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Education is the bedrock of development. Nigeria’s education system encompasses three different sectors: basic education (nine years), post-basic/senior secondary education (three years), and tertiary education (four to six years, depending on the program of study).

According to Nigeria’s latest National Policy on Education (2004), basic education covers nine years of formal (compulsory) schooling consisting of six years of elementary and three years of junior secondary education. Post-basic education includes three years of senior secondary education.

At the tertiary level, the system consists of a university sector and a non-university sector. The latter is composed of polytechnics, monotechnics, and colleges of education. The tertiary sector as a whole offers opportunities for undergraduate, graduate, and vocational and technical education.

The academic year typically runs from September to July. Most universities use a semester system of 18 – 20 weeks. Others run from January to December, divided into 3 terms of 10 -12 weeks.

Education in Nigeria is overseen by the [Ministry of Education](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigerian_Federal_Ministry_of_Education). [Local authorities](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Local_Government_Areas_of_Nigeria) take responsibility for implementing state-controlled policy regarding [public education](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_education) and [state schools](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_schools). The education system is divided into [Kindergarten](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kindergarten), [Primary education](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primary_education), [Secondary education](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secondary_education) and [Tertiary education](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tertiary_education). Nigeria's central government has been dominated by instability since declaring independence from [Britain](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom), and, as a result, a unified set of education policies has not yet been successfully implemented. Regional differences in quality, [curriculum](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curriculum), and funding characterize the education system in Nigeria. Currently, Nigeria possesses the largest population of [out-of-school learning](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Out-of-school_learning)youth in the world.

Types of education we have in Nigeria

Primary education begins at around age 5 for the majority of Nigerians. Students spend six years in primary school and graduate with a school-leaving certificate. Before 1976, education policy was still largely shaped by the colonial policy of the British Colonial Period. In 1976, the Universal Primary Education program was established. This program faced many difficulties and was subsequently revised in 1981 and 1990. The Universal Basic Education, *UBE*, came as a replacement of the Universal Primary Education and intended to enhance the success of the first nine years of schooling The *UBE* involves 6 years of Primary School education and 3 years of Junior Secondary School education, culminating in 9 years of uninterrupted schooling, and transition from one class to another is automatic but determined through continuous assessment.

Secondary school : Students spend six years in Secondary School, which is 3 years of JSS (Junior Secondary School), and 3 years of SSS (Senior Secondary School). Secondary School Education is free and compulsory.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is made up of thirty-six States and the Federal Capital Territory. There are about two Federal Government Colleges in each state. These schools are funded and managed directly by the Federal Government through the Ministry of Education. Teachers and staff are Federal Government employees. Teachers at the Federal Government schools are required to possess a bachelor's degree in Education or in a particular subject area, such as, Mathematics, Physics etc. These schools are supposed to be model schools carrying and maintaining the ideals of secondary education for Nigerian students. Admission is based on merit, determined by the National Common Entrance Examination taken by all final year elementary school pupils. Tuition and fees are very low, approximately twenty five thousand naira ($69.08), because funding comes from the Federal Government.

State-owned secondary schools are funded by each state government and are not comparable to the Federal government colleges. Although education is supposed to be free in the majority of the state-owned institutions, students are required to purchase books, uniforms and pay for miscellaneous things costing them an average of fifty thousand naira ($200) in an academic year. Teachers in State-owned institutions usually have a National Certificate of Education or a bachelor's degree, but this is not always the case as many secondary schools in [Nigeria](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigeria" \o "Nigeria)are filled with unqualified teachers who end up not being able to motivate their students. Often these schools are understaffed due to low state budgets, lack of incentives and irregularities in payment of staff salaries. Some state-owned secondary schools are regarded as elite colleges because of the historically high educational standard and producing alumni who have prominent citizens in the various careers. However, the college ranking of these institutions have since dropped because of the arrival of some private institutions.

Private secondary schools in Nigeria tend to be quite expensive with average annual fees averaging from two hundred and fifty thousand naira to one million naira ($1000.00 – $4000.00). These schools have smaller classes (approximately twenty to thirty students per class), modern equipment and a better learning environment. Most teachers in these institutions possess at least a bachelor's degree in a specific course area and are sent for workshops or short term programs on a regular basis.

Tertiary education : The government has majority control of university education. Tertiary education in Nigeria consists of Universities (Public and Private), Polytechnics, Monotechnics, and Colleges of education. The country has a total number of 129 universities registered by NUC among which federal and state government own 40 and 39 respectively while 50 universities are privately owned. In order to increase the number of universities in Nigeria from 129 to 138 the Federal Government gave 9 new private universities their licences in May 2015. The names of the universities that got licenses in Abuja included, Augustine University, Ilara, Lagos; Chrisland University, Owode, Ogun State; Christopher University, Mowe, Ogun State; Hallmark University, Ijebu-Itele, Ogun State; Kings University, Ode-Omu, Osun State; Micheal and Cecilia Ibru University, Owhrode, Delta State; [Mountain Top University](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Top_University), Makogi/Oba Ogun state; Ritman University, Ikot-Epene, Akwa- Ibom State and Summit University, Offa, Kwara State.

First year entry requirements into most universities in Nigeria include: Minimum of SSCE/GCE Ordinary Level Credits at maximum of two sittings; Minimum cut-off marks in Joint Admission and Matriculation Board Entrance Examination (JAMB) of 180 and above out of a maximum of 400 marks are required. Candidates with minimum of Merit Pass in National Certificate of Education (NCE), National Diploma (ND) and other Advanced Level Certificates minimum qualifications with minimum of 5 O/L Credits are given direct entry admission into the appropriate undergraduate degree programs.

Students with required documents typically enter [university](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/University) from age 17-18 onwards and study for an [academic degree](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academic_degree). Historically, universities are divided into several tiers.

### First generation universities

Five of these universities were established between 1948 and 1965, following the recommendation of the Ashby Commission set up by the British Colonial Government to study the necessity of university education for Nigeria. These universities are fully funded by the federal government. They were established primarily to meet a need for qualified personnel in Nigeria and to set basic standards for university education. These universities have continued to play their roles for the production of qualified personnel and the provision of standards, which have helped to guide the subsequent establishments of other generations of universities in Nigeria. Universities in this tier are the following:

* [University of Nigeria, Nsukka](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Nigeria,_Nsukka)
* [University of Lagos](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Lagos)
* [Obafemi Awolowo University](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obafemi_Awolowo_University)
* [Ahmadu Bello University Zaria](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmadu_Bello_University)
* [University of Ibadan](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Ibadan)[[6]](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Nigeria#cite_note-embassy-6)

### Second generation universities

With the increasing population of qualified students for university education in Nigeria and the growing needs for scientific and technological developments, setting up more universities became imperative. Between 1970 and 1985, 12 additional universities were established in various parts of the country

### Third generation universities

The need to establish Universities to address special areas of Technological and Agricultural demand prompted the establishment of 10 additional Universities between 1985 and 1999.

### State universities

Pressures from qualified students from each state who could not readily get admissions to any of the Federal Universities continued to mount on States Governments. It became imperative and urgent for some State Governments to invest in the establishment of Universities.

### Private universities

The Federal Government established a law in 1993, allowing private sectors to establish universities following guidelines prescribed by the Government.

The typical duration of undergraduate programs in Nigerian universities depends largely on the program of study. For example, Social Sciences/Humanity related courses are 4 Years, I.C.T related courses are 4 years, Engineering/Technology related courses are 5 Years, Pharmacy courses are 5 Years, and Law courses are 5 Years, each with two semester sessions per year. Medicine (Vet/Human) degrees take 6 Years and have longer sessions during the year.

Educational System in Nigeria Problems and Prospects

This paper examines the problems and prospects of education in Nigeria. Education is the bedrock of development. But unfortunately Education in Nigeria is bisected with myriad’s of problems. These includes; poor funding and thus poor educational infrastructures, inadequate classrooms, teaching aids (projectors, Computers, Laboratories and libraries), paucity of quality teachers and poor / polluted learning environment. In addition to these inadequacies, our school system is plagued with numerous social vices such as examination malpractices, cultism, hooliganism and corruption. For meaningful development to take place in the educational sector; the government need to re-address the issue of funding. Private educational investors, teachers! Parents/guidance and students/pupils need a reorientation towards achieving the goals of education. Also education must be made affordable for all and sundry. The current monolistic approach to knowledge acquisition must be changed. Technical education and innovation/ adaptation centers must be encouraged and well funded, if this nation must move out of this present technological and scientific dependence. Government and the organized private sector must as well fund research programmes, inventions and mass production of invented products.