

Bahrain

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Principles and general objectives of education

In accordance with the constitutional statements, and as indicated in Article (3) of the Educational Law Project of 1989, the main objectives of education in Bahrain are defined as follows:

- Provide the opportunity for each individual to develop his/her abilities, skills, and attitudes to achieve a better quality of human life, and to prepare him/her for co-operative life in work and employment fields.
- Ensure the development of the individual within the group, physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, morally, and spiritually, according to his/her ability, with due regard to individual differences.
- Develop individual critical thinking, and sound judgment with good application.
- Inculcate the Islamic faith, emphasizing its role in the integration of the individual's personality, the unity of the family and society and their co-operation, and demonstrating the Islamic role as a comprehensive way of life suitable for any time and place, and its ability to cope with the demands of the time.
- Inculcate pride in belonging to the Arab and Islamic nations based on the awareness of the genuine value of Arab Islamic thinking, its historical role in developing human civilization and advancement of science and art, and the awareness of the potentials of the Arab nation, and its ability to achieve progress and unity.
- Ensure economic and social progress by providing sufficient and capable skilled national manpower.
- Develop the concepts of education for peace, international co-operation, and solidarity based on justice, equality, mutual respect, and interaction amongst states and nations.

Current educational priorities and concerns

The Ministry of Education has concentrated its comprehensive educational plan for the period 1989-1994 on measures to be adopted in order to develop the educational process thoroughly, and to increase its efficiency. Special attention is paid to the clear commitment to ensure Education for All (EFA) and to improve quality and standards to meet the learner's needs and the socio-economic development.



The Ministry has therefore adopted the following directions as a general framework to achieve its educational objectives:

- Viewing education as a gateway to integrated and comprehensive development in all fields, and considering that the development of society depends mainly on schools, since it is education that creates human mentality, knowledge and attitudes.
- Viewing education as an integral system in itself, and at the same time as a part of the socio-economic one.
- Considering the education system in Bahrain as a part of a larger one, namely, the Arab education system.
- Considering the Ministry of Education as equally responsible for both formal and non-formal education.
- Viewing education as a responsibility of all, and promoting new ways of participation, such as the Educational Council for Planning and Co-ordination and the Parent-Teacher Council.
- Viewing education as a co-operative system and gradually delegating most of the functions to the schools in order to achieve full decentralization.
- Considering the education reform as a comprehensive change rather than a partial one.
- Promoting technical education standards and linking them to the labour market and development requirements.
- Strengthening the relations between the home, the school and the community.
- Improving the standards of education personnel, and enhancing training opportunities within the school for sustained professional growth.
- Eliminating illiteracy.
- Providing incentives for national and foreign investors from the private sector to open kindergartens, schools and institutes to relieve the pressure on Government schools and to increase the variety of choice in educational experiences.

In order to achieve the educational objectives, the Ministry has adopted over the years a number of new strategies, methods and techniques designed to enhance educational quality. Some of these strategies and techniques have had a positive impact on the development of education process, for example:

- The English language curricula development project for basic education.



- The project for introducing design and technology subjects in basic education, which aimed at enhancing students' attainment standards, transmitting a positive attitude towards manual work, and improving educational outputs. This project was started in 1999/2000 in four primary schools and was expanded to include twenty additional schools in 2001.
- Family education in boys' schools.
- The cooperative schools project, which was designed for schools to improve on various aspects of their functioning and administration through cooperation.
- The introduction of the Internet in Learning Resource Centers in secondary schools.
- The integration of students with special needs in regular classes.
- The Parents Councils Project was adopted in public schools so that parents may support and complement the role of the school in reaching its objectives. Implementation of this project began in three schools and was subsequently expanded to 16 schools during the year 2000/01.

During the period from 2000 to 2004, the implementation of the directions related to the development of the education system and enhancement of the quality of education has been based on two documents, namely the Fundamentals Directions for Education Development and the Future Vision of Education Development approved by the Cabinet on 13 April 2003 as a general framework for future developments. The general objectives can be summarized as follows: enhancing the democratic concepts and implant the tolerance spirit; adopting effective strategies for promoting lifelong learning; directing the curricula to integrate learning and work; giving attention to the gifted and talented and utilizing their creative abilities; and giving attention to students with special needs and encouraging them to be more self-reliant, useful and productive. Several projects have been initiated in order to improve the quality of basic education, such as employing ICTs in the teaching process, the Design and Technology project, and teaching English in the first grade of primary education, among others.

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

In the year 2000, the Ministry of Education prepared a draft bill regarding education, the **Education Law**. It comprises 11 articles that define its provisions involving identification of education philosophy and objectives, duties, responsibilities and functions of the Ministry, citizen's right to education, the State's responsibility towards education, free education, educational ladder, literacy and adult education, private education and education for students with special needs.

In 1995, Law No. 19, the **Academic Qualifications Evaluations Law**, was issued on the evaluation of academic qualification, providing for modification or equivalence of foreign academic qualifications granted by foreign universities,



institutions and schools in the absence of corresponding national qualifications by a decision issued by the Minister of Education based on the proposal by a Committee to be named "The National Committee for Evaluation of Academic Qualifications".

Decree-law No. 25, the **Private Education and Training Institutions Law**, was issued in 1998, canceling the previous Decree No. 14 of 1985. The new law provides definitions and objectives of private education and training establishments, in addition to the definition of the types and divisions of private schools, the conditions relevant to establishment and management, financial system, technical supervision and administrative control to ensure establishment of educational institutions free from financial and administrative problems.

Education is free at all school levels for Bahraini and non-Bahraini children. Although education is not compulsory, all school-age children attend public or private schools.

Administration and management of the education system

The **Ministry of Education** is responsible for the administration of the public education in Bahrain. It is the official authority responsible for executing the State's educational policy, directing the education system at all levels, drawing-up and planning its policies, and supervising and directing its departments.

The Ministry consists of five sectors (Educational Planning and Informatics; General and Technical Education; Curriculum and Training; Educational Services and Private Education; and, Financial and Administrative Affairs), each one falling under the responsibility of an assistant under-secretary who in turns supervises a certain number of departments.

The Ministry also supervises private education (including kindergartens) through the Directorate of Private Education, as well as adult education and training programmes that are set-up by various educational organizations. Nurseries are under the supervision and control of the **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs**.

Since the early 1980s, the Ministry of Education has promoted decentralization and a consultative democratic policy, by creating channels of expression and interaction amongst educational officials, involving all educational personnel in developmental committees and taking the appropriate decisions to raise educational efficiency. Several advisory committees have also been established. Membership is not confined to the Ministry's officials, and assistance can be sought from experienced personnel from other Ministries and universities in Bahrain. Students are involved in the decision-making process by participating in a number of these committees.

Higher education institutions enjoy autonomy in administrative and technical matters. However, the Ministry of Education is considered as the highest official authority responsible for some of them (i.e. the University of Bahrain and the Arabian Gulf University). The Minister of Education is the chairman of their Board of Trustees.



In 1990/91, the Ministry adopted the system of each school as an autonomous educational unit, according to the Ministerial decision No. 375/168/90 of 24 April 1990. The document attached to the Ministerial decision has defined the basic proceedings, the new organizational chart of school administration, educational and administrative tasks, as well as the evaluation process.

This new organizational structure of the school as an autonomous educational unit consists of the following:

- The **School Principal** represents the school's higher leadership as the chairman of its council. He/she participates in setting-up the general policy of the school, and takes the responsibility of leading the school's work to implement the educational policy and achieve the educational objectives.
- The **School Council** consists of: the principal as chairman, assistant principal(s), a social worker, an elected senior teacher, a learning resources centre specialist, a registrar, and five elected teachers. The council discusses matters concerning the school policy in general; the school's administrative and academic problems and the appropriate solutions; the school's needs in terms of teaching and administrative staff; the suggestions and plans presented by the school staff regarding curriculum development and teaching methods; and the proposed school budget.
- The **Assistant Principal** participates with the principal in drawing-up school policy and discussing it with the school council; he/she runs the school's administrative and technical affairs.
- The **Academic Sections** include all the teachers who teach one subject or carry out an instructional activity. Each section is headed by a senior teacher, who is in charge of developing the subject-matter curriculum, teaching methods, evaluation methods, and the programme of staff professional development. A senior teacher can be a member of the school council by election.
- The **Teacher** is considered as the cornerstone of the educational process. He/she participates as an elected member in the school council, participates in the process of decision-making, and contributes to the sound administration of the school.
- The **Social Worker** has an effective role in running school life and regulating social relations among the students, and between them and their parents. He/she also provides the students with psychological, social and vocational advisory services. He/she is a member of the School Council.
- The **Learning Resources Centre Specialist** is in charge of the school library and other learning resources. He/she co-ordinates with various sections in order to provide the needed services, assists and advises the teachers, and helps in teaching certain lessons in library science and research methods. He/she is a member of the school council.

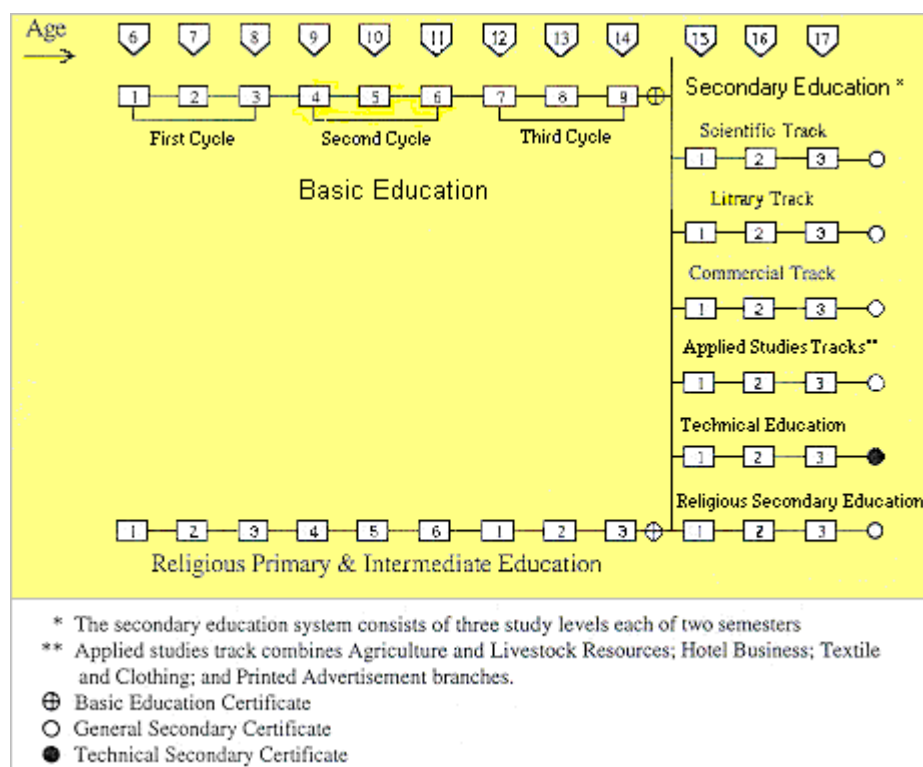
- The **Secretary** is in charge of the administrative, accounting and financial matters.

To familiarize the school with autonomy, the Ministry of Education determined that self-evaluation would be the most appropriate method. The essence of self-evaluation is that all the school staff should participate in the evaluation process, from the definition of its objectives to the adoption of corrective measures based on the evaluation results. In the light of the above, an automated school administration system has been established. Since 2001/02, the Ministry has applied the comprehensive evaluation of the school administration systems aiming at creating a unified student evaluation database in order to facilitate the execution of the Ministry's decisions within this domain.

The EFA National Forum has been established in April 2002 in accordance with the Cabinet's decision No. 673 of 16 February 2002. The Ministry of Education is activating the role of this Forum to achieve the EFA goals with the cooperation of all concerned bodies in the country.

Structure and organization of the education system

Bahrain: structure of the education system



Pre-school education

Pre-school education is provided by the private sector only. Kindergartens are supervised by the Ministry of Education and cater to children aged 3-5. Nurseries cater to children less than 3 years of age and are under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.



Primary education

Primary education includes the first two cycles of basic education. It lasts six years and caters to children aged 6-11. In the first three grades (first cycle) a class-teacher system is applied. The third cycle of basic education is called intermediate education, and lasts three years. Students are admitted upon completion of primary education or its equivalent in literacy classes. Schools are not co-educational, i.e. there are separate establishments for boys and girls.

Secondary education

Secondary education lasts three years, divided into six semesters. Students are admitted upon obtaining the Intermediate School Certificate or its equivalent. The credit-hour system is applied at this level, since 1988/89 for technical secondary education (known as the modular courses system), and since 1990/91 for general and commercial secondary education. The credit-hour system was generalized in 1994/95. A student has a choice to pursue different curricula: scientific, literary, commercial, applied or technical. Within the applied curricula track, there are five branches: agriculture and livestock resources (for boys only); printing (for boys only); textile and clothing (for girls only); graphic design (for girls only); and hotel management (for boys only). Depending on the common courses, students may change tracks among more than one specialization. A total of 156 credit hours is needed to graduate for all tracks except technical, where a total of 180 credit hours is required (one credit hour is equivalent to fifteen periods). At the end of the secondary level, successful students are awarded the General Secondary School Certificate.

Religious education is offered by a specialized institute under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. It is for boys only. This type of education is the same as that at the basic and general secondary levels, with the same duration of study and admission age, but it emphasizes Islamic studies to prepare men with an appropriate background in religious affairs. At the end of the secondary level, students are awarded the General Secondary School Certificate, Religious Branch. In 2003/04, there were 610 students enrolled in the religious institute (all levels).

The duration of studies at universities, colleges and higher institutes ranges from two to four years or more.

In 2003/04 the school year extended from mid-September to the end of June, and consisted of 170-172 working days (or about thirty-four weeks) at the primary and intermediate levels, and 155 working days (or thirty-one working weeks) at the secondary level.



The financing of education

All the educational services are financed by the State budget. Higher education establishments have a budget allocated by the government and additional financing comes from tuition fees.

Public education in Bahrain is free in all its forms and types and is provided by the State as a right for every Bahraini citizen. The government is allocating not less than 10% of its budget to recurrent expenditure on education, in addition to the capital (non-recurrent) budget for school maintenance and buildings. The education budget rose from BD93 million in 2001 to BD157 million in 2006.

In addition to the budget provided by the government for the Ministry of Education, there are other sources of financing for education. Although they are relatively small, they contribute to reduce pressure on the public budget. These sources are: neighboring countries (such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia); regional and international organizations (such as UNICEF and UNESCO); the schools own revenues; and private donations.

From the second half of the 1980s, the Ministry of Education adopted the principle of reducing the cost of education as much as possible. Several means have been adopted:

- The policy of reducing staff cost. The Ministry has given emphasis to scholarships and training plans for the Bahrainis, thus reducing the cost of non-Bahraini staff by 15% in 1994. Administrative procedures have been adopted to ensure the full teaching load in order to reduce the annual demand of teachers and to achieve the specified class size in all schools. Other procedures have been adopted regarding rents for accommodation, allowances related to job performances, etc.
- The policy of reducing other costs. The Ministry has reduced the cost of consuming services and goods, and of capital goods.
- Reconsidering educational technologies. The Ministry has changed the way of providing educational technologies to schools (i.e. equipment, textbooks, etc.) by dispersing their distribution over several years.
- Supporting and encouraging private schools. The State supports and encourages the private sector to establish schools in order to reduce costs. This support consists of providing private schools with free textbooks and other materials, and no fees are collected from these schools.
- Reducing the costs of schools buildings. The Ministry has changed school specifications in order to reduce costs.



The educational process

The Directorate of Curricula is responsible for the comprehensive process of curriculum development, including planning and providing study programmes and syllabi for all educational levels and types in public schools, planning of innovative curricular projects, and piloting, implementing, evaluating and analyzing results.

In the first stage of curriculum development, the Directorate assesses the needs of the society through investigation and research. Then, taking into consideration the general educational goals of the country, curriculum planners transform these needs into the general curriculum outline. This might require the reform or gradual improvement of the whole curriculum, or just parts of it; it also might require the improvement of learning materials and the introduction of new ideas into the syllabus. After its preliminary preparation, the curriculum outline is presented for consultation to a group of teachers, senior teachers, university instructors, institutions, and some private companies and ministries. Once its effectiveness has been evaluated, the outline is presented to the Higher Committee for Curricula (HCC), who then makes recommendations that are carried out by the development committees. Then the modified framework is once again presented to the HCC and the Education Committee for approval.

The process of change and adoption of contents is carried out by committees consisting of curriculum specialists, teachers, university instructors, and some ministries, organizations, and commercial establishments. For example, the Education Committee and the HCC make decisions concerning the development of secondary education curricula, the introduction of the new evaluation system in basic education, the modification of work plans, and the development of the technical education curriculum.

After the adoption of the general framework the Directorate of Curricula plans syllabi following these two steps: it designs flowcharts of skills and concepts for every subject at all levels, and coordinates among subjects by careful study of the skills flowchart in order to avoid repetition and to ensure that all concepts and basic skills support and complement each other.

The following principles have governed curriculum development in Bahrain: (i) curriculum development should be geared towards the future prospects for Bahrain and the major issues of the Arab world; (ii) curriculum development should take into account the latest educational and psychological research; (iii) the improvement, renewal and piloting of curricula should be based on continuous field studies; (iv) the curriculum should aim to enable the learner to comprehend modern sciences and to raise her/his technical competency both theoretically and practically; (v) the curriculum should be flexible and innovative; (vi) self-access learning should be encouraged through access to educational technologies such as computers, the Internet and multimedia; (vii) the roles of government sectors and society should be clearly specified to ensure interaction, harmony, and collaboration with the education sector.

The Ministry involves the various sectors of the community in deciding on various aspects of the development of education. For example, parents associations



and other associations were established to participate in ministerial committees. Indeed, the effective participation of the community in educational development and change has become a fundamental requirement for the improvement of the quality of education. The committees that various community sectors may participate in include: (i) national committees, such as the National Committee for Elimination of Illiteracy, and the National Committee for Evaluation of Academic Qualifications; (ii) joint committees, formed to ensure coordination and integration between the Ministry's requirements and the agencies which implement these requirements; (iii) developmental committees, concerned with the development or reform of the structure and contents of education. These include the Secondary Education Development Committee, the Technical Education Development Committee, the Commercial Education Development Committee, and the Primary Education Development Committee.

Pre-primary education

As mentioned, pre-school education is provided by the private sector only. Kindergartens cater to children aged 3-5 years; nurseries cater to children less than 3 years of age. The pre-primary education stage is not integrated into the national education system. The Ministry of Education supervises kindergartens which follow the regulations and rules of the Ministry, whereas nurseries are run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The main objectives of pre-primary education are:

- developing the child's attitudes and behaviors in accordance with the Islamic religion, belief and heritage;
- promoting the child's mental, psychological, social and physical development;
- establishing the principles of the child's self-sufficiency;
- developing the child's skills and abilities;
- encouraging the child's creativity;
- preparing the child for further education.

Currently, each kindergarten prepares its own curriculum. The curricula vary from one institution to another, according to the type of system applied in these kindergartens (i.e. Bahraini, British, American, etc.). Unlike other schools, kindergartens do not follow a rigid timetable. Children move freely under the direction and guidance of teachers and supervisors. Some kindergartens allocate a certain amount of time for reading and writing, as well as playing individual and group games to suit children's needs. Each kindergarten prepares an evaluation form which includes teacher's notes and comments regarding the child's skills and practices in the different developmental aspects, and a description of the child's development in each aspect.

The Ministry of Education has recently adopted the kindergarten curriculum project. A Committee has been established for this purpose that consists of curriculum and private education specialists, in order to prepare a unified curriculum document.



The document has been submitted to the concerned bodies at the Ministry to be reviewed and discussed for final formulation. The final version of the document has been distributed to all kindergartens to be implemented in the school year 2005/06.

The University of Bahrain plays a major role in training the educational staff. The college of education offers the Associate Diploma in Early Childhood (ADEC). This diploma aims at preparing early childhood teachers capable of helping learners acquire experiences in an integrated form. The total number of credits to be completed in this programme is 65. There are also private educational institutions which provide training for early childcare education teachers, such as the Delmon Academy, the Nama Center and the Montessori Center.

In 2005/06, there were 1,037 children enrolled in nurseries. In the same year, the total enrolment in kindergarten was 18,992 children (of whom 9,143 were girls). In 2003/04, the gross enrolment ratio for pre-primary education was estimated at 44.7%, and the percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience was estimated at 73.4%. In 2005/06, the total number of teachers (all female) was 51 in the case of nurseries; 126 teachers in nursery-kindergartens; and 637 teachers in kindergartens.

Primary education (basic education)

The main objectives of primary education (first and second cycles of basic education) are:

- developing the children physically, mentally, morally, socially and emotionally, and providing them with the basic general education and skills required to be good citizens;
- helping the children to acquire the fundamental skills of reading, writing and mathematics in order to enable them to use their Arabic language in reading, writing and self-expression and to use numbers in their daily life;
- helping children to form good habits, attitudes and skills (such as close observation, careful listening, clear thinking, and interest in learning), to develop their talent and hobbies, motivating them towards study and self-learning;
- developing values and attitudes towards work and production, and respect for manual labour and those who practice it.

The main objectives of the intermediate stage (third cycle of basic education) are as follows:

- developing the student, physically, mentally, morally, socially and nationally and providing him/her with the general and practical education required to be a good citizen;



- providing the necessary studies and aids to explore and develop the student's abilities and talents and to prepare him/her for life in general and for the various tracks of secondary education;
- helping the student to acquire good habits, skills and attitudes for self-learning and developing his/her specific talents and abilities;
- developing values and attitudes towards work and respect for manual labour, and inculcating an appreciation for handicrafts.

There are separated schools for boys and girls with teaching staff of the same gender. However, according to the 2003/04 statistics, about 31 primary schools for boys have been managed by women, and boys are taught by women teachers, in order to solve the problem created by the lack of male teachers at this stage, and in keeping with the Ministry's plan to extend this experiment to include a larger number of primary school classes. The weekly lesson timetable for basic education is presented below:

Basic education: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade								
	First cycle			Second cycle			Third cycle		
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Islamic education	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
Arabic language	9	9	8	7	7	7	6	6	6
English language	–	–	2	5	5	5	5	5	5
Mathematics	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Science and technology	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	4
Social studies	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
Family life education	–	–	–	1	1	1	–	–	–
Fine arts	2	2	2	2	2	2	–	–	–
Practical studies (*)	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	3	3
Physical education	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Music	1	1	1	1	1	1	–	–	–
Total weekly periods	25	25	27	30	30	30	30	30	30

Source: Information provided by the Gulf Arab States Educational Research Center (GASERC), November 2004. Each teaching period lasts 50 minutes.

(*) Include home economics, carpentry, metalwork, pottery, etc.

The Ministry of Education's directions regarding the primary education curriculum emphasize the experience unit, treating the topics on the basis of the integration perspective, practising scientific thinking and acquiring the necessary skills to solve problems. Special attention is also paid to practical aspects and their integration in the curriculum, in order to foster functional elements related to the present and future life of the student.

In the first cycle of basic education, where a class-teacher system is applied (e.g. all subjects are taught by one teacher with the exception of English, technology, physical education and music), the teacher assesses pupils' performance during the semester by continuous systematic evaluation, daily training and practicing, planned



activities, individual and group projects, and diagnostic tests. Passing in this cycle is based on the continuous evaluation throughout the semester.

In the second and third cycles of basic education, where a subject-teacher system is applied (e.g. there is a specialized teacher for each subject), students are evaluated through systematic observation, daily training and practising, planned activities, individual and group projects, mid-semester tests, and a final examination at the end of each semester. Students must attain an overall score of at least 50% on each subject.

If a student fails a subject, he/she has the right to again sit the examination in accordance with the terms and conditions stated in the evaluation and examination system of 1984. If a student fails more than one subject, he/she will have the right to repeat that grade for one time only, after the provision of remedial lessons. Students who fail in the intermediate level are allowed to sit the examination as external students. Those who pass the examination are awarded the Basic Education Certificate.

The Education Council at the Ministry of Education approved the Developed Student Evaluation System in basic schools in December 1994. The project was adopted on an experimental basis during the academic year 1995/96 before its final generalization, as stated in the Ministerial decree of September 1995.

In 2005/06, there were 82,943 pupils enrolled in Grades I–VI (of whom 24.7% in the private sector) and the gross enrolment ratio (GER) was estimated at 104%. The total enrolment in Grades VII–IX was 39,741 students (of whom 18.6% in the private sector) for an estimated GER of 102%.

Secondary education

The main objectives of general secondary education are:

- preparing the student, physically, mentally, morally, socially and nationally to be a mature individual and a good citizen;
- educating him/her in the arts and sciences in order to prepare him/her for higher education;
- preparing the student for life in general by providing him/her with sound values and knowledge about scientific trends, and the ability to solve problems of contemporary life, so that, after receiving vocational training, he/she can become a productive member of society.

The study plan of secondary education (credit-hour system) is based on the total credit hours required to complete secondary education: 156 credit hours for scientific, literary, commercial and applied studies tracks; and 180 credit hours for the technical track. The credit hours are divided into four groups of courses as follows:

- Core courses. These are characterized by variety and integration, ensuring a minimum of general knowledge studied by all students. They include a



sufficient amount of information, skills, and attitudes that help the students to continue their study and self-learning. The percentage of core courses out of all the study requirements is 45% for scientific, literary, commercial and applied studies tracks, and 25% for technical track.

- Specialized courses. These are a group of courses that the students must study in one track (as a major course). The percentage of specialized courses out of all the study requirements is 39% for the scientific, literary and commercial tracks; 45% for the applied studies track; and 69% for the technical track.
- Elective specialized courses. These courses are directed towards a specialization, or are linked to a specific field of knowledge. The percentage of these courses out of all the study requirements is 8% for the scientific, literary and commercial tracks; 5% for the applied studies track; and 3% for the technical track.
- Free elective courses. The objective of these courses is to enrich the curriculum, satisfy the students' interests and talent, and achieve the balance and integration between all other core and specialized courses. The percentage of these courses out of all the study requirements is 8% for the scientific, literary and commercial tracks; 5% for the applied studies track; and 3% for the technical track.

The daily timetable consists of six periods of fifty minutes each in all secondary schools. The yearly lesson timetable is showed below:

Upper secondary education: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of yearly periods in each form					
	I		II		III	
	Lit.	Sc.	Lit.	Sc.	Lit.	Sc.
<u>Core courses:</u>						
Arabic language	90	90	90	90	90	90
English language	90	90	90	90	90	90
Islamic education	40	40	40	40	40	40
Science	30	30	30	30	30	30
Mathematics	30	30	30	30	30	30
Social studies	30	30	30	30	30	30
Physical education	30	30	30	30	30	30
Family life education	10	10	10	10	10	10
Sub-total	350	350	350	350	350	350
<u>Compulsory specialized courses (science track):</u>						
Mathematics	–	90	–	90	–	90
Physics	–	90	–	90	–	90
Chemistry	–	60	–	60	–	60
Biology	–	60	–	60	–	60
Geology	–	10	–	10	–	10
Elective specialized courses	–	60	–	60	–	60
Free elective courses	–	60	–	60	–	60
Sub-total	–	430	–	430	–	430
<u>Compulsory specialized courses (literary track):</u>						
Arabic language	70	–	70	–	70	–
English language	60	–	60	–	60	–
Islamic education	20	–	20	–	20	–
History	50	–	50	–	50	–
Geography	50	–	50	–	50	–
Economics	20	–	20	–	20	–
Sociology	10	–	10	–	10	–
Philosophy	10	–	10	–	10	–
Psychology	20	–	20	–	20	–
Elective specialized courses	60	–	60	–	60	–
Free elective courses	60	–	60	–	60	–
Sub-total	430	–	430	–	430	–
Total annual periods	780	780	780	780	780	780

Source: Information provided by the Gulf Arab States Educational Research Center (GASERC), November 2004.

Each teaching period lasts 50 minutes. Lit. = Literary track; Sc. = Science track.



Secondary schools use the teaching methods adopted by the Directorate of Curricula, derived from the educational philosophy. These methods are based on the student's activity to achieve the objectives of the courses (mastery of the process of learning, co-operative learning, self-learning and group learning).

The Ministry initiated comprehensive development programmes for technical and commercial education in order to make these more suited to and compatible with the Bahraini society and to render them more effective in achieving total development. New projects for developing commercial and technical education were adopted. Their objectives include to:

- endorse the principle of broad specialization in technical education to meet future development requirements;
- graduate qualified persons capable of adapting to labor market requirements;
- provide technical training suited to the output and the students' abilities and inclinations;
- keep pace with scientific and technological advances in industrial fields;
- prepare distinctive students capable of continuing higher education;
- enhance the output of commercial education to meet labor market requirements.

Evaluation in the credit-hour system aims at assessing students' achievement and academic efforts continuously throughout the semester. A variety of evaluation methods are used side by side with the mid- and final semester test depending on the nature of each course (i.e. oral, written, and practical tests, as well as research and report writing). The evaluation process also deals with the students' activity, his/her level of participation in the classroom, and homework accomplishment.

The students' evaluation system in secondary schools was implemented in 1993/94. Three parties are participating together in this process: the teacher, the school and the Ministry.

The new evaluation system summarizes students' achievement and performance in each course based on continuous, diagnostic, formative and internal evaluation carried out by the teacher throughout the semester. It contributes 30% of the course's final grade, calculated according to the oral and written classroom performance tests. The internal evaluation of students is made by the school through a mid-semester examination, contributing 20% to the course's final grade. Specialized teachers in each subject-matter participate in this process, supervised by a senior teacher. The external evaluation represents the remaining 50% of the course's final grade. The Ministry of Education is carrying out this process in collaboration with the schools through a unified examination supervised by round committees. These committees comprise curriculum specialists and senior teachers. They organize cumulative and summative evaluation.



Students should attain an overall score of at least 50% in each subject matter, a 20% in the internal evaluation's overall grade, and the same in the cumulative evaluation carried out by the Ministry at the end of each semester. To obtain the Secondary School Certificate, students must attain an overall score of at least 50% in the final cumulative average, and complete all the study requirements.

The Ministry adopted the percentage system in computing students' results, instead of a cumulative system. Thus, students' scores are calculated in percentages instead of points, because of their clarity for the students and their parents. Since the introduction of this system, the Ministry set up a scale showing how to convert the grade within the cumulative system into percentile system.

In 2005/2006, there were 34,026 students enrolled at the secondary level (of whom 14.1% in the private sector) and the gross enrolment ratio was estimated at 95%.

Assessing learning achievement nation-wide

No national programmes for assessing and monitoring pupils' and students' learning achievement are reported.

Higher education

Higher education establishments in Bahrain include universities, colleges and institutes. The duration of studies ranges from two to four years or more. A student must have successfully completed the general secondary education cycle in order to be admitted to higher education programmes.

The University of Bahrain was established in 1986 by the Amiri Decree No. 12. It is an autonomous academic institution and the Board of Trustees, chaired by the Minister of Education, is responsible for planning the general policy, recommending the proposed budget, establishing new programmes and promoting changes in university structure and regulations. The University Council supervises academic, research, educational, administrative and financial activities. It is chaired by the University President and consists of vice-presidents, deans of colleges and representatives of other institutions. The University is financed by the Government, in addition to students' fees. The university colleges offer many academic programmes and specializations that satisfy the labour market demands and serve the developmental policies of the country: bachelor's degree, associate diploma, certificate, master's degree and post-graduate diploma programmes. Courses are evaluated in terms of credit hours. The academic year is divided into two semesters and a summer session (optional). A semester consists of sixteen weeks, one of which is dedicated to final examinations. The summer session is usually eight weeks long. The first semester begins in September and the second in February, while the summer session begins in June of each year.



The University of Bahrain consists of seven main colleges:

College of Arts. It includes three academic departments: Arabic and Islamic studies; English language and literature; and general studies. The college offers a master's degree programme in Arabic language and literature, with emphasis on either literature or linguistics. The college also offers programmes in major specializations, in addition to minor specializations. In order to obtain a bachelor's degree, a student must successfully complete 128-131 credit hours.

College of Science. It includes five departments: mathematics; physics; chemistry; biology; and computer science. It offers a master's degree programme in mathematics and a bachelor's degree programme in major specializations in addition to minor specializations. In order to obtain a bachelor's degree, a student must successfully complete 128-131 credit hours.

College of Education. It includes five departments: curriculum and instruction; educational foundations and administration; educational technology; psychology; and physical education. The college offers the following programmes: Master in Education/Curriculum Development (M.Ed.); Diploma in Education, specialization in teaching; Diploma in School Administration; Diploma in Learning Resources and Information; Bachelor of Education (class-teacher system); Bachelor of Physical Education (B.PE.); Minor programmes: Minor in Education; Minor in Psychology; Double-Major and Minor programme; Double-Major in Education and Islamic Studies; Associate Diploma in Early Childhood; and Continuing Education Programme (this programme provides training sessions, workshops, seminars and consultation services in various educational and psychological fields; it also co-operates with the University of Sheffield in providing a part-time master's degree programme in education—educational studies and English language teaching). In order to obtain a bachelor's degree (class-teacher system) and a B.PE., a student must successfully complete 128 and 129 credit hours for each degree, respectively; 65 credit hours are required for the Associate Diploma in Early Childhood Education.

College of Business Administration. The college consists of the following departments: business and management (bachelor's degree and diploma programmes); accounting (bachelor's degree and diploma programmes); office management (bachelor's degree, diploma and certificate programmes); economics (offering a wide range of service courses to students of other departments at colleges, but no programmes). The Continuing Management Education Programme (COMEP) is a part-time programme which aims at retraining employees in the field of management and upgrading their managerial efficiency and effectiveness. It offers several diploma and certificate programmes in clerical skills, secretarial skills and specialized workshops. The Department of Business and Management also offers part-time post-graduate programmes in business administration. A bachelor's degree in accounting requires 131 credit hours; a B.Sc. in business and management, 130 credit hours; an associate accounting diploma, 68 credit hours; an associate business diploma, 70 credit hours; and a commercial studies diploma, 64 credit hours. English is the language of instruction in all the programmes.

College of Engineering. It consists of five departments: civil and architectural engineering; electrical engineering; mechanical engineering; chemical engineering;



and continuing education programme. The college offers Master of Science programmes in civil engineering and electrical engineering. The Bachelor of Science programmes are in the following specializations: civil engineering; architectural engineering; electrical engineering; chemical engineering; mechanical engineering; and engineering education (mechanical engineering and electrical engineering for teachers). The college also offers associate diploma programmes in the same specializations of the Bachelor of Science programmes, in addition to the Associate Diploma in Process Instrumentation and Control. Continuing Engineering Education Programmes (CEEP) are modular programmes in a number of applications designed to cater for the needs of industry. The total number of credits to be completed is 159 for the B.Sc. in Architectural Engineering; 157 for the B.Sc. in Civil Engineering; 143 for the B.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering; 152 for the B.Sc. in Electrical Engineering; 158 for the B.Sc. in Chemical Engineering; 143 for the B.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering Education; and 142 for the B.Sc. in Electrical Engineering Education. The total number of credits to be completed for the Associate Diploma is between 72 and 80 credit hours, depending on the specialization.

College of Information Technology. It consists of five departments: computer engineering, computer science, business information systems, the evening programme, and the continuing education programme. There also exists the College of Law.

In 1995/96, the total number of students enrolled at the University of Bahrain was 6,580 (3,889 females). In 2000/01, the total number of students enrolled was 12,812.

The Arabian Gulf University is a regional institution of the Gulf Cooperation Council States in the Arabian Gulf Region located in Bahrain, and was founded on 4 April 1979. The participating countries are: United Arab Emirates; Bahrain; Kuwait; Saudi Arabia; Oman; and Qatar. The Board of Trustees is responsible for planning the general policy of the university and the University Council supervises academic, research, educational, administrative and financial activities. It is chaired by the University President and consists of vice-presidents, deans of colleges and directors of institutes or research centres; and a representative of each college, institute or research centre. All the member states are supporting the university with financial contributions, in addition to other resources as stated in the university constitution.

The Arabian Gulf University consists of two main colleges:

Medicine and Medical Sciences College. Students who fulfill the admission criteria in this college join the pre-medical phase. It lasts for two years (four semesters). The pre-medical programme aims at providing the student with basic knowledge in the fields needed in his/her prospective study at the college; and preparing him/her academically and intellectually for that study. The second phase (Medical Phase I) lasts of two years. The students are introduced to and gradually increase their understanding of community health and medical problems. The third phase (Medical Phase II) lasts two years and consists of clinical work, followed by twelve months of rotating internship. The university adopts the credit-hour system in the premedical programme. The academic year is divided into two semesters.



Post-graduate College. It offers the educational studies programme, which includes education for the mentally retarded and slow learners programme; and the education for the gifted and talented programme. Graduates of these two programmes are awarded a master's degree or a higher diploma in the related specialization. It also offers the technical studies field, which includes the desert and arid zone programme; the biotechnology programme; and the management technology programme. Graduates of these programmes are awarded a master's degree or a higher diploma in the related specialization.

In 2000/01, the total number of students enrolled was 627.

The College of Health Sciences is a national academic institute supervised administratively and academically by officials from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, as well as representatives of higher education institutions in Bahrain. The college was established in 1979 in order to provide hospitals and clinics with qualified health manpower. The college offers specialized programmes leading to an associate degree in general nursing; laboratory; radiography; pharmacy; public health inspection; medical equipment repair and maintenance; sports therapy; medical secretary; dental hygiene; and nurse-midwifery. The college also offers programmes leading to a diploma degree such as health teacher training; middle health care administration; community health nursing; and psychiatric nursing. It also offers a B.Sc. nursing programme.

The academic year of the college is divided into two semesters and one summer session. Each regular academic semester includes sixteen weeks, with one week reserved for final examinations. The summer session is made up of eight weeks, and the examination takes place during the final week. The college adopts the credit hours system. In 1995/96, the total number of students enrolled was 620 (of whom 524 were females).

Finally, the Hotel and Catering Training Centre is supervised by the Ministry of Information. It prepares and trains technicians in the field of hotel management, catering and tourism. The duration of the course is two academic years, after which successful students are awarded a Diploma in Hotelry and Catering.

In accordance with the Amiri Decree-Law No. 14 of 1984 concerning the evaluation of higher academic qualifications, the Ministry of Education has established a committee consisting of representatives of specialized bodies or those related to the academic qualifications.

The committee has the task of equalizing the academic qualifications awarded by universities, institutes and schools abroad with the national qualifications or evaluating these qualifications academically if there are no equivalent national qualifications. In this regard, the Ministerial Decree No. 6/186-1/85, dated 11 February 1985, indicates the basic conditions to evaluate the academic qualifications; the committee's work, procedures and technique; and the committee's reporting, as well as the evaluation criteria.



According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, in 2004 the total enrolment at the tertiary level was estimated at 18,524 students (of whom 63% were women) and the number of teachers was estimated at 832.

Special education

In 1986, the Ministry of Education established a Special Education Committee to deal with the issues related to the students with special needs (i.e. slow learners, physically handicapped, blind, deaf, mentally retarded and gifted students). The committee consists of members representing public and private sectors.

The Ministry has also established a Special Education Unit within the Directorate of Student Activities and Services. It is responsible for identifying the handicapped students and for the supervising of students with special needs in public schools as well as in special institutions abroad.

Since the establishment of the Special Education Committee, efforts have been focused on the opening of remedial classes for slow learners and the preparation of qualified teachers at the Arabian Gulf University (special education programme).

The remedial classes' project was implemented in 1986/87 as an experiment by opening two classes for slow learners and low achievers in one primary school for boys. This school was chosen because of the increased rate of low achievers and the availability of such classrooms for this purpose. Two teachers who hold postgraduate diplomas in special education were appointed to this school.

The real start of special education in Bahrain was linked to the recommendations of the workshop held in 1988/89 in cooperation with UNESCO. In the light of those recommendations, the Ministry expanded the implementation of the remedial classes' project in eight primary schools (seven for boys and one for girls).

In 1992, the Ministry adopted another project according to which students with special needs are integrated into ordinary classes together with their normal peers, to avoid their separation from ordinary schools. The committee decided to implement this project in two primary schools (one for boys and the other for girls) in October 1992. In this regard, the following steps were carried out: twenty-seven teachers (fifteen male and twelve female) were selected to start teaching in twenty-eight classes; and a teacher training workshop was organized, aimed at providing information about experiences carried out in other countries. The experiment was gradually expanded, reaching thirteen schools in 1995/96, and has been generalized all over Bahrain public schools.

The Ministry of Education's concern is not limited to slow learners and low achievers; it also includes other cases such as mental retardation, deafness, speech defects and blindness. The Special Education Unit's task is to identify all of these cases and transfer the pupils concerned to the specialized institutions and centres supported by the Ministry. The following are specialized institutions:



The Saudi-Bahraini Institute for the Welfare of the Blind. It is a regional institute located in Bahrain. It provides educational training and cultural programmes, in addition to full health, social and psychological care for sight-impaired boys and girls. The institute uses the same grade structure and curriculum as the regular public schools for primary and intermediate levels. Students who complete their intermediate level education are transferred to regular public secondary schools which provide them with special care. The institute uses Braille as a method of instruction.

Al-Amal Institute. Established by the Child and Motherhood Care Society. Admission requirements specify that students should not have any other disabilities in addition to mental retardation. Students should be 6-12 years old for the educational programme and 12-15 years old for the vocational training programme. Students are classified according to their learning abilities, and not according to the academic levels. The institute offers individualized educational services for the mentally retarded through designing an individual educational/instructional plan for each student using special curricula adapted to their abilities and needs.

Social Rehabilitation Centre. Run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, providing a variety of vocational and academic rehabilitation programmes for handicapped children and youth. It consists of four units: (i) Hearing Defect Unit (3-10 years old): the unit uses the same grade structure and curriculum of primary public schools and adopts the following methods of instruction: speech training, reading, writing, sign language, and finger alphabet; (ii) Special Education Unit (12-15 years old): the duration of the programme is two years, renewable according to the students abilities; it is mainly for mentally retarded children and the programme includes academic, social and pre-vocational skills which help the students to integrate into the society; (iii) Vocational Rehabilitation Unit: the students in this unit should be sixteen years old, and programmes aim at achieving the insertion of students in certain occupations; (iv) Craft Workshop Unit (16 years old): it offers handicapped youth the opportunity to be trained on various occupational areas adapted to their physical abilities and intellectual levels; training programmes focus on carpentry, farming, tailoring, home economics, special skills and handicrafts.

In 2005/06, there were 22 special education institutes with a total enrolment of 1,452 students (of whom 618 were women) and 246 teachers (of whom 214 were women).

Private education

Private education at all levels in Bahrain aims at achieving the same public school objectives. The number of private education institutions increased due to the economic development and to the presence of many expatriates working in various sectors.

The Directorate of Private Education at the Ministry of Education is the responsible body for supervising the private education institutions. It aims at extending the bridges and strengthening the relationship between these institutions and the public schools. The directorate, in co-ordination with other directorates at the ministry, provides all the private education institutions with technical support and



assistance, such as: finding teachers to be appointed; providing free Arabic language, Islamic education, Bahrain history and geography textbooks; and assigning specialists to supervise the teachers of those subject-matters.

The directorate is also in charge of issuing licenses to establish private education institutions, when all the requirements and conditions are fulfilled as stated in the Decree-Law No. 14 of 1985. This law determines the procedures; the specifications of school buildings, teaching staff, records, plans and curricula, as well as punishment and other general rules.

Private nurseries are under the supervision and control of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. They are mainly established by women's societies, charitable organizations, and some individual institutions.

Kindergartens are under the supervision of the Directorate of Private Education. The directorate devotes its attention to this level of education in the following manner: examining the application forms for opening a kindergarten and ensuring the fulfillment of all conditions to get a license; ensuring the safety of kindergarten buildings, technically and educationally, in co-ordination with other related bodies at the Ministry of Education; following-up the educational and instructional process and preparing periodical reports on the work progress at each kindergarten; organizing teacher training workshops; examining the application forms for a post at kindergarten; drawing-up plans and programmes that will develop this level of education to perform its role in a efficient manner.

The first private school in Bahrain was established in 1913. It is the AlRaja School (previously the American Mission School). Since then, private schools have carried out their role in the interest of the educational process for all the citizens, Arabs or foreigners living in Bahrain. In 2005/06, all children enrolled in nurseries and kindergartens were in the private sector. In the same year, 24.7% of pupils at the primary level, 18.6% of students at the intermediate level, and 14.1% of students at the secondary level were in the private sector.

Private schools in Bahrain are mainly of two types. National private schools are established and run by Bahraini citizens or with the participation of non-Bahrainis; these schools have various educational levels, from kindergarten to primary, intermediate and secondary; they offer bilingual programmes (i.e. subjects are taught in Arabic and English). Foreign private schools are established, run and financed by foreign establishments, institutes or communities in Bahrain; these schools also have various educational levels, from kindergarten to primary, intermediate and secondary. Although they were established originally to provide education for the children of foreign communities in Bahrain, most of them accept Bahraini and Arab students. They are taught in the language adopted by the school, usually English, French or Urdu (Indian). Arabic language is taught in all foreign private schools that accept Arab students, in addition to the Islamic religion for all Muslim students.

Each private education institute has its own curricula, study plans, courses and textbooks. They are submitted to the Ministry of Education for approval. The Ministry has the right to modify or stop any curriculum or textbook that is incompatible with the religious and national values of the country.



The Directorate of Private Education is responsible for supervising Arabic language, religious education and social studies in private schools. The Ministry provides these schools with free textbooks for these subjects and assigns specialists to supervise the teachers.

The private schools comply with the curricula and textbooks approved by the Ministry concerning the Arabic courses for Arab students, Islamic religious education for Muslim students, and Bahrain history and geography for all students. These curricula are prepared in accordance with: public, Arab students and foreign students interests; the availability of printed materials; the system adopted in assessing the student achievement. In addition, the Muslim students are forbidden to attend non-Islamic lessons or participate in any activity related to preaching and praying at all levels of education.

The minimum number of periods for the above-mentioned subjects to be taught weekly in a foreign private school is as follows: six periods for Arabic language (first three grades of primary education); four periods for Arabic language (the other grades of primary, intermediate and secondary education); one period for Islamic education for Muslim students at all levels of education. All the students take social studies courses according to the Ministry's guidelines.

Means of instruction, equipment and infrastructure

The Educational Technology Centre at the Ministry of Education has the responsibility of developing, providing and evaluating all the teaching materials to fulfill the continuous development requirements of the curricula. This centre is in charge of designing teaching materials models required by the development of teaching methods to be produced, either inside or outside the centre. It produces and provides educational films, sound recordings, maps, slides, educational cards and models in response to the instructional needs. All the teaching materials are tried and evaluated in collaboration with other related bodies at the Directorate of Curricula and the schools.

The centre is also in charge of drawing-up technical specifications for the science laboratories and equipment, as well as supervising their utilization and maintenance. Furthermore, the centre is responsible for developing and establishing learning resource centres in all schools.

Computers were introduced in 1983 as an educational innovation, and since then the Ministry has continued to promote the introduction of computers as a subject and a tool in secondary schools. The Ministry is planning to expand computer literacy and the computer as an instructional tool for both primary and secondary levels by the year 2010.

Estimated number of computers by level of education (1996)

Type of school	No. of schools	No. of computers	Usage
Primary	90	160	Administration
Primary/intermediate	20	60	Administration
Intermediate	22	60	Admin. and teaching
Intermediate/secondary	3	100	Admin. and teaching
Secondary	26	975	Admin. and teaching
Total	161	1,355	

The Directorate of Curricula at the Ministry of Education provides textbooks in every subject for all educational levels, free of charge, at the beginning of each academic year. Textbooks are generally written locally by curricula specialists and university faculties in Bahrain. They are printed and produced by the Educational Technology Centre Press in Bahrain or abroad.

In 1994/95, 151 textbooks in all subjects were prepared for the academic year 1995/96 on the basis of a schedule of printing these textbooks locally. The Directorate of Curricula has also prepared a list including sixty-six textbooks to be ordered from abroad for the academic year 1995/96 according to technical and educational specifications.

School buildings should be in harmony with the modern educational programmes and be compatible with all the educational innovations. The Ministry's concern is: to provide a sufficient number of school buildings; to distribute them fairly over all the residential areas in Bahrain; the conformity of a school's design with the educational specifications; and the provision of appropriate furniture and equipment.

The Ministry adopted the school map method to: overcome the problems of population distribution; achieve equality of opportunity by establishing a school network, taking into consideration the development of residential areas in line with the overall development; and develop special criteria for school buildings taking into consideration technical, health, educational and job performance specifications.

Educational changes and innovations have had great effects on school buildings. For instance, the schools for the class-teacher system contain general activity rooms, laboratories, family-life education rooms, multi-purpose halls and learning resources centres. The Ministry is currently modifying these buildings by establishing new designs, in order to be able to have a capacity of ten classrooms instead of eight in each school. The credit-hour system at the secondary level has also imposed new requirements on the secondary schools, such as the provision of workshops, laboratories, study halls, cafeterias and registration rooms.

The Ministry provides a cafeteria in each school. Food is prepared and sold by contractors (tradesmen and restaurant owners) in accordance with the Ministerial



Decree of 6 March 1985, concerning the experimental implementation of entrusting school cafeterias to contractors. The school cafeterias supervision committee at the Ministry of Education is in charge of supervising the school cafeterias commitment to health standards; coordinating with the different school administrations the matters concerning the implementation of the system of entrusting the school cafeterias to contractors; and ascertaining that both the school administrations and contractors do not sell prohibited foods and drinks.

The Ministry provides free transportation for the students living far away from their schools and who do not have their own transport. The Ministry determines assembly points for students and specific times for buses movement; draws up plans, projects and activities related to the school transportation prior to the beginning of each academic year; and prepares the necessary statistics in terms of the number of students and teachers to be transported.

Adult and non-formal education

The Directorate of Adult Education at the Ministry of Education organizes educational programmes for illiterates and for those who have successfully passed literacy and follow-up stages, and intend to continue their education. The duration of the literacy and adult education programme is six academic years, divided as follows:

- Literacy stage, considered as a basic stage for those who cannot read and write. It lasts two academic years. The subjects taught in this stage include Islamic religion, Arabic language and mathematics.
- Follow-up stage, equivalent to Grade VI of formal primary education and lasting two academic years. It is attended by those who obtained the literacy stage certificate. It aims at developing the basic skills the learners acquired in the literacy stage. Upon completion of this stage, students are awarded the equivalent primary certificate. The subjects taught include Islamic religion, Arabic language, mathematics, English language, sciences, and social studies. The syllabi in this stage are the same as those of the fifth and sixth grades of primary school; however, they are revised to suit the needs of adults.
- Consolidation stage, equivalent to the formal intermediate stage. It is attended by those who completed the follow-up stage and are interested in continuing their education, or by those who did not complete the formal education for one reason or another. This stage aims at providing an educational environment for adult learners to continue their education till the end of basic education; to maintain the experience they acquired in the previous stages and avoiding the phenomenon of relapsing into illiteracy in case of dropout; using knowledge and skills developed as a foundation for self-continuing learning; applying them in the personal, social and vocational fields of life; and promoting functional effectiveness in daily life. The curriculum content applied in this stage is the same as that of formal intermediate education. It is revised in order to be given in two instead of three years, taking into consideration adults' experiences, their interests and their shortage of time. The subjects taught at



this stage include Islamic religion, Arabic language, mathematics, English language, sciences and social studies (history and geography).

In 2003/04, there were 30 literacy centres with 2,672 adults enrolled (of whom 1,060 were women).

The Directorate of Adult Education also organizes several continuing education programmes for adults who want to master more information and knowledge in various fields, taking into consideration the labour market demand and the people's educational and training needs. The following is a brief description of the programmes offered.

English language. Aims at giving those who want to learn English Language an opportunity to study and promote their practical competence in this language. The programme is divided into five levels. The learner is enrolled in the level on the basis of the proficiency test. Each level consists of forty-five hours of instruction (three hours per week).

Arabic language for foreigners. This programme aims at disseminating Arabic among non-Arab expatriates who want to learn it in order to help them deal easily with nationals and others, as well as to understand the Arabic culture and the Islamic culture. The duration is forty hours (three hours per week).

French language. This programme aims at giving those who want to learn French an opportunity to do so in order to help them deal primary with French speakers. The duration is fifty hours (four and a half hours per week).

Japanese language. The programme is offered in co-operation with Nomura-Bahrain-Japan Friendship Fund. It lasts three months (two days per week).

Islamic studies for foreigners. The purpose of this programme is to make authentic facts and information about Islam available to participants, as well as to promote a better understanding of Islam way of life and the Islamic civilization. The programme lasts three months (two days per week).

Family life education. The purpose of this programme is to promote and employ a woman's knowledge; to respond to her needs; to strengthen the principles and values; to correlate the education with the everyday requirements of the family and to build up the family on a proper basis. This programme is only for women who have successfully finished either primary level or illiteracy and follow-up levels. The programme is designed in three integrated units, namely: the home; mother and child welfare; and food and nutrition. It is offered free of charge and sponsored by the ministry in co-operation with UNICEF. It lasts twenty-four weeks.

Office practice programme. This programme aims at providing training and preparation opportunities in various office practices, and acquiring the necessary skills to practice such business. Under this programme several specialized courses are offered: Arabic typewriting (120 hours); English typewriting (120 hours); secretary in English (eighty hours); accounting and book-keeping (in English; eighty hours); travel business (eighty hours); shorthand (100 hours).



Computer programmes. The objective of these programmes is to provide those who are interested in computers with practical and scientific experiences. There are a variety of courses such as operating systems, basics of computer and various software applications. The duration of each course varies between thirty and sixty hours, depending on the type of each programme.

Libraries: Books Cataloguing and Classification. The objective of this programme is to train the participants on the library technical processes that include cataloguing and classifying various types of materials using the latest cataloguing rules and Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC). This programme serves those who want to organize their home libraries, as well as schools children, societies and club libraries. The programme consists of forty hours of instruction.

According to the 2001 Census, the illiteracy rate for the age group 10-44 years was 1.36% for males and 4.03% for females—2.69% for both males and females.

Teaching staff

The Ministry of Education has determined the academic and educational qualifications that teachers should possess to join the profession at different levels of education as follows:

- The teacher should hold a bachelor's degree in education (classroom teacher programme) to be eligible to teach at the primary school level (first cycle of basic education) that adopts the classroom teacher system.
- Those who want to teach at the second cycle of basic education (Grades IV-VI) should hold a bachelor's degree in one of the arts subjects (Arabic, social studies or religious education) and should have a good academic background in the other two subjects; or, they should hold a bachelor's degree in one of the scientific subjects (chemistry, physics, biology or mathematics) and should have a good academic background in the other three subjects (i.e. the training programme should include courses that will qualify the graduate to pass the determination level test in non-specialized subjects).
- The teacher should hold a bachelor's degree in a specialized academic subject with a minor in education to be eligible to teach at the intermediate and secondary levels.

The Ministry of Education established a new procedure for teaching requirements in 1994. This procedure requires that all the university graduates in various specializations should sit proficiency level tests in their academic subject. The tests are prepared by experts and specialists at the Ministry. Recruitment of teachers is based on the final results of the tests and priority is given to those who attained higher grades. Those who attained lower grades may attend a long intensive course in their specialization. They should attain the required pass grade to be eligible for the teaching profession.



The University of Bahrain plays a major role in the training of educational staff. The college of education offers the following educational programmes:

- Associate Diploma in Early Childhood (ADEC). This diploma aims at preparing early childhood teachers capable of helping learners acquire experiences in an integrated form. The total number of credits to be completed in this programme is 65.
- Bachelor of Education (classroom teacher programme). This programme aims at preparing classroom teachers at the primary school level. The total number of credits to be completed in this programme is 128.
- Bachelor of Physical Education (B. PE.). This programme aims at preparing physical education teachers to be eligible to teach at all school levels. The total number of credits to be completed in this programme is 129.
- Bachelor's degree programmes in specialized subjects. The University of Bahrain offers bachelor's degree programmes in specialized academic subjects such as Arabic, mathematics, English, chemistry, etc., with a minor in education. These programmes aim at preparing teachers of specialized subject-matters to be eligible to teach at all school levels.

The University of Bahrain also offers in-service training programmes for the staff of the Ministry of Education. Those who are not in the teaching profession can attend pre-service programmes (i.e. Higher Diploma in Education, Diploma in Learning Resources and Information, and Master in Education). The Post-graduate College at the Arabian Gulf University offers a variety of programmes in the educational field, which include education of the mentally retarded and slow learners and education of the gifted and talented for those who want to be special education teachers in public schools or special institutions.

Pre-service teacher training programmes offered by the college of education at the University of Bahrain contain the following elements:

- Mastery of the subject matter. All the college's programmes include training in the subjects that the teacher will teach. For instance, the B.Ed. (classroom teacher programme) includes courses in Arabic language and literature, Islamic studies, English language and literature, mathematics and science.
- Pedagogical and methodological skills. All the college's programmes include courses in methods of teaching and teaching/learning strategies in addition to courses in psychology, educational foundations and philosophy. For example, the B.Ed. (classroom teacher programme) includes courses in methods of teaching Arabic and Islamic studies, mathematics and science, as well as workshops dealing with preparation of educational units, teaching strategies and school practice. The psychology courses include developmental psychology: infancy and childhood, learning psychology, and intelligence and creativity. The education courses include educational foundations, primary school curricula, library and study skills, physical education in primary



schools, classroom management, educational evaluation, and introduction to educational technology.

The bachelor's, diploma, master's and minor programmes in education include a course in teaching methods. These courses deal with the objectives of modern education, its principles, techniques and the fundamentals of effective teaching, the various teaching methods (i.e. discussion method, lecture method, demonstration method, problem solving method, etc.; interaction analysis, questioning techniques, lesson planning, laboratory and classroom management), and the different teaching/learning processes. Emphasis is placed on the functional use of the methods and techniques applied in school practice through varied workshops according to the subject area of specialization.

The programmes offered by the college of education also include courses containing elements related to education for democratic citizenship, intercultural/multicultural education, and education related to values, the environment, health, population, new technologies, arts, human relations, etc. For instance, the B.Ed. (classroom teacher programme) include courses in scientific subjects (i.e. man and the environment, the universe around us, water and energy, the human body and health education) in addition to the other different subjects related to art education, child literature, child culture and the social development in the Gulf States.

The bachelor's, diploma, master's and minor programmes in education include varied courses related to the above-mentioned areas, such as population and environmental education. This subject includes: the study of population and its interrelation with comprehensive development plans; the role that education can play in the light of the study of the population and socio-economic characteristics of society; and the analysis of women's status in the process of development and the educational needs that have to be satisfied to improve their socio-economic status. The course also includes concepts concerning environmental education and its problems, with special emphasis on the Arabian Gulf area in general and Bahrain in particular.

The school and social change course deals with the general concepts of the meaning of culture, civilization and social change; the theories of social change and factors that facilitate or hinder this change, and the changing role of the teacher in society. The social psychology course deals with: social influences on the behaviour of the individual as a member of various social groups; and concepts of socialization, attitudes, values, prejudice and leadership.

The Directorate of Training at the Ministry of Education implements training policies for teachers and other technical staff. The Directorate of Training defines training needs; plans and implements training activities by itself or in co-operation with other educational institutions in Bahrain or abroad; evaluates these activities and their outcomes; and supervises the application of continuous education system for teachers, principals, and other educational and technical personnel at the Ministry of Education.



Two basic strategies for in-service teacher training have been set, i.e. long-term and short-term programmes. Long-term programmes include the following:

- Bachelor of Education (classroom teacher system): this programme is offered by the University of Bahrain as mentioned above. Every year, a number of teachers attend this programme on a scholarship basis on full pay, so as to be eligible to teach in the first cycle of basic education.
- Diploma in Primary Education: this programme aims at preparing teachers for the second cycle of basic education on using the correlated and integrated curriculum. The Directorate of Training has prepared this programme in co-operation with the University of Bahrain for second-cycle teachers holding the General Secondary Certificate or Educational Orientation Certificate. The programme includes two specializations: one in Arabic Language, Islamic education, and social studies; and the other in mathematics and science. The total number of credits to be completed is 250. The programme consists of orientation, basic and practice teaching courses.
- Post-graduate Diploma in Education: a large number of teachers in Bahrain holding bachelor's degrees in different specializations do not have proper qualifications. Therefore, the Ministry is sending unqualified teachers to study for a Diploma in Education at the University of Bahrain or abroad on a scholarship basis with full payment. The total number of credits to be completed in this programme at the University of Bahrain is 33. The programme consists of education and psychology courses, along with teaching methods.
- Master's degree programmes: the Ministry of Education is very much concerned with developing senior educational personnel, seeking to provide a good quality of education for the students. Thus, it has encouraged teachers in general and senior teachers in particular, to attend master's degree programmes in Bahrain or abroad, such as education (curriculum development or primary education); Arabic language; mathematics; and English language (with the co-operation of the University of Bahrain and University of Sheffield in United Kingdom).

The Directorate of Training also organizes short-term training courses, sometimes in co-operation with other educational institutes in Bahrain and abroad. Emphasis is placed on the developing the learning/teaching process in public schools. Examples of these programmes are as follows:

- Comprehensive Training Programme for holders of non-specialized bachelor's degree in primary school mathematics: there are a number of teachers holding bachelor's degrees in different subject areas who are teaching mathematics. So the Directorate of Training organized a comprehensive programme to upgrade teacher efficiency in mathematics.
- Intensive Training Programme in Arabic language: designed for all Arabic teachers at all levels of education, in order to upgrade their efficiency in this subject matter.



- English Language Development Programme for English teachers: the objective of this programme is to upgrade English teachers level to the A-level of the Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English (C.A.E.) and First Certificate in English (F.C.E.)

The Ministry of Education has also introduced changes and innovation into pre-service and in-service teacher training such as:

- Commercial secondary schools are establishing a co-operation mechanism between the schools and productive and service establishments in order to carry out teacher-training courses. A great number of teachers have attended practical training programmes in many businesses and banks with the aim of achieving the convergence and link between what is taught and what exists on the market.
- The Ministry implemented a programme aimed at training kindergarten teachers. This programme started in 1993/94. Untrained teachers will no longer be eligible to work in a kindergarten.

In addition to the training programmes offered by the Directorate of Training and other Directorates (such as the Directorate of Curricula) there are different institutes in Bahrain implementing training courses in various vocational and academic fields, such as commercial, industrial, computer and foreign languages.

Working and employment conditions are the same for all teaching staff in terms of salaries, recruitment methods, student/teacher ratio, promotion opportunities, in-service training and professional support. With respect to salaries, there is a special payroll for teaching staff which is different from that of general and specialized payrolls in terms of grades, steps, allowances and the salary itself. Salaries cover the following: basic salary; social allowance; medical and injury insurance (for technical education teachers only); housing allowance for expatriates; and air tickets for the whole family of expatriates. Male and female teachers enjoy opportunities for promotion to higher positions, such as senior teacher or deputy principal, based on the conditions and criteria for evaluating the applications for these positions.

Two Ministerial Decrees have been issued, the first (7 April 1993) concerning the conditions for occupying a senior teacher position, and the second (15 April 1995) concerning the conditions for occupying a deputy principal position.

To be promoted, the candidate must be Bahraini; hold a bachelor's degree with a minor in education or a Diploma in Education (for a senior teacher position) or a bachelor's degree or equivalent (for the deputy principal position). The candidate should also have a minimum of ten years experience in teaching, of which five years teaching in the general or commercial secondary education or in his/her specialized field in technical education (for the senior teacher position), or a minimum of ten years service in the educational cadre, of which five years teaching in the level of education for which he/she applied. All applicants sit a performance test and those who pass the written test are interviewed.



The Ministry of Education adopted new measures and provisions to improve the social and professional status of the teaching staff in public schools. The establishment of two teacher centres (one in Manama and the other in Muharraq) can be considered as a first step in this direction. The objectives of these centres are to give teachers an opportunity to meet with each other in order to exchange views and ideas concerning their profession; and to promote and enhance the teaching profession by providing developed professional educational services within an overall developmental framework. In this regard, the Ministry issued the Ministerial decree No. 383/168/1/90 (9 June 1990) approving the constitution of Learning Resources Centres for Teachers.

Celebrating World Teacher Day can be viewed as another step towards enhancing the social status of the teaching staff. The State also honors excellent teachers during the National Education Day ceremony every year. This initiative started in May 1986 following the issuing of the Ministerial decree No. 22/168-1/86 concerning the formation of a committee to select excellent teachers. This committee is in charge of: reviewing the criteria of excellent teacher selection; setting up scales for each criterion; receiving and investigating school's nominations; and carrying out the final decision to select ten excellent teachers each year representing all Bahraini public schools.

The teacher also has a role in expressing his/her viewpoints regarding educational matters through the Teacher Consultative Committee, established in 1983 in accordance with the Ministerial Decree No. 998/52/83 of 26 November 1983. The Committee submits its reports to the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education has established that all school principals should hold an educational qualification in school administration. The Ministry put this plan into effect through the Diploma Programme in School Administration implemented by the American University of Beirut from 1985/86 to 1990/91, and then through the Diploma in School Administration implemented by the College of Education at the University of Bahrain.

In November 1995, the Directorate of Training implemented a programme in school administration for holders of the diploma from the former Teacher Training College, to prepare them academically to be eligible for a Diploma in School Administration. This programme lasts for two semesters (182 training hours).

In compliance with the development of school administration machinery as one of the basic cores in development implementation, the Ministry organized training courses and workshops for administrative personnel within the framework of the project "the school as a fundamental education unit", to prepare them academically concerning the project objectives and implementation procedures.

The Ministry of Education is planning training programmes for educational advisers, curricula specialists and senior teachers through the postgraduate programmes offered by the University of Bahrain or abroad. The Ministry also organizes annual conferences on the latest educational developments and new teaching methods. Educational advisers and curricula specialists participate either by attending the sessions or presenting papers.



In the light of the development of central educational administration personnel, the Ministry implemented since 1989 the advanced management programme for senior personnel, through the University of Bahrain in conjunction with the Continuing Management Education Programme. The objective of this programme is to upgrade administrative efficiency. The first group comprised the under-secretaries and the directors who completed the programme in February 1990; the second group comprised the section heads who completed the programme in 1991; and the last group comprised senior specialists and superintendents who completed the programme in 1993. With this third group, the Ministry has completed the training of senior educational leadership in its administrative organization, although in-service training is continuing.

Educational research and information

The Educational Research and Development Centre at the Ministry of Education has been carrying out qualitative and quantitative research since its establishment in 1987. It aims at improving the quality of educational and instructional services in Bahrain. There are between four and six professionals carrying out educational research. The Ministry of Education mainly depends on professionals from the University in Bahrain and abroad to carry out research on a contract basis.

The centre follows a research policy based on diagnosis and analysis, as well as action follow-up mechanisms, and the identification of the real purpose of educational practices.

Along with the Educational Research and Development Centre, there are other directorates and sections at the Ministry conducting educational research and studies, such as: the Directorate of Plans and Programming, the Directorate of Adult Education, the Directorate of Curricula, the Directorate of Training, and the Educational Documentation Section.

Current activities are concentrated on conducting diagnostic evaluative research, and investigating the progression of interaction and learning, in order to upgrade the efficiency of the educational process.

The types of information needed and used by the different actors depend on the decision-makers needs, but it is mostly related to: the functioning of education systems in other countries for comparison purposes; curriculum development; school administration; and teaching methods. Access to international information is provided by the Educational Documentation Section at the Ministry of Education.



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Web resources

Ministry of Education: <http://www.education.gov.bh/> [In Arabic and English. Last checked: October 2007.]

For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/links.htm>