Overview of the Higher Education System

Turkmenistan

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Eurydice
The higher education system in Turkmenistan

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- Other length of a Bologna cycle
- Professional programme
- Programme outside the typical Bologna model
- Professional programme non Bologna
- ECTS: Credits according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
- Regulated at national level
- Decided at institutional level

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1 Overview

Turkmenistan is a country in Central Asia, bordered by Kazakhstan to the northwest, Uzbekistan to the north and east, Afghanistan to the southeast, Iran to the south and southwest, and the Caspian Sea to the west. The Turkmen shore along the Caspian Sea is 1,768 kilometres long.

With a total area of 488,100 square km, Turkmenistan is the world's 52nd largest country. The capital is Ashgabat. The major cities are Turkmenbashy, Mary, Turkmenabad and Dashoguz.

In November 2016 the population was 5,465,786; male 49.2% and female 50.8%.1

Turkmen is the official language, although Russian is widely spoken in cities as a "language of inter-ethnic communication". Turkmen is spoken by 72% of the population, Russian by 12%, Uzbek by 9%, and other languages by the remaining 7%.

GDP per capita in 2016 accounted to $14,241.

Expenditures on education were 3% of GDP in 2013.2

1.1 Fundamental principles and National Policies

The Constitution of Turkmenistan adopted in 2008 guarantees each citizen the right to education, and specifies the following (Article 38):

General secondary education is obligatory, and everyone has the right to obtain it in state schools for free. The state provides access to vocational education to each citizen according to his/her abilities. Both state and non-state organisations, as well as individual citizens, have the right to provide paid educational services according to the principles and procedures established by the law. The state sets educational standards, which are obligatory for all educational institutions.

In accordance with the Law on Education adopted on 15 August 2009, the education system includes the following levels:

- preschool education,
- general secondary education,
- IVET,
- secondary VET,
- higher professional education,
- post-university professional education.

The Law on Education adopted on 4 May 2013 aims to improve the regulatory framework of the Government policy in the education sector. It regulates social relations in the sphere of education, defines the basic principles of the state education policy, as well as the objectives, tasks and functions of the education system and its management. It also provides a number of innovations, such as it authorizes the establishment of private educational institutions and educational institutions in which the primary language of instruction is not Turkmen, it stipulates that the educational institutions can be set up by the state government bodies, local governments, domestic and foreign organisations of all types of ownership, public associations registered in the territory of Turkmenistan, by Turkmen citizens and even foreign nationals. However, education institutions carrying out educational programmes for training the staff of military and law enforcement agencies can only be set up by the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan.

In addition, the law foresees that education can also be provided through self-education, external studies, as well as online learning. Along with full-time study, distance education is planning to be introduced.

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1 www.countrymeters.info/en/turkmenistan
2 https://knoema.ru
The strategies in the education sector are reflected in the “National Programme of Social and Economic Development of Turkmenistan for the period 2011 – 2030” which identifies the need “to establish an education system comparable to developed countries, and to increase the quality of education as a condition for Turkmenistan’s development and competitiveness”.

Within the context of the adopted active strategies towards reforms, the Government has consistently adopted a series of laws and decrees that demonstrate a process of reforms. The GDP growth has been strong in recent years: in 2013 it was 10.2% and GDP per capita had increased to around USD 18,500. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index ranks Turkmenistan as 103 out of 187 countries; it corresponds to a medium-level country. The World Bank has ranked Turkmenistan among the countries with above-average income levels.3

On June 15, 2016 the Government of Turkmenistan adopted the policy to ensure quality education and learning environment. The quality education policy was developed by the Ministry of Education with technical support from UNICEF. The policy aligned with international standards includes five components.

- The first component on inclusiveness implies that all children will be included into education irrespective of their nationality, gender, origin, socio-economic status, place of residence, language, religion, or abilities.
- The second is about academic performance and compliance with child’s life needs, requiring a number of conducive conditions. The conditions include availability and implementation of the state socio-economic and educational policy based on respecting child’s rights; social services and structures of civil society focused on a child; well-trained and motivated teachers provided with enabling working environment; adequate educational programmes and sufficient educational materials for students; and professional supportive staff and administration.
- The third element responds to gender sensitivity and envisages full enjoyment of equality of children, staff, and parents, as well as mobilization of school, local community and social systems.
- A safe and protective environment is the fourth aspect. It reflects access to clean water, sanitation, and safety for both students and teachers, and use of non-violent and child-oriented methods by teachers and parents in educating and upbringing children.
- The last fifth component involves students, families and local communities actively participating in school management through committees, mass media, and educational councils. Stakeholders will be able to take an active part in developing school visions, monitoring plans, and school self-evaluation processes. Schools will support and stimulate joint participation of children, teachers, and parents in school and public activities.

The policy document on improving the quality of education will be mainstreamed into the country’s education system. This policy will help to strengthen standards of education services, including an effective system of monitoring, capacity development of teachers, review of pre-service and in-service curricula as well as development of criteria for strategic management and planning in the education sector.

The policy on quality education as part of the Government’s reforms in education will serve as a platform for development and introduction of inclusive education in Turkmenistan.

The document contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 4 on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

1.2 Lifelong Learning Strategies

Education is one of the largest and rather developed sectors of social infrastructure in Turkmenistan. The country has greatly succeeded in realizing the objective of each individual’s right to education.

3 https://www.unicef.org/turkmenistan
In 2016 rate of literacy was 99.7%.\(^4\)

The lifelong learning system of education is a part of the county’s unified system of continuing education that meets the needs of people in mastering knowledge and skills required for their professional growth and personal development during adult life. It includes the following components:

- a network of educational institutions;
- research centres;
- educational programmes of various purposes;
- adult education organisations;
- social services with an educational component;
- organisations engaged in public information activities;
- scientific and cultural institutions engaged in educational activities;
- methodological associations;
- mass media used for educational purposes.

Vocational education acts as the main body for training and retraining of adults and includes:

(a) improving personnel skill qualifications within their field specialization – usually on an enterprise basis;
(b) retraining of adults offering them new specializations.

Almost all vocational technical and higher education institutions in Turkmenistan can provide continuous education.

In 2013, 31,600 employees of large and medium enterprises (about 5% of the annual total number) underwent vocational training, including 73.7% for professional development, 16.5% for retraining, and 2.8% during probation.\(^5\)

Approximately one third of the total number of registered education institutions is involved in training foreign languages, management, marketing, economics and computer literacy.

Enterprise-based training or staffs retraining is being practiced as widely as the training provided at vocational and higher institutions: each employer independently defines the requirements for upgrading professional qualifications and retraining staff which is carried out according to procedures stipulated by the labour contract or collective agreement. Retraining is provided in educational institutions, in the workplace, or by distance learning. They have various forms of ownership: state, foreign, mixed, private and cooperative. Similar services are provided by education institutions of other forms of ownership, including foreign ownership. (See table 1) Most adult education programmes require fees to be paid.

Table 1: Sources of funding for educational institutions providing services in adult education and other types of education (%) 

![Pie chart showing sources of funding](chart.png)

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\(^4\) http://www.cia.gov

\(^5\) Turkmenistan VET and Labor Market, 2015
The involvement of the UN agencies (UNICEF, UNEP) and European experts (ECHO) in the process of lifelong learning in Turkmenistan has considerably increased in recent years. Since 2015 a number of advanced courses have been organized with UNICEF support by the Ministry of Education of Turkmenistan, the National Institute of Education, and Methodological Centres of HEIs. A group of international experts from Canada, Russia and Germany and other countries shared best practices with paediatricians, psychologists, neuropathologists, speech therapists, pre-school teachers, and education specialists.6

With the assistance of the UN experts, the National Institute of Education, Methodological Centres of HEIs and colleges (2016) have adapted the courses of theoretical and practical trainings to the education standards of the country on the DRR management, physical and occupational therapy, and ECD services.

In the context of company-internal training, special attention is given to courses provided by HEIs. This applies mainly to technical and engineering specialties. Many companies involved in research collaborate actively with universities and institutes, where students in their last year of studies constitute a reserve of potential employees. These students are often given the opportunity to do practical work in a company and defend their diploma projects. This helps to fill the gap between study and practice that is typical of the modern higher education system.

A number of training activities and curricula improving are being implemented in agricultural, tourism, construction and energy sectors in the framework of UN and EU programmes and on the agreements concluded by the Government of Turkmenistan with foreign companies throughout the territory of the country.

As examples, a Training Centre of the USA «General Electric» Company in Ashgabat, equipped with advanced technologies and connected via telecommunication system with the largest construction sites, power stations and plants of the country, provide trainings for specialists of energy sector and the teaching staff and students of engineering HEIs. Trainings are conducted by the resource persons and the leading experts of the company.

The Hyundai Engineering Company (Korea) has opened in Kiyanal, Balkan a Centre for training of specialists for the oil and gas industry of Turkmenistan. The capacity of the Centre is 400 people per a year.

STORM Training Centre in cooperation with ES “Hazar Doganlary” (TM) and "Caspian Driller" (Singapore) has organized distance learning and e-learning courses for training of specialists on the “STORM” platform (Russia).

### 1.3 Organization of Private Education

In accordance with the current legislation, a variety of educational establishments can function in Turkmenistan. They are classified based on the nature of their property ownership – State, private or mixed. State educational establishments are still quite prevalent, as the process of forming of alternative educational establishments is developing slowly. Thus, State budget is the main source for education financing in Turkmenistan.

All higher education institutions are state owned, subordinated to corresponding sectorial ministries, and the majority is financed from the state budget. Only a small number of them use mixed forms of finance, in particular the International University for Humanities and Development, and the Oguz Khan University of Engineering Technologies provide training on the basis of tuition fees from students.

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6 [www.turkmenistan.gov.tm](http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm)
In 2013-2014 academic year 22.2% of the total state expenditure on education (including capital expenditure) was allocated to pre-school education, 55% to general secondary education, 0.9% to secondary VET and 6.2% to higher education.\(^7\)

### 1.4 National Qualification Framework

In accordance with the Law on Education adopted on 15 August 2009, the education system includes the following levels:

- pre-school education,
- general secondary education,
- IVET,
- secondary VET,
- higher professional education,
- post-university professional education.

**Table 2: Turkmenistan structure of the education system**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education programmes</th>
<th>Currently available qualifications</th>
<th>Potential work roles/occupations</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher education – (Candidate, Doctorate)</td>
<td>Doctorantura</td>
<td>Entry to, or continuing professional development within, senior levels of management or higher level professional occupations</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship for graduates</td>
<td>Post-graduate degree Aspirantura</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education outside the typical Bologna model</td>
<td>Specialist, higher education diploma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education – Bologna 1st cycle (only two HEIs)</td>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary VET</td>
<td>Diploma in general or vocational subjects Vocational education diploma</td>
<td>Qualified worker/Supervisor</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial VET</td>
<td>Initial vocational education certificate</td>
<td>Semi-skilled worker</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General secondary education</td>
<td>School education certificate</td>
<td>Low skilled worker</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school education</td>
<td>No qualifications</td>
<td>Minimum level of basic skills, inc. literacy/numeracy, required for entry to lowest level of employment</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1.5 Statistics on Organization and Governance

Higher education is less accessible than other forms of education mainly because of the limited number of student places in universities funded from the state budget. The quotas for higher education are

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\(^7\) Turkmenistan VET and Labour Market, 2015
determined on the basis of applications from sectorial ministries and departments classified by specialties and regions. These applications are submitted to the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for analysing them and developing an integrated plan of admission.

**Table 3: Total number of students enrolled in Higher Education**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of students in HEIs</td>
<td>6,100</td>
<td>6,861</td>
<td>7,128</td>
<td>7,256</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of HEIs in the country has been increased in 2016-2017 to 24.\(^8\)

### 1.6 Distribution of Responsibilities

According to the Law on Education of Turkmenistan, the higher education institutions are governed by the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan. The Cabinet is responsible for developing and implementing state policy in the field of education. It ensures compliance with the constitution of Turkmenistan, the legal provisions governing education and international treaties. The Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan is in charge of the management of the education system and state budget in the field of education. In addition, it the state body for management of education is responsible for:

- development of a strategy for education and state educational standards;
- coordination of the activities of the educational institutions;
- maintenance of international relations, studying and disseminating best practices;
- development of regulatory guidance documents on the organisation of education, educational methods and scientific work of educational institutions of all types;
- participation in setting the state budget for education;
- development of models for quality assurance, licensing and accreditation;
- scientific and methodological support for the final certification of graduates on completion of their studies;
- determine requirements for admission to educational institutions;
- issue certificates of activities in education and vocational/professional training;
- development of recognition procedures for co-validation of degrees from foreign countries;
- development of certification procedures and professional development of teaching staff.


The Ministry of Education co-ordinates the activities of higher institutions; develops normative acts and instructions concerning the organization of educational training programmes for personnel in the higher and secondary specializations; elaborates the terms for enrolment in the higher education institutions and the standard statutes of educational establishments; approves salary schemes based on position titles.

Ministries and departments (having their own network of higher education institutions) establish enrolment plans for admission into higher education institutions and assign graduating students to the enterprises and institutions in their respective branches.

Other institutions playing a decisive role in educational matters:

- The **National Institute of Education** is in charge of research, curriculum development and teacher training for general secondary education and to a lesser extent of vocational education.

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\(^8\) [www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/](http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/)

6
- The Academy of Science coordinates the education sector reform and acts as a guarantor of quality in education. They perform content related assessment and analysis of textbooks in general primary and secondary, vocational and higher education and provide yearly input.

The direct management of an educational institution is the responsibility of its head (appointed and dismissed according to the provisions of the laws of Turkmenistan). The title of the head of an educational institution, the powers and responsibilities of the head and the establishment and responsibilities of the various boards of institutions are defined by the regulations and charters of educational institutions.9

2 Higher Education Funding

2.1 Public Education

The funding of state educational institutions is carried out according to the standards of funding determined for each type of educational institution based on the number of students. The standards for public funding of state educational institutions are set by the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan.

For educational institutions with lower student populations and for educational institutions in rural areas, the standard funding requirements are taken into account regardless of the number of students.

Non-governmental educational institutions take the standard funding specifications of state educational institutions as a model for their funding activities.

2.1.1 Financial Autonomy and Control

Educational institutions are entitled to conduct business and other income-generating activities in accordance with the legislation of Turkmenistan. The acquisition of additional funding by an educational institution does not result in the reduction of its funding from the state.

Educational institutions can provide, within the available extra-budgetary resources, social support to students in need. Educational institutions conduct their financial activities independently and keep their own accounts.

2.1.2 Public Higher Education Fees

Only two universities require payment for study: the University for Humanities and Development and the Oguzkhan University of Engineering and Technologies.

2.2 Private Education

According to the Law of Turkmenistan on Education (Chapter III, Article 13), the educational institutions, in accordance with the legislation of Turkmenistan on ownership, can be public, private and other forms of ownership. The legislation of Turkmenistan in the field of education shall govern all educational institutions on the territory of Turkmenistan regardless of their form of ownership and affiliation.

All higher education institutions are state owned, and the majority of them are financed from the State budget. Only a small number of them use mixed forms of finance, in particular the International Turkmen-Turkish University and the International University of Humanities and Development.

2.3 Financial Support for Learners’ Families

People in need are provided with state allowances regardless of their children study or not at the university.

2.4 Financial Support for Learners

Students in VET institutions, established by the laws of Turkmenistan, are provided with scholarships, accommodation in student residences and other measures of social support.

9 Law on Education of Turkmenistan, 2013
Students in HE educational institutions have the right to receive education in accordance with the state educational standards, to obtain additional educational services (including fee paid) as well as to use textbooks and teaching material in state educational institutions for free.

Student loans

According to the Law on Education of Turkmenistan Chapter VII Article 38 Education Loans:

- In Turkmenistan the state support in a form of loans shall be provided to the citizens enrolled in vocational educational programmes at both the respective educational institutions of Turkmenistan and foreign countries.
- Education loans shall be target loans and provided by banks and other credit institutions of Turkmenistan to the citizens admitted to vocational education institutions regardless of their form of ownership and form of education.
- Education loans can be used to pay for the training in institutions of vocational education in the amount of the tuition or part of tuition fees (basic education loan) and/or payment of accommodation, meals, purchase of educational and scientific literature and other household needs during the training period (the accompanying education loans).
- The amount and the procedure of granting state support to education loans shall be determined by the Central Bank of Turkmenistan.

3 The Structure of the Higher Education System

3.1 Types of Higher Education Institutions

The following types of higher education institutions are available in Turkmenistan: university, academy, institute and conservatory:

- Universities provide a wide range of specializations, including graduate programs.
- Academies include study or training graduate programs in special fields.
- Institutes – involve graduate programs in a specific profession.

All higher education institutions provide equivalent levels of training and can train specialists with a higher education qualification. The duration of training ranges from five to seven years, depending on the specialization.

State higher education institutions include: 6 universities, 16 institutes, one academy, and one conservatory.

The current list of universities in Turkmenistan includes:

1. Magtumguly Turkmen State University
2. Turkmen State Medical University
3. International Oil and Gas University
4. Niyazov Turkmen Agricultural University
5. International University for Humanitarian Sciences and Development
6. Oguz Khan University of Engineering Technologies
7. Turkmen Agricultural Institute in Dashoguz
8. Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
9. Azadi Turkmen National Institute of World Languages
10. Turkmen State Architectural and Construction Institute
11. Turkmen State Institute of Economy and Management
12. Turkmen State Institute of Transport and Communication
13. Turkmen State Finance Institute
14. Seydi State Educational Institute
15. National Institute of Sports and Tourism
16. Turkmen State Institute of Energy  
17. Turkmen State Institute of Culture  
18. Naval Institute in Turkmenbashi  
19. Military Institute of the Defence Ministry  
20. Niyazov Institute of Internal Affairs  
21. Institute of the National Safety of Turkmenistan  
22. Institute of Boundary Services of Turkmenistan  
23. State Art Academy  
24. Turkmen National Conservatoire

### 3.2 First Cycle Programmes

The International University for Humanities and Development and Oguzkhan International University of Engineering and Technologies are higher education institution offering 2-cycle studies according to the Bologna structure. It provides education in the English language on a paid basis.

The International University of Humanities and Development includes 6 faculties and 13 departments. All lectures and practical classes are conducted in English and, in view of this, a one-year course of English study is included in the programme. The training is conducted in 14 specialties, including philosophy, sociology, international public law and private law, international relations, journalism, international economics, management, finance, insurance, commerce, computer programming, and information and communication technologies.

The curriculum of the university has been developed according to the requirements of the Bologna Process and, following the one-year language course, students undertake four years of general education according to the baccalaureate system. The programme also includes two subsequent years for obtaining a master’s degree. Citizens of both Turkmenistan and other states can apply for admission to this university.

### 3.3 Short-Cycle Higher Education

There is no Short-Cycle Higher Education in Turkmenistan.

### 3.4 Second Cycle Programme

The Law on Education of Turkmenistan envisages the transition to 2 cycle education programme. The Ministry of Education of Turkmenistan is in the process of developing Regulations concerning the transition to the system of credits.

Currently only two higher education institutions in Turkmenistan offer second cycle studies according to the Bologna structure.

### 3.5 Programmes outside Bachelor and Master Structure

Higher education is carried out on the basis of full-time courses. The fields of study offered are in line with the classification of specialties of higher education of Turkmenistan or are determined by the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan.

University studies offer five-year programmes except for medicine and some programmes in arts which last for six years. Higher education in various fields is mainly provided by universities, academies, conservatoires and institutes.

The laws are aimed at improving HE while extending the period of study to five (six) years, with the teaching load 850 hours, providing a review of curricula and study plans, introducing new disciplines, increasing the annual number of student places and developing postgraduate and study programmes in relevant branches of science.10

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10 Law on Education of Turkmenistan, 2013
3.5.1 Branches of study

Each program has its own specialties, such as the State Academy of Arts that offers courses in painting, graphics, architecture, carpets, jewellery, ceramics and sculpture. The Turkmen State Institute of Economics includes programs in accounting, auditing, municipal management, labour, marketing, financial market and quality management and leadership.

Students can also pursue scientific programs through the Academy of Science of Turkmenistan, or other programs through the National Institute of World Languages and the Institute of History.

Some academic programs tie directly to key industries, such as the Institute of Oil and Gas and a variety of other scientific research councils and institutes.

The primary areas of the International University of Engineering and Technologies offer programs in the spheres of science, education, all sectors of the economy in areas as chemistry and biotechnology; metallurgy, machine building and metal processing; nanotechnologies and nano-materials; Natural Sciences; Computer Science and Engineering; automation and control; electronics, radio and communication systems, civil engineering, textile technology, and mathematics. Educational process is planned to be organized by Japanese programmes with involvement of lecturers from Japan.

Students of the University of Engineering Technologies study English and Japanese languages during first year of study. From the second year and other three years, Japanese professors give lectures on chosen specialties. In the fourth year of study, students are offered continue their study in Japan universities including University of Tsukuba. At the of academy training, they will receive appropriate certificates and diplomas.

The Turkmen Polytechnic Institute has a strong focus on skills and disciplines involved in the petrochemical industry, such as geology, chemistry, oil and gas exploration and mining.

New specialties have been introduced in Turkmen universities and institutes from 2015 academic year: Cybernetics in the Turkmen State Institute of Economy and Management, Shipbuilding and Radio-electronic systems and complexes - in the Turkmen State Institute of Transport and Communications, Electric and thermal energy production technology - in the State Energy Institute of Turkmenistan, "Chemical processing of glass and glass ceramics" - in the Turkmen State Institute of Architecture and Building; Development of mineral deposits - in the International University of Oil and Gas. Sanitary-and-Epidemiologic Service specialty will appear at the military medicine faculty of the State Medical University of Turkmenistan, and Opera art - at the Turkmen National Conservatory.

3.5.2 Admission requirements

Admission to university is regulated by a Presidential Decree which determines the number of students to be admitted to each faculty.

Students have to pass three entrance exams and the most successful are admitted on a competitive basis. Entrance exams test the knowledge of general subjects, which includes exams on the history of Turkmenistan, writing and interviewing conducted in Turkmen on the basis of Turkmenistan's secondary school curriculum.

In 2016 many higher educational institutions have increased their admission quota. The quotas for higher education are determined on the basis of applications from sectorial ministries and departments classified by specialties and regions. These applications are submitted to the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for analysing and developing an integrated plan of admission.

11 new specialties have been introduced into the curriculum of the institutions of higher education in Turkmenistan.11

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11 www.tdh.gov.tm/index.php.ru
3.5.3 Curriculum

The Ministry of Education sets the curricula of higher education institutions. New textbooks for vocational and higher education institutions are updated regularly. Particular measures are taken in order to improve the following:

- further development of university research activities;
- enhancing the equipment and facilities of educational institutions;
- introduction of advanced technologies in the educational process;
- widely use of scientific and technological advances;
- development of new methodologies for compiling textbooks and teaching aids.

A number of universities have recently introduced new specialties.

3.5.4 Teaching methods

In 2015, training materials of 334 titles were prepared for publication, 189 out of them, including textbooks and teaching aids for higher, secondary and vocational schools, were published.

It has become the common practice to hold workshops, training sessions, lectures and other forms of joint activities which involve in the process educational institutions of Turkmenistan and a number of countries of the world in the .

Vivid evidence for fruitful international contacts of Turkmen education professionals is their contribution to the implementation of various projects in the framework of international educational programmes, such as Tempus, Erasmus Mundus, Erasmus+, and others.

Exhibitions contribute advanced technologies and best practices in the national education system. The achievements in this sphere are presented at the International Conferences and Exhibitions on Education and Sports, held in Ashgabat.

Such conferences favour exchanging the education experience between the teachers of HEIs from different countries.

3.5.5 Progression of Students

Each month, during the semester, students get credits for completed courses. Those, who haven’t got a credit for a course, have a chance to improve their situation within the next month with the help of a teacher working with them additionally. Such extra work supports also weak students at examinations. In a case of failing an exam, a student is given 2 chances to re-sit the exam. If re-sitting comes about before the end of the examination time, the student is given out a scholarship. The students, failed at examinations, have other chances to prepare for retake and pass exams again in the beginning of the next semester. Otherwise, if they fail to pass for the second time, they are expelled from the university.

All subjects are compulsory at HEIs.

3.5.6 Employability

Turkmenistan has a favourable demographic profile. The share of the labour force in the total population is high and increasing. The labour force will continue to grow in the long term according to UN demographic projections for the period up to 2050.12

In recent years, the economic progress has led to changes in the sectorial structure of employment. The accelerated growth of industrial production, particularly the processing industries, created opportunities for new enterprises, increasing the number of people employed in industrial sectors. In these circumstances, Turkmenistan experiences a growing need of specialized professionals.

Senior students of HEIs can work as teachers at schools and receive a part-time teacher’s salary.

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12 Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Turkmenistan for the Period 2014-2017
According to the school administration students can receive permission from the university to work as part-time teachers, and at the same time, have pedagogical practice there.

After graduating from the HE institution (5 years study), specialists are assigned to work places where they are obliged to work for 2 years. After 2 years period they are given the University Diploma. Graduates admitted to the university according to regional quotas, are obliged to return for work in the regions they come from.

Generally a representative of a public institution (employer) can be a chairman or a Member of the State Examination Commission as an External Examiner.

If any public institution or organization is interested in a certain graduate, it sends a preliminary request to the university. Thus, each graduating student is provided with a work place which he/she can change according to their wish only after 2 years work. During these 2 years the Ministry of Education and universities control their specialists’ work activity.

3.5.7 Student Assessment

The most common forms of student assessments are tests and examinations. Students must pass the examinations to progress from one year/stage of studies to the next.

Students must pass compulsory state exams on Social Science, Computer Science and they can choose to take a Proficiency Test or defend a Diploma Paper.

3.5.8 Certification

On completion of the course of study graduates are given HE degrees/diplomas which attest the corresponding qualification and include the marks insert.

3.6 Third Cycle (PhD) Programmes

3.6.1 Organization of Doctoral Studies

PhD education (Aspirantura) is the basic part of postgraduate training is considered the basic means of preparing new teaching and research personnel for the HE establishments and research institutions of Turkmenistan.

3.6.2 Admission requirements

Aspirantura is an individual program which lasts 3 years and conducted under the supervision of senior academic or research personnel. It leads to the qualifying examinations for the candidate degree and to the preparation and defence of a dissertation.

Applicants must have complete higher education in the field they wish to specialize, demonstrate an aptitude for research and have research, teaching, or industrial experience for at least 3 years in the particular field they intend to work in as aspirants. They are eligible for admission on a competitive basis to postgraduate studies.

For medical studies, applicants complete clinical training and must have three years of work experience in medicine, or otherwise to have five years of work experience in medicine. In this case they are eligible for admission to postgraduate studies on a competitive basis.

To be enrolled to Aspirantura, applicants must have commendations of the HE establishment, and pass the required entrance examinations.

3.6.3 Status of Doctoral Students/Candidates

Regular full-time aspirantura training lasts for 3 years. Aspirants receive a monthly stipend which is equivalent to the average wage. The period of full-time aspirantura is considered as a part of the work experience and is taken into account when granting a pension.

His/her medical care policy and union membership continue.
The research supervisor receives a payment for guidance and is responsible for the actual quality of the aspirant’s study.

### 3.6.4 Supervision Arrangements

The aspirant students are supervised by the head of the appropriate department. Each aspirant is assigned to a professor-advisor, who is approved by the Scientific Council, at the beginning of study.

Full-time Aspirantura programs consist of periodic consultations between professor and student. Together, they develop a program - an individual plan of research and reading based on the student's special interests and background.

The aspirant's progress is checked periodically by means of a report he/she submits to the advisor and to the Scientific Council at the beginning of each academic year.

During the studies, the aspirant student is expected to pass 3 candidate minimum examinations: 1) philosophy; 2) one foreign language; 3) computer science.

When the dissertation is completed and meets the degree requirements, the aspirant petitions to the Specialized Academic Council to be allowed to defend it.

### 3.6.5 Employability

The working place of an aspirant is preserved for him/her, if an aspirant takes a course of study at another institution than he/she had worked before enrolling the Aspirantura. The aspirant has the right to return to his/her former place of work.

Having received the candidate degree, the specialist has an advantage to make a career and receive addition to his/her salary if he/she continues the scientific activity.

### 3.6.6 Assessment

If teachers and instructors of HEIs pass a regular qualifying examination, the availability of an academic degree is taken into consideration by the certification commission.

### 3.6.7 Certification

In case of successful defending of the dissertation, the candidate degree is granted to the aspirant by the Specialized Academic Council and then officially confirmed by the VAK.

The candidate or doctor degree can be received without applying to Aspirantura or Doctorantura. A seeker, fulfilling a research, can ask the Scientific Council to approve the theme of the dissertation he/she is working on, and under the guidance of a scientific supervisor, after completing the thesis and passing candidate minimum exams, he/she petitions to the Specialized Academic Council to be allowed to defend it.

### 4 Teachers and Education Staff in Higher Education

#### 4.1 Initial Education for Academics in Higher Education

According to the regulation a HE teacher is required to have a Master's Degree or a Diploma of a university or pedagogical institute. Specialists in other fields than Pedagogy are admitted on a condition to undergo further training at the pedagogical faculty. The required length of teaching experience is at least three years.

#### 4.2 Conditions of Service for Academic Staff Working in Higher Education

The academic staff of a HEI is composed of junior lecturers, lecturers, senior lecturers, heads of department, assistant deans of faculty, and deans of faculty, vice-rectors and rectors.
4.2.1 Planning policy

As the required annual teaching load is 850 hours, the number of teaching staff depends on the number of students’ groups. If the number of students is intended to be increased, then new vacancies for teachers are opened.

4.2.2 Entry to the Profession

A state official or a public servant has the right to be engaged in pedagogical activities according to the laws of Turkmenistan.

According to the standard provisions of the educational institutions, the persons with relevant pedagogical or vocational education/training have the right to engage in pedagogical activities and be appointed to pedagogical posts.

For the academic staff of the HEI the employment contract is concluded for a definite period (normally one year), based on the results of a competition conducted in the manner prescribed by the authorized body of the State Management of Education.

4.2.3 Professional Status

HEIs’ teachers are employees and are accepted for employment on basis of the Law of Turkmenistan and the HEI’s Regulations.

The rights and obligations of the HEI’s academic and technical stuff are envisaged by the regulations of the Labour Legislation of Turkmenistan, the Law of Turkmenistan on Ethics and Code of Conduct of the employees, and the Charter of the HEI.

4.2.4 Salaries

Teaching staff are paid according to their qualifications or degrees and the rate is established by the State, regardless of the field of study.

The required annual teaching load is 850 hours which covers practical classes and extra-curricular hours, methodological work and supervision of students’ teaching practice, diploma and course papers, official duties (such as rector, vice rector, dean).

Professional work experience, academic degrees and scientific ranks are taken into consideration.

36 hours are considered to be a working week (six hours per a day). If a teacher works extra hours (1.25 of a wage rate or part-time), he/she is given additional payment.

4.2.5 Working time and holidays

One teacher’s total load is 36 hours per a week. Teachers can work extra hours – 0.5 (36+18h.) of a wage rate or an hourly rate.

Teachers’ annual leave is 45 days. It can be given once in summer, when students are on extended vacation.

If teachers have summer practical training, a part of an annual leave can be transferred to winter vacation.

Absence through illness is paid if a teacher gives a sick-leave certificate.

A teacher may ask to be given a several day leave at the expense of an annual leave, or an unpaid additional leave.

4.2.6 Promotion, Advancement

Faculty members are ranked, in descending order, as professor, docent (associate professor), senior teacher (assistant professor), instructor and trainee teacher.
Professor and docent have usually Doctor or Candidate scientific degree, a number of published works and carry out and supervise research activities.

Senior teacher may also have a scientific degree, or be in a stage of preparation to defend a dissertation.

Teacher/instructor without a scientific degree may also conduct a research work.

Trainee teacher is a graduate who is left to work for two years at a department or invited from another sphere to develop professional teaching skills. In recent years trainee teachers must undergo postgraduate courses.

All teachers can take part in conducting research works: in HEI departments or 'Academy of Sciences' collaborative works. Teachers with scientific degrees can work out individual research activities.

There are also opportunities for teachers working full time to have extra 0.25 of a wage rate or an hourly rate. Some women teachers after maternity leave or pensioners can work 0.5 of a wage rate.

HEIs sign labour agreements with teachers which are extended automatically if it suits both parties. Labour agreements with pensioners are re-signed yearly.

4.2.7 Retirement and Pensions

In Turkmenistan the pensionable age is 57 for women, and 62 for men. If a woman has 3 or more children, she can retire earlier.

Teachers of the retirement age can continue their work as long as labour contracts with them are extended.

4.3 Continuing Professional Development for Academic Staff Working in Higher Education

4.3.1 Organizational Aspects

The teaching staff of the HEIs is required to continue professional development connected with scientific activities and improving the teaching skills. Teachers can study in aspirantura (full-time and correspondence study) and doctorantura, and conduct research works as degree candidates.

Successful defence of dissertations provide opportunities for the promotion of teachers.

Mentoring, advanced training and periodic assessments are used to improve skills of the teaching staff. Graduates of non-pedagogic HEIs (technical, medical and others) are provided with knowledge of pedagogy, psychology, and teaching techniques.

4.3.2 Incentives for Participation in Continuing Professional Development Activities

According to the Law on Education of Turkmenistan (Chapter IX, Article 46, 7 Chapter IX, article 46, 7) for staff of educational institutions of all types and other enterprises, institutions and organizations, carrying out the teaching activity, there shall be established salary increments for academic degrees and titles according to the procedure and amount determined by the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan.

Teachers’ activity directed to constant career developing is encouraged by HEI authorities and the Ministry of Education of Turkmenistan with moral and material support.

Teachers studying in full-time Aspirantura or Doctorantura are provided with scholarship equal to the average wage of the teacher or docent.

Professional and academic career developing is encouraged with receiving academic degrees (candidate or doctorate) and titles (docent, professor, and academician) and increasing the wages.

Receiving diplomas after completing advanced and training courses also give extra points in the performance of periodical assessment of the teaching stuff.

Teachers of higher scientific and pedagogical qualification may be invited to take part as members of examination commissions, methodological councils, and as experts and jurors of scientific contests.
HEIs organize a one-year “Best Teacher” award to HE teachers on a competitive basis, the main criterion of which among others is the professional and academic career development. The best teacher of Turkmenistan is awarded the Honour Title which is equal to the State awards. The winner of the “Best Teacher” award shall be exempted from payment of income taxes which influence then the increasing of pensions.

5 Management and Other Education Staff in Higher Education

5.1 Requirements for Appointment

From the Law on Education of Turkmenistan (Chapter III, Article 16):

1. Administration of educational institutions shall be carried out on the basis of the legislation of Turkmenistan in accordance with their model regulations and statutes based on the principles of undivided authority and collegiality.

2. A head of an educational institution, appointed to the position and released of duties in accordance with the procedure established by the legislation of Turkmenistan, shall directly carry out administration of the institution.

3. Title of the position of the head of the educational institution, his/her powers and responsibilities, the procedures of formation and activity of collegial bodies of the educational institution, separation of powers between them shall be determined by the model regulations and statutes of educational institutions.

4. The head of the public educational institution shall be assessed according to the procedure established by the legislation of Turkmenistan.

5. Collegial administration bodies shall be established at the educational institution.

The forms of collegial administration can be the following: an academic board, a school board, teacher’s council, education board/scientific board and other forms, the policy rules for which, including their election procedure, shall be stipulated by the model regulations and statutes of educational institutions.

6 Quality Assurance in Higher Education

6.1 Responsible bodies

According to the Law on Education of Turkmenistan (Chapter III, Article 15, 4), the state monitoring of the quality of education shall be carried out by the government body for administration of education through the state summative assessment of graduates, assessment of the educational institution, and scheduled and unscheduled inspections in order to check the content and quality of students’ education and their conformity with educational programs taught in educational institutions.

The assessment and inspection procedures for an educational institution shall be established by the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan.

6.2 Approaches and Methods for Quality Assurance

According to the Law on Education of Turkmenistan, the fundamental principles of objective assessment of graduates’ knowledge and qualifications, regardless of the forms of education, make up the state education standards.

The license of the state accreditation, given to education institutions (with the exception of preschool institutions), approves their status and compliance with the requirements to the state education qualities and standards.
The internal quality control is implemented by the methodological commission established in each of HEIs. The commissions observe the compliance with the requirements of the academic curricula, teachers’ working programs and qualities of teaching. The quality of scientific works is observed by HEIs scientific councils.

Members of the methodological commissions can visit teachers’ lessons and assess their quality. They can give their recommendations to teachers which may stimulate their further work.

7 Educational Support and Guidance

7.1 Support Measures for Learners in Higher Education

According to the Chapter VIII, Article 40 of the Law on Education of Turkmenistan:

- Students of all educational institutions are entitled to education in accordance with the governmental specifications, to get additional (paid or otherwise) educational services and also to free use of their institution’s textbooks and teaching aids.
- Graduates of educational institutions, having received the Turkmen State certification, regardless of their form of ownership, have equal rights to compete for admission to an applied HEI.
- Students of educational institutions in accordance with the order established by the Legislation of Turkmenistan are provided with scholarships and rooms in student residences and boarding schools. They are also delivered other forms of support.

7.1.1 Definition of the Target Group(s)

According to the Regulations on Higher Education, the following groups of applicants, who successfully passed entrance examinations, are enrolled for HEIs out of competition:

- Orphans without parental care (or persons acting as their parents)
- Invalids of I-II groups, if there are no obstacles to study at a HEI
- Children of military and law enforcement persons, died in the line of duty.

7.1.2 Specific Support Measures

The maintenance, upbringing and education of orphans without parental care (or persons acting as their parents) in any education institution (including vocational institutions) are fully maintained by the State until the age of 24.

7.2 Guidance and Counselling in Higher Education

7.2.1 Academic Guidance

Each HEI has special department – Academic Department, which observes all matters relating to the education and students’ training: methodological activity of teaching stuff, monthly certification of students, examinations, teaching practice and practical training for students, final examinations, and diploma papers’ defence. The department controls the learning activity to be implemented in accordance with the Law on Education and Normative Acts.

Methodologists from academic departments can provide the teaching stuff and students with methodological assistance.

7.2.2 Psychological Counselling

Each students group (approximately 25 students) is overseen by a supervisor - a university teacher of the same specialty who supervises all the curricula and extracurricular activities of students. They support direct contacts with students’ parents (or guardians) of students as well as the dean does. Supervisors must know all social and living matters of students’ life and maintain regular contacts with them. At the end of students’ study the supervisor give the testimonials to their students which are the basis of the university testimonials used for placement in employment. Each room in the students’ hostel is attached
to a mentor who controls students’ everyday life. The supervisor must know that students have good life conditions necessary to their normal studying.

If a HEI has a department of psychology, the teachers of the department give every possible assistance and support to students and teachers.

7.2.3 Career Guidance

Besides the HEI academic department, the scientific department also plays an active role in students’ growth. Students are involved in scientific circles according to their interests and during their teaching practice they contact with representatives of their future profession. These activities promote students’ participation in various scientific conferences and contests. Talented students have opportunities to attract attention and support of future employers, who may send their requests for definite students to employ him or her.

8 Mobility and Internationalization in Higher Education

8.1 Student Mobility

The mobility of HE students of Turkmenistan is mainly implemented within the framework of the European Community Action Programmes in the field of education such as Erasmus Mundus, Erasmus+, DAAD, IREX, cultural and educational programs of various Embassies accredited in Turkmenistan.

Having concluded the agreements within the projects, HEIs are responsible for pre-selection of students, providing them with required documentation, and technical support. Responsible persons at HEIs are the coordinators of projects. As the HE curricula in Turkmenistan are still much different from the European (baccalaureate and the master’s degree have been introduced only in two HEIs), it would be better to send the Turkmen students to foreign HEIs for full year than 3-6 months.

Validation and recognition of foreign degrees or other qualifications, exams or courses obtained or completed abroad are done partially if that fall within the HEI’s programme.

Students consider this mobility as an advantage, since it gives them the opportunity to master several subjects (which are not taught at their universities), to acquire new experience, to introduce closer to the European system of HE. As a rule, these graduates can find good job, many of them can become HEI educators and further the key figures in the transition period of education.

The language policy is an essential component of the current education reforms in Turkmenistan. Knowledge of foreign languages provides the opportunities for all young people who want to study. Many students, who are linguistically flexible, can master new disciplines with the help of distance educational platforms such as: the E-learning platform “E-Sapak” of Turkmenistan Academy of Sciences launched in the Project TuRENA (with three academic areas: Informatics, Economics, and Industrial Practice), the Moodle platform with materials and tests modified for students of technical universities within TEMPUS and ERASMUS+ Projects, a number of learning platforms at the USA Embassy website with large English language learning and teaching resources, TOEFL Pratice Tests-website, a number of the UN learning platforms, such as UN CC:Learn, the UNODC Global e-Learning Programme, and others.

Many students take part in International on-line contests and become winners. These promote increasing the rating of the students.

8.2 Academic staff mobility

Turkmen HEIs have been participating in the Tempus Programme since 1997. The projects have resulted in the modernization, initiation and implementation of structural reforms, capacity building activities and curriculum development. Most of the academic staff has benefited from these projects in building their capacities, through training, enhancing the research and teaching potential through mobility, trips abroad and exchanging experience with other EU and regional HEIs.
According to the Regulation of HE (Chapter VII, point 69), the teaching stuff of HEIs can undergo professional training and other types of advanced training abroad, write and defend dissertations.

The mobility of the teaching stuff, doctoral, candidates, administrative staff is implemented through European Community action programmes such as Tempus, Erasmus Mundus, and Erasmus+, cooperative programmes with foreign countries, and on the basis of bilateral agreements and contracts.

The timeline of mobility may vary and depends on the given contract or agreement.

Persons responsible for organizing and coordinating activities are HEIs’ rector, vice-rector, and project coordinators.

8.3 Other Dimensions of Internationalization in Higher Education

8.3.1 European, Global and Intercultural Dimension in Curriculum Development

According to the Regulations on Higher Education of Turkmenistan (Chapter 1, Article 3), ‘Principles of Government Policy in the Field of Education’, (point 9) “Integration of an Education System into Science and Industry and Its Cooperation with Education Systems of Other Countries”, the transition strategies provide an opportunity for two phased educational model (Bachelor/Master) and ECTS which contributes to the process of internationalization of the HE of Turkmenistan.

Learning foreign languages are included in general and HEIs’ curricula as compulsory subjects and are specified by the Law on Education of Turkmenistan (Chapter 1, Article 5).

8.4 Bilateral Agreements and Worldwide Cooperation

8.4.1 Bilateral agreements

Every year, dozens of the Turkmen young people go to study abroad in prestigious universities and secondary vocational schools in the framework of intergovernmental and interdepartmental agreements to acquire degrees needed by various sectors of the national economy.

In the 2016-2017 academic year many young people have become students of prestigious universities of Russia, Belarus, China, Malaysia, Romania, Turkey, Croatia, Korea and other foreign universities.

In April 2016 the Magtymguly Turkmen State University organized selection and enrolment of new students to study at the universities of the People’s Republic of China. 30 Turkmen students were admitted in June to the HEIs of China.

In May, 2016 the admission of Turkmen students was also organized at the State Medical University for the Beijing University to study the Chinese traditional medicine.

China is ready to provide assistance in teaching the Chinese language to the Turkmen specialists, by sending its professors to the D. Azadi Turkmen National Institute of World Languages. At the same time, due to intensive development of interstate cooperation, China turned to Turkmenistan with a request to assist in organizing the Turkmen language courses in Beijing.

On the basis of the agreements, concluded between the Turkmen high officials and the representatives of the Lenovo Group Company, China will supply modern computer technologies for the higher and secondary education institutions.

In June of 2016 the Embassy of Japan in Turkmenistan organized a testing procedure for applicants of HEIs in the framework of the annual MEXT program - Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan. Since 2005, fifty representatives of the Turkmen youth have become the graduates of the program.

The International Oil and Gas University conducted testing of applicants for studying at the HEIs Japan. Most recently, the Magtymguly Turkmen State University has completed the enrolment of new students for HEIs of Romania. The admission campaign for foreign universities has been organized in accordance with the demands of ministries and departments of Turkmenistan.
Two Turkmen universities: International Oil and Gas University and International University for Humanities and Development have also admitted exchanged students from abroad.

According to the Agreement signed in October 2015 on the academic exchange and cooperation between the International University for Humanities and Development of Turkmenistan and the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, the Tokyo University has introduced the Turkmen language as a new linguistic discipline The International University for Humanities and Development, in turn, plans to invite the representatives of the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies to teach the Japanese language. In the framework of bilateral cooperation, two universities plan to open the Centre for Japanese Language and Culture at the International University for Humanities and Development.13

The International Oil and Gas University has lately enrolled students for the 2016-2017 academic year to study at the HEIs of the Turkish Republic and Japan for the following specialties: mechanical engineer, chemical engineer, an electrical engineer for electronic equipment. These specialities are much in demands with the needs of natural gas and gasoline production industry of Turkmenistan.

Approximately 200 Turkmen students study at Malaysian HEIs. The Malaysian University PETRONAS and the Turkmen International Oil and Gas University actively interact in training of highly qualified specialists for the priority sectors of the Turkmen economy.

Currently, about 9,000 Turkmen students study at the Belarusian HEIs. Cooperation agreements for 2017-2020 have been signed between the Turkmen Agricultural University and the Belarusian State Agrarian Technical University, between the Turkmen State Institute of Transport and Communication and the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Electronics, between the Turkmen State Institute of Transport and Communication and the Belarusian State Academy of Communication. The Turkmen State Institute of Architecture and Construction has prepared the Action Plan on cooperation for 2016-2020 with the Belarusian National Technical University.14

26 students from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan have been enrolled this academic year (2016-2017) to four Turkmen HEIs: Turkmen State Pedagogical Institute, Turkmen Agricultural Institute, State Energy Institute of Turkmenistan and International University of Oil and Gas.

Turkmenistan continues to assist Afghanistan in the training of professionals in various specialities including such projects as the construction of the TAPI gas pipeline and the Asian international railway transport corridor.

8.4.2 Cooperation and Participation in Worldwide Programmes and Organisations

EU has successfully supported the preparation of a mid to long term strategy for the modernization of the education and training systems. The quality of education has been strengthened by contributing to the upgrading of knowledge and skills of staff of education and training establishments. EU supported the Government of Turkmenistan in developing a quality assurance approach addressing the main issues of quality of education.

The EU national assistance programme for 2011–13 covered the following projects in the area of education and training.15

- The project Further Improvement of Quality and Relevance of Professional Education represented an important step towards the modernisation of VET. The four-year project, which started in August 2011, aimed to strengthen the capacity of policy makers to plan and review training standards; introduce new subjects and methodologies; and upgrade teachers’ and trainers’ skills.

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13 www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/
14 www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/
15 Turkmenistan VET and Labour Market, 2015
• The Ministry of Education was the main stakeholder of the project and a steering committee was established, including all relevant stakeholders and other donors active in the field of education and training.

• The implementation of the project Support for modernization of the education system started in February 2010 with the aim of contributing to the reform of secondary general education and reviewing the overall education sector strategy. The project also included specific actions related to the implementation of revised curricula and teacher training in pilot schools.

• A number of Tempus projects were financed during the period 1997–2010, to a total of approximately EUR 10 million. Tempus has been an effective tool for the promotion of international cooperation between Turkmen universities and those in the EU and neighbouring countries. The programme has been instrumental in motivating staff and introducing new ways of teaching and learning.

• The Erasmus Mundus Partnership focuses on the individual mobility of students, professors and researchers.

There have also been a number of other projects.

• The Central Asian Research and Education Network (CAREN) aimed to provide a high-speed internet service for universities and research centres. CAREN supported researchers in Central Asian countries not only to collaborate with each other but also to engage in joint projects (telemedicine, distance education, etc.) with peers in Europe and in other parts of the world.

• The Norwegian government carried out a study on VET in Turkmenistan with a view to identifying opportunities for cooperation in reforming Turkmen VET through pilot sectors.

• The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) implemented two projects, the first on inclusive basic education and the second on child-friendly learning environments. UNICEF has organised study visits for Turkmen stakeholders focused on education systems and management, and will implement a series of training programmes on education financing and management.

• UNESCO provided support for the analysis of student learning outcomes in Grades 4 and 5 and analysis of curricula and textbooks.

• The UNDP provided support for the training of IT teachers in general education. Under the UNDP, 20 pilot schools have been provided with computer equipment and access to the internet.

• The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided capacity and infrastructure assistance to support sustainable economic development and growth in Turkmenistan through programmes targeting agro-business and VET (Accounting/Certified International Professional Accountant (CIPA) project and Junior Achievement project).

• The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) country strategy approved in 2010 emphasises that further improvements in the economic, political and social sphere in Turkmenistan are essential, and encourages implementation of projects in agro-business, energy, microenterprises and SMEs, and infrastructure (EBRD, 2010).

Other projects have been carried out with Turkish support in the area of agricultural skills. Exchange programmes for students and teachers of higher education have been established with various countries.

• In 2013, the EU adopted the Horizon 2020 programme, which aims to strengthen the links between research, technological innovation and international cooperation. In order to involve Central Asia in Horizon 2020, the European Commission supported a large network project, IncoNet Central Asia, which helps scientists and innovators in the region to establish cooperation with their colleagues in the EU and associated countries. The project activities include information days, training courses, seminars, and participation in competitions of universities, institutes, science centres, industrial parks, and SMEs. Potential participants are provided with information about contests, new events of the programme, participation rules, and links to potential partners in the EU, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and are assisted with tasks such as creating competitive project proposals, searching for partners and preparing project budgets.
• The National Institute of Education of Turkmenistan, in partnership with German development organization GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), is involved in the realization of a three-stage educational programme, Reform of education systems in Central Asia. In its final stage, covering the years 2014–16, the project named Creation of educational innovation technologies distribution network commenced. Under the programme, training workshops are conducted in all regions of the country for specialists of local educational institutions, coordinators, methodologists and key teachers who have already undergone training in the application of innovation technologies in the learning process.

• A 2014 United Nations meeting on ‘Cultural heritage as a factor of peace and stability: the contribution of Turkmenistan’ took place at the Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was organized in the form of a round-table discussion and became an initiative of the high school of diplomacy and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA).16

9 On-going Reforms and Policy Developments

9.1 National Reforms in Higher Education

9.1.1 2015

Ministry of Education of Turkmenistan developed and adopted the Regulation on the Credits Transfer System (ECTS) in the sphere of vocational HEIs. It was approved by the Decree of the Minister of Education of Turkmenistan №234, July 1, 2015

9.1.2 2014

The regulation on vocational higher education institutions (adopted by the Decree of President of Turkmenistan №13552, March 20, 2014) specifies two phases (Bachelor and Master’s) and one phase (Specialist) training structures. The Decree regulates all areas of HEIs.

9.1.3 2013

The Law on Education of Turkmenistan was adopted which specifies two phase (Bachelor and Master’s) and one phase (Specialist) structures in the system of HE vocational training.

10 Legislation

The Law on Education adopted on February 15, 2007
The Law on Education adopted on May 4, 2013
Decree of President of Turkmenistan № 13552, March 20, 2014
Decree of the Minister of education of Turkmenistan №234 July 1, 2015

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