

5. An Educational Overview

The current education system in Taiwan is comprised of the following components: basic education, intermediate education, advanced education and returning education. Basic education includes kindergartens, national primary and national middle schools. Intermediate education includes vocational schools and senior high schools. Advanced education includes junior colleges, universities and graduate schools. Returning education refers to schools for continuing education and supplementary schools. In addition to the above, complete special education is provided by all level of schools for students with physical and mental disabilities.

1. The Educational Process

The present education structure supports 22 years of formal study. Completion times are flexible, depending upon the needs of the students. Normally, the entire process requires 2 years of preschool education, 6 years of primary school, 3 years of junior high, 3 years of senior high school, 4-7 years of college or university, 1-4 years of a graduate school program, and 2-7 years of a doctoral degree program.



2. Compulsory Education for Primary and Junior High School Students

In 1968 (SY68), a compulsory education program for primary and junior high school students, of Taiwan, Kinmen, and Matsu was implemented. A trial ten-year compulsory education program was launched in 1994 (SY94) and implemented nationwide in 1996 (SY96). This program is designed to integrate junior high school and senior vocational school curricula. Junior high school students, who are interested in beginning a program in vocational training, could now do so during the last year of their junior high school for two years. This specifically designed program addresses their needs and allows them to receive the relevant occupational training that they would need, since they are not going on for further education.

3. Senior High and Senior Vocational Education

There are two types of institutions for students above the junior high school level. They are senior high and senior vocational schools, both being taken three years to complete. Senior vocational schools offer courses in areas such as agriculture, industry, business, maritime studies, marine products, medicine, nursing, home economics, drama and art.

4. Junior College Education

Junior colleges fall into two categories, five-year junior college and two-year junior college, each having a different set of admission requirements. Five-year junior colleges admit junior high school graduates, and offer courses of five-

year completion time. Two-year junior colleges admit senior vocation high school graduates and offer courses of two-year completion time.

5. Teacher Education and Training Programs

In Taiwan, the teacher training programs are available at the higher education level and the duration of studies is four years. Those programs fall into the following two categories: (1) programs for training teachers of the secondary schools and institutions; and (2) programs for training teachers of elementary schools and kindergartens. The former are primarily offered by normal universities while the latter are chiefly offered by teachers colleges. In addition, universities with the department or college of education or offering teacher education programs are eligible for teacher training education.

6. University Education

University undergraduate programs require four years of study; however, students who are unable to fulfill their requirements within the designated time, may be granted extensions, up to two years. Specialized undergraduate programs such as dentistry or medicine require six to seven years, including an internship period of one year.

7. Graduate Education

Graduate programs leading to a master or doctoral degree requires one to four years and two to seven years respectively. But students who enter the graduate school as part of on-job training can be granted an extension, if they fail to finish the required course or to complete their thesis/dissertation in time. The specifics will be given in the school regulations of each university.



8. Special Education

Only designated schools are allowed to admit students who are mentally and physically challenged. Special education in preschool and primary school requires at least six years, in junior high school, three years, and in senior high and senior vocational school, three years. Otherwise special classes are offered to regular education institutions, including primary, junior, and senior high schools. At the university and college level, resource classes are provided for blind and deaf students.

9. Supplementary and Continuing Education

Supplementary and continuing education provides citizens with an alternative way to achieve their educational goals. Based on the curriculum provided, it is classified into three main categories, including basic education, advanced study and short-term supplementary education. The study periods vary according to their curriculum design.

Note: A school year (SY) refers to a one-year period from August 1 of the current year to July 31 of the next year. For instance, SY2004 covered a period from August 1, 2004 to July 31, 2005.



The Current School System



