



EDUCATION FACT SHEET - MALAWI

Country in Brief	<p>Population: approximately 20 million people, 51% being youth under the age of 18 (2020)</p> <p>National Languages: Chichewa; Official Language: English</p> <p>Literacy: 68.6 percent literacy rate (71.6% men and 65.9 women) (2019)</p> <p>Youth Literacy: 75%</p> <p>National Curriculum: Yes</p> <p>Years of Public School: 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary: 8 years, starting age 6 • Secondary: 4 years <p>Primary Language of Instruction: English</p> <p>High School Leaving Exams: Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) examinations- (Equivalent to O-levels)</p> <p>Date of Exams: June to July (approximately a month to complete)</p>
Academic Calendar	<p>Primary/Secondary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting month: September • Ending month: July <p>Public Tertiary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting month: Varies from university to university • Ending month varies from university to university <p>Private Tertiary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting month: varies. But usually February • Ending month. It varies, but usually in June.
School System	<p>Malawi has an 8-4-4 education system consisting of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • primary - 8 • secondary - 4 • university- 4 <p>Primary School</p> <p>Most children start formal education at primary school at the age of six. Primary education is free in Malawi's government schools. The primary school takes eight years from Standard 1 to 8, at the end of which pupils</p>

write the Primary School Leaving Certificate examinations. Students have to pass and get selected if they are to attend secondary school education in a government secondary school.

Secondary School

Secondary school education takes four years, from Form 1 to Form 4. Students can attend secondary school in public schools run by the government or private schools run by the private sector and individuals. Students in secondary schools sit for two examinations: a Junior Certificate (JC) Examination at Form 2 and a Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) Examination at Form 4. Both examinations are set by the Malawi National Examination Board (MANEB).

MSCE Grading system

GRADE	MARKS	REMARK
1	80-100	Distinction
2	70-79	Distinction
3	65-69	Credit
4	60-64	Credit
5	55-59	Credit
6	50-54	credit
7	45-49	Pass
8	40-44	Pass
9	0-39	Fail

Tertiary education

In Malawi, Universities are accredited by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). There are six accredited public universities and a few accredited private universities. Access to tertiary education in Malawi is competitive, as these Universities cannot admit all deserving individuals. Malawi's current tertiary gross enrolment rate is at 0.8 percent.

Entry Requirements to Tertiary Institutions

To gain admission into Universities in Malawi, one must meet entry requirements set by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). Currently, the requirement is MSCE, IGCSE, or any other internationally recognized qualification comparable to 'O' level certificates with at least six credit passes (a minimum of grade '6' at MSCE or 'C' at IGCSE), including English Language.

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Available Scholarships in the Country for both Locals and Internationals

	Financing for higher education can either be through private funding or loans administered by the Higher Education Students' Loans and Grants Board (HESLGB). These loans are a preserve for a very small population of Malawian students.
Language of Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard 1-4 (Lower Primary) Taught in local languages • Standard 5-8 (upper primary) taught in English • Form 1- 4 (Secondary) taught in English
School Leaving Exams	Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) examinations
Issues with the Education System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges associated with limited access (limited available places) • Insufficient funding results in limited financial capacity for the most vulnerable students, contributing to high dropout rates • Inadequate infrastructure quality • Shortage of learning materials • Limited availability of inclusive education provision
SAT Test Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Andrews International Schools (Blantyre) • Bishop Mackenzie International Schools (Lilongwe)
ACT Test Centers	St. Andrews International Schools (Blantyre)
IELTS/TOEFL	<p>IELTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Council offices (Blantyre) • British Council offices (Lilongwe) <p>TOEFL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sparcs Systems Limited (Blantyre) • St. Andrews International Schools (Blantyre) • Home take option
Best Time for Admissions Officers to Visit	<p>Term 1: Between September and December.</p> <p>This is early enough in the year for students to use the college information shared. School attendance is higher during this period.</p>

Sources:

- Africa Brief (2022). "27% of Malawians can't read/write". <https://africabrief.substack.com/p/27-percent-of-malawians-cant-read>
- "Malawi". World Bank. 2021, <https://data.worldbank.org/country/malawi>
- National Statistical Office (2020) '2018 Malawi Population and Housing Census: Population Projection 2018 -2050 Report'. NSO, Malawi.

- National Council for Higher Education (2022) 'Annual Report of the Council for Higher Education in Malawi.' NCHE, Malawi.
- <https://www.education.gov.mw/index.php>