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# Iraq

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## Principles and general objectives of education

Traditionally, the education system in Iraq has been based on values and principles derived from the religious, human and national characteristics of society. The most prominent is the belief that education is a social process, sensitive to time and place factors, and dependent on social ideology, needs and available material and human resources. Within this framework, the State ensures the right to free education for all citizens at all levels, compulsory education at the primary level, and eradication of illiteracy. In implementing the principle of democratization of education, the State undertakes to: provide equal learning opportunities for all citizens without discrimination regardless of sex, race or religion; encourage talent and creativity in all intellectual, scientific, and artistic activities, with special attention to females and inhabitants of rural and remote areas; overcome economic and social obstacles, so as to facilitate access to educational institutions; promote the role of education in establishing mutual understanding, co-operation and peace on the international level and respect for the rights and basic freedoms of human beings.

Until the end of the 1990s, the overall objective of education in Iraq was to bring up an enlightened generation, believing in God, loyal to the Homeland, and devoted to the Arab nation, adhering to scientific thinking as well as morality, relying on work and self-education, possessing the will to struggle and the power to confront the crucial challenges of the contemporary world. The education system endeavours to cover the social, cultural and religious aspects of life. In the light of these general aims, all types of education develop specific areas related to physical, senso-motor, mental, emotional, spiritual, patriotic, national, human, social and behavioural dimensions. The educational aims, which are translated into the curriculum, involve, *inter alia*, assimilating the sources of the Arab-Islamic culture, concentrating on the challenges facing the Arab nation, and fulfilling the learners' needs.

The political changes that took place in Iraq after 2003 and the transition to democracy required a reform of the educational system in Iraq based on a new educational philosophy. This philosophy was finalized in 2008. The educational system in the Federal Republic of Iraq is based on the faith in God Almighty, as well as the humanistic values of respecting the human dignity of all and the family as the foundation of the society. The State protects the national identity and unity and its moral and religious values that are seen as foundations of the social, educational and scientific processes. Particularly important for the new Curriculum Framework (being drafted with the technical support of the UNESCO International Bureau of Education) are principles of the new Iraqi Educational Philosophy such as: (i) encouraging excellence and creativity in all the areas of intellectual life, scientific work and the arts; (ii) increasing the enrollment of learners in educational institutions; (iii) paying particular attention to the population of rural and remote areas; (iv) strengthening the role of education in consolidating tolerance and understanding among people based on the principles and practices of learning to live together peacefully at national, regional

and international levels. In compliance with the National Education Strategy, the overall objectives of education in Iraq are to foster new generations who:

- Believe in God Almighty and His Messengers;
- Love their country and work to consolidate its national unity;
- Are able to deal with scientific contents and methods;
- Are ethical and respectful of human rights, the cultural heritage and the environment;
- Are contributing to social/community cohesion in a pro-active/constructive way;
- Are cultivating originality and innovation;
- Are interested in personal development and life-long/continuous learning. (MOE Baghdad and Kurdistan, 2011).

In terms of the vision of the National Development Plan 2010-2014, Iraq is seeking to be a peaceful and stable nation under the auspices of a federal democracy. It is also seeking to be an effective nation that functions in accordance with market mechanisms and a regional economic power that complements and is part of the international economy in a manner that embodies the principle of international partnership. Based thereupon, Iraq will use its economic resources, both human and natural, effectively and efficiently to attain a competitive and diversified economy in which the private sector has a leadership role in generating wealth and jobs, while the government performs an organizational and enabling role to address market failures and ensure equitable distribution of national income so as to enable the most vulnerable social groups to fulfill their role effectively in achieving economic and social progress. All of this is to be achieved with guidance from the principles of democracy, the rule of law, good governance, sustainable development, competitiveness, social justice, freedom, and human rights. The vision for the education sector is the development of truly enabling conditions that contribute to raising educational levels, pursuant to standards that ensure quality; and establishment of an education system that provides the foundation that enables an individual to be independent and develop the creative abilities necessary for independence, to achieve sustainable development objectives and create a cooperative environment that strengthen the values of good citizenry. (Ministry of Planning, 2010).

## **Laws and other basic regulations concerning education**

Educational legislation aims at ensuring the State's supervision over educational policy, as well as organizing, financing and orientating the various types of education in accordance with the philosophy, general objectives and aims of the various educational levels. This is achieved through laws, regulations, and instructions which organize the various aspects of the educational process, particularly those concerning free education and compulsory primary education (age group 6-11 years), granting professional and transportation allowances to supervisory, administrative, and teaching staff.

A number of regulations which contribute to the development of the educational process have been issued, the most prominent of which is the Parent-Teacher Councils Regulation. Certain laws, regulations and instructions have been



amended. These include laws concerning schools for the gifted, examinations, foreign students, teacher training institutes, fine arts institutes, educational television and scouting.

Article 34 of the **Constitution** of 2005 stipulates that education is a fundamental factor for the progress of society and is a right guaranteed by the State. Primary education is mandatory and the State guarantees that it shall combat illiteracy. Free education in all its stages is a right for all Iraqis. Article 4 specifies that the Arabic language and the Kurdish language are the two official languages of Iraq. The right of Iraqis to educate their children in their mother tongue, such as Turkmen, Assyrian, and Armenian shall be guaranteed in government educational institutions in accordance with educational guidelines, or in any other language in private educational institutions.

## **Administration and management of the education system**

According to the Ministry of Education Law No. 34 of 1998 (amended in 2005 by Law No. 28), the organizational structure of the Ministry comprises the Minister's Bureau, three Undersecretaries Bureaus (the senior, the technical and the administrative), the Directorate of Legal Affairs, twelve central General Directorates (including the General Directorate of Curricula and the General Directorate of Assessment and Examinations), and a number of units, bodies, institutes and offices.

The **Ministry of Education** has the following functions: elaboration of the educational policy; planning and monitoring of implementation; curriculum development; establishing and managing schools; management of teachers and other educational personnel; educational research and innovation; supervision of religious, moral, sports, health and environmental education; development of standards for educational, psychological, and vocational guidance and counselling; development of standards for assessment and examinations; and coordination and cooperation with local, national and international partners and stakeholders.

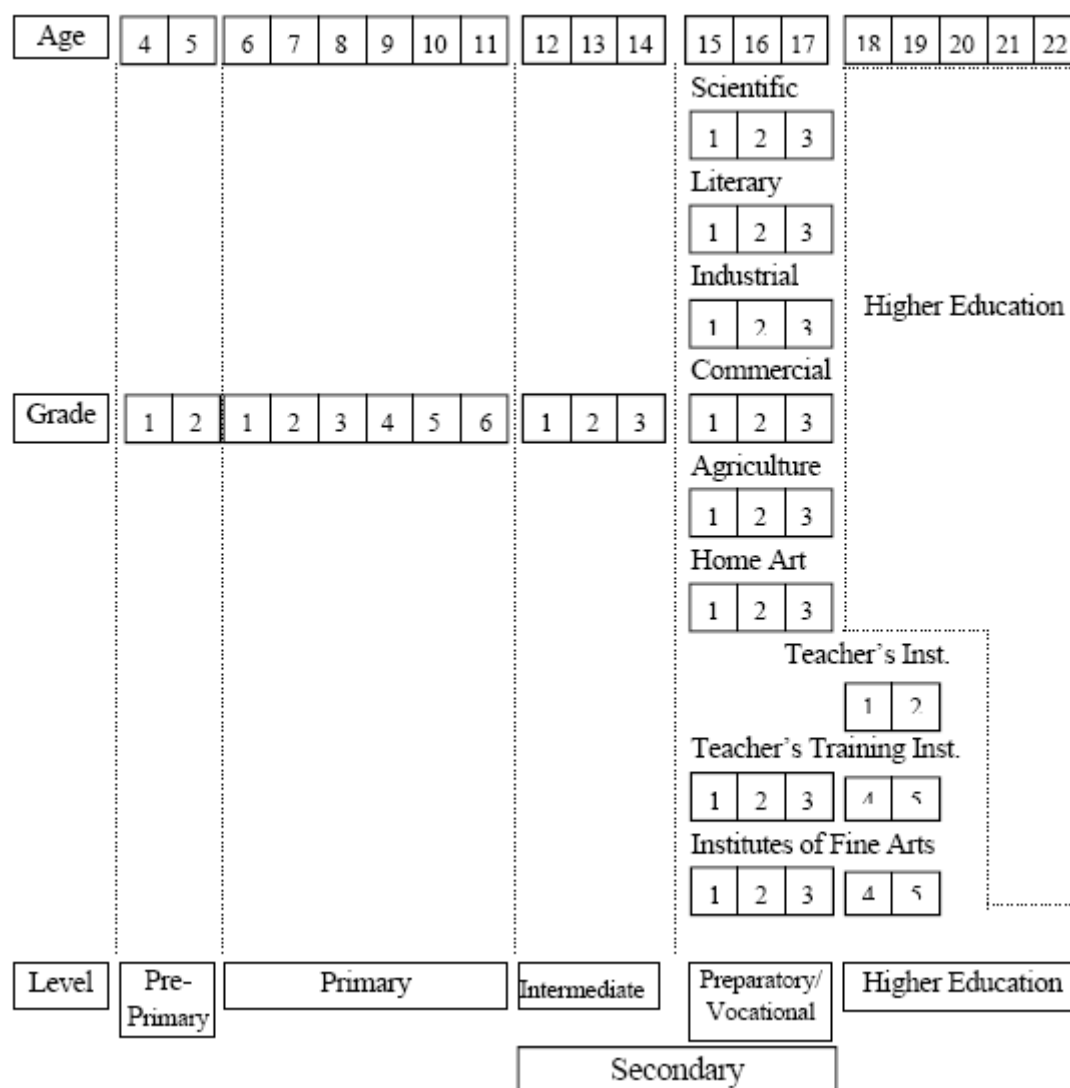
The **General Directorates of Education** in the 18 governorates (or provinces) are in charge of the delivery of educational services, teachers' training and employment, rehabilitation and maintenance of schools, and coordination with the Provincial Education Committees. There are also Education Offices at the district level. The **Kurdistan Regional Government** has constitutionally recognized authority over the provinces of Arbil, Dahuk, and Sulaymaniyah. Education is under the supervision of the **Ministry of Education, Kurdistan Region**. (According to the Constitution of 2005 the country's future autonomous regions are to be established from its current 18 governorates or provinces).

The **Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**, consisting of six departments, defines the higher education policy and supervises the administration and organization of the higher education system (universities, colleges and technical institutes). Both private and public universities in Iraq are autonomous in financial, administrative and technical matters. A number of other ministries such as the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the

Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, and the Ministry of Oil, administer vocational training centers in order to produce skilled manpower in various fields of specialization.

## Structure and organization of the education system

### Iraq: structure of the education system



### Pre-school education

Preschool education (kindergarten) lasts two years and caters to children aged 4-5. Preschool education is not compulsory.

### Primary education

Primary education lasts six years. It is compulsory for all children in the age group 6-11. In the Kurdistan Region basic education covers grades 1 to 9.



## Secondary education

Secondary education extends over six years for the age group 12-17 and comprises two stages, each lasting three years: intermediate education, leading to the Third Form Baccalaureate (or certificate of intermediate studies), and preparatory education, leading to the Sixth Form Baccalaureate. Preparatory education is divided into two streams (science and arts) starting from the second year. Students completing the intermediate stage can pursue general secondary education, join a secondary vocational school (agricultural, industrial, veterinary or commercial studies) or enter a teacher training institute. General and vocational preparatory schools cover grades 10 to 12, while training for the teaching profession takes either five years (grades 10-14) or two years (grades 13-14). Teacher training institutes enrol graduates of the intermediate cycle, after they complete grade 9, and offer a five-year teacher preparation programme: three years for general education and an additional two years for subject specialization.

## Higher education

University studies, to which students are admitted after completing secondary education, range from four to six years in duration. Applicants are registered in colleges and universities to pursue their studies in various specializations such as arts, science, medicine and engineering. In addition to colleges, there are two-year post-secondary technical institutes preparing students for various technical professions. The minimum duration that leads to a diploma is two years, usually offered by the technical institutes. Central teacher institutes enrol graduates of the preparatory level of secondary education (grade 12 graduates), for a two-year pre-service programme. The first stage of higher education leads to a bachelor's degree in arts, law, economics, science and engineering (four years); architecture, dentistry, pharmacy and veterinary medicine (five years); and medicine (six years). The second stage leads to a master's degree which is offered in various fields (usually, two-year programmes). The degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) is awarded in some fields after three years of study following a master's degree.

The average length of the school year was normally thirty-six working weeks, each week consisting of six working days. In 2010, the school year consisted of 160 working days (or 32 five-day weeks) in the Baghdad Region and 192 working days (or 32 six-day weeks) in the Kurdistan Region.

## The educational process

After the conflict of 2003, the prevailing picture is one of acute shortages and urgent needs. Most of the education institutions require physical rehabilitation, furniture, equipment and materials for the teaching of science, technology, other practical subjects, and replenishment of libraries. In-service training for teachers, who had long been cut off from the outside world, including access to international journals, textbooks as well as Internet communications, remains a prerequisite for the introduction of innovative practices and changes into the education system. Teacher trainers need to be exposed to the nature of active learning, student-centered education, and practice in critical, creative and caring thinking as a foundation for

responsible citizenship. The curriculum, likewise, has been static and limited by political constraints. Renewal of curriculum and textbooks is an urgent challenge, with a need for updating, especially in the sciences and technology, and infusion of the values of peace and human rights, respect for others, active citizenship and democracy. (UNESCO, 2004).

The new Iraqi Curriculum Framework (being drafted in 2011 with the technical support of the UNESCO International Bureau of Education) is an important regulatory document of the Iraqi 'curriculum system', for it defines a common curriculum model for the country that is standards- and competency-based. The Framework provides quality standards especially with regard to the content of the curriculum and the approaches to teaching and learning. It is a unifying document that stresses the commonalities of curriculum development and implementation in Baghdad and Kurdistan Regions, while giving also space for differentiated approaches. As a common basis for aligning curricula, teaching and learning and assessment, the Iraqi Curriculum Framework sets a common basis for the development of syllabuses and textbooks, as well as other learning resources. The main orientations of the Iraqi curriculum vision are the following: (a) providing high quality learning for all, as a human right; (b) developing integrated, balanced, flexible and advanced curricula that promote human rights, gender equality, intercultural understanding and sustainable development; (c) addressing both the learner needs and the requirements of national development plans, including the present and future needs of the labor market; (d) addressing changes/new developments at the local and international levels through up-to-date and culturally appropriate curricula; (e) forging moral persons based on high religious values and principles and by rejecting radicalism; (f) forging enlightened citizenship based on the principles and practices of democracy, freedom and social justice; (g) developing creative and critical thinking, problem solving skills, pro-active attitudes and learning to learn skills from a lifelong learning perspective.

The main education and learning aims envisaged in the new (draft) Curriculum Framework can be summarized as follows: young people in Iraq should become (a) successful lifelong learners able to operate confidently in a knowledge economy and rapidly changing environment, (b) confident and productive individuals, and (c) proud and responsible citizens of Iraq and the wider world. The underpinning values are: the Iraqi identity, tolerance and respect for all, social justice (i.e. respect of human rights; gender equality; inclusiveness; social cohesion), democracy, and sustainable development. The sets of key competencies that support each of the aims are the following:

- In order to become successful lifelong learners, students should develop thinking and learning competencies and should develop skills in: critical and independent thinking; inquiry and information processing; creative thinking and problem solving (as both individual and collective processes); evaluation and decision making; communication; and management of own learning.
- In order to become confident and productive individuals, students should develop personal and social competencies and should: develop self-confidence and be able to accept challenges; manage their emotions and be sensitive to the emotions of others; be caring, proactive and ready to



engage positively in society; be resilient and able to cope with change; work independently and as part of a team; develop physical competence and adopt healthy lifestyles; develop self-respect and respect for others; develop the capacity to use time efficiently.

- In order to become proud and responsible citizens, students should develop citizenship and work competencies and should: understand and cherish their own country and culture; be aware of and enjoy their rich cultural heritage; be committed to ideals of democracy and social justice; play a positive and enterprising role in society, knowledge production, culture and the economy; respect the physical environment and understand the need for sustainable development. (MOE Baghdad and Kurdistan, 2011).

## Pre-primary education

Within the framework of the new educational philosophy finalized in 2008, the kindergarten phase aims to empower the children to develop their personality physically, mentally, linguistically, emotionally, socially, spiritually and nationally, and facilitate the process of their gradual transition from home to the kindergarten. In the cognitive domain the objectives are the following: enabling the children to acquire some scientific and arithmetic concepts such as the concepts of time, space, numbers, weights and lengths; enabling the children to acquire some basic information about their bodies, senses and their functions, and the necessary requirements their bodies need for sound growth; developing the mental abilities of the child such as attention, observation, remembrance, recognition, comparison and the ability to distinguish and make connection; encouraging the child to acquire scientific tendencies and giving special attention to the creative mental abilities and encouraging their growth; assisting the children in self-growth and informing them of their duties and rights towards themselves, their families, their kindergarten and society; introducing to the child the most prominent phenomena of his local environment and its features and how to preserve it; encouraging the children to express their opinions.

In the affective domain, the main objectives are to: instill the principle of faith in God, his oneness, messengers, books and respect of religious rites; enable the child to acquire the behavioral concepts derived from the values of Islam and the other monotheistic religions such as reverence to God, honesty, altruism and faithfulness; implant in the child's heart the love of the homeland, and the sense of belonging and of allegiance to it; encourage the child to express freely and safely his/her thoughts, feelings and needs; encourage the child to exchange affection, compassion and tenderness with his/her surroundings; develop the child's love to his/her environment with the animals, plants and natural phenomena it contains; boost the child's self-confidence, self-reliance and shouldering of responsibility; raise the children in a correct patriotic manner; develop the sense of responsibility and create the spirit of cooperation; develop the child's sense of beauty of his/her environment and its care and his/her ability to express that artistically.

Additional objectives include: developing the child's ability for free artistic expression (drawing and acting); enable the children to acquire the basic skills preparing them to learn for to read and write; to develop the child's ability to listen and respond to directives; to train children on the correct pronunciation by reading some Koranic verses and school songs and children stories; to enable the child to





acquire the correct behavioral patterns and practice the healthy habits; to assist the child in acquiring the skills for using some tools, equipment and scientific games and how to benefit from that; to develop the child's abilities for social adaptation and for moving from self-focus to getting along with others. (UNESCO Iraq Office, 2011).

In 1997/98, the enrolment rate of children in the age group 3-5 was estimated at 6.8%. (MOE, 1999). In 1999/2000, the gross enrolment ratio was estimated at 5.7%. The children-teacher ratio was 15:1. In 2001/02, about 54,000 children were attending pre-primary education or less than 7% of children aged 4 and 5 years.

According to the Central Organization for Statistics, in 2007/08 there were 586 kindergartens (not including the Kurdistan Region) with 85,592 children enrolled (of whom 42,003 were girls) and 5,006 teachers. The coverage of the eligible population group (children 4 and 5 years old) was estimated at 5.6%. (Ministry of Planning, 2010).

According to UNESCO, in 2008 in the governmental sector there were 607 kindergartens at the center (Ministry of Education Baghdad) and 198 in the region (Ministry of Education Kurdistan). Only 6% of kindergartens were in the rural areas. The total enrolment was 138,190 children and the number of teachers was 7,407. The children-teacher ratio was 19:1 and the average number of children per class was 44. In terms of teachers' qualifications, 85% of teachers were diploma holders and 14% were holders of a university certificate. (UNESCO Iraq Office, 2011).

## Primary education

Within the framework of the new educational philosophy finalized in 2008, elementary education aims to enable the children to develop their personalities physically, intellectually, ethically, spiritually and socially, to grow up as good citizens believing in God and human moralities, and aware of their national message, in addition to granting them the basic knowledge tools and the grounds for the Islamic Arab culture and other cultures.

In the cognitive domain, the main objectives are to: introduce to the children the facts, information and concepts about their natural environment; inform the children of the nature of the physical changes and the health conditions that the physical growth requires; enable the pupils to know the healthy rules relevant to sleeping, eating and working and to enable them to apply the prevention of diseases methods, and to know the first aid procedures; give special attention to the Kurdish language as being a second official language after the Arabic language, in addition to teaching non-Arabic languages such as Turkmen, Syrian and Armenian languages in the coverage areas; enable the pupils to absorb the basic principles and objectives for the society in the new Iraq; enable the pupils to realize the importance of the human and natural wealth in their homeland, and the necessity to invest and rationalize them to accomplish sustainable development and build the homeland; enable the pupils to know the characteristics of the Islamic heritage and the exemplary heroic models it represents; introduce human rights and the commitment to achieving them.

In the affective domain, the main objectives are: enhancing the pupils' faith in God and His Divine messages, and their feeling of need for the religious faith; inform



the pupils of the pillars of Islam and faith, and develop knowledge of their contents; to instill the love of cleanliness, strength and action as being basic requirements in the life of the individual and society; to develop awareness of the environment, respect of its resources and components and their positive investment; to consolidate children's belief in the national unity; to instill pride in the Arabic language and the Islamic Arabic civilization and the other national languages in their homeland; to bring children up on respecting work as being a duty and an honor for the citizen, and practicing manual and craft work; to bring children up on the respect and obedience of parents and teachers.

Other objectives of elementary education include: enable the pupils to practice the sports, scouts and training activities available for them and to invest in them to develop their physical abilities and fitness and develop their basic motor skills; enable the pupils to master the basic skills for the four arithmetic operations; enable the pupils to use some modern scientific techniques suitable for their levels of equipment, tools and games, and to invest them well and benefit from them; enable the pupils to express better their ideas safely and clearly, through writing and talking, and to have the skill of listening; enable children to trust science and adopt its methods for the development of their characters, abilities and skills; accustom the pupils to pronouncing the classical Arab language; enable the pupils to learn an international foreign language such as English language; enable the pupils to work in order to develop their personalities in a balanced and integrated manner; train the pupils on solving family and environmental problems, realize their duties for protecting their families and environment and participate in their development and preservation; enable the children to go for charitable work and cooperation with their peers, family and community; enable the children to realize the rights they have and their duties towards themselves, their families, community and homeland. (UNESCO Iraq Office, 2011).

The weekly lesson timetable for the primary stage by the end of the 1990s was as follows:

**Primary education: weekly lesson timetable (1999)**

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Islamic education	4	4	4	4	4	4
Arabic language and calligraphy	11	11	11	11	7	7
English language	–	–	–	–	4	4
Mathematics	6	6	6	6	5	5
Civics	–	–	–	3	1	1
History	–	–	–	–	2	2
Geography	–	–	–	–	2	2
Social and moral education	1	1	1	1	–	–
Science	4	4	4	3	3	3
Agricultural education	–	–	–	1	1	1
Art education	2	2	2	2	1	1
Physical education	3	3	3	2	2	2
Music and anthems	1	1	1	1	1	1
Family education	–	–	–	–	1	1
<b>Total weekly periods</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>34</b>

Note: Each teaching period lasts 40 minutes in double-shift schools and 45 minutes in single-shift schools.

Double-shift schools follow the above-mentioned plan. Two class periods are allocated to agricultural education in rural schools, provided that the second class period is taken from science in the fourth, fifth and sixth classes. Islamic education is considered a basic subject of school curricula. Christianity is taught two class periods per week in schools where the majority of students are Christians. Students practice extracurricular activities in the practical, artistic and athletic fields according to a schedule prepared for this purpose.

The percentage of educational facilities used for two shifts in 2007/08 was 35.8% at the elementary level, 42.1% at the secondary level, 23.5% at the vocational level, and 49% at teacher training institutes; 4.5% of elementary schools, 3.4% of secondary schools, and 1.5% of vocational schools operated in three shifts. Out of a total of 17,913 educational establishments in 2007/08, 1,878 establishments were about to collapse and 3,076 schools were in need of comprehensive refurbishment. (Ministry of Planning, 2010).

The weekly lesson timetable of primary education in 2010 is presented in the table below:

### Iraq. Primary education: weekly lesson timetable (2010)

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Islamic education	4	4	3	3	3	3
Arabic language (reading in grades 1 and 2)	9	9	8	8	5	5
English language	–	–	3	3	4	4
Mathematics	6	6	6	6	5	5
Social studies	–	–	–	1	–	–
History	–	–	–	–	2	2
Geography	–	–	–	–	2	2
National and social education	–	–	–	–	1	1
Science	3	3	3	3	3	3
Art education	2	2	2	2	1	1
Physical education	2	2	2	2	2	2
Songs and music	1	1	–	–	–	–
<b>Total weekly periods</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>

*Source:* Ministry of Education (Baghdad and Kurdistan Regions), 2011. Each teaching period lasts 40 minutes in double-shift schools and 45 minutes in single-shift schools. The Kurdistan Region applies a different timetable.

School and general examinations aim at measuring and evaluating students' achievement. Evaluation and examination instruments are periodically revised and developed by a specialized committee. At the primary level, general examinations qualify graduates for admission to the secondary level.

In 1997/98, the average repetition rate at the primary level was 14.5% (13.2% in grade 1; 13.2% in grade 2; 12% in grade 3; 13.7% in grade 4; 22.7% in grade 5; and 7.2% in grade 6). (MOE, 1999). In 1999/2000, the gross enrolment rate at the primary level was 101.6%. The pupil-teacher ratio was 21:1. Official data from 2000/01 indicated that at the turn of the century there were some 11,709 primary schools, with some 4,031,346 pupils enrolled (of whom 44% were girls) and 190,650 teachers (of whom about 72% were female teachers). (UNESCO, 2004).

According to the Iraqi Central Organization for Statistics, in 2007/08 there were 12,507 schools (not including the Kurdistan Region) offering primary education with 4,333,154 pupils enrolled (of whom 1,933,344 or 44.6% were girls) and 237,130 teachers. The Kurdistan Region Statistics Office reports a total enrolment of 1,193,968 students (no level is specified) and a total of 73,399 teachers for the school year 2007. For same the year 2007/08, UNICEF reports a total enrolment of 5,065,276 pupils at the primary level (including the three Kurdistan provinces), of whom 2,269,662 were girls. It should be recalled that the situation in the country remains fluid and in some areas the threat of violence has increased. Accurate data remain elusive. (UNICEF, 2010). According to the Ministry of Planning (2010), the (gross) enrolment ratio was 87% in 2007/08.



According to UNESCO, in 2008 in the governmental sector there were 13,124 primary schools at the center and 4,494 in the region. A total of 9,658 schools were in rural areas and 7,960 were in urban areas. The total enrolment was about 4.4 million pupils at the center and some 1.1 million in the region. There were about 257,000 teachers at the center and some 67,000 in the region. The pupil-teacher ratio was 17:1 and the average number of pupils per class was 33. In terms of teachers' qualifications, 84% of teachers were diploma holders and 16% were holders of a university certificate. (UNESCO Iraq Office, 2011).

## Secondary education

As mentioned, secondary education comprises two cycles: the three-year intermediate stage (or lower secondary, grades 7 to 9) and the three-year preparatory education stage (or upper secondary, grades 10 to 12). Within the framework of the new educational philosophy finalized in 2008, intermediate education aims to enable the youngsters who have completed their elementary education to accomplish the growth requirements at this phase and to continue with it at the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and social levels, and to detect their readiness, tendencies, orientations and provide them with the suitable sciences and knowledge for their ages, and to enable them to acquire the skills and the scientific and professional orientations, in addition to raise them on the belief in God and the love of the homeland. (UNESCO Iraq Office, 2011).

Preparatory education aims to continue the discovery of students' capabilities and orientation, developing and expanding them culturally and to satisfy the requirements of good citizenship, and gradually getting to further diversity in the fields of knowledge and training on its applications, to qualify for working life and to continue to study subsequent stages.

The following tables show the weekly lesson timetables for the two stages by the end of the 1990s:

**Intermediate education (lower secondary): weekly lesson timetable (1999)**

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each form		
	I	II	III
Islamic education	3	3	3
Arabic language	6	6	6
English language	6	5	5
History	2	2	2
Geography	2	2	2
Civics	1	1	1
Mathematics	5	5	5
General science	4	–	–
Chemistry	–	2	2
Physics	–	2	2
Biology	–	2	–
Man and human health	–	–	2
Art education	2	1	1
Physical education and military training	2	2	2
<b>Total weekly periods</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>
Family education for girls	1	1	1

Note: Each teaching period lasts 40 minutes in double-shift schools and 45 minutes in single-shift schools.

Double-shift schools follow the above-mentioned timetable. Evening schools follow the same plan except for the omission of physical education and military training. Two class periods are allotted to practical activities in the schools applying the experimental vocational arts sections. Islamic education is considered a basic subject of school curricula. Students practice extracurricular activities in the scientific, educational, social, literary, artistic, athletic, agricultural and industrial fields according to a schedule prepared for this purpose.

**Preparatory education (upper secondary or second stage of general secondary education): weekly lesson timetable (1999)**

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each form				
	IV	Literary		Scientific	
		V	VI	V	VI
Islamic education	3	3	3	3	3
Arabic language	5	8	8	4	4
Kurdish language	–	2	–	2	–
English language	5	6	6	5	5
History	2	3	3	–	–
Geography	2	3	3	–	–
Sociology	–	2	–	–	–
Economics	–	2	3	–	–
Mathematics	3	2	2	6	5
Chemistry	3	–	–	4	4
Physics	3	–	–	4	4
Biology	3	–	–	4	4
Physical education, military training and civil defense	1	2	1	2	1
Art education	1	1	1	1	1
National education	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total weekly periods</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>32</b>
Family education for girls	1	1	1	1	1
Health education for girls	1	1	–	1	–

Note: Each teaching period lasts 40 minutes in double-shift schools and 45 minutes in single-shift schools.

Double-shift schools follow the timetable above. Evening schools follow the same plan except for the omission of physical education class periods, and the addition of that time allocation to the teaching of the Arabic language. Islamic education is considered a basic subject of school curricula. Students practice extracurricular activities in the scientific, educational, social and practical fields according to a schedule prepared for this purpose. One class period is allocated to national education and added to the study plan in Forms 5 and 6 (science and arts). The curriculum needs review, in terms of reducing the large number of subjects, and updating subject matter and pedagogy. The trend towards subject diversification should be replaced by curriculum integration, where several subjects with similar features or themes can be integrated into one subject area. The current emphasis of the Education Ministry on the inclusion of citizenship education is to be commended. (UNESCO, 2004).

The weekly lesson timetables for intermediate and preparatory education in 2010 are presented below:

**Iraq. Intermediate education (first stage of general secondary education): weekly lesson timetable (2010)**

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade		
	7	8	9
Islamic education	3	3	3
Arabic language	5	5	5
English language	5	5	5
National and social education	1	1	1
History	2	2	2
Geography	2	2	2
Mathematics	5	5	5
Chemistry	2	2	2
Physics	2	2	2
Biology	2	2	2
Art education	1	1	1
Physical education and sports	2	2	2
<b>Total weekly periods</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>

*Source:* Ministry of Education (Baghdad and Kurdistan Regions), 2011. Family education is taught in girls schools for one class per week. Schools that teach foreign languages intensively (i.e. French, Spanish and Russian) plus ICT add classes for the respective subjects. Each teaching period lasts 40 minutes in double-shift schools and 45 minutes in single-shift schools. The Kurdistan Region applies a different timetable.



**Iraq. Baghdad Region, preparatory education (second stage of general secondary education): weekly lesson timetable (2010)**

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade					
	10		11		12	
	Sci.	Lit.	Sci.	Lit.	Sci.	Lit.
Islamic education	3	3	3	3	3	3
Arabic language	5	5	4	7	5	8
Kurdish language	2	2	–	–	–	–
English language	5	5	5	5	6	6
History	–	3	–	3	–	3
Geography	–	3	–	3	–	3
Philosophy and psychology	–	–	–	2	–	–
Sociology	–	2	–	–	–	–
Economics	–	–	–	2	–	3
Mathematics	4	3	6	3	6	3
Chemistry	3	–	3	–	4	–
Physics	3	–	3	–	4	–
Biology	3	–	3	–	4	–
Physical education	2	2	2	2	2	2
Art education	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total weekly periods</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>32</b>

*Source:* Ministry of Education (Baghdad and Kurdistan Regions), 2011. Family education is taught in girls schools for one class per week. Schools that teach foreign languages intensively (i.e. French, Spanish and Russian) plus ICT add classes for the respective subjects. (Each teaching period lasts 40 minutes in double-shift schools and 45 minutes in single-shift schools). Sci. = Science stream; Lit. = Literary stream.

In 1999/2000, the gross enrolment ratio at the secondary level was estimated at 38.3%. The student-teacher ratio was 19.7:1.

Official data from 2000/01 indicated that at the turn of the century there were some 3,701 general secondary schools, with some 1,291,309 students enrolled (of whom 39.5% were girls) and 73,989 teachers. There were some 263 vocational secondary schools, as well as 139 teacher institutes. (UNESCO, 2004).

According to the survey carried out in July-August 2003, the great majority of secondary students (a total of 1,443,436 students in 4,042 secondary schools), were enrolled in general secondary education, whether in schools that cater mainly to grades 7 to 9 (known as intermediate schools), to grades 7 to 12 (known as secondary schools), or to grades 10 to 12 (known as preparatory schools). There were a further 128,573 students at secondary level (8%) who were enrolled in vocationally oriented institutions, including teacher training. The survey showed wide disparities in student numbers between the 18 governorates. The proportion of female students varied according to the type of institution, with girls being in the majority for teacher training, and boys for other institutions. About a half of all boys and a third of girls appeared to be participating in education at secondary level. The overall gross enrolment ratio was estimated at 44.2%. The total number of teachers in secondary level institutions was found to be 85,417, and a slight majority were women (58%).



The majority of these teachers (77,357) were employed in general secondary education. (*Ibid.*).

Repetition rates were high, even before the period of sanctions. In 2001/02, they were recorded by the Ministry of Education as 31% for boys and 22% for girls at intermediate level; and as 28% for boys and 16% for girls, at preparatory level. Cross-sectional data for 2002/03 suggests that there is significant drop out after each grade of secondary education, except perhaps grade 11. (*Ibid.*).

Vocational education includes schools in the fields of industry, commerce, agriculture and home science, with 21 areas of specialization. The vocational cycle is of three years duration (grades 10-12), ending with national examinations. The top 10% of students in these final examinations can go on to pursue degree programmes in technical colleges. Enrolment in the 231 vocational preparatory schools responding to the UNESCO survey was 73,941 students. The survey found a total teaching force of 4,694 in the 231 vocational preparatory schools that completed the questionnaire. About half of the teachers were male (2,311) and half were female (2,383). The number of teachers was substantially less than in 2000/01, when the teaching force was estimated at 7,483. Vocational education curricula have not been reviewed for over two decades.

According to the Central Organization for Statistics, in 2007/08 there were 4,364 secondary schools (not including the Kurdistan Region) with 1,603,623 students enrolled (of whom 658,106 or 41% were girls) and 114,745 teachers. In addition there were 18 vocational schools (not including the Kurdistan Region) with 7,155 students enrolled and 940 teachers. According to the Ministry of Planning (2010), the (gross) enrolment ratio at the secondary level was 44.3% in 2007/08.

According to UNESCO, in 2008 there were 5,409 secondary schools. The total enrolment was about 1.8 million students at the center and some 178,000 students in the region. The number of teachers was about 128,000 at the center and some 11,000 in the region. The student-teacher ratio was 14:1. In terms of teachers' qualifications, 98% of teachers were university degree holders. Concerning vocational education, there were 289 vocational schools at the center (200 for boys, 70 for girls and 19 co-educational) and 33 schools in the region (11 for girls, eight for boys and 14 co-educational). The total enrolment was about 61,000 students at the center and some 7,000 in the region. The number of teachers was some 12,000 and the average students-teacher ratio was 5:1. (UNESCO Iraq Office, 2011).

## Assessing learning achievement nationwide

Information is not available.

## Teaching staff

Teacher education is offered in teacher training institutes to which students are admitted after completing the intermediate stage. The programme lasts five years and graduates are qualified to teach in primary schools. There are also institutes offering two-year programmes to students who have completed secondary education. Most of

these institutes were converted into four-year teacher colleges at the university level in recent years. The minimum academic qualification normally required for secondary school teachers is a bachelor's degree from a university, preferably from a faculty of education or science. During the sanctions period, however, graduates from the teacher training institutes were allowed to teach students in the first years of the intermediate cycle. Teachers recruited under this policy were encouraged by the Ministry of Education to pursue a four-year education degree either from a faculty of education in a university or from the Open College of Education in Baghdad.

Vocational teachers are expected to hold a university degree. Most teachers for these specializations obtain a two-year diploma from a Technical Institute and then study at the University of Technology in Baghdad in the Technical Education Department for a further three years. Zafaraniya Technical Institute is the only institution of its kind in the country for training industrial teachers. Similarly teachers for agriculture receive their training at the College of Agriculture, and commerce teachers in the College of Business Administration or Economics.

The Ministry of Education has always endeavoured to improve teacher education in accordance with the economic, social and cultural changes and their effects on the various roles of teachers. Due attention is devoted to the professional preparation of teachers to improve their skills and increase their efficiency. The major developments in the area of teacher education include the conversion of teacher institutes into teacher colleges, the introduction of special courses of Islamic education in teacher institutes and colleges, and the development of teaching practice programmes in pre-service teacher training institutions.

The Ministry is also concerned with in-service training programmes with a view to improving the efficiency of teachers and thus increasing the effectiveness of the education system. This is achieved by offering training opportunities to teachers, providing them with new experiences and acquainting them with innovations in the various fields of education and science. Some of the major achievements in this area include: strengthening the Institute of Educational Training and Development (established in 1984) as well as pre-service and in-service training departments in the governorates, and providing the required human, financial and material resources; diversifying types and methods of training and adopting modern techniques, as well as establishing co-operation and co-ordination with scientific and professional societies, trade unions, universities and training centers; adopting innovative projects such as training by correspondence and by video; developing provincial handiwork and scientific centers; making use of modern evaluation techniques to increase the effectiveness of programmes; and establishing strong links between the training programmes and the schools.

Professional development programmes and in-service teacher training courses were not conducted regularly during the years of sanctions. In the Centre/South, in-service teacher training courses were organized by the Institute of Educational Training and Development. Between January 1998 and August 2003 some 35,200 secondary teachers attended those courses. A significant percentage of the teachers (26%) received training to enhance their teaching skills in their respective subject specialization. Other areas where teachers received training were general teaching methods (6%), school administration (4%) and educational psychology (2%).



Teachers (8%) were also trained in other areas that were not identified. A majority of secondary education teachers still need training in both subject areas and teaching methodologies, including classroom management and student counselling. Even teachers who have received in-service training need refresher courses. (UNESCO, 2004).

In order to encourage primary school teachers to upgrade their qualifications through distance education, an Open College of Education was established in Baghdad in 1998, with campuses in 8 governorates and a central campus in Baghdad. The College was affiliated to the Ministry of Education and received technical guidance from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. Before the conflict in March-April 2003, the College was self-financed and students had to pay tuition fees. However, after the conflict, the College was supported by government funding. The target groups of the Open College are primary education teachers with a diploma from a two-year or five-year teacher training institute, primary education teachers with only a diploma from preparatory school, and primary education teachers with a university degree in a non-teaching-related subject. Students are expected to continue their work as primary school teachers after graduation. The College began enrolling students in 2000/01. The number of satellite centers increased from 8 in 2000/01 to 15 in the next academic year. The College offers a four-year distance education programme (leading to a bachelor's degree in education) in nine subject areas, namely: Islamic studies, Arabic language, mathematics, physics, history, physical education, art education and educational psychology. The Open College of Education had 9,051 students at the beginning of the 2002/03 academic year, attached to 15 satellite centers. Fifty percent of the students were girls. During the conflict of 2003, the college infrastructure was severely affected.

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