Egypt

Revised version, November 2006.

Principles and general objectives of education

Egypt's education policy attempts to meet the real needs of the people and effectively cope with international challenges.

This policy is based on several principles: education as a national security issue and as an investment; equality of educational opportunities; democracy in policy-making; and ensuring that education does not place a financial or psychological burden on families.

Current educational priorities and concerns

Egypt's national economy is organized according to an overall development plan geared to increasing the national income, distributing justice, raising the standard of living, as well as increasing job opportunities and linking wages to production.

Since 1991, Egypt has started implementing programmes for improving its economic performance, increasing production and productivity, doubling exports and lessening imports, controlling inflation, as well as for reducing the balance of payment and national budgetary deficits.

The family is the cornerstone of society and is anchored in religion, morals and patriotism. The State is keen to safeguard the original feature of the Egyptian family as represented in its values and traditions. Moreover, the State cares for the protection of motherhood, children, and youth.

Since the onset of the 1990s, education and culture are a priority and Egypt exerts its efforts to develop education at all levels as the cornerstone of progress. The new education policy specifies a number of approaches which aim to upgrade education in quantity and quality (a few are listed below).

- A reform of teachers' conditions: training programmes were re-organized by the internal training centres in collaboration with the faculties. As a result of the reform, methods of in-service teacher training now include, in addition to direct face-to-face training, distance learning and training missions abroad. 400 teachers were annually sent to advanced countries beginning in 1993. This number increased to 1,000 teachers annually starting from 1996 and to 1,355 in 2000. Teachers are also sent abroad for training in fields such as modern methods of teaching or the use of advanced technology in education.

- Improved flexibility among different types of education: a system was set up to help technical education graduates to enrol in universities and higher education institutes. Alternative opportunities were made available to encourage young men to complete their higher education through open

education and oriented matriculation. Moreover, professional and academic higher studies diplomas are currently available to achieve the concepts of continuing education and re-training.

- Initiatives in curriculum development: the focus is on the acquisition of basic skills, self-education, and the use of new technologies. Emphasis is placed on Arabic as well as foreign languages, in order to help the learner to understand other cultures. Great importance is given to sciences and mathematics. In addition, religious education moulds values and principles.

Furthermore, in the new education policy educational media such as computers, television, broadcast and language laboratories were developed to be used as teaching media. The Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Broadcast and Television Union are co-operating in the development of educational programmes and distance in-service education, producing educational media including videotapes, multimedia discs, educational computer programmes and audio cassettes, and developing science clubs. About 200 secondary schools and fifty preparatory schools were connected to the Internet, so that one such school at least is established in every district throughout all governorates.

Other initiatives include: fostering religious and artistic activities; nutrition and health care for students and attention to pupils with special needs; the development of technical education; sustaining higher and university education; promotion of the role of the private sector; and a ten-year campaign for the eradication of illiteracy.

In order to enhance societal participation in education, parents' councils have been reformed so that parents may play a stronger role in developing and monitoring their children's education. For example, parents' councils now have the right to follow-up the educational process. Furthermore, council trustees, composed of various members of the community, have also been established in order to provide financial support to schools, link them to the surrounding local environment, and help them carry out their tasks.

Despite the huge efforts exerted and the tangible increase of education allocations in recent years, there are still many difficulties facing the process of reform. These difficulties require:

- Improving access to and equity in education.

- Seeking adequate financing for the comprehensive education reform.

- Generalizing compulsory education, particularly in rural areas and among disadvantaged people—especially women and girls.

- Constructing enough schools to allow full enrolment, reduce class sizes and school shifts.

- Raising the required allocations to continue improving the material and social conditions of teachers and upgrading their professional and scientific qualifications.

- Overcoming illiteracy and developing systems and programmes of adult education, particularly in remote areas.

Reforms planned for the period 2000-2005 include: (i) developing educational infrastructure; (ii) developing higher and middle institutes to meet the needs of the labor market; (iii) evaluating and developing the programmes and technology for higher-level distance education; (iv) establishing a national system for measuring educational quality; (v) increasing the use of information technology in schools and universities; (vi) further developing the skills and capacity of the teaching staff; and (vii) establishing a national center for training the administrative leaders in the higher education system.

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

Educational policy in Egypt relies on constitutional principles which specify its general framework and determine its basic features. These principles are the following:

The State recognizes education as a right and supervises all levels of education. The primary education cycle is compulsory and the State attempts to extend the duration of compulsory education to other cycles. The independence of universities and scientific research centres is guaranteed. This in turn will link education to the production sector and society's needs. (Article 18).

Education in all State institutions is free at all its different levels. (Article 20). Eradication of illiteracy is a national duty which necessitates the mobilization of all the people's potentialities to realize it. (Article 21).

Education is governed by two constitutional principles, equal opportunity and equality, as mentioned in the following articles: "The State shall guarantee equal opportunity to all citizens." (Article 8). "All citizens are equal before the law. They have equal public rights and duties regardless of race, ethnic origin, language, religion or belief." (Article 40).

Other important laws are:

Law No. 139/1981, modified by **Law No. 233/1988**, **Law No. 2/1994** and **Law No. 23/1999** regarding pre-university education. It mentions the right to free education for all citizens and the duration of compulsory education.

Law No. 49/1972 on the organization of universities.

Law No. 103/1961 on the re-organization of *Al-Azhar* and its bodies specifies that there are two types of Al-Azhar institutes: establishments providing basic education in Islamic and Arab culture, as well as general education; and the qualitative Azharitte

Institutes preparing students from abroad to learn religious and Arab sciences, and reading institutes which prepare Quran rectors.

Law No. 8/1991 on the eradication of illiteracy and adult education. This law considered literacy and adult education as a national duty and stipulated the establishment of a general authority for eradicating illiteracy, defining its functions and responsibilities.

Law No. 227/1989 establishing a fund for supporting and financing educational projects.

Law No. 12/1996 on child protection and bylaw **Decree No. 3452** of 1997 and its **Amendment No. 151** of 2000, focusing on the development of pre-primary education and early childhood education and development. The **Ministerial Decree No. 65** dated 23 March 2002 amended by the **Ministerial Decree No. 15** dated 19 January 2003 provide for additional regulations regarding kindergartens.

There are also a number of national programmes and plans, as well as political declarations related to education, such as a plan for new school establishments, a plan for spreading education technology, and a curriculum development plan.

Since 1981 (Law No. 139), compulsory education covered eight years and included two cycles: primary education, lasting five years, and the three-year preparatory cycle. In accordance with the Law No. 23 of 1999, compulsory basic education now lasts nine years (age group 6-15) and covers the six-year primary education cycle and the three-year preparatory cycle. (NCERD, 1999). Public education should be provided free of charge at all stages.

Administration and management of the education system

The **Ministry of Education** (MOE) is responsible for all matters concerning educational policy, planning, budgeting, implementation and follow-up, except for higher education. It is responsible as well for determining curricula, textbooks and educational aids and identifying the necessary qualifications of teaching staff. The Ministry coordinates its activities with various universities, higher education institutes, as well as other ministries, organizations and institutions of the State, in order to ensure that the educational plan is consistent with the plans of these organizations. The MOE is also responsible for the compilation of statistics and the assessment of the educational process in the country.

Educational Directorates in the governorates are responsible for all practical matters pertaining to the schools in their areas—including appointment and placement of staff, school health care issues, etc. they study the governorate's environment and its educational needs, and suggest the projects that are consistent with these needs. They also implement the educational policy in the governorates and supervise the educational process in all pre-tertiary stages in their areas. They participate in developing administrative, technical and communication structures. They look after youth education, and develop the athletic spirit within and outside schools, and co-

operate with both governmental and non-governmental organizations and bodies working in the field.

Educational Directorates participate in the illiteracy eradication campaigns, co-ordinate the enrolment policy and are responsible for the establishment and general management of general and technical secondary schools. They also open new schools, determine the dates of vacation periods and school timetables and supervise the application of the curricula approved by the MOE. Finally, they administer the examination for the Primary School Completion Certificate and the Preparatory School Completion Certificate within the governorate.

The **Ministry of Al Azhar Affairs** is responsible for the educational policy and plans of the Al Azhar schools, colleges and University, where Islamic studies are given more emphasis.
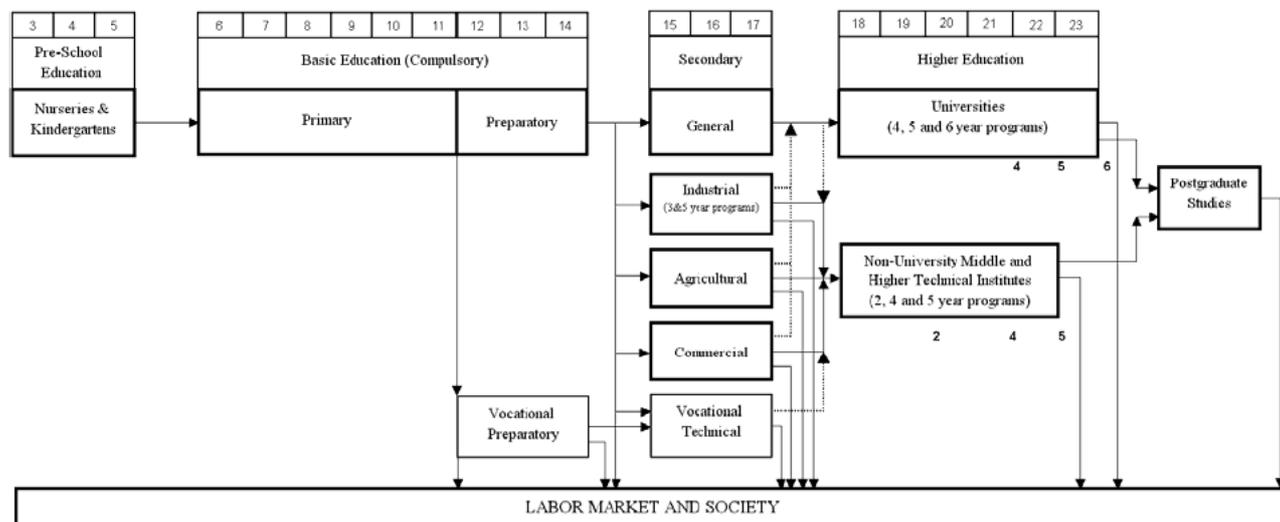
The **Ministry of Higher Education** is responsible for higher education. The **Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs** supervises nursery education.

Structure and organization of the education system

Arab Republic of Egypt: structure of the education system (1998)
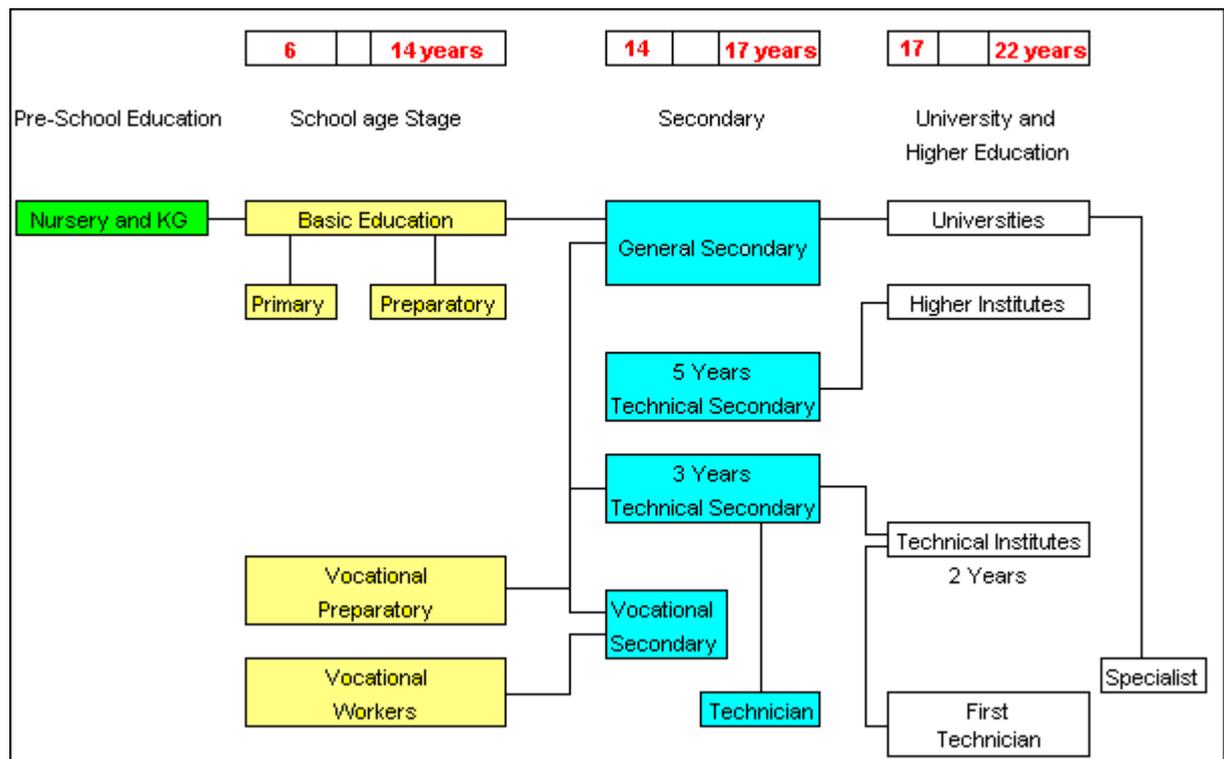
Arab Republic of Egypt: structure of the education system (2001)

Source: Ministry of Higher Education, 2001.

Pre-school education

Pre-school education (kindergarten) is an independent educational stage lasting two years for children aged 4-5 years.

Primary education

Compulsory basic education starts at the age of 6; it includes primary and preparatory education. The primary cycle comprised two levels, of three and two years' duration respectively. At the end of primary education, pupils are awarded a completion certificate. At the end of the three-year preparatory cycle, successful students are awarded a basic education completion certificate. In accordance with the Law No. 23 of 1999, compulsory (basic) education now lasts nine years (age group 6-15) and covers the six-year primary education cycle and the three-year preparatory cycle. After six years of primary education, students may opt for the three-year vocational preparatory education programmes.

Secondary education

Secondary education (general and vocational) lasts three years. Technical education (industrial, agricultural, and commercial) is offered at two levels: three-year technical secondary schools preparing middle-level technicians; and five-year technical secondary schools preparing high-level technicians. Students who pass the exams at the end of general secondary education are awarded a General Secondary Education Certificate. Students who pass the exams at the end of the three- or five-year technical schools are awarded a diploma. *Al-Azhar* (religious) education follows the same direction of the general education in terms of teaching periods allocated to school subjects, but with more emphasis on Islamic studies.

Higher education is available at universities or non-university higher education institutes and accessible to all students holding the General Secondary Education Certification and those technical education students with high scores. Graduates from five-year technical education programmes have better chances to be admitted to university education. In universities, the duration of studies at the first stage is four to six years (the latter in the case of medicine); a postgraduate degree (equivalent to a master's degree) take two to five years of further study, and a doctorate degree take at least two years of study after the master's degree. Middle technical institutes (MTI) offer two-year courses leading to the award of diplomas in a variety of technical fields (accountancy, computer, health sciences, etc.). Higher technical institutes (HTI) offer 4- to 5-year courses leading to the award of advanced technical education diplomas in agricultural, industrial and commercial fields.

The school year consists of thirty-four working weeks. The academic year is divided into two terms separated by a mid-year vacation lasting two weeks.

The financing of education

The government provides the major part of financing for education. The current educational policy aims at bringing about an unprecedented increase in the financial allocations for the total budget of education. In addition, it encourages public contribution and efforts in education.

"Government expenditure on education has been increasing, throughout the past decade, in both nominal and real terms. This increase has been impressive given that it occurred during a period of sharp fiscal contraction; the budget share in GDP declined by about one fifth. In nominal terms, public expenditure on education amounted to LE16.8 billion in 1998/99 compared to LE4.6 billion in 1990/91. In real terms, the increase was 90% over the period in question. As a proportion of total government spending, expenditure on education increased from 10.2% in 1990/91 to about 17% in 1998/99, which is high by international standards. As a percentage of GDP, government spending on education increased from 4.8% in 1990/91 to 5.5% in 1998/99, with an average of 5% during the period." (UNDP, 1999).

The total government budget for education amounted to LE14,939 million in 1998/99, of which LE9,540 million (or 64%) for primary and secondary education and LE4,223 million (or 28%) for higher education. (Ministry of Higher Education, 2001).

The educational process

Since 1990, educational policy has been formulated within a democratic framework. Thus, many individuals, and particularly through the conferences, are given an opportunity to take part in the decision-making process concerning education.

More specifically, developing school curricula and educational materials is the responsibility of the Centre for Developing Curricula and Educational Materials, established in the early 1990s. This Centre plays an effective role in the process of preparing, revising, modifying and developing the content of the different curricula.

The parties involved in developing curricula work in co-operation with consultative committees consisting of teachers, supervisors, and university professors specialized in the various disciplines as well as education. Both the National Centre for Educational Research and Development and the National Centre for Examinations and Educational Evaluation assist in the task of developing curricula.

In addition, the educational professions syndicate carries out the evaluation of educational policies, methods and tools. This syndicate investigates educational policy and problems of implementation, and suggests solutions for these problems. It also holds seminars, training sessions and general conferences.

The organizations mentioned above work together and collaborate to develop the educational content delivered through school curricula according to the following procedures: (i) conducting comparative studies to identify and describe curriculum development procedures and efforts in other advanced countries; (ii) evaluating the present school curricula at various levels; (iii) articulating a vision for the different school curricula (often through conferences); and (iv) revising and modifying school curricula in the light of the recommendations made at these national conferences.

The first conference for developing curricula was the National Conference for Developing Primary Education Curricula in 1993. It was then followed by the National Conference for Developing Preparatory Education Curricula in 1994, then the National Conference for Developing Teachers' Preparation, Training and Caring in 1996, and finally the National Conference for Gifted and Talented Pupils in 2000. Before holding these conferences, the views of teachers, parents, pupils, inspectors, and of other people who are interested in education were surveyed and taken into account for educational decision-making. These successive conferences for developing school curricula have led to decisions and decrees aimed at improving the performance at all levels of the educational process.

In terms of teaching and learning strategies, recent curricular reforms have included: focusing on the acquisition of skills rather than the acquisition of information; replacing memorization and rote learning by understanding and analysis; encouraging pupils to acquire an ability for independent learning or self- instruction; teaching the skills, experiences, expertise and abilities necessary for the job market. Furthermore, the recommendations of the national conferences for primary education in 1993, and preparatory education in 1994, have stressed that it is necessary for teachers in different specializations to follow up-to-date teaching and learning strategies, such as discussion, games, problem solving, cooperative work, etc.

In terms of content, recent efforts for changing the curriculum have included: modernizing the scientific knowledge presented in school curricula in a way that it keeps in line with the most recent scientific and technological developments; reducing the quantity of information and emphasizing the acquisition of basic scientific concepts; including contemporary issues within the school curricula in a way that develops students' feelings of citizenship.

Pre-primary education

Pre-primary education (kindergarten) aims at achieving the comprehensive development of children and preparing them for school. In 1994/1995 the pupil-teacher ratio was 26:1 and the average number of pupils per class was 36. From 1998 to 2000, the pupil-teacher ratio was 24:1. During the same period, the gross enrolment rate (GER) was estimated at 11%.

Official bodies in charge of supervision or coordination include the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs (MISA), the Ministry of Health, and the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM). A Committee at the governorate level (under the umbrella of NCCM) monitors the provision of early childhood education and development (ECED) and submits evaluation reports to the governorate. The Nurseries Affairs Committee functions at the Governorate level and is chaired by the Governor. The Committee includes members of all related sectors.

Kindergarten (KG) refers to pre-primary classes for 4-5 years old children, prior to transitioning to Grade 1. KG programmes are a form of early childhood education (ECE) that takes place in a formal classroom setting, with a teacher, a curriculum, and a group of approximately 25 children. Preschool or nursery school programmes are usually tailored for younger children, aged 2 to 4 years, and can also take place in a formal classroom setting, with a teacher, and a curriculum. The total number of nurseries supervised by MISA was 10,434 in June 2004. The NGO sector operates 55% of nurseries, while the private sector 42%. The remaining 3% is affiliated to local government units, youth centers, companies, and universities. Formal early childhood education provision is divided between the public sector (slightly less than 50%) and the NGO and private sector (slightly over 50%). Concerning the kindergarten curriculum, teachers currently rely on a collection of 23 books, authorized by the Ministry of Education, that cover a series of topics: general teacher guides; a selection of guides on personality development, child behavior development, and music education; subject guides for the promotion skills in language, art, mathematics, story telling, and writing. The remaining ten are workbooks for KG children, five each for KG1 and KG2.

About half of KG enrollment is in private schools; most programmes in the private sector are developed and managed by NGOs, religious schools in the Al-Azhar system, workplace childcare centers, non formal-child care in organizations and private homes. About two-thirds of nursery services are provided by NGOs, with the balance covered by an active private sector. There are no estimates of the numbers of children in these settings. There is also an extensive public nursery system that enrolls thousands of 4- and 5-year-olds, providing custodial child care. The MISA currently has responsibility for 7,525 nurseries that care for over 600,000 children. Seventy-three percent of nurseries are located in Upper and Lower Egypt, in poorer, rural areas. Although nurseries are intended to cater for children until 4 years of age, it has been estimated that as much as 40% of nursery enrollments may be 4- and 5-year-olds or approximately 252,025 children. The nursery programme of the MISA is tailored to provide care for poor children. According to a World Bank assessment team that reviewed the nursery system (World Bank, 2002), the quality of the current programme should be improved to promote early stimulation and education.

Faculties of Education are in the process of developing pre-service training for non-specialized KG teachers, and university faculties are developing in-service packages. New applicants for public KG teacher positions are required to have at least a bachelor's degree with specialization in education and early childhood development. Two centers have been established in order to provide training opportunities for kindergarten teachers and to prepare suitable educational media for kindergarten children.

In 2001, the government announced its intention to promote the improvement of children's health and education by increasing the enrollment rates for KG programmes, and reforming early childhood education. The specific aims are to provide a place for each child in a preschool institution; integrate preschool into the compulsory education system for the age group 4-5; and increase the percentage of children in preschool from 13 to 60% by 2010.

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, in 2003/04 the GER was 14.4% at the kindergarten level. In 2003, there were 446,346 children enrolled in kindergartens and the number of teachers was 18,924.

Primary education (basic education)

Primary education aims at developing pupils' abilities and potentialities, satisfying their needs and interests, and providing them with the necessary values, behaviors, and knowledge. With a focus on science, foreign languages, health, nutrition and the environment, basic education aims to prepare the individual to become a productive citizen in his or her environment and society.

It is a priority for the State to provide basic education for all children aged 6. Parents are obliged to have their children enjoy this right. Governors have the right to take decisions that are necessary for regulating and implementing this obligation, and distributing children over the governorate's basic education schools. In case there are vacant places, children at the age of five and a half years may be enrolled without increasing the assigned class size.

Primary education curricula have changed. They now take into account recent technological and scientific progress. Furthermore, the number of school subjects and the quantity of information included in the curriculum have been reduced. It has also been emphasized that primary school teachers should be given enough freedom to choose and select the educational activities suitable for the environment and pupils' interests.

The weekly lesson timetables for the first and second cycles of basic education are shown below:

Primary education (first cycle of basic education): weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade					
	I	II	III	IV	V	(VI)
Religious education	3	3	3	3	3	(3)
Arabic language	12	12	12	11	11	(11)
Arabic calligraphy	2	2	2	1	1	(1)
Foreign language	–	–	–	3	3	(3)
Mathematics	6	6	6	6	6	(6)
Social studies	–	–	–	2	2	(2)
Science	–	–	–	3	3	(3)
Educational activities and practical skills	10	10	10	–	–	(–)
Art education	–	–	–	2	2	(2)
Physical education	–	–	–	3	3	(3)
Music	–	–	–	2	2	(2)
Practical areas	–	–	–	1	1	(1)
'Maintenance'	–	–	–	1	1	(1)
Computer science	1	1	1	–	–	(–)
Library	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total weekly periods	35	35	35	39	39	(39)

Source: NCERD, 2001. Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes. The sixth grade has been reintroduced in 1999; it was abolished in 1988/89.
Note: According to Ministerial Decree No. 99 of 8 June 2003, the teaching of English should be introduced in the first grade (three periods per week) starting in the school year 2003/04.

Preparatory education (second cycle of basic education): weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each form		
	I	II	III
Religious education	2	2	2
Arabic language	7	7	7
Arabic calligraphy	1	1	1
Foreign language	5	5	5
Mathematics	3	3	3
Social sciences	4	4	4
Art education	2	2	2
Physical education	2	2	2
Music	1	1	1
'Maintenance'	1	1	1
Technology	3	3	3
Library	1	1	1
Practical areas	2	2	2
Additional subjects	5	5	5
Total weekly periods	39	39	39

Source: NCERD, 2001. Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes.

In accordance with the Ministerial Decree No. 71 of 1993, the primary school cycle is divided into two levels. The first level comprises Grades I-III, during which a child acquires the basic skills of reading, writing, mathematics and religious education. The second level (Grades IV-V/VI) aims at the child's functional use of the basic skills previously acquired in everyday life activities for fear of a relapse into illiteracy.

To achieve the aim of this cycle, the Ministry of Education has focused on evaluation tools with due attention to the overall development of pupils. Evaluation should not be confined to using achievement tests, but it should also include oral performance tests according to the nature of educational experiences offered. Developing examination systems should not be confined to measuring the information content learnt by heart, but go beyond that to the measurement of the pupil's ability to deduce, relate, synthesize and criticize. At the end of this cycle, pupils are awarded a completion certificate.

In the preparatory cycle students are assessed through two written examinations. Such summative tests are held at the level of the educational administration. There are no activities marks throughout the school year. At the end of the cycle, students are assessed through a written examination held at the end of the academic year at the governorate level. No marks are awarded to students for their effort throughout the months of the school year. At the end of the preparatory cycle, successful students are awarded a basic education completion certificate.

At the primary stage, the pupil-teacher ratio is 25:1 and the average number of pupils per class is 44. At the preparatory stage, the pupil-teacher ratio is 21:1 and the average number of pupils per class is 41 (data refer to 1994/95). In 1998/99, the total enrolment at the primary level (age group 6-11 years) was 8,921,605 pupils for a gross enrolment ratio (GER) of 103%. At the preparatory level, there were 2,931,329 students enrolled and the GER was estimated at 62%. (Ministry of Higher Education, 2001).

As mentioned, compulsory basic education now lasts nine years (age group 6-15) and covers the six-year primary education cycle and the three-year preparatory cycle.

Secondary education

Secondary education aims at preparing students for practical life and for higher and university education, as well as enhancing citizenship with a view to deeprooting identity and developing students' loyalty to motherland.

General and vocational preparatory education curricula have changed. The quantity of information contained in the curriculum has been minimized, religious education has been emphasized as a way to foster and deepen religious, social and ethical values, and there has been a renewed focus on Arabic and foreign languages.

In 1994/95, at the general secondary education level, the student-teacher ratio was 14:1 and the average number of students per class was 40. At the technical secondary education level, the student-teacher ratio was 17:1 and the average number of students per class was 38 (data also refer to 1994/95). From 1998 to 2001, the pupil teacher ratio for general secondary education also was 17:1.

Efforts have been exerted to develop and support the technical secondary education curricula, in particular the industrial secondary education, to raise its quality level by suggesting curricula and new specialties; introducing computers in the

technical schools; and concentrating on marketing services. No major changes have yet occurred in the general secondary education curricula but these are planned.

The weekly lesson timetable for the first year of general secondary education is presented below:

First year of general secondary education: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods
Religious education	2
Arabic	6
First foreign language	6
Second foreign language	3
Mathematics	4
Chemistry	2
Physics	2
Biology	2
History	2
Geography	2
Civics	1
Physical education	2
Arts (art and music education)	2
Technology	2
Total weekly periods	38

Note: Students in military secondary schools have one additional period per week for military training.

At the general secondary level, in the first year students have two written exams, one at the end of the first school term and another at the end of the second term. There are no yearly marks for students. In addition, there are practical tests for some subjects (i.e. chemistry, biology, physics and practical fields). These exams are held at the level of the educational administration. In the second and third years, students sit the General Secondary Education Certificate examination, which is administered at the end of each year; the total scores in both exams determine the students' overall result. At the end of these exams, successful students are awarded a General Secondary Education Certificate.

Technical education (industrial, agricultural, and commercial) is offered at two levels: the level of preparing technicians in three-year technical secondary schools; and the level of preparing high-class technicians in five-year technical secondary schools. Students who pass the exams at the end of the three- or five-year technical schools are awarded a diploma.

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

Information is not available.

Higher education

Higher education covers university higher education and non-university higher education (middle and higher technical institutes). The duration of studies is two years in middle technical institutes, four to five years in higher technical institutes, and four to six years in universities. In 1994 there were eighteen universities, twelve of which were affiliated to the Supreme Council of Universities (SCU), and four of which were private. Admission of students to public universities is based on the scores of the secondary school leaving examination.

The number of university faculties/colleges increased from 146 in 1981/82 to 277 in 2002/03 which represents an increase rate of 189%. The number of students admitted at university increased by 120% between 1982 and 2000, and the number of registered university students increased by 131% within that time span. The number of individuals with higher university degrees rose by 263% between 1981 and 2000. Universities have also witnessed a remarkable increase in their budgets.

The Open University offers correspondence courses to students who have missed the chance of completing their education. In the academic years 1994/95 and 1995/96, there were 14,397 students enrolled. In 1995/96, 2,657 students graduated from this programme.

Number of students enrolled in universities by field of study, 1994/95

Field of study	1994/95	1995/96
Arts and humanities	119,381	115,068
Law	85,030	107,599
Commercial studies	150,430	191,407
Economic political studies	1,785	1,485
Basic sciences	18,900	22,222
Home economics	3,839	4,268
Medical studies	25,517	21,675
Pharmaceutical studies	9,469	12,535
Dentistry	2,320	2,715
Engineering	38,672	43,390
Agricultural studies	16,336	17,078
Veterinary studies	5,526	6,975
Education	101,054	125,742
Artistic studies	8,347	7,244
Physical education	10,299	11,633
Musical education	641	764
Total	**597,564**	**691,800**

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)

In 1998/99 the total enrolment at the public universities was estimated at 1.16 million full-time and 244,500 part-time students. There were 12 public universities with a total of 268 faculties/colleges and institutes, the Al Azhar University (with some 182,300 students enrolled) and five private universities (with about 7,700 students enrolled). In addition, there were 51 public non-university institutions, including 47 middle technical institutes (MTI) and four higher technical institutes. In 1998/99, there were some 111,500 students enrolled in MTIs, mostly in the fields of commerce and industry. In the same year, in the twelve public universities there were 29,717 faculty staff members (of whom 9,541 were professors, 7,111 associate professors and 13,065 lecturers) and 18,060 assistants (including 10,194 assistant lecturers). (Ministry of Higher Education, 2001). In 2002/03, there were 37,112 faculty staff members and 22,245 assistants. In the same year, there were 80 private higher technical institutes with a total enrolment of about 278,000 students and 11 private middle technical institutes (NCERD, 2004).

The Egyptian university is considered as an independent institution managed by the University Council and the University Chairman. The Council is under the presidency of the chairman and is composed of: university deputies; faculty and institute deans; and a maximum of four members among those having experience in university education and public affairs, appointed for a period two years (renewable).

The University Chairman is responsible for the university's scientific, administrative and financial affairs, and represents the university vis-à-vis other entities. He/she is also responsible for the implementation of university regulations and laws of the University Council and those issued by the Supreme Council of Universities.

The administration of a faculty or institute is shared between the faculty/institute council and the faculty/institute dean. The Council is composed of: two faculty deputies; heads of departments; one professor from every faculty/institute department; one associate professor and one lecturer in the faculty/institute at which departments do not exceed a number of ten, and two associate professors and two lecturers if this number exceeds ten departments; a maximum of three members among those who have certain experience in teaching subjects at the faculty/institute.

The University Council awards the B.A degree according to a certain specialization, and M.A and Ph.D. degrees upon the request of the faculty/institute council. The internal guides of each faculty/institute establish the conditions or criteria for awarding such academic degrees. These degrees are awarded only to those students who successfully pass the assigned tests/exams.

The administration of the academic department within a faculty/institute is shared between the Department Council and the head of this council. The department council is composed of all associate professors in the department and five lecturers who annually take part in the council membership according to their years of experience as lecturers. The department council supervises all academic, administrative and financial affairs of the department.

The Head of the Department Council supervises the academic, administrative and financial affairs of the department within the limits of the policy drawn up by the

faculty council and the department council. The department head presents a report at the end of the academic year on the department's academic, administrative and financial affairs, to be submitted to the faculty/institute council.

In accordance with the Law No. 49 of 1972, Egyptian universities are public entities that have both an academic and cultural nature and an autonomous character. A university has the freedom to accept donations that do not contradict its ultimate aim. The Law also stipulates that every university must have a separate budget similar to the budgets of public entities.

The Supreme Council of Universities is the higher authority concerned with the university's affairs. This council is responsible for planning the general policy for higher education and scientific research and affiliated institutes. It is also responsible for coordinating universities in their various activities and regulating students' enrolment.

The main areas of reform identified under the Egypt's Higher Education Enhancement Programme (HEEP) include: administrative restructuring and management development; use of information technology and new teaching methodologies as well as setting-up a multimedia national center; establishment of a comprehensive faculty development programme; development of faculties of education; development of higher and middle technical institutes; setting up library automation and centers of excellence; enhancement of graduate studies and research, establishment of quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms; establishment of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF); and encouragement of distant and lifelong learning.

Special education

The Ministry of Education, through the General Directorate for Special Education and its different departments, offers comprehensive and integrated services to pupils with special needs, promoting their right to the same instruction and education as normal children.

The Ministry enables those pupils to study at the different stages of education, depending on their abilities. The Ministry provides the educational establishments at which the handicapped study with instructional as well as visual and auditory aids, in addition to providing those schools with psychological and social specialists.

The General Directorate for Special Education has achieved the following in the field of the welfare of pupils with special needs:

- Special education classes and schools in the different governorates, including: Al Nour schools for the blind and schools for the visually impaired; schools and classes for the mentally retarded and classes for those who suffer from rheumatic heart disease; Al Amal schools for the deaf and hard of hearing.

- An increase in the number of classes and schools of special education for pupils who have different handicaps, providing instructional and special education services.

Special education: number of classrooms, pupils and teachers

Type of handicap	Number of schools			Number of classrooms			Number of pupils			Number of teachers		
	1993	1994	1995	1993	1994	1995	1993	1994	1995	1993	1994	1995
Visual	19	21	25	187	205	224	1,866	2,135	2,159	471	492	588
Auditory	40	57	95	622	676	753	6,762	7,024	8,496	1,174	1,395	1,431
Mental	67	96	107	767	813	986	6,945	7,535	8,169	1,386	1,495	1,747

In 1999/2000, the number of schools was 236, with a total enrolment of 29,023 students and 6,307 teachers (not including those teachers recruited by the Ministry of Social Affairs and NGOs). The total number of classrooms was 2,904. In 2002/03 the total enrolment was 34,051 students and the number of teachers was 7,842. (NCERD, 2004).

On the occasion of two national conferences on primary and preparatory education, a number of steps were taken to improve the services offered to children with special needs, including: medical and psychological care; developing special books, teachers guides; and efforts aimed at integrating classes of handicapped children into mainstream schools.

At the end of their schooling, successful students are awarded a certificate. The same applies to students following the vocational preparatory school for the deaf.

Attention is also paid to gifted students so as to prepare a generation of gifted scientists. To achieve this, an experimental secondary school for boys was established at Ainshams. The class size of this school should not exceed 24 students. Supervision, management and faculty staff should be selected carefully according to special criteria. A teacher for two students and financial incentives and remuneration for teachers should be allocated. The school should also be provided with a developed library, science laboratories, and modern computers.

Private education

The role of private education is to raise educational services for citizens in such a way that services could be amalgamated within the State's general educational policy. This concept calls on the State to supervise private education, to ensure that it complements the State's educational policy.

The State, through the Ministry of Education, encourages private education, licensing school establishments in line with the Ministry specifications of governmental schools, and creating the appropriate climate to promote private investments in educational projects.

Decree No. 306 of December 1993 organizes work in the field of private education at the beginning of the academic year 1993/94. Private schools are established to realize all, or some, of the following objectives:

- Assisting in the field of primary, general secondary, or technical education according to the set plans and curricula of the counterpart public schools;

- Expanding teaching foreign languages side by side with the set official curricula;

- Teaching special curricula according to a decision from the Minister of Education and agreement of the Supreme Council for pre-University Education.

Every private school should have a director, a headmaster, faculty staff, a financial and managerial body, and full-time workers having altogether the same competence, allocations and conditions as those set for public schools.

The owner of the school, or the person who represents him/her, is responsible for its management through implementing the Education Law. He/she is also responsible for the maintenance of the building, the school equipment and furniture, and school expansion. Moreover, he/she is in charge of studying the staff needs, wages and remuneration.

Private schools should establish an internal guideline pertaining to coursework, in accordance with the Education Law No. 139 of 1981 and its amendments. In addition, the school determines tuition fees, school activities fees, as well as other fees, according to the school budget schedule. Private schools follow the same conditions and rules as public schools regarding admission, transfer and enrolment policies.

At the primary level, the number of schools in the academic year 1994/95 was 1,075, and rose to 1,130 in 1995/96. In preparatory education, the number of schools in 1994/95 was 585, and increased to 649 in 1995/96.

The number of primary education pupils in the academic year 1994/95 amounted to 509,981, and increased to 533,403 in 1995/96. At the preparatory level, the number of pupils in 1994/95 was 117,097, and increased to 138,778 in 1995/96. At the general secondary level, the number of pupils was 80,107 in 1994/95 and 74,685 in 1995/96. As far as commercial education is concerned, the number of pupils in 1994/95 was 146,261, and decreased to 123,063 in 1995/96, due to a limitation introduced in public schools.

Official schools' schedules and curricula are applied in private schools, including language schools. Any school that teaches one foreign language or more at a high level, as determined by the Ministry, is considered a private language school. It should also offer sciences and mathematics in a foreign language, according to the schedule, curriculum, and textbooks set in public schools.

Through the approval of the Minister of Education, it is possible to license private schools to add some studies to the original schedule, if there are justified technical reasons. Each private school is committed to teach the official curricula. Revision of supplementary textbooks should be carried out by the Ministry to ensure their validity.

In the first cycle of basic education (primary education), it is possible to teach one foreign language or more. Schedules, curricula, and textbooks should be approved by the Ministry of Education. Private schools of different types and at different stages can use language textbooks to prepare students for a foreign certificate examination.

The examination system at private schools follows the same rules applicable to public schools. Language school pupils sit the regular and general certificate examinations in the subjects they studied, in the same language they learned, after translating the questions.

Councils of parents and teachers, and student unions are established in private schools according to the ministerial decrees applied in public schools. Private school pupils at all levels are obliged to reimburse the medical insurance fees, according to Law No. 99 of 1992 and its related decrees.

Staff performance in private schools is evaluated according to the system followed in public schools. Training of teachers and educational leaders at private schools is conducted at their expense. This type of training is under the supervision of the educational directorate concerned. The Ministry is planning to give private education teachers the chance to enjoy the advantages of training abroad, training in computer usage, and holding training sessions.

Educational directorates and zones ensure the supervision and the evaluation of private schools located in their areas in all aspects, as in public schools.

Means of instruction, equipment and infrastructure

The Book Sector of the Ministry of Education provides textbooks for all stages of education, from kindergarten until the end of the general/technical secondary education in a way that realizes self-sufficiency in this field. The Book Sector of the MOE also provides textbooks at all levels and assessment manuals (199 different books for a total of 162,962,500 copies in the academic year 1995/96.) Importing school textbooks and even translated foreign textbooks has stopped as they are now printed in Egypt. In 2003/04, the number of school textbooks and evaluation guides was 2,465 for a total of more than 424 million copies (not including textbooks for language schools, kindergartens and Al-Azhar system).

The Ministry has put forward a comprehensive plan to develop education through technology, considering that technology is not an end in itself but a means to the real end of educational development. Computer laboratories have been set up for showing multimedia programmes. It is the most modern means of self-learning through the use of the computer as an educational aid. Multimedia laboratories have been established in fifty secondary schools distributed in seven governorates. This

experiment is being generalized to 400 secondary schools, 200 preparatory schools, 200 primary schools and 200 kindergartens. It involves the procurement of computers, macro-demonstrators, television sets, videos and CDI laser for both the kindergarten and the primary stages.

Advanced science laboratories are also established in 500 schools and another fifty schools are being equipped. These laboratories are being generalized in the framework of the One Thousand Schools project (400 secondary, 200 preparatory, 200 primary and 200 kindergartens throughout the country).

Two hundred secondary and fifty preparatory schools were supplied with the necessary equipment for connecting to the Internet, with the aim of encouraging students and teachers to keep up with sources of science and knowledge through the international information networks and thus developing self-learning abilities.

In 2003/04 a total of 1,317 new schools have been built. School buildings were carefully designed to have a library, a laboratory, multipurpose halls, a computer room, multimedia educational aids, classroom for the handicapped, classes for the kindergarten children, a physician's room and playgrounds. In order to extend educational services to the countryside and semi-desert areas, a large number of specialized schools were built to satisfy the needs of these environments.

The E-government project has been completed and now connects all schools in the country (around 35,000 schools) with the Ministry main office and with each other through the Intranet of the Ministry. They are also connected with the information international network (250 educational administrations in 27 educational directorates).

Adult and non-formal education

There are several types of non-formal education institutions in Egypt:

- Literacy classes affiliated to the MOE through the General Authority for Illiteracy Eradication and Adult Education. This Authority is in charge of planning, coordinating and evaluating illiteracy eradication and adult-education programs and projects. The number of literacy classes in 1995/96 amounted to 45,539, with a total of 992,476 learners. Between July 1992 and June 2000, a total of 4,090,682 individuals had joined illiteracy eradication classes; between 1987 and 2001, illiteracy rates decreased by 1.14%.

- Literacy classes affiliated to other organizations: the ministries of Defence, Interior, Culture, Agriculture, Labour, etc.

- The one-classroom schools for women in the age group 8-14 years. By 1996, there had been constructed 550 of the one-classroom schools and 906 temporary schools, for a total of 1,456 schools with 15,806 learners.

- Community schools created with the collaboration of UNICEF. This project aims at providing education for all, through satisfying basic needs for education and making these schools accessible to certain low-income sectors

of the population that are deprived of educational services in rural areas, especially in small villages.

- Special vocational training courses linked with literacy programmes, i.e., rapid vocational training for persons aged 16-20, or vocational training catering to basic education drop-outs aged 12-18 years. Courses last seven months in training centres plus two months on production sites (under the supervision of Ministry of Labour).

- Vocational training centres affiliated to various ministries (MOE, Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, Agriculture, Social Affairs).

There are also multi-purpose adult education centres aiming at eradicating illiteracy, supplementary study centres affiliated to the MOE, literacy programmes for special groups such as handicapped citizens, and advanced adult education programmes.

A number of non-university higher education programmes are supervised by the Ministry of Higher Education through several councils.

The literacy curriculum implementation takes eighteen months divided into two levels, and the programme involves 456 hours of study at each level (sixteen hours per week). Textbooks are the same as those prescribed for the primary cycle, and the curriculum includes the following subjects: Arabic; fundamentals of arithmetic and geometry; general culture which involves religious, social, health and scientific elements; and vocational training covering carpentry, plumbing, wood painting and tailoring for men, and sewing, knitting and food industries for women.

The total literacy rate was estimated at 65.8% in 1999 (76% for males and 55% for females). (Ministry of Higher Education, 2001). In 2004, the illiteracy rate was estimated at 28.6%; the number of illiterates was estimated at 12.8 million (3.9 million males and 8.9 million females). (NCERD, 2004). A National Project for Literacy and Adult Education 2003–2007 was launched in July 2003. The target is to make literate some 7.5 million persons in the age group 14-45 years.

Teaching staff

A 1989 policy mandated that all primary education teachers must hold a university degree, specializing in education (usually a B.Ed awarded after four years of study). At the kindergarten level the majority of teachers are secondary school graduates. Most of secondary school teachers are university graduates with an education background. In the faculties of education, graduates from the basic education programme are appointed as class teachers and subject teachers in basic education schools. Graduates from language departments (English and French), and from industrial education departments are also appointed as soon as they graduate, due to a shortage of teachers in these specialties. Until recently, the MOE was committed to appoint all education faculty graduates as soon as they graduated, but this commitment receded lately as a result of growth in the number of teachers, particularly in such subjects as mathematics, science, and social studies.

The Ministry also upgraded the level of primary education teacher preparation, which now falls under the umbrella of university faculties and other higher education institutes, although the preparation of certain types of teachers still falls short of higher education. Examples of these are teachers of practical activities, typing and certain practical subjects in industrial education.

The training of kindergarten female teachers is provided at two faculties, in Cairo and in Alexandria. Training is also offered at nine faculties of education under the Ministry of Higher Education. Moreover, the training of kindergarten female teachers is offered at faculties of education in nine universities. The duration of studies is four years, and successful students are awarded the B.Sc. degree.

In 1995/96, there were twenty-three divisions of primary education, responsible for training teachers at the primary tier of basic education, in addition to a division of basic education (with its two tiers) at the Faculty of Education, Ain-Shams University, and a Faculty of Basic Education at Port-Said for basic education teachers (with its two tiers).

Teachers of the preparatory tier of basic education and general secondary education teachers are trained at the faculties of education in the different governorates. These faculties, including the Faculty of Education, Al-Azhar University, are twenty-seven in number. Students should hold a General Secondary Education Certificate to be admitted, and the duration of the course is four years.

Training of teachers of technical education, special education, arts, music, physical education, etc., is provided by specialized faculties. The enrolment requirements are the same as for other teachers. In-service training is organized by the General Directorate for Training (GDT), which supervises six centres. In the academic year 1995/96, 165 programmes were implemented for a total of 17,521 participants. Such training can also be decentralized in departments of outlying directorates. A number of bodies and agencies work side by side with the GDT to provide in-service training. Furthermore, teachers can be sent abroad to be trained, through grants offered by some agencies and institutes. Some incentives are provided to teachers wanting to improve their training.

Teacher's workload differs from one stage to another as shown below:

- twenty-four class sessions per week in Grades I-III of basic education;

- twenty-one class sessions per week in the other grades of basic education.

Teaching workload at the secondary level (all types) is eighteen sessions per week for the ordinary teacher, and twelve for the session master. At the higher level, it is twelve hours for lecturers, ten hours for associate professors, and eight hours for full professors.

In summary, teacher's workload is heavier in the lower stages of education. Furthermore, basic education teachers mainly work in rural areas, since 67.1% of primary schools are located in the countryside. These teachers do not receive any special compensation.

Promotion to the position of preparatory school headmaster, preparatory school director, secondary school vice-principal, or secondary school headmaster, requires the candidate to obtain a high pedagogical qualification, or an appropriate higher qualification, together with spending three years in the lower position, and attending a given training programme. Promotion to the position of a secondary school director requires spending one year at least in the first bracket, level C, together with obtaining the high, or appropriate, educational qualification.

The distribution of teachers to educational zones is done centrally to satisfy the needs of every governorate in accordance with the numbers of pupils in each stage. Yet the distribution of teachers to the administrations and divisions within the governorate is done at the governorate level.

Teachers' salaries are based on the regular salary scale. Increase in salary is wholly related to years of experience and to qualifications. Salaries increase with higher qualifications and years of service.

The total number of teachers by the end of 2003 amounted to 807,385 for all pre-university education stages. The Ministry set a plan for the professional development for teachers and is striving to promote training centers and increase their capacity to reach up to 18,500 trainees. During the years 2002 and 2003, a total of 712,133 teachers were trained in basic skills. Some of these teachers attended more than one session. A total of 242,000 teachers have been trained in advanced technology skills and diverse applications (the computer and its uses). The total number of teachers who were trained through video conferences in the period from 1994 to September 2003 amounted to 1,393,162 in 57 centers all over the country.

Educational research and information

Educational research is mainly carried out at the National Centre for Educational Research and Development (NCERD). The NCERD aims at providing educational policy makers with sound, scientifically based information. The NCERD also investigates means of achieving an appropriate level of co-ordination between the educational policy specified by the Ministry of Education and the educational policies specified by the specialized national councils.

In 1994 and 1995, the main fields of educational research covered by NCERD were: model or experimental schools; teacher education and training in the light of the educational policy and the needs of the Ministry of Education; human resources required to implement the education development policy; and the possibility of using distant education technology in the context of Education for All.

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Web resources

Ministry of Education: http://www.emoe.org/ [In Arabic. Last checked: October 2007.]

Ministry of Higher Education: http://www.egy-mhe.gov.eg/ [In Arabic and English; some information in French. Last checked: October 2007.]

Egyptian Universities Network: http://www.frcu.eun.eg/ [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