

Education system

Indonesia

described and compared with
the Dutch system

This document provides information about the education system of Indonesia. We explain the Dutch equivalent of the most common qualifications from Indonesia for the purpose of admission to Dutch higher education.

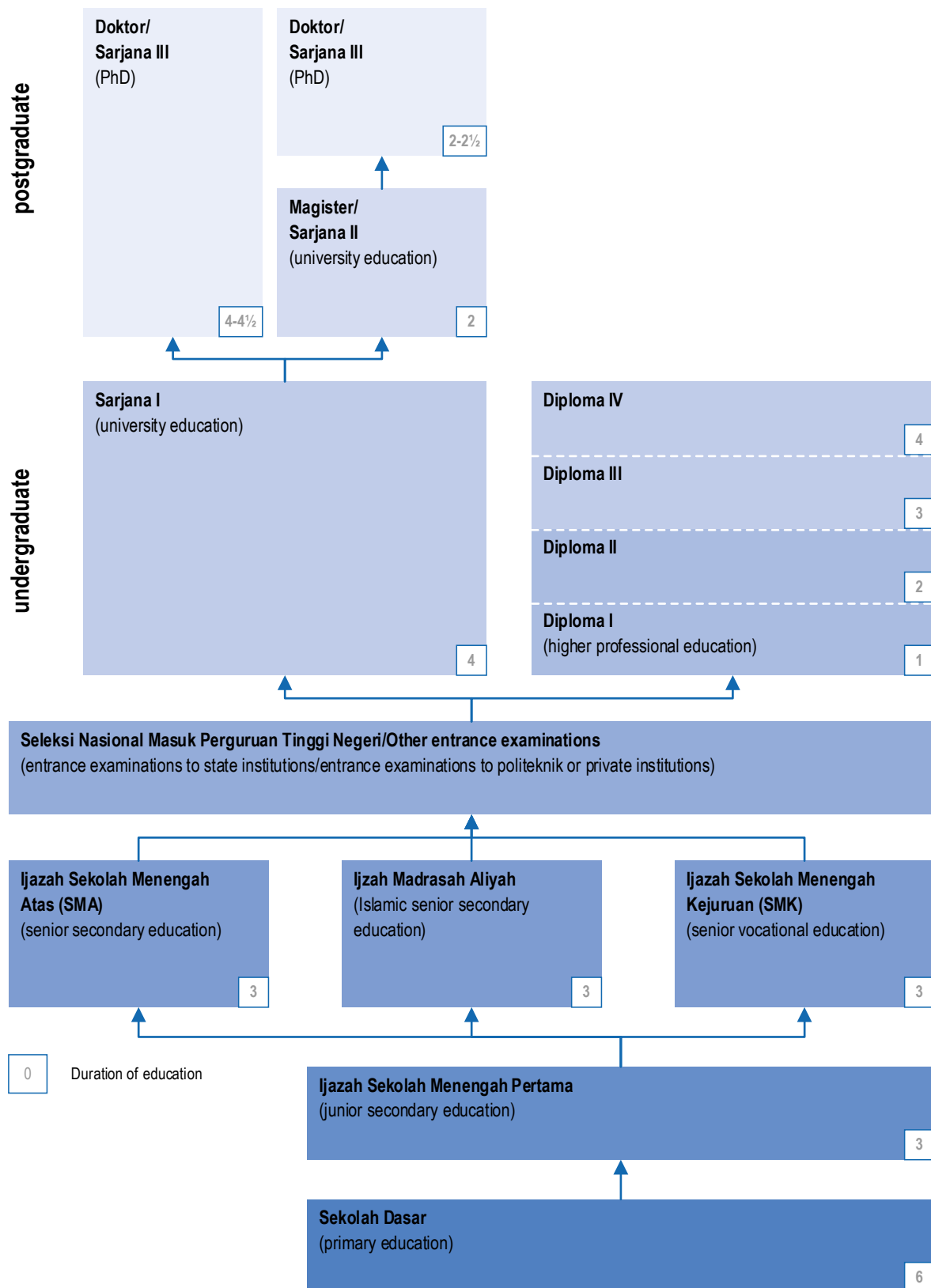
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We assemble the information for these descriptions of education systems with the greatest care. However, we cannot be held responsible for the consequences of errors or incomplete information in this document.



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Education system Indonesia



Evaluation chart

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

| Foreign qualification | Dutch equivalent and NLQF level | | EQF level |
|---|---------------------------------|-----|-----------|
| <i>Ijazah Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK)</i> | MBO diploma, level 2 or 3 | 2/3 | 2/3 |
| <i>Ijazah Sekolah Menengah Atas (SMA)</i> | HAVO diploma | 4 | 4 |
| Diploma I (D I) | 1 year of HBO | 5 | 5 |
| Diploma II (D II) | 2 years of HBO | 5 | 5 |
| Diploma III (D III) | 3 years of HBO | 6 | 6 |
| Diploma IV (D IV) | HBO bachelor's degree | 6 | 6 |
| <i>Sarjana I (S I)</i> | HBO or WO bachelor's degree | 6 | 6 |
| <i>Sarjana II (S II)</i> | WO master's degree | 7 | 7 |

Please note:

- 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, however it does give 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 foreign qualifications and vocational 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

Indonesia is a nation of islands with around 13,700 islands. Amongst those, the islands of Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua (or Irian Jaya) are the most significant. Indonesia has a population of 242 million, encompassing major linguistic, religious and cultural differences.

One of the first steps taken in terms of education following the foundation of the *Republik Indonesia* in December 1949 was the introduction of *Bahasa Indonesia* (literally: language of Indonesia) as the language of education. A 6-year period of compulsory education was introduced in 1950, and the *Pancasila* state philosophy was introduced as the foundation of education.

The Ministry of National Education (*Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional*) is responsible for secondary and higher education, and operates at various levels: central, provincial (*propinsi*), regional (*kabupaten*) and at district level (*kecamatan*). The Ministry of the Interior is primarily responsible for the organizational aspects of primary education. The Ministry of Religious Affairs carries responsibility for all Islamic education institutions, and the Ministry of Agriculture manages the agricultural schools at (senior) secondary level. Some ministries run schools at secondary and higher levels (Diploma programme) for the training of their own staff.

Private education plays a prominent role, particularly in secondary and higher education. Sixty-six per cent of all higher education institutions are privately owned. In recent years, private schools started receiving some financial support from the government, particularly through the provision of teachers. Tuition fees are still a major source of income for schools and institutions, causing the quality of schools to vary greatly.

In 1994, compulsory education was extended to 9 years: 6 years of primary education (*pendidikan dasar*) and 3 years of junior secondary education (*Sekolah Menengah Pertama, SMP*).

The academic year runs from September until June.

■ Primary and secondary education

Pre-school education lasts between 1 and 3 years, and is not compulsory. It is followed by primary school (*Sekolah Dasar*) and junior secondary school, both of which are compulsory. Primary education lasts for 6 years and the medium of instruction is officially *Bahasa Indonesia*, although regional languages are also used during the first 3 years.

Secondary education starts with 3 years of junior secondary school, upon completion of which students are awarded the certificate *Ijazah Sekolah Menengah Pertama* (SMP). Senior secondary school also lasts for 3 years, and is divided into a general track (*Sekolah Menengah Atas*, SMA) and a vocational track (*Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan*, SMK).

From the second year onwards, students in the general track can choose between the following subject clusters: natural sciences, social sciences, and languages. Students participate in the school examination for a large amount of subjects including those belonging to the chosen subject cluster. Students must also sit a state examination (only for the subjects included in the chosen subject cluster), upon completion of which the *Surat Keterangan Hasil Ujian Nasional* certificate is issued. An average score of 6.0 (on a scale of 1-10) is required in order to pass the state examination, with a minimum score of 4.26 for each subject. The certificate of graduation of the senior secondary education is the *Ijazah Sekolah Menengah Atas* (*Ijazah SMA*).

In terms of level, the *Ijazah Sekolah Menengah Atas* (SMA)
is comparable to a HAVO diploma.

Islamic education is provided at primary and general secondary level. In addition to a core curriculum from the Ministry of Education, these schools also follow a curriculum of Islamic subjects. Upon completion of senior secondary school students receive the *Ijazah Madrasah Aliyah*. The state examination is the same as for general education, as is the name of the certificate.

All other candidates, e.g. those who are schooled through non-formal education, partake in the state examination *Paket C*. Successful candidates receive the *Ijazah* and *Surat Keterangan Hasil Ujian Nasional* with a mention of the chosen subject cluster and the partaken examination (*Paket C*).

Senior secondary vocational education

Instead of continuing on in the general track after junior secondary school, pupils can take 3-year technical and vocational education programmes. The most common types of schools for senior vocational education are:

- *Sekolah Teknik Menengah (STM)*, offering a wide variety of programmes;
- *Sekolah Menengah Ekonomi Atas (SMEA)*, offering programmes in commercial sciences;
- *Sekolah Menengah Kesejahteraan Keluarga (SMKK)*, offering home economics programmes;
- *Sekolah Menengah Teknologi Pertanian*, offering agricultural programmes.

At the end of secondary technical/vocational education, pupils are awarded the *Ijazah Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan*. Pupils also sit a state examination for this type of education, upon completion of which the *Surat Keterangan Hasil Ujian Nasional* certificate is awarded.

In terms of level, the *Ijazah Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK)* is comparable to an MBO diploma at level 2 or 3, depending on the specialisation.

■ Admission to higher education

The Senior Secondary School Certificate (*Ijazah Sekolah Menengah Atas, SMA*) and the state examination (*Surat Keterangan Hasil Ujian Nasional*) are both required for admission to higher education.

State universities require students to pass an entrance examination (*Seleksi Nasional Masuk Perguruan Tinggi Negeri*), which tests mathematics, English, Indonesian and the subjects relevant to the student's chosen specialisation. Successful candidates may be admitted to the state universities, depending on the number of available places.

The *Politeknik* and *Akademi* have their own admission requirements. In addition, private institutions also conduct their own admission examination.

■ Higher education

Higher education is provided at five different types of institutions: universities (*universitas*), academies (*akademi*), colleges (*sekolah tinggi*), polytechnics (*politeknik*) and institutes (*institut*). Universities and institutes provide both academic and higher professional education, whereas academies, colleges and polytechnics only provide the latter.

Graduates from university programmes receive a degree, whereas graduates of higher professional education programmes are awarded a diploma.

■ University education

Indonesia currently has 51 state universities and an Open University. In 1998 the government stopped issuing permits for the founding of private universities. Nowadays, private universities can only be established under certain strict conditions.

The Open University (*Universitas Terbuka*) was founded in 1983 by the Ministry of Education. Although the most important reason for its establishment was to reduce the shortage of study places for secondary school leavers, the majority of students turned out to be workers. The Open University primarily provides written distance education.

Sarjana I

Universities always provide education at the level of *Sarjana I* (*Sarjana Stratum satu*, S I), usually referred to only as *Sarjana*. These programmes have a nominal length of 4 years. Students are allowed to extend the study duration to a maximum of 14 semesters or 7 years). The S I in Medicine, Pharmacology, Dentistry and Veterinary Science includes an internship.

A credit system was introduced in 1979, in which nominal 4-year S I study programmes require 144-160 credits.

In terms of level, the *Sarjana I* degree is comparable to an HBO or WO bachelor's degree, depending on the type of study programme.

Sarjana II

Education at a level higher than S I was not developed properly until the 1980s, and was initially only offered by state institutions.

The S II (*Sarjana Strata/stratum dua*) *Magister* was introduced in 1990, and requires a minimum of 2 years/39-50 credit points following the S I, including research and 8-10 credit points for a final paper. The programme requires a nominal duration of 2 years (4 semesters). The maximum allowable length for the programme is 5 years (10 semesters). Admission is granted based on an S I with a final paper in the same or related subject area, demonstrable academic ability (evinced by a GPA of at least 2.50 – 2.75) during the S I programme, entrance

examination, and letters of recommendation. Proficiency in English is sometimes also a requirement.

In terms of level, the *Sarjana II* degree is comparable to a WO master's degree in a similar specialisation.

A number of private institutions offer MBA (Master in Business Administration) programmes that are not recognised by the Ministry of National Education. Some MBAs are provided by prominent institutions; others set completion of secondary education as the only admission requirement. This means that the MBA is available at various levels.

State universities offer something similar: the *Magister Manajemen*. This programme is recognised by the Ministry and placed at the level of S II. These programmes are much in demand, require large tuition fees and only admit five percent of all applicants.

Another type of postgraduate qualifications in Indonesia is the 'specialist diplomas'. These qualifications are more professional than academic. *Specialis I* is at S II level, and is a practically-oriented programme that is mainly offered in medical specializations. The programme involves 40-70 credits and a final paper. There are plans to develop *Specialis II* programmes.

Sarjana III

S III programmes lead to the title of *Doktor*. Admission is based on an S II diploma (*Magister* or *Specialis*) with a GPA of at least 3.25, and entrance examination. The programme includes research and a doctoral thesis. The programme requires 40-52 credits with a nominal duration of 2-2½ years (4-5 semesters) for candidates holding a master's degree. For candidates holding a bachelor's degree, the required amount of credits is 76-88 with a nominal duration of 4-4½ years (8-9 semesters). Although the minimal duration is regulated centrally, the actual nominal duration (often 3-4 years following the *Sarjana II*) is set individually by each higher education institution. The level reached in Dutch terms must be determined for each programme.

■ Higher professional education

Politeknik (polytechnics)

These institutions were created in the 1980s and are linked to universities. Students are admitted following 12 years of education and completion of the *Ujian Masuk Politeknik (UMP)* entrance examination. *Politekniks* mainly provide D II and D III-level programmes, and very rarely D IV programmes. This type of education

provides a professional qualification, yet graduates can also continue on to higher-level education. The curriculum is very practical in nature, with a minimum of 45% of the programme being devoted to practical (including simulations) and training.

Akademi (academies)

These are usually small institutions with a single specialisation up to D II and D III level. Many academies were established in order to educate ministry staff. Many others are private academies. Students are admitted following 12 years of education (for most programmes) and an entrance examination.

Sekolah Tinggi (colleges)

These institutions are sometimes also called 'colleges'. They usually comprise of a single faculty with only a few hundred students, and provide both diploma programmes and programmes at *Sarjana I* level. Their number has increased tremendously over the last 20 years, with the majority being private institutions. The programmes usually have a professional focus; however, there are also colleges that offer programmes in areas such as Law or Dentistry.

Institut (institutes)

Institutes usually provide education in a single specialisation, at both diploma and S I level. Some institutes also provide education at post-graduate level (S II and S III). There are both private and government institutes. Most institutes provide teacher training programmes.

In recent years, the number of private institutes has grown enormously. This also includes the *Instituts Agama Islam Negeri* (IAIN), or State Institutes for Islamic Religion, which fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. These private Islamic institutions have their own entrance examination, designed to match the programmes of Islamic secondary schools.

Diplomas

The 5 types of higher education institutions named above (universities, academies, colleges, polytechnics and institutes) all provide programmes that award graduates a *diploma* at the following levels:

Diploma I (D I) programme

D I programmes are 1 year full-time (40-50 credit points) and lead to the qualification *Ijazah* (D I). Currently only a few D I programmes still exist. This level will probably disappear completely in the future.

In terms of level, the *Diploma I* is comparable to 1 year of higher professional education (HBO) in a similar specialisation.

Diploma II (D II) programme

D II programmes are 2 years full-time (80-90 credit points). Graduates are awarded the *Ijazah* (D II).

In terms of level, the *Diploma II* is comparable to 2 years of higher professional education (HBO) in a similar specialisation.

Diploma III (D III) programme

D III programmes are 3 years full-time (110-120 credit points). Graduates are awarded the *Ijazah* (D III).

In terms of level, the *Diploma III* is comparable to 3 years of higher professional education (HBO) in a similar specialisation.

Diploma IV (D IV) programme

D IV programmes are 4 years full-time (144-160 credit points). Graduates are awarded the *Ijazah* (D IV). This diploma is awarded without a degree.

In terms of level, the *Diploma IV* is comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree in a similar specialisation.

Assessment systems

After 1987, the following assessment system was introduced into higher education in which the grade 1/D is the lowest possible pass mark and grade 4/A is the highest score obtainable:

| In numbers | Letter grade | Description | Meaning |
|------------|--------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 4 | A | <i>Istimewa/baik sekali</i> | Outstanding/very good |
| 3 | B | <i>Baik</i> | Good |
| 2 | C | <i>Cukup/sedang</i> | Satisfactory |
| 1 | D | <i>Kurang/lulus bersyarat</i> | Barely satisfactory |
| 0 | E/F | <i>Gagal/tidak lulus</i> | Unsatisfactory |

High averages are very uncommon.

Accreditation and quality assurance

Since 1994, accreditation of higher education programmes has been carried out by the *Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi (BAN-PT)*, the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education. BAN-PT falls under the *Kementarian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*, the Ministry of Education and Culture. The accreditation body began accrediting programmes in 1996; first of all the *Sarjana I* programmes, then *Sarjana II*, and after that *Sarjana III*. In 2001 the accreditation process extended to *Diploma III* programmes, and in 2002 to the remaining *Diploma* programmes. The first accreditation results were published in 1998.

The accreditation process consists of the following steps:

1. The institution conducts a self-evaluation, and draws up a report.
2. The assessors evaluate the report.
3. The evaluation is directly followed by a site visit by the same assessors.
4. The assessors' report is submitted to the board of the BAN-PT for a final decision.
5. The result of the accreditation is communicated to the stakeholders.
6. The accreditation certificate is issued with recommendations for further development and programme improvement.
7. The accreditation process is repeated every 5 years.

Each programme is assigned a category: A (very good), B (good), C (satisfactory) or D (unsatisfactory)

The following guideline applies to programmes pre-1998: Government accreditation was not necessary for programmes offered by state institutions

(PTN), these programmes were accredited automatically. Programmes at private institutions had to be accredited, and could be assigned one of the following 3 statuses by the regional *Kopertis*:

- *Terdaftar* (registered)
- *Diakui* (recognised)
- *Disamakan* (equal)

Disamakan indicated that the quality of the programme was equal to that of a state institution. *Diakui* and *Terdaftar* meant that the quality of the programme was not equal to that of a state institution, hence students had to complete a state examination. A stamp from the regional *Kopertis* on the certificate indicated that the student had successfully passed the state examination. The accreditation status was valid for either 5 years (*Terdaftar*, registered), 4 years (*Diakui*, recognised) or 3 years (*Disamakan*, equal).

The following guideline applies to programmes after 1998 and before 2003: If the accreditation status was not changed as a result of the request for accreditation during this period (e.g. upgraded from *terdaftar* (registered) to *diakui* (recognised)), then the pre-1998 status was maintained.

The following guideline applies to programmes from 2003 onwards: All programmes must be accredited. The BAN-PT [website](#) contains an overview of all higher education programmes, with their current accreditation status (categories A-D). Programmes with a 'D' ranking in the list are **not** accredited. A note on the terminology used: *tidak terakreditasi* means 'not accredited' and *SK* refers to 'decree'. The database can also be viewed in English. However, to find a particular programme or institution, only the official Indonesian names can be used.

There is a separate accreditation board for the non-formal education sector, the [BAN-PNF](#).

■ Composition of file

As for secondary school graduates, a complete file consists of the *Ijazah Sekolah Menengah Atas* (a double sided document with a list of marks on the backside) and the *Surat Keterangan Hasil Ujian Nasional* (the national examination certificate), all in the original language and with a translation. Both documents are issued by the *Departemen Pendidikan Nasional* and share the same format.

Higher education qualifications such as the *Sarjana* degree are issued by the educational institution. A file is complete if the student also submits a list of marks from all 4 years and translations of the list of marks and *Sarjana*. The same file composition applies to *Diploma I, II, III, and IV*, as well as to the *Magister* (S II) and S III.

■ Overview of higher education institutions

The BAN-PT, the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education, gives an [overview of recognised institutions](#) in Indonesia.

■ Useful links

- [Website of the Nuffic Netherlands Education Support Office \(NESO\)](#) in Indonesia.
- [Website of the Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan](#), the Ministry of Education and Culture.
- [Database of BAN-PT](#) (the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education) with an overview of the most recent status of accredited education programmes offered by all higher education institutions.
- [Website of the Kementerian Riset Teknologi Dan Pendidikan Tinggi](#), the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education, with an overview of recognised higher education institutions.
- [Website of the BAN-PNF](#), the national accreditation board for non-formal education.
- [Website of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation](#) with information on Indonesia's education system amongst others.