

Education system

Lebanon

described and compared with
the Dutch system

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

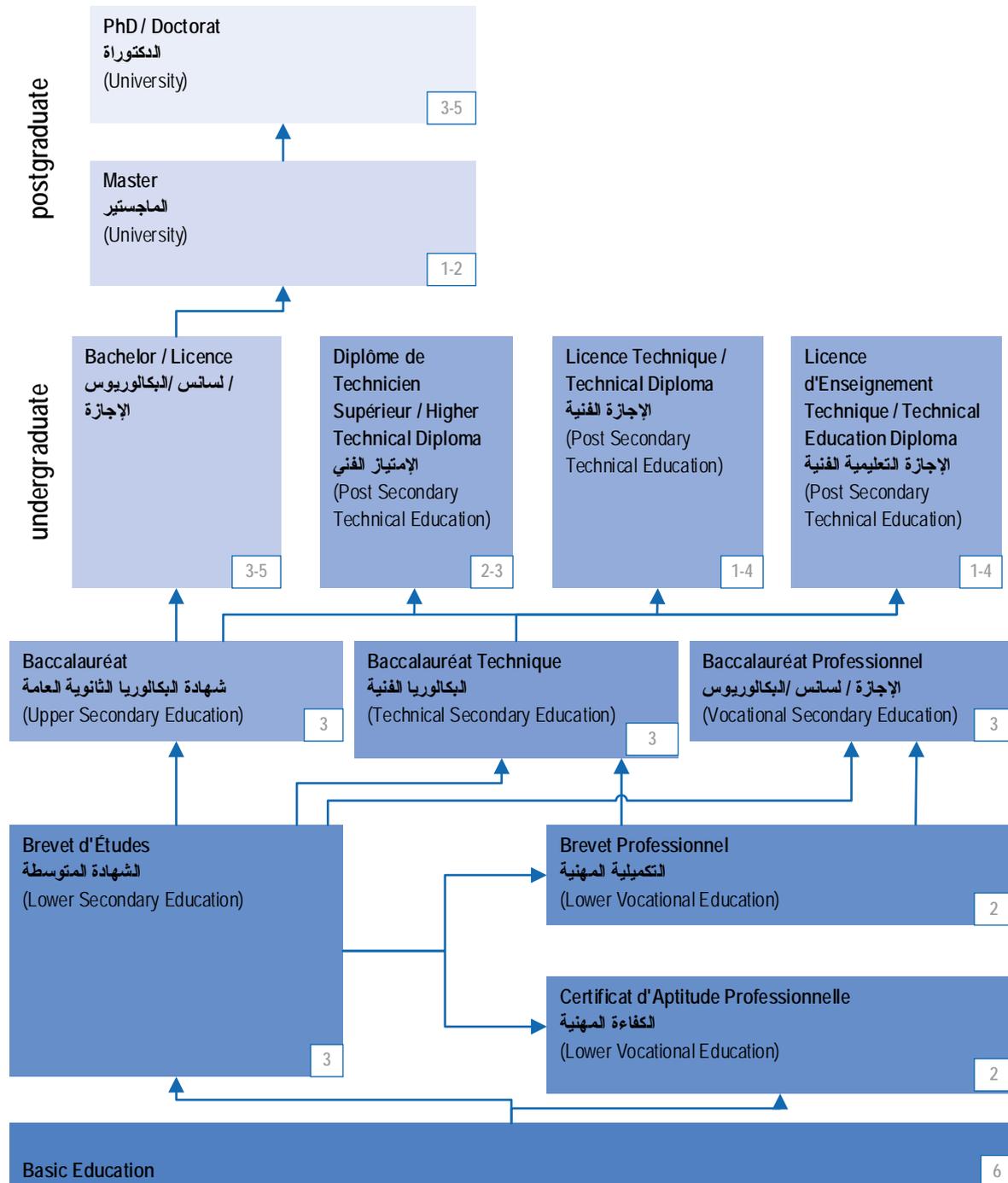
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We assemble the information for these descriptions of education systems with the greatest care. However, we cannot be held responsible for the consequences of errors or incomplete information in this document.



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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.

Foreign degree or qualification	Dutch equivalent and NLQF level	EQF level
<i>Baccalauréat Technique</i>	MBO diploma (qualification level 2 or 3)	2/3
<i>Baccalauréat</i>	at least a HAVO diploma	4
Bachelor's/Licence degree (3 years)	HBO bachelor's degree or 2 years of WO	6
Bachelor's/Licence degree (4 years)	HBO or WO bachelor's degree	6
Bachelor's/Licence degree in engineering, dentistry and pharmacy (5 years)	at least a WO bachelor's degree	6
Master	HBO or WO master's degree	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 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 Lebanon is a parliamentary democracy. In 1920, the country came under the French mandate. Following major Lebanese resistance, the state became an independent republic in 1943.

The country is divided into 6 governorates: Beirut, Mount Lebanon, North, Beqaa, South and Nabatieh. These 6 governorates are subdivided into 25 districts.

Lebanon has had many cultural influences over the years, a fact that is reflected in the education system. As early as the 19th century, French and American missionaries had set up schools here, with the American University of Beirut (1866) and the Saint Joseph University (1875) both dating from this period.

During the time of the French mandate (1920-1946), the education system was adjusted in line with the French system. French became one of the official languages and half of the courses in secondary education were taught in French. In this period, the *Baccalauréat* exams were introduced, which were administered at the end of the secondary education process.

Once the country gained independence in 1943, Arabic was reintroduced as an official language. The curriculum was also changed to give more attention to courses focusing on Lebanese history and culture rather than French.

Education is compulsory for children aged 6 to 12. The provision of education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE).

Since 1948 (following the establishment of the state of Israel), in addition to regular education, education is also provided for Palestinian children that do not attend a Lebanese school. Amongst others, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) currently provides primary, secondary and post-secondary vocational education for 32,000 Palestinian students in refugee camps in Lebanon. In addition, since 2011 a large number of Syrians have come to Lebanon due to the civil war in Syria. Of these refugees, approximately 150,000 children have been admitted to public schools.

■ Primary and secondary education

Primary education in Lebanon lasts 6 years. This is followed by lower and upper secondary education, each of which has a nominal duration of 3 years. The total duration of school education is therefore 12 years. The language of instruction in primary and secondary education is Arabic. French and English are taught from primary school onwards. In compliance with the Lebanese Education Act, the subjects of math and physics/chemistry are always taught in French or English.

Lebanon has a large number of private schools. Approximately two-thirds of Lebanese students attend a private school. The Lebanese national curriculum is taught at both public and private schools.

Lower secondary education lasts for 3 years and is devoted to general academic subjects. This educational phase is concluded with the award of the *Brevet d'Études* (الشهادة المتوسطة).

Upper secondary education also takes 3 years. Admission is granted based on the *Brevet d'Études*. The first-year curriculum is the same for all programmes. The second year consists of a subject cluster in arts or in sciences, and in the final year, a choice is made between arts and literature, sociology and economics, and life sciences and general sciences. At the end of the third year, the national examinations are administered, which result in the award of the *Baccalauréat* (شهادة البكالوريا الثانوية العامة) also known as *Bac II*, *Baccalauréat Libanais* or *Baccalauréat Général*.

In terms of level, the *Baccalauréat* is comparable to at least a HAVO diploma.

Upper secondary education also includes technical and vocational programmes. These comprise around 55 different subject clusters. These programmes are intended to prepare students for higher technical education. Students that pass the national examinations for a technical subject cluster receive the *Baccalauréat Technique* (البكالوريا الفنية).

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

Besides the Lebanese curriculum, international schools also offer 3 other types of curricula, namely the International Baccalaureate, the American curriculum and the French curriculum.

Students can also begin studying vocational education after completing primary education. This vocational track is intended to prepare students for practical professions. This education is divided into 3 stages. The first stage lasts 2 years and is concluded with the award of the *Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle* (الكفاءة المهنية). After this, a 2-year advanced vocational programme can be followed, which is concluded with the award of the *Brevet Professionnel* (التكميلية المهنية).

Subsequently, students can continue to the upper level to obtain the *Baccalauréat Professionnel* or the *Baccalauréat Technique* (البكالوريا الفنية). After obtaining the *Baccalauréat Professionnel*, students can enter the job market.

■ Admission to higher education

In order to be admitted to higher education, students must possess at least the *Baccalauréat* or an equivalent qualification. As a rule, any student in possession of a *Baccalauréat* diploma is eligible for admission to the Lebanese University, the only public university in the country. However, certain faculties have an enrolment quota or require students to sit an entrance examination.

Many private institutions also require students to comply with other criteria, such as language competences. Selection for higher education institutions often involves an enrolment quota or entrance examinations administered by the faculty in question.

At the American universities, in addition to the American *High School diploma*, which can be obtained from American schools in Lebanon, SAT I and SAT II (Scholastic Assessment Tests) scores can also be requested. These assess the students' maths and English skills and the knowledge required for certain subjects. If the student has completed prior education at a school with a Lebanese curriculum, then only SAT I scores are requested.

■ Higher education

Higher education in Lebanon is offered at universities and University Colleges or University Institutes. A University College or University Institute must have at least one faculty and usually only issues bachelor's degrees. A university must have at least 3 faculties, of which at least one is a humanities faculty and at least one is a natural sciences faculty. They are authorised to issue all academic degrees from bachelor's degrees to doctorates. At many universities, the language of instruction is English or French.

Only one university is public: the Lebanese University. Approximately 39% of the total number of students in Lebanon study at this university. All other higher education institutions are private institutions.

The Directorate General of Higher Education is responsible for the education provided at the universities, the University Colleges and the University Institutes. This Directorate General is part of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

■ University education

Higher education in Lebanon is characterised by influences from various education systems, namely the Arabic, French and American systems. Some higher education institutions offer education in the style of one of these systems, but often it is a combination of these systems. As a result, the systems are not always clearly distinguishable.

Higher education is largely organised in 3 cycles. Within these cycles, we encounter the English terms bachelor – master – PhD, the French terms *licence – master – doctorat* and the Arabic terms *bakâlôriyûs – mâjistîr – duktûrâh* (بكالوريوس – ماجستير – دكتوراه).

Qualifications from the first cycle usually have a nominal duration of 3 or 4 years. The first degree is the bachelor's or *licence* (ليسانس/الإجازة/البكالوريوس) degree. Lebanon operates a credit system, from which you can derive the nominal duration of a programme. The following system is often used, although not always:

3-year programme	
1st year	0 –33 credits
2nd year	34 –66 credits
3rd year	67 –99 credits

4-year programme	
1st year	0 –36 credits
2nd year	37 –72 credits
3rd year	73 –108 credits
4th year	109 – 144 credits

Some institutions use the ECTS system to indicate the study load of programmes, which is usually 180 ECTS for a bachelor's programme and 120 ECTS for a master's programme.

In terms of level, the bachelor's/*licence* degree following a nominal 3-year degree programme is comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree or 2 years of university education (WO), depending on the type of study.

In terms of level, the *bachelor's/licence* degree following a nominal 4-year degree programme is comparable to an HBO or WO bachelor's degree, depending on the type of study.

There are also initial degree programmes with longer nominal durations. Amongst others, the engineering, dentistry and pharmacy programmes have a duration of 5 years. Upon completion of these programmes, students are awarded a *bachelor's/licence* degree, or the *Diploma in Dental Surgery/Diplôme de Chirurgien Dentiste* in the case of dentistry, or the *Diploma of Doctor in Pharmacy/Le Diplôme de Docteur en Pharmacie* in the case of pharmacy. The number of credits in 5-year programmes is between 150 and 180.

The medicine programme (*Medical Doctor - MD*) has a duration of 6 years plus 1 year of internship. The number of credits is around 200. After the initial degree programme in medicine, a master's programme can be taken. This usually has a duration of 2 years and focuses on a specific field.

In terms of level, the *bachelor's/licence* degree following a nominal 5-year degree programme in engineering, dentistry or pharmacy is comparable to at least a WO bachelor's degree in a similar specialisation.

Master's programmes vary in length between 1 and 2 years. In some cases, students can choose between graduation programmes with or without a final paper. Some educational institutions offer various master's programmes within a particular field, namely *Master de Recherche* (research master) or *Master Professionnel* (regular or professionally-oriented master), in line with the French education system.

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

In principle, students with a master's degree (الماجستير) are eligible for admission to a doctoral programme. Doctoral programmes last for at least 3 and at most 5 years, and upon successful completion, students are awarded the title of doctor (دكتوراه).

■ Higher professional education

Students holding a *Baccalauréat* or a *Baccalauréat Technique* can apply to enrol in a higher professional education programme to gain a *Diplôme de Technicien Supérieur*/Higher Technical Diploma (الأمْتياز الفنية). Such programmes have a duration of 2 or 3 years and are conducted at an Institute or Technical Institute. Following 2 further years of study, students can obtain the *Licence Technique*/Technical Diploma (الإجازة الفنية) or the *Licence d'Enseignement Technique*/Technical Education Diploma (الإجازة التعليمية الفنية). The latter two programmes can also be started immediately after gaining the *Baccalauréat* or the *Baccalauréat Technique*. In such cases, their duration is 4 years. This type of higher technical education is the responsibility of the Directorate General for Vocational and Technical Education (DGVTE). This Directorate General is part of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Education is provided by both public and private technical schools.

■ Assessment systems

For secondary education, a certain number of points can be achieved for each subject. This maximum number differs per subject, but it also depends on the subject cluster. The example degree certificates are provided by way of illustration. Institutions with the French system use an assessment system with scores from 1 –20. This gives the following assessments:

In numbers	Description
0-9	<i>Insuffisant</i>
10-11	<i>Passable</i>
12-14	<i>Bien</i>
15-17	<i>Très bien</i>
18-20	<i>Excellent</i>

There are also institutions that use the American assessment system:

In letters	Percentage	Assessment
F	0-59	Fail
D	60-69	Weak
C	70-79	Fair
B	80-89	Good
A	90-100	Excellent

■ Bologna process

Although Lebanon is not a signatory to the Bologna Declaration, gradual adjustment stemming from the Bologna process has been made to the bachelor's and master's structure and associated tools within the Lebanese education system. Lebanon has its own credit system, although some institutions use the ECTS system to indicate the study load of programmes. This is generally 180 ECTS for a bachelor's programme and 120 ECTS for a master's programme. Upon request, some institutions also issue a Diploma Supplement together with the degree certificate.

■ Quality assurance and accreditation

The Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education is responsible for the quality assurance of educational institutions providing primary, secondary and higher education. Only the Lebanese University is automatically accredited by the Lebanese state. Private institutions must request a licence from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. In Lebanon, accreditation is issued at the institutional level. Degree programmes are not accredited separately.

The American University of Beirut and the Lebanese American University are American institutions that have been accredited by the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges respectively. Furthermore, they have both been accredited by the Lebanese state, enabling them to issue accredited degrees.

A list of recognised Lebanese higher education institutions is available in the [List of higher education institutions](#) section and on the [website](#) of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

■ Composition of file

Ideally, a file from Lebanon should include a diploma or declaration of graduation and a grade list in Arabic, plus a translation of both documents. Sometimes, Lebanese higher education institutions will issue a diploma and associated grade list in English or French. The qualifications for general secondary education are usually only issued in Arabic.

Lebanese qualifications need to be checked closely for authenticity. If in doubt, please contact [Nuffic](#).

List of higher education institutions

English name	French name	Arabic name
Al Kafaat University (AKU)	Université Al-Kafaat	جامعة الكفاءات
Al Maaref University (MU)		جامعة المعارف
Al Manar University of Tripoli (MUT)	Al-Manar Université à Tripoli	جامعة المنار في طرابلس
American University of Beirut (AUB)		الجامعة الأميركية في بيروت
American University of Culture & Education (AUCE)	Université Américaine pour l'Education et la Culture	الجامعة الأميركية للثقافة والتعليم
American University of Science & Technology (AUST)	Université Américaine de Science et Technologie	الجامعة الأميركية للعلوم والتكنولوجيا
American University of Technology (AUT)		الجامعة الأميركية للتكنولوجيا
Antonin University (UPA)	Université Antonine	الجامعة الأنطونية
Arab Open University (AOU)	Université Ouverte Arabe	الجامعة العربية المفتوحة
Arts Sciences & Technology University of Lebanon (AUL)	Université d'Arts, Sciences et Technologie au Liban	جامعة الآداب والعلوم والتكنولوجيا في لبنان
Beirut Arab University (BAU)	Université Arabe de Beyrouth	جامعة بيروت العربية
Beirut Islamic University (BIU)	Université Islamique de Beyrouth	جامعة بيروت الإسلامية
Global University (GU)		الجامعة العالمية
Haigazian University (HU)	Université de Haigazian	جامعة هايكازيان
ESA Business School	Ecole Supérieure des Affaires -ESA	المعهد العالي للأعمال
Holly Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK)	Université Saint-Esprit de Kaslik	جامعة الروح القدس – الكسليك

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Islamic University of Lebanon (IUL)	Université Islamique du Liban	الجامعة الإسلامية في لبنان
Jinan University (JU)	Université Jinan	جامعة الجنان
La Sagesse University (ULS)	Université La Sagesse	جامعة الحكمة
Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (ALBA)	Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts	الأكاديمية اللبنانية للفنون الجميلة - جامعة البلمند
Lebanese American University (LAU)	Université Libano-Américaine	الجامعة اللبنانية الأميركية
Lebanese Canadian University (LCU)	Université Libano-Canadienne	الجامعة اللبنانية الكندية
Lebanese French University of Technology and Applied Sciences (LFU)	Université Libano-Française de Technologie et des Sciences Appliqués	جامعة التكنولوجيا والعلوم التطبيقية اللبنانية - الفرنسية
Lebanese German University (LGU)	Libano-Allemand Université	الجامعة اللبنانية الألمانية
Lebanese International University (LIU)		الجامعة اللبنانية الدولية
Makassed University of Beirut (MU)	Université de Makassed	جامعة المقاصد
Middle East University (MEU)	Université de Moyen Orient	جامعة الشرق الأوسط
Modern University of Business & Sciences (MUBS)		الجامعة الحديثة للإدارة والعلوم
Notre Dame University – Louaize (NDU)	Université de Notre Dame - Loueizeh	جامعة سيدة اللويزة
Phoenicia International University (PU)	Université Internationale de Phénicie	جامعة فينيسيا الدولية
Rafik Hariri University (RHU)		جامعة رفيق الحريري

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Rassoul Aazam University Institute of Health Sciences		كلية الرسول الأعظم للعلوم الصحية
Saint Joseph University (USJ)	Université Saint-Joseph	جامعة القديس يوسف
Holy Family University (USF)	Université Sainte Famille	جامعة العائلة المقدسة
University Institute for Nursing Sciences of the Lebanese Red Cross	Faculté Universitaire des Sciences Infirmières de la Croix Rouge Libanaise	كلية الصليب الأحمر اللبناني الجامعية للتمريض
University of Balamand (UOB)	Université de Balamand	جامعة البلمند
University of Sciences & Arts in Lebanon (USAL)	Université des Sciences et Lettres au Liban	جامعة العلوم والآداب اللبنانية
University of Tripoli (UOT)	Université de Tripoli	جامعة طرابلس

University Institutes & Colleges		
English name	French name	Arabic name
Imam Ouzai College		جامعة الإمام الأوزاعي
Saidon Institute of Dentary Laboratory		كلية صيدون الجامعية لمختبرات الأسنان
Saidon Institute of Business		كلية صيدون الجامعية للإدارة

University Institutes of Technology		
English name	French name	Arabic name
Joyaa University Institute of Technology		كلية جوياء الجامعية للتكنولوجيا
Arca University Institute of Technology (ARCATECH)		
Matn University Institute of Technology	Matn Institut Universitaire de Technologie	كلية المتن الجامعية للتكنولوجيا

University Institutes for Religious Studies		
English name	French name	Arabic name
St. Paul Institute of Philosophy & Theology		كلية القديس بولس للفلسفة واللاهوت
Near East College of Theology		كلية اللاهوت للشرق الأدنى
Tripoli University Institute of Islamic Studies		معهد طرابلس الجامعي للدراسات الإسلامية
Daawa University Institute of Islamic Studies		كلية الدعوة الجامعي للدراسات الإسلامية

Useful links

- [Website](#) of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (in Arabic).
- [Website](#) of the Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE).
- [Website](#) of the Unesco Office in Beirut.
- [Website](#) of the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World (FUIW).
- [Website](#) of the Association of Arab Universities (in Arabic).