



EDUCATION FACT SHEET - BURUNDI

<p>In Brief</p>	<p>Population: 11,466,756 (July 2017 est.) Size: 27,834 sq. kilometers</p> <p>National Languages: Kirundi (universally spoken) French (administrative)</p> <p>Literacy: 62% Youth Literacy: 80% Female Youth Literacy: 75%</p> <p>National Curriculum: Yes</p> <p>Years of Public School: 13 Primary School: 6 years Lower Secondary School: 4 years Upper Secondary School : 3 years</p> <p>Primary Language of Instruction: French</p> <p>High School Leaving Exams: Yes Date of Exams: Early August</p>
<p>Academic Calendar</p>	<p>Primary, secondary: Starting month: September Ending month: July</p> <p>Public Tertiary: Starting month: January Ending month: December</p> <p>Private Tertiary: Depends on school</p>

Education System

Recent Switch to 12-Year System

Note: the academic model throughout the schooling system is similar to the one used in France.

Note also that in 2016, the public school structure was changed to a 12-year system. The class graduating upper secondary school in 2019 will be the last class under the "old" 13-year system.

The system is structured so that the primary school cycle lasts six years, lower secondary lasts four, and upper secondary, two. Children officially enter primary education at age seven.

Primary Education

Primary education is compulsory, and the net matriculation rate for primary schools is around 97%. However, around 55% of these students will drop out before completing the primary cycle. Gender representation at the primary level is well balanced.

Thirty percent of students start their studies one or more years late, and 22% of students every year will be required to repeat the previous grade. These effects are especially pronounced in rural areas of the country.

Public primary education is tuition-free, however costs such as uniforms and notebooks (both of which are strictly required) can be prohibitive for low-income students. In rural areas, the opportunity cost of not having children participate in agriculture can also prevent participation. All of these effects contribute to low primary completion rates.

Secondary Education

Somewhere between 30% and 60% of children will attend lower secondary studies, and somewhere between 5% and 30% will attend upper secondary. Gender representation at the secondary level is also well-balanced.

Entry into the secondary school system is mediated by a system of national exams. Students are placed into specialized tracks based on examinations taken at the end of primary and lower secondary studies.

Both public and private schools charge tuition at the secondary level. This severely limits access for low-income students.

	<p>Tertiary Education One national university and around a half-dozen private universities provide traditional tertiary studies to around five percent of tertiary-aged students each year. At the tertiary level, a student is about three times as likely to be male as to be female.</p> <p>Public and Private Schools At the primary level, public schools are free. At the secondary level, tuition is charged in both public and private institutions. While public secondary tuition is low compared to its private counterpart, the cost is still a barrier for a majority of Burundians.</p> <p>Private schools exist throughout the country, and will generally provide a more consistent education for students. However, they are prohibitively expensive for nearly the entire population.</p> <p>There are also a few public schools with reputations for academic excellence that surpass even the top private schools. These elite institutions are highly selective and have separate admissions policies.</p> <p>Rural and Urban Schools All factors constant, urban schools tend to be more rigorous and provide a more consistent education. However, a number of boarding schools exist throughout the country that provide their students with a relatively higher quality education.</p>
<p>National School System</p>	<p>Exams Determine Education Tracks</p> <p>Entrance into lower secondary studies is mediated by a national exam taken during the final year of primary school (grade 6). This exam determines whether a student will be allowed to begin secondary studies, and is used by the Ministry of Education to place students at secondary schools throughout the country.</p> <p>In the final year of lower secondary (grade 9), students take another national exam. The results of this exam determine whether a student will be admitted to one of four university-bound tracks at the upper secondary level, or will be assigned to a variety of other technical school options.</p>

	<p>State technical schools are attended in lieu of a traditional upper secondary education. They teach disciplines such as agriculture, nursing, and accounting, or prepare students to be electricians or mechanics. The A3 diploma indicates that the student attended a two-year technical school and is eligible for trade work. The A2 diploma is issued after a three- or four-year technical school and prepares a student either for further studies at the university level (<i>e.g.</i> in accounting) or for work.</p> <p>What would usually be considered upper secondary education is split into four specialization tracks. Graduates of these tracks who pass the national exit examination are eligible for university studies.</p> <p>English Language</p> <p>In public schools, English is introduced as a foreign language for the final six years of secondary studies. The quality of English education is highly dependent on teacher qualifications and availability; it is not uncommon for an English teacher to have little or no formal training in the subject. This issue is especially prevalent in rural schools.</p>
<p>Upper Secondary Education</p>	<p>Four Tracks for College-Bound</p> <p>College-bound students specialize in one of four areas at the upper secondary level. Students are placed into these tracks by the Ministry of Education based on their 9th grade leaving exam. While it is theoretically possible for a student to appeal their placement, this is somewhat rare.</p> <p>The four specializations tracks are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economics, which focuses on the social sciences; • Modern Letters, which focuses on languages and humanities; • Science A, which focuses on math and physics; and • Science B, which focuses on biology and chemistry. <p>Specialization tracks only indicate a relative emphasis, as students in all tracks take a complete liberal arts curriculum that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kirundi • French • English • Math • Biology • Physics

- Chemistry
- History
- Geography
- Economics
- Civics
- Physical education.

School Grades – Upper Secondary

Students are graded on a percentage-based system; they also receive a class ranking. Equivalent grades in Burundi are much lower than their US counterparts, with the typical median yearly grade somewhere between 55% and 60%.

Interpretation:

- Grades for each school year will almost always fall between 40% and 85%.
- Anything less than 55% is considered failing and requires repetition of the grade; typical class repetition rates are between 5% and 10%.
- Scores higher than 70% are highly uncommon and considered stellar.
- Scores between different specialization tracks should be considered equivalent.

Class Rank – Upper Secondary

Class rank is assigned within each specialization track, with somewhere between 10 and 50 students per track per school.

A select number of schools in Burundi (both public and private) function as “elite institutions” with admission based on test results. In these cases, class rank may not be a useful metrics for student evaluation, as all students should be considered highly qualified.

National Exam

A state-administered exam, tailored to each specialization track, is taken by all graduating students upon completion of their final year of secondary school. Score distribution varies wildly around the country, but scores of above 70% designate the very top scholars. Scores are normalized each year, though details about the normalization are not shared by the Education Ministry.

- Only about one third of scholars will score above a 50% on the exam.
- Scores higher than 60% qualify a student to study at the national university.
- Private universities will generally accept students with scores above 50%.

Top scores by year and high school track:

Year	Section	Top Score	5th Place Score
2015	Economics	85.7%	81.1%
	Modern Letters (languages)	88.2%	85.9%
	Science A (math, physics)	82.3%	70.4%
	Science B (biology, chemistry)	89.6%	83.5%
2016	Economics	92.7%	90.0%
	Modern Letters (languages)	90.4%	87.4%
	Science A (math, physics)	94.1%	87.2%
	Science B (biology, chemistry)	93.4%	92.4%

Certifications:

The Certificat des Humanités Générales is issued to students upon completion of their secondary studies. These are usually available to students in August, immediately after graduation.

The Diplôme d'État is issued to students if they pass the national leaving exam. These are usually available to students between nine and twelve months after graduation.

Diplomas (at both the secondary and tertiary levels) include the following indicators, based on grades and/or national exam results:

- 90-100%: Excellent
- 80-89% : La plus grande distinction "(The highest distinction)"
- 70-79% : Grande distinction "(High distinction)"
- 60-69% : Satisfaction/Pass

<p>Tertiary Studies</p>	<p>Public University</p> <p>The University of Burundi is the premiere institution of higher education in the country. Students are admitted based entirely on their results in the national exam. Students are assigned a concentration by the Ministry of Education, similarly based on national exam results. It is possible, though uncommon, for students to request a different concentration than assigned.</p> <p>The University includes faculties of education, engineering, agriculture, various languages, and various sciences.</p> <p>All students who are admitted to the national university receive free tuition.</p> <p>Students matriculate at the national university a full year and a half after graduating from secondary studies. Because of this delay, some students opt to attend private universities to continue their studies.</p> <p>Private Universities</p> <p>Private universities are generally perceived as less prestigious than the national university, but they may offer students more opportunities to choose their area of study and they would allow a student to avoid a year and a half interruption in studies. Private universities generally accept matriculating students with lower national exam results than the public university.</p>
<p>SAT Test Centers</p>	<p>BURUNDI AMERICAN INTL ACADEMY, Behind Kings Conference Center, Bujumbura, Burundi, Center Code: 76500 New as of March 2018; no SAT Subject Tests offered</p> <p>Assorted test center options in Rwanda</p>
<p>ACT Test Centers</p>	<p>Assorted test center options in Rwanda</p>
<p>IELTS/TOEFL Test Centers</p>	<p>TOEFL: Bujumbura, Burundi, Center Code A603 Paper Delivered Test ONLY</p> <p>Kigali, Rwanda iBT Available</p> <p>IELTS:</p>

	British Council Rwanda (Kigali)
Best Time for Admission Officials to Visit	May (final trimester of the year) Late September/October (first trimester) February (second trimester)
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Annotated Bibliography

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