

The education system of

Tunisia

described and compared with
the Dutch system

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

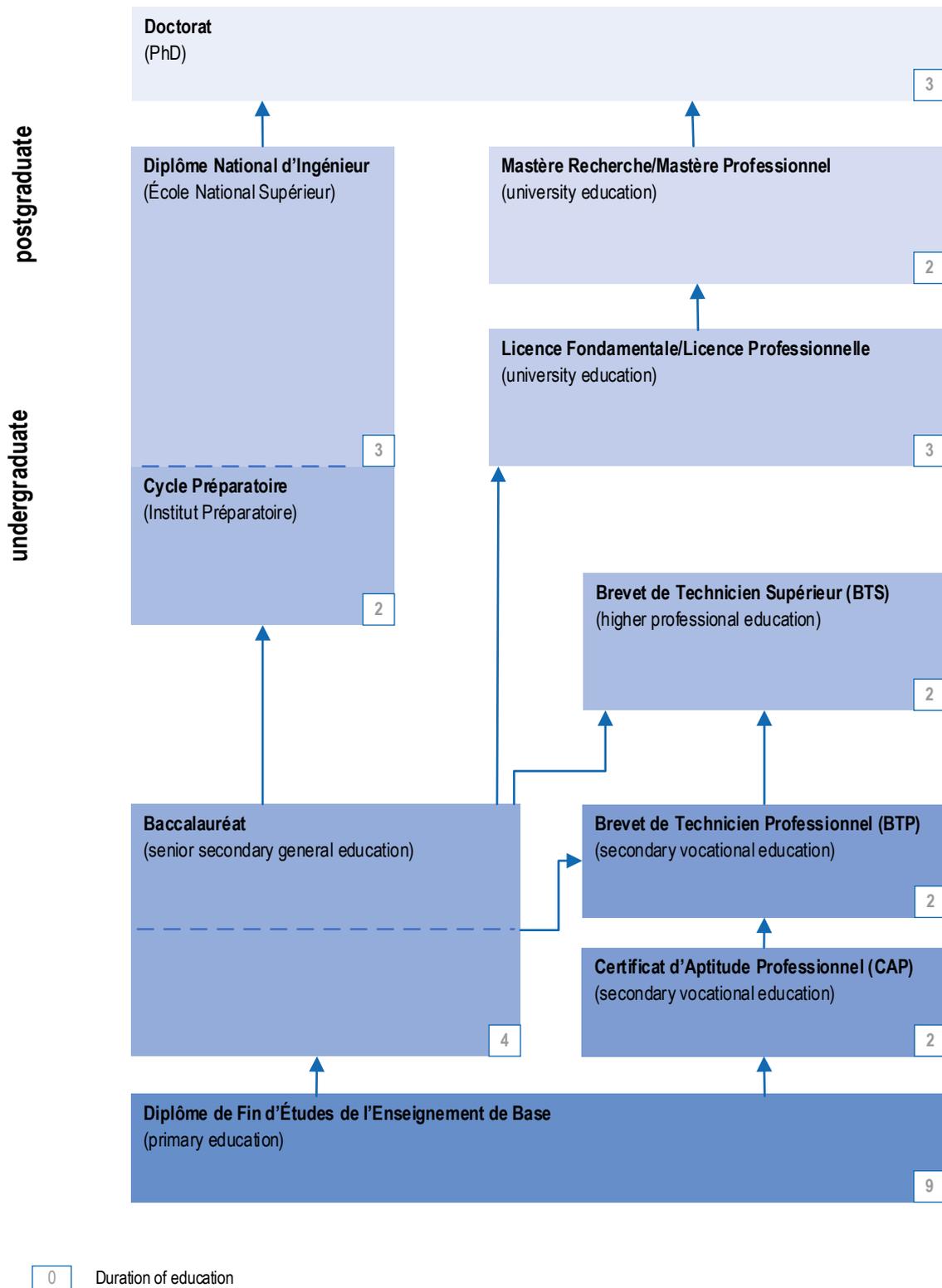
Disclaimer

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 for more information on the reuse of this publication.

Education system Tunisia



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 corresponding levels in the Dutch and European qualifications frameworks.

Degree or qualification	Dutch equivalent and NLQF level	EQF level
<i>Baccalauréat</i>	at least a HAVO diploma	4
<i>Brevet de Technicien Professionnel</i>	MBO diploma, qualification level 3 or 4	3/4
<i>Brevet de Technicien Supérieur</i>	2 years of HBO or an associate degree	5
<i>Licence Fondamentale</i>	2 years of WO	6
<i>Licence Professionnelle</i>	3 years of HBO	6
<i>Diplôme National d'Ingénieur</i>	1 year of a 2-year WO master's degree	7
<i>Mastère Professionnel</i>	HBO master's degree	7
<i>Mastère Recherche</i>	1-year 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: [education and diplomas the Netherlands](#).
- [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

Tunisia (*La République Tunisienne*/الجمهورية التونسية) is situated in the north of Africa, on the Mediterranean Sea. It is one of the Maghreb countries, together with Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria and Libya.

Form of government

In the 19th century, Tunisia was a French colony, and the French influence is still strong. The country gained its independence in 1956. 2011 saw the outbreak of the Tunisian Revolution. This resulted in a new constitution and parliament and presidential elections in 2014.

Tunisia is now a parliamentary republic, with a president as head of state. The head of the parliament is the deputy prime minister.

Language

Arabic is the country's official language. French and Berber are also official languages.

Education

The Tunisian education system still has many similarities with the French education system. Since the introduction of the Higher Education Act in 2008, higher education has used the *Licence/Mastère/Doctorat* structure (3+2+3 years). Before that, the education system was split into 3 phases of 2+2+1/2 years. See also [Higher education](#).

Ministries of Education

- The Ministry of Education (*Ministère de l'Education*/وزارة التربية) is responsible for primary education and teacher training.
- The Ministry of Professional Training and Employment (*Ministère de la Formation Professionnelle et de l'Emploi*/وزارة التكوين المهني والتشغيل) is responsible for technical and vocational education.
- The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (*Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique* - MESRS/*وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي*) is responsible for higher education.

General features

- Compulsory education: Children aged 6 to 15 (primary education and lower secondary education).
- Language of instruction: Arabic (primary education), Arabic and French (secondary and higher education).
- Academic year: from early September to late June.

Primary and secondary education

Basic education (*enseignement de base* / التعليم الأساسي) lasts a total of 9 years:

- 6 years of primary education (for 6-12 year olds);
- 3 years of lower secondary education (for 12-15 year olds).

Primary education is delivered by primary schools, while lower secondary education is delivered by *collèges*. At the end of this phase, students take the *Diplôme de Fin d'Études de l'Enseignement de Base* (شهادة ختم التعليم الأساسي).

General secondary education

Upper secondary education (*enseignement secondaire*) is delivered by *lycées*.

- Duration: 4 years.
 - Admission requirement: the *Diplôme de Fin d'Études de l'Enseignement de Base*.
 - Content: in the 1st year, students follow a common curriculum (*tronc commun*). After that, they choose 1 of the 4 subject clusters: 1. arts, 2. science (*science*), 3. technology, 4. economics and management. Students specialise further within these clusters. The final exam includes 6 subjects.
- Diploma: *Baccalauréat* (البكالوريا) + chosen subject cluster.

In terms of level, the *Baccalauréat* is comparable to at least a [HAVO](#) diploma.

Vocational secondary education

Generally speaking, vocational secondary education comes under the Ministry of Employment (*Ministère de la Formation Professionnelle et de l'Emploi* / وزارة التكوين المهني والتشغيل). Only certain specialised courses come under a different ministry, e.g. the Ministry of Public Health or the Ministry of Agriculture.

Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnel (CAP)

On completion of the *enseignement de base* phase, pupils can also choose a 2-year vocational programme:

- Duration: 2 years.
 - Content: vocationally oriented curriculum.
- Diploma: *Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnel* (CAP) / شهادة الكفاءة المهنية.

Brevet de Technicien Professionnel (BTP)

Once they have passed the CAP, students can continue to study for a BTP, provided that it is in the same field:

- Duration: 2 years.
 - Content: vocationally oriented curriculum.
- Diploma: *Brevet de Technicien Professionnel* (BTP) / مؤهل التقني المهني.

NB The diploma may also be called a: *Diplôme de Technicien Professionnel*.

In terms of level, the *Brevet de Technicien Professionnel* (BTP) is comparable to an [MBO](#) diploma (qualification level 3 or 4).

Post-secondary education

Having obtained a *Brevet de Technicien Professionnel* (BTP), students can continue their studies in the same field.

- Duration: 2 years.
- Content: vocational programme.
- Admission requirement: *Brevet de Technicien Professionnel* (BTP) or *Baccalauréat*.
- Diploma: *Brevet de Technicien Supérieur* (BTS) / مؤهل التقني السامي.
NB The diploma may also be called a: *Diplôme de Technicien Supérieur*.

In terms of level, the *Brevet de Technicien Supérieur* (BTS) is comparable to 2 years of a [HBO](#) bachelor's programme or an associate degree.

■ Higher education

Tunisia has a unitary higher education system. Universities offer both academic and professionally oriented programmes.

State institutions

There are 13 universities and 25 higher professional institutes (*École Supérieure/ المدرسة العليا*, *Institut Supérieur/ المعهد العالي* of *École Nationale d'Ingénieurs/ المدرسة الوطنية للمهندسين*). Each university is divided into faculties and higher institutes.

Private institutions

There are over 60 private institutions. These are supervised by the Ministry of Higher Education. The establishment of a private educational institution is governed by a comprehensive framework with strict regulations.

There are private schools at all levels in Tunisia. The *Private Higher Education Law* (*La loi de l'enseignement supérieur privé/ القانون المتعلق بالتعليم الخاص*) from 2000 states that diplomas from government-approved private schools must be accepted for admission to state institutions. See also: [la loi n° 2000-73 du 25 juillet 2000](#) (*Journal Officiel de la République Tunisienne*, 10 mai 2013).

Current structure

Higher education is currently organised in accordance with the LMD structure (3+2+3):

- *Licence* (3 years)
- *Mastère* (2 years)
- *Doctorat* (3 years)

Old structure and diplomas

Before the introduction of the LMD structure in 2008, students could obtain the following diplomas in 4 phases:

- 1st phase: *Diplôme Universitaire d'Etudes Scientifiques* (DUES), *Diplôme Universitaire d'Etudes Littéraires* (DUEL) or *Diplôme d'Etudes de Premier Cycle* (DEUPC).
- 2nd phase: *Maîtrise*.
- 3rd phase: *Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures Spécialisées* (DESS) or *Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies* (DEA).
- 4th phase: *Doctorat*.

■ Admission to higher education

The admission requirement for higher education in Tunisia is a *Baccalauréat*.

Additional requirements may include:

- entrance examinations for specific programmes (including engineering programmes and medical programmes);
- specific subject clusters or specialisations;
- the average achieved in the final examination.

■ University and higher professional education

In Tunisia, students can obtain higher education diplomas at the following levels:

- *Licence*
- *Mastère*
- *Doctorat*
- Other study programmes

Licence Fondamentale

- Duration: 3 years.
- Content: theoretical education with seminars, tutorials or labs.
- Admission requirement: *Baccalauréat*.
- Diploma: *Licence Fondamentale* / الإجازة الأساسية.

Licence Professionnelle

- Duration: 3 years.
- Content: a combination of theoretical and professional education with mandatory work placements.
- Admission requirement: *Baccalauréat*.
- Diploma: *Licence Professionnelle* / الإجازة التطبيقية.
NB The diploma may also be called a *Licence Appliquée*.

In terms of level, the *Licence Fondamentale* is comparable to 2 years of [WO](#).

In terms of level, the *Licence Professionnelle* is comparable to 3 years of [HBO](#).

Mastère Recherche

- Duration: 2 years.
- Content: research master's, ending with a thesis (*mémoire de recherche*);
- Admission requirement: *Licence Fondamentale*.
- Diploma: *Mastère Recherche* / ماجستير بحث.

Mastère Professionnel

- Duration: 2 years.
- Content: applied programme with a report on the final work placement (*mémoire de stage*).
- Admission requirement: *Licence Fondamentale* or *Licence Professionnel*.
- Diploma: *Mastère Professionnel* / ماجستير مهني .
NB The diploma may also be called: *Mastère Appliqué*.

In terms of level, the *Mastère Recherche* is comparable to a 1-year [WO](#) master's degree.

In terms of level, the *Mastère Professionnel* is comparable to an [HBO](#) master's degree.

Doctorat

- Duration: 3 years.
- Content: *coursework* and writing and defending a doctoral dissertation; extensive academic research and publication of articles in academic journals.
- Admission requirement: *Mastère Recherche*, *Diplôme National d'Ingénieur* or final diplomas in architecture, medicine, veterinary science, dentistry and pharmacy.
- Diploma: *Doctorat* / دكتوراه.

Other study programmes

Not all study programmes follow the LMD structure. Studies in the field of medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, pharmacy, architecture and engineering have a different structure.

- *Diplôme National d'Ingénieur* / *Diplôme d'Ingénieur d'Etat*
- *Diplôme National d'Architecte*
- *Diplôme National de Docteur en Médecine*
- *Diplôme National de Docteur en Médecine Dentaire*
- *Diplôme National de Docteur Vétérinaire*
- *Diplôme National de Docteur en Pharmacie*

Education system Tunisia

Diplôme National d'Ingénieur

- Duration: 5 years.
- Content:
 - first phase (2 years) - basic programme (*cycle préparatoire*) at an *Institut Préparatoire*, specialising in mathematics/physics/information technology (*Mathématique-physique-informatique*) or chemistry/applied biology (*chimie-biologie appliquée*).
 - second phase (3 years) at an *École National Supérieur*. In-depth studies in a particular field: the programme is both theoretical and professional.
- Admission requirement: *Baccalauréat*, but admission is highly competitive. And after completion of the first phase (*cycle préparatoire*), a test for admission to the second phase is mandatory.
- Diploma: *Diplôme National d'Ingénieur* / الإجازة الوطنية للمهندس .

In terms of level, the *Diplôme National d'Ingénieur* is comparable to 1 year of a 2-year [WQ](#) master's degree.

- Architecture: 6 years – *Diplôme National d'Architecte*.
- Medicine: 8 years – *Diplôme National de Docteur en Médecine*.
- Dentistry: 6 years – *Diplôme National de Docteur en Médecine Dentaire*.
- Veterinary medicine: 6 years – *Diplôme National de Docteur Vétérinaire*.
- Pharmacy: 5 years – *Diplôme National de Docteur en Pharmacie*.

■ Assessment systems

The assessment system is the same for both secondary education and higher education: a scale of 0-20, in which the minimum average mark to achieve a pass is 10.

Grade	Description	Meaning
16-20	<i>Très bien</i>	Very good
14-15.9	<i>Bien</i>	Good
12-13.9	<i>Assez bien</i>	More than satisfactory
10-11.9	<i>Passable</i>	Satisfactory
0-9	<i>Insuffisant</i>	Unsatisfactory

■ Qualification frameworks

Tunisia has worked with the *Classification Nationale des Qualifications* since 2009. This includes 7 different levels of diploma. See also: [Décret n° 2009-2139](#) in *Journal Officiel de la République Tunisienne* — 17 juillet 2009, No 57.

■ Accreditation and quality assurance

Higher education institutions are accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The Ministry can issue a licence to private institutions. In order to guarantee the quality of private education, the Ministry reviews licences on a regular basis.

The [Instance Nationale de l'Évaluation, de l'Assurance Qualité et de l'Accréditation \(IEAQA\)](#) (The National Evaluation, Quality Assurance and Accreditation Authority/ الهيئة الوطنية للتقييم وضمان الجودة والإعتماد) was set up in 2012. This organisation is responsible for reviewing higher education institutions and accrediting degree programmes. The IEAQA is charged with monitoring the quality of higher education and compliance with international standards.

■ Bologna process

Tunisia began implementing the Bologna process in 2006. The LMD system was introduced following the introduction of the Higher Education Act in 2008. The Diploma Supplement was also officially introduced at that time.

■ International treaties

Various Tunisian higher education institutions have agreements with international institutions, under which Tunisian students can obtain a *double degree*. These are often engineering institutions.

Tunisia has various bilateral agreements in the field of higher education with other Arabic countries, as well as with European countries and the United States.

Algeria is a partner of Tunisia in the Tempus/Erasmus+ programmes (*joint degrees, academic staff mobility, credit transfers*).

The Ministry of Higher Education (MESRS) also encourages students from other African countries to come to Tunisia to study.

■ Diploma supplement

Officially, Tunisia should have been issuing Diploma Supplements (DS), *Le Supplément au Diplôme*, or *Annexe Descriptive au Diplôme* since 2006, when parts of the Bologna process were implemented. In practice however, files rarely include a diploma supplement.

■ Composition of file

Secondary education qualifications comprise of the *Baccalauréat* with a separate, official final examination list.

In higher education, institutions issue a diploma with separate transcripts and grade lists for all academic years.

The diplomas and grade lists are generally in Arabic. The grade lists can also be in French only.

■ Overview of higher education institutions

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research provides an [overview of all state universities](#) in Tunisia.

The Ministry's website also has a [list of all private universities](#).

■ Useful links

- [Ministère de l'Éducation](#), the Ministry of Education (the website is not always accessible, just like www.education.gov.tn).
- [Ministère de la Formation Professionnelle et de l'Emploi](#), the Ministry of Professional Training and Employment.
- [Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique - MESRS](#), the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.
- [Instance Nationale de l'Évaluation, de l'Assurance Qualité et de l'Accréditation \(IEAQA\)](#), the National Evaluation, Quality Assurance and Accreditation Authority.