 (including the final paper) and no grade lower than 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Class Honours</td>
<td>A grade of at least 50% for all modules at Levels 4 and 5 (including the final paper). Students may have obtained grades of between 45% en 49% for a maximum of 20 credits, as long as the final paper was graded at least 50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Qualification frameworks

Rwanda's national qualifications framework, the Rwandan Qualifications Framework, comprises 7 levels. The framework outlines requirements for the awarding of degrees by higher education institutions. The framework is based on the Credit Accumulation and Modular Scheme (CAMS).

The following overview describes the most common degrees and associated levels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate of Higher Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma in Higher Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>240 (120 Level 1 + 120 Level 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Diploma in Higher Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>300 (120 Level 1 + 120 Level 2 + 60 Level 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary Bachelor's</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>360 (120 Level 1 +120 Level 2 + 60 Level 3 + 60 Level 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary Bachelor with Honours</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>480 (120 Level 1 +120 Level 2 + 60 Level 3 + 60 Level 4 + 120 Level 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Arts, Master of Science</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>180 (with a minimum of 140 credits at Level 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Not based on credits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a full overview of the various degrees and associated levels (in accordance with the framework), see: [www.hec.gov.rw/spip.php?article226](http://www.hec.gov.rw/spip.php?article226).

Quality assurance and accreditation

The Higher Education Council (HEC) was established by the Rwandan government and operates as an independent government agency. The Council is responsible for the structure, organisation and performance of all higher education institutions. The Council also monitors and evaluates the preconditions for higher education quality and standards and works to ensure the further improvement of education and research quality. The Council advises the Ministry of Education on all issues relating to the accreditation of higher education institutions. The Council also sets standards for the accreditation of private institutions.

A list of accredited institutions can be found at the bottom of the Higher Education Council home page: [http://hec.gov.rw](http://hec.gov.rw).
Composition of file

The Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education as issued by the Rwanda Education Board is required for secondary education. All higher education diplomas obtained must be submitted together with an overview of subjects and grade lists.

List of higher education institutions

www.mineduc.gov.rw/agencies/higher-learning-institutions
Website of the Ministry of Education, containing an overview of all public and private higher education institutions.

Useful links

www.mineduc.gov.rw/home
Website of the Ministry of Education.

www.education.rw
Website featuring information on the Rwandan higher education system.

http://hec.gov.rw
Website of the Higher Education Council (HEC).

www.reb.rw
Website of the Rwanda Education Board (REB).
Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education
(Confirmation of results - issued by the Rwanda Education Board, after 2011)

CONFIRMATION OF RESULTS
I, the undersigned, Dr. John RUTAYISIRE, Director General of Rwanda Education Board, certify that the candidate mentioned below sat for Rwanda Advanced Certificate of Education in the academic year 2013 and obtained the following grades:

Candidate’s names: 
School attended: 
Combination/Option: Physics-Chemistry-Biology
Index number: 040:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Paper</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weighted aggregate: 51 Points
Results: Pass

Dr. J.
Director General

Rwanda Education Board, Stadium Road, Kigali, P.O. Box 3817, Kigali, Rwanda. E-mail: info@reb.rw; Website: www.reb.rw
Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education (issued by the Rwanda National Examinations Council before 2011)
Bachelor of Science

This is to Certify that

having satisfied the requirements for the award of Degree of

Bachelor of Science with Honours in
Food Science and Technology
Second Class Upper

was conferred with the Degree at a Congregation held in Kigali on the

Twenty Second of August in the year Two Thousand and Fourteen

[Signature]

Registrar, Office of the Registrar

Education system Rwanda
# Bachelor of Science - transcript

![Bachelor of Science - transcript](image_url)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EN2311</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAT3321</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHY3212</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHE3221</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG3221</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STA3221</td>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL (CU)</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Credit Hours:** 120

**Cumulative GPA:** 3.70

**Degree classification:** SECOND CLASS HD

**AY of completion:** 2015-2016

**Head of Department:**

---

**Academic Statement of Merit**

**GPA:** 3.70

**Degree Classification:** SECOND CLASS HD
Bachelor of Law
### Bachelor of Law - transcript (page 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAW1101</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>General Introduction to Law</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>7.17</td>
<td>7.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAW1102</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Introduction to Scientific Research, Skills of Writing and Reading</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6.77</td>
<td>6.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAW1103</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Introduction to Private Law: Introduction to Private Law &amp; Party Law</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>7.60</td>
<td>7.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAW1104</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Introduction to Public Law: Introduction to Public Law</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>9.66</td>
<td>8.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAW1201</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Introduction to Business Law</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>8.62</td>
<td>8.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average: 7.89%

### Notes
- Bachelor of Law – transcript (page 1)
- National University of Rwanda
- Faculty of Law

Check for errors and provide feedback on the transcript.
Bachelor of Law - transcript (page 2)