Principles and general objectives of education

Education in the State of Kuwait is a right for all citizens and its overall goal is to prepare individuals to become active, thoughtful members of society in both private and public life. The State’s development strategy stresses the role of educational institutions in developing these qualities, and in training individuals to form part of a skilled body of human resources. Education is viewed as the main tool for building high performance in society at the institutional, cultural, economic and social levels. Therefore, the role of education is: to strike a balance between safeguarding the State’s cultural identity and preparing citizens to meet changes within the country and at regional and international levels; to provide basic skills; to prepare citizens to meet technological advancements; and to prepare students for practical life.

The long-term goals of formal education are: expanding and developing the school system for preparing youth to be active members of society; following scientific progress in the field of education; creating stronger links between school and the society; preparing curricula that safeguard Kuwaiti society, while advancing with scientific and technical progress.

Current educational priorities and concerns

Faced with rapid technological and scientific advancements, the Ministry of Education strives continually to develop the concept and role of education. The following objectives have been outlined:

- developing of curricula and teaching methods;
- improving education for girls and women;
- promoting literacy programmes and special programmes for gifted students and for students with special needs;
- assessment of student learning;
- teaching of sciences and information technology;
- developing of school libraries.

The Ministry of Education formulated its orientations for the period 1995-2000 encompassing changes at all levels of education.

At the elementary and secondary levels, objectives include: broadening formal education by introducing information technologies and practical skills; fostering individual development in students while stressing Islamic/Arab values, humanitarian
values and a sense of civic duty; directing formal education towards continued studies at institutions of higher education and applied studies, thus creating links with current needs in the labour market; maintaining an optimum student/teacher ratio; ensuring a balanced geographical distribution of schools among the different residential areas; strengthening relations with Arab, foreign and international educational institutions; implementing adequate financing of formal education, thus raising standards of performance and diversifying sources of financing through popular support of education development programmes.

The objectives for postsecondary education are: ensuring specialized human resource training and development so that young people may be respectful of their society’s values and traditions and capable of assuming leadership in society; following and contributing to scientific progress through research in economic, social and cultural development; playing a leading role in serving society and helping achieve development while safeguarding the society’s values and ethics; strengthening the Arab/Islamic cultural heritage; contributing to Arab civilization by developing scientific research in the sciences and the arts; making world culture accessible in the areas of the sciences and the arts.

The primary concern facing the education system in Kuwait is the shortage of teachers. Part of this shortage is due to early retirement, particularly among female teachers who retire between the ages of 30-40. Another problem is that Kuwaiti youth, particularly males, have been reluctant to join the teaching profession. Teacher training programmes in Kuwait are making continuous efforts to improve teacher preparation and training, to motivate more individuals to join the profession, and to elevate the social status of teachers in the country.

The new education strategy covering the period 2005-2025 was launched in June 2003. This strategy was developed after the National Conference on Education held in 2002. It was framed by a group of educational experts and was approved by the Ministers Council. The strategy deals with a number of main educational issues and includes several plans, projects and programmes, such as the computerization programmes already started in previous years.

**Laws and other basic regulations concerning education**

The Constitution of Kuwait (1962) lays out the general legal framework concerning the country’s education. Article 10 specifies that “The State shall care for the young and shall protect them from abuse as well as from moral, physical and spiritual neglect.” According to Article 13, “Education is a basic component to be provided and supervised by the State.” Article 40 states that: “Education is a right for all citizens to be provided by the State in accordance with the law and in keeping with the general system and ethics. Education is compulsory and free of charge in its primary stages, according to the law.”

According to **Law No. 1 of 1965**, education is compulsory and free of charge for all Kuwaiti children, from the first grade of primary education (age 6) to the end of the intermediate or preparatory level. This law makes it incumbent on the State to

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
World Data on Education. 6th edition, 2006/07

provide school premises, books, teachers and all that is necessary in terms of human and material means to guarantee the success of compulsory education.

By the **Law No. 29 of 1966**, the University of Kuwait, and the aims and levels of higher education were defined, as well as the principles governing the management and financing, the rules governing admission, and the granting of university degrees. Article 5 of **Law No. 29** stipulates that higher education should have a special budget and that it is responsible for managing its finances.

The **Decision of the Minister of Education No. 10664** of 1967 stipulates that private educational establishments are subject to supervision by the Ministry of Education. The decision includes several sections covering provisions related to the financial rules governing private educational institutions, the academic system and examinations in private schools, staff and personnel of private schools, and justifications and procedures for the closure and liquidation of a private educational institution.

The **Decree of 1979 issued by the Emir regarding the Ministry of Education** defined the objective of the Ministry as the development of Kuwaiti society and the upbringing of its young within an integrated scientific, spiritual, moral, intellectual, social and physical framework, in the light of the principles of Islam, of the Arab heritage and of contemporary civilization, in keeping with the national environment and in realization of its progress and development. It is on such a basis that the decree defined the functions of the Ministry of Education in administering education (up to the secondary level) and instructed the Ministry to undertake all that is necessary for its management and development.

**Law No. 4** of 1981 regarding the eradication of illiteracy, makes it incumbent on all Kuwaiti men between the ages of 14 and 40, and on all Kuwaiti women between the ages of 14 and 35, to enrol in a literacy programme.

**Law No. 63** of 1982 was adopted in order to meet the needs of the labour force and to overcome shortages in technically qualified national workers. The law defines the rules governing the organization and management of a new authority, its prerogatives and financing. With the issuing of the above law, the task of supervising technical and functional education was transferred from the Ministry of Education to the new authority with all its relevant human and material resources.

**Law No. 4** of 1987 can be considered the first legislation providing the general legal framework for public education (school education up to the end of the secondary level). While all previous legislation aimed at regulating one particular aspect of the education system, this law stressed constitutional principles governing education in the State of Kuwait. Foremost among them is the principle that all citizens have a right to education, that education aims to protect and develop the young, ensure social progress, and that it is to be provided free of charge to all citizens by government schools. In addition, the law stipulated the establishment of a **Supreme Council for Education** to be chaired by the Minister of Education and composed of the President of the University and seventeen members from the educational community.

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
Decree No. 164 issued by the Emir in 1988 specifies the functions of the Ministry of Higher Education, which supervises all matters related to university education, applied studies and scientific research undertaken by the faculties and institutes of higher education.

The Ministerial Decision No.76 of 2003 concerns the modification of the educational ladder. According to Article 2, the new educational ladder consists of five years of elementary education, four years of intermediate education and three years of secondary education, in principle to be introduced starting from 2004/05.

Administration and management of the education system

The education system is administered jointly by the Ministry of Education, supervising school education until the end of the twelfth year of school, and the Ministry of Higher Education, which is responsible for higher education beyond secondary school or its equivalent, and supervises the University of Kuwait, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training and the programme of Studies and Scholarships abroad.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the rapid population growth, expanding urbanization, and increasing demand for education in new residential areas created the need for educational zone administrations. These administrations were responsible for evaluating the efficiency of school performance. Where the State was previously divided into three educational areas, the Ministry created five: Al-Asema, Hawally, Frawania, Ahmadi and Al-Jahra, which corresponds to the current governorates.

When the new organizational situation became well-established, a balance was struck between centralization and decentralization of educational administration: the centralized mechanisms assumed the responsibility of planning, supervising and controlling the development of education, while decentralized mechanisms (the administrations of education zones) would implement executive directives in their schools, supervise and assess performance. The sixth educational zone (Mubarak Al-Kabeer) has been established at the end of 1999.

Co-operation is well-established among educational institutions and ministries responsible for providing education for all and lifelong education through various systems and training programmes based on a flexible concept of basic education. Among these institutions are: the Ministry of Waqf and Islamic Affairs; the programme Community Service and Lifelong Education at the University of Kuwait; and the programme for Community Service and Lifelong Education at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training.

The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs*, Department of Islamic Studies, encourages all those who are interested in Islamic studies, males and females alike, adults and younger candidates from the age of 14 years. The curriculum focuses on: Islamic studies, literature and basic mathematics and sciences, and Arabic language and history. Classes are free of charge.

*Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
The programme Community Service and Lifelong Education at the University of Kuwait focuses on self-education with the help of the University’s educational and scientific facilities, thus allowing all members of society to acquire education regardless of age, culture or degree of learning. The curriculum focuses on: Arabic and other languages, management and commerce, humanities and information, and secretarial studies.

Another relevant body is the National Committee in Support of Education, a permanent committee set up by the Ministerial Decision No. 30/95, issued by the Minister of Education on 1 July 1995. It is composed of a large number of experienced educators and other Kuwaiti personalities. The Committee is chaired by an administrative board of eight members. The aim of the Committee is to raise the standard of education, promote educational projects and draw both students and teachers to educational institutions. The Committee is financed by contributions in cash and kind received from public and private sources. In addition, it is entitled to invest part of its revenues to generate income for its projects.

**Structure and organization of the education system**

The structure of the education system in the State of Kuwait follows the 4-4-4 model: four years at the primary level, and four years at the intermediate (equivalent to preparatory) and secondary levels. This sequence is preceded by two years of kindergarten.

Schooling is compulsory for all the children from the beginning of the primary to the end of the intermediate levels. The age limits for compulsory schooling are from 6 to 14 years; education is no longer compulsory if the student reaches the age of 14 before completing the primary level, while, at the intermediate level, compulsory schooling ends at the age of 16 if the student does not complete the level.

**Kuwait: structure of the education system**

![Diagram](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)

*Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)*
Pre-school education

Pre-school education (kindergarten) is not compulsory but is provided free to Kuwaiti citizens. The entry age is usually 4 years and its duration is two years.

Primary education

Primary education is the first cycle in the '4-4-4' system and is compulsory. Children are admitted at age 6.

Secondary education

Intermediate or preparatory education (lower secondary) lasts four years and is also compulsory. Students who successfully complete this cycle are awarded the Intermediate School Certificate, granting access to secondary education. General secondary education is last cycle of the '4-4-4' system. Upon completion of general secondary education (science or arts stream) successful students are awarded the General Secondary School Certificate.

Higher education covers university and postsecondary education and training. There are two main higher education establishments in Kuwait: the University of Kuwait; and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training. Programmes leading to a diploma usually last two years. A bachelor’s degree normally requires eight regular semesters (four years) for all programmes, except for the College of Engineering (nine semesters) and the College of Medicine (seven years, according to its three-level programme).

The school year consists of 168 working days (or about thirty-four working weeks) at the primary level, and 151 days (or about thirty working weeks) at the preparatory and secondary levels.

The financing of education

The Ministry of Education ensures the financing of pre-primary, primary and secondary education. The financing of higher education falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Higher Education. Other ministries and municipalities provide funding for the allocation of land, building maintenance, water and power connections, the building of educational establishments and health care.

The total expenditure of the Ministry of Education on public education for 1995/96 reached approximately 305 million Kuwaiti dinars (KD). This sum represented 7.5% of the overall State budget. In 1998/99, expenditure on educational affairs and services represented 17.7% of the total government expenditure. In the same year, the budget of the Ministry of Education amounted to KD374.34 million (of which 343 million for wages and salaries). According to the World Bank, in 2003/04 public and private expenditure in education amounted to KD919.6 million, representing 7.4% of GDP.

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
In keeping with the State’s general budget, the Ministry of Education proposes its own budget in accordance with the traditional budget requirements, to cover all items, making sure not to exceed the sums allocated to each item. There is no separate budget for each level of education, nor is expenditure charged separately to each level. Expenditure and its distribution by levels are analyzed to determine the cost of each compared to the size of the student population at each level, to rationalize decisions and cost of expanding and to achieve optimal distribution of expenditure. This also allows calculating per capita costs at each level.

The expenditure in percentages by levels of education for 1993/94 were as follows: kindergartens 15.5%; primary level 29.7%; intermediate level 26.7%; secondary level 25.8%; special education schools 1.2%; religious education 0.7% (the teaching staff costs are charged to the post-secondary level); adult education and literacy 0.4%. The distribution follows the growth of the State’s education sector and tallies with international averages, bearing in mind the number of students enrolled at each level. Other ministries and state authorities participate in educational expenditure, either financially or in kind.

The National Committee in Support of Education, since its inception, has funded projects to equip computer workshops in secondary schools, to set up and maintain school science laboratories, to introduce computer studies at the intermediate level, and to set up reference centres at both intermediate and secondary levels. The Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Science financed a project undertaken by the Ministry of Education and another local company, who signed a contract to extend 42 computer networks and to provide 933 computers for the Ministry schools in 1995, equipped the Al Qurain public library, founded a modern, state-of-the-art children’s library, furnished the Al Oyun library and financed the establishment of a mother and child care centre in co-operation with UNESCO.

The Waqf Fund for Scientific Development is attached to the general secretariat of the Waqf Ministry, holding capital in trust, the income of which is used to support and develop education services in Kuwait. The Waqf Fund for Culture and Intellectual Development, also attached to the Waqf Ministry’s secretariat, devotes its income to promoting intellectual and cultural activities.

There are also School Financial Funds in each school at all levels, which are run by the school administration to finance general needs. Funding is provided by parents, co-operatives, individuals, surplus profit from the school cafeteria and by the Ministry.

Private financing of education has two main sources: school fees paid by parents, and material support and direct financial assistance granted by the Ministry of Education. The State devoted a major programme to help private schools by providing them with specialized school administrators, direct financial assistance, or material support in the form of textbooks, in addition to technical guidance. By helping private schools, the Ministry aims to achieve the following: providing financial assistance by paying half the school fees; raising the standard of school services by granting them assistance for each student at different levels of education; increasing staff salaries by setting a minimum wage and by granting additional assistance; and strengthening

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
supervision of the private sector by regulating its finances in order to protect public interest.

In 1993/94, the maximum school fees for private Arabic schools were as follows: kindergarten, KD160; primary, KD185; intermediate, KD225; secondary, KD265. In the same year, total direct financial assistance to private and Arabic schools reached KD18.9 million.

Foreign schools differ from one another according to the system and the curriculum applied. Fees in these schools are set upon approval of the Ministry and may reach KD1,800 per year per student.

The educational process

Pre-primary education (kindergarten)

Kindergartens strive to provide the appropriate conditions for the development of the child physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually and socially, in accordance with the child’s abilities and needs. Kindergartens aim to develop children’s capacities for interaction and communication, encourage them to discover their environment, and provide them with social and moral guidance in a safe environment.

Pre-primary education is provided free to Kuwaiti citizens. In 1999/2000 there were 149 government kindergartens with 44,152 children enrolled. The total number of teaching staff was 3,012 (female teachers) and the children-teacher ratio was 14.7:1. According to national estimates, in 2004/05 the gross enrolment ratio was 76.9%, while the net enrolment ratio was 59.9%. Some 88% of children enter primary education with previous preschool experience.

Primary education

Primary education seeks to strengthen the child’s spirit and mind, foster the development of his or her personality in keeping with the principles and concepts enshrined in the Muslim religion, provide the child with basic knowledge in reading, writing and arithmetic, and help the child develop a sense of social awareness, cooperation and responsibility.

As from 1995/96, learning the Holy Qu’ran has become part of the curriculum, with exposure to the various sections of the Book spread over the four years. Special attention is paid to the development of the Arabic language curriculum in order to achieve linguistic integration; the necessary books were prepared and an experimental implementation of the new system was launched in 1994/95 in accordance with a plan designed to expand it to all classes and schools by 1998/99. The Ministry issued a decision on 18 January 1994 establishing a High Commission for the Development of Arabic Language curricula for primary schools; the commission is under the chairmanship of the Minister of Education and the Minister of Higher Education. Furthermore, English language was introduced in the first grade of primary schools in 1993/94. The weekly lesson timetable is shown below:
In 1999/2000, the pupil-teacher ratio in government primary schools was 12.4:1 (12:1 in 2005) and the average number of pupils per class was 29.7. In 2003/04, the gross enrolment rate was 96%. In 2004, the primary to secondary education transition rate was 95%.

Intermediate or preparatory education (lower secondary)

Intermediate or preparatory education (lower secondary) strives to direct students’ capabilities in preparation for the secondary level. The broad objectives of this level are helping students acquire an understanding and knowledge of their national identity in the following subjects: Arabic language, social studies, basic science, mathematics and English; providing students with opportunities to acquire technical know-how and experience in practical matters of life; developing students’ capacity to think in order to develop their creativity.

Recent innovations in the curricula of the intermediate level include: teaching Arabic language curricula in all third and fourth year classes; developing English language curricula (to be introduced by 1997/98); introducing new subjects in the social studies curriculum, such as the Iraqi invasion, and the role of the United Nations, the Gulf Co-operation Council (G.C.C.), the role of the Islamic Conference Organization and the League of Arab States in the liberation of the State of Kuwait (new books related to this subject are being taught in the first three years since 1994/95; they became part of the fourth year curriculum in 1995/96). Furthermore, in 1994/95 experimental information technologies classes were introduced in four intermediate girls’ schools. The official addition of information technology to the curriculum began in 1995/96, to be gradually included in all intermediate level schools by 2002/2003. The weekly lesson timetable is presented below:

**Primary education: weekly lesson timetable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Number of weekly periods in each grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic education</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic language</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine arts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total weekly periods** 32 32 32 32

*Source:* Information provided by the Gulf Arab States Educational Research Center (GASERC), November 2004. Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes.

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
In 1999/2000, the student-teacher ratio in government intermediate schools was 10.8:1 and the average number of students per class was 31. In 2003/04, the gross enrolment rate was 95%.

Secondary education

The main objectives of secondary education are: directing students’ capabilities in preparation for the university level and for higher education; encouraging them to discover their sense of identity through the development of their capacities, knowledge and skills. Secondary education also seeks to prepare students for practical life and for further studies at the university or higher institutes, by encouraging and guiding areas of vocational interest, and awakening a sense of civic duty based on an understanding of their rights and obligations.

The long-term aims of formal education in school are preparing youth in keeping with society and its needs; following scientific progress in the field of education systems; creating stronger links between school and society; safeguarding the identity of Kuwaiti society by creating curricula that integrate Arab/Islamic values while advancing with global scientific and technical progress; expanding the scope of teaching resources through more interaction with the environment.

Recent innovations in the curricula at the secondary level (two sections system) include the production of revised and updated textbooks for science, mathematics, information technologies and the Arabic language.

Recent innovations in curricula at the secondary level include a project for the development of the syllabus system led by the Ministry of Education in co-ordination with the University of Kuwait and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training. The new syllabus system will be composed of the following branches: arts,
sciences, foreign languages, commercial and industrial studies, and information technologies.

The Ministry of Education has a team of planners and other education staff that develop work plans and guidelines for general education in the country. These plans relate to the general objectives of education in the state of Kuwait: curriculum appraisal; assessments of the role of the teacher at each level of education; objectives for the different levels of education; current trends in education.

The Ministry of Education devotes particular attention to the teaching of English and French, in addition to the Arabic language, in all public education schools. The appropriate curricula were devised and the necessary teachers were trained by the Ministry. At present, the Ministry is preparing English and French language programmes through a local technical committee, rather than through the use of non-local programmes as was done previously. The weekly lesson timetable is shown below:

**General secondary education: weekly lesson timetable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III Art</th>
<th>III Science</th>
<th>IV Art</th>
<th>IV Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Islamic education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic language</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French language</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sciences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III Art</th>
<th>III Science</th>
<th>IV Art</th>
<th>IV Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrated sciences</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geology</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific knowledge</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Social studies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III Art</th>
<th>III Science</th>
<th>IV Art</th>
<th>IV Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practical studies/Fine arts/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III Art</th>
<th>III Science</th>
<th>IV Art</th>
<th>IV Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer studies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Physical education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III Art</th>
<th>III Science</th>
<th>IV Art</th>
<th>IV Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home economics (for girls)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total weekly periods (boys)**: 31, 32, 31, 31, 31, 31

**Total weekly periods (girls)**: 33, 34, 33, 33, 33, 33

Source: Ibid. Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes.

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
In 1999/2000, the student-teacher ratio in government secondary schools was 8.7:1 and the average number of students per class was 27.7. In 2003/04, the gross enrolment rate was 82%.

**The evaluation system at different levels**

The Ministry has set the regulations governing evaluation and examinations in keeping with the latest theoretical and practical educational bases of measurement, so that they may be an accurate guide to assist in assessing students and facilitating evaluation procedures. The system follows the two-semester academic year and comprises two methods:

- school evaluation for transitional classes from first-year primary to third-year secondary;
- central evaluation directly supervised by the Ministry, limited to fourth-year secondary and leading to secondary school certificate (Thanaweya ‘Ama).

**Primary level**

**Compulsory disciplines for the primary level with maximal and minimal requirements (1995/96)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Second</th>
<th>Third</th>
<th>Fourth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maximal</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Maximal</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Islamic education</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Arabic Language</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. English Language</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mathematics</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Science</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Social Studies</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Grades</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Physical Education</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Art</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Music</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Intermediate level

Maximal and minimal grades for compulsory disciplines in intermediate level classes (1995/96)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Maximal</th>
<th>Minimal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Education</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic Language</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical Studies</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Economics</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Activities</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the end of the year, a percentage is calculated for each passing student on the basis of the overall total obtained for discipline with minimal limits. The general evaluation of the student is calculated on the basis of the percentage obtained at the end of the year as follows: Excellent, 90% or more; Very Good, from 80% to less than 90%; Good, from 70% to less than 80%; Passing, less than 70%. The evaluation system in adult education centres and for students applying from home is subject to specific regulations.

Secondary level, syllabus system

Evaluation within the framework of the syllabus system is intended to continuously measure the students' capacity to follow and absorb subject matter, and measure their own efforts throughout the school year. Oral, written and scientific tests are used for evaluation in keeping with the nature of the discipline concerned, in addition to research and written assignments.

In addition to measuring students’ academic performance, evaluation includes their interaction with the teacher in class and performance of homework. The final examination is compulsory for all students. If a student does not present himself or herself for the final examination without an acceptable excuse, he or she will have failed the syllabi. The minimal passing grade for any syllabus is 60. The same fail and pass system is applied to all syllabi.

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
The Department of Examinations and Evaluations at the Ministry of Education is responsible for assessing the equivalence of all certificates of Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti students. The department also organizes the end of secondary studies examinations through special committees.

At the end of the secondary level, successful students are awarded the Thanaweya ‘Ama or General Secondary School Certificate. For a student to obtain the above certificate, he or she must obtain 50% of the maximum grade for each subject. If the student fails to obtain 50% of the maximum grade in one subject the first round, he or she can sit for an exam in the same subject the second round. If a student fails in more than three subjects, he or she will repeat the fourth year. At the intermediate level, a student having failed in more than three subjects can sit for the second round of exams. A student having failed in three subjects remains in his or her class.

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

Information is not available.

Higher education

Higher education in Kuwait plays a significant role in economic development, contributes to the development of human values, and provides the country with specialists, technicians and experts in the various fields. Institutions of higher learning provide students with access to knowledge, advanced research methods and the foundations for responsible citizenship. Article 5, Law No. 29 (1966), stipulates that higher education should have a special budget and that it is responsible for managing its finances.

Higher education programmes are offered by two main institutions: the University of Kuwait; and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training. There are also two other institutes offering specialized programmes: the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts and the Higher Institute of Musical Arts (four-year system).

The University of Kuwait strives to train students to become part of a skilled human resource base, and to develop a generation of young people respectful of their society’s values and traditions, who will be efficient and capable of assuming leadership in society. The University’s aims are following and contributing to scientific progress through scientific research directed towards solving societal problems and discovering solutions to economic, social and cultural development; playing a leading role in serving society, thus helping to achieve its overall development by safeguarding its values and ethics, by providing its requirements and by encouraging the application of a scientific methodology to problem solving; strengthening the Arab/Islamic cultural heritage; developing scientific research in all branches of science and of the arts so as to contribute to knowledge and Arab civilization; making world culture accessible to young generations in the areas of sciences and the arts.

The time limit for graduation (Bachelor’s degree) is eight regular semesters (four years) for all programmes, except for the College of Engineering (nine

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
semesters) and the College of Medicine (seven years, according to its three-level programme). The University also offers master’s degree courses in science, engineering, philosophy, and medicine, through the College of Graduate Studies. These programmes require one to two years to complete after the bachelor’s degree. All applicants must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), since English is the language of instruction in all programmes, excepting philosophy. The Committee for Scientific Affairs, affiliated to the Bureau of the Kuwait University, Director of Scientific Affairs, reviews and updates the curricula of the fields of specialization in order to keep pace with the latest studies in international universities. Kuwait University undertakes periodical evaluation of science programmes. For this purpose, it has created an Academic Excellence Scheme with a view to establishing a sound institutional system, based on scientific, methodological and academic criteria and a periodical review system in order to achieve international scientific standards.

The Academic Excellence Scheme assesses: the academic level of students during their study at the university, the performance of teaching staff in the areas of teaching, research and community services; scientific facilities and equipment; administrative and technical support; efficacy of the administrative system; the clarity and reflection of the scientific section’s role in the community. A specialized committee was established to review the evaluation methods adopted by Kuwait University. A series of questionnaires were developed pertaining to the evaluation of curricula, faculty staff members and on-going systems to evaluate teaching performance.

In 1995/96, the number of students enrolled at Kuwait University (first semester) amounted to 16,466 (of whom 11,165 were women) and in 1996/97 the number was 19,456. In the same year, the teaching staff amounted to 865 (920 in 1996/97, including: 199 full professors; 286 assistant professors; and 434 teachers). In 1998/99, there were 18,387 students enrolled and the number of teaching staff was 1,166.

The aim of establishing the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) was to provide and develop the national manpower in order to overcome deficits in national technical manpower and to meet development requirements of the country. The Public Authority’s aims include co-operating with major institutions in the labour market; training drop-outs; linking academic programmes to society’s needs through co-operation with institutions in governmental and non-governmental sectors. The Authority manages its own independent budget, and it is the sole body in charge of all applied education and training affairs in the country. Colleges and institutes under the Authority offer to graduates from secondary education two-year programmes leading to the award of a diploma, and four-year programmes leading to the award of a B.Sc. In 1998/99, the total number of students enrolled in colleges and institutes under the Authority was 25,357.

Technical training at the postsecondary level under the supervision of PAAET takes place in four postsecondary technical institutes and three training centers. The training centers are more vocational in orientation and offer two-year technician programmes for secondary certificate holders and one- to two-year assistant technician programmes for intermediate school graduates. Admission to the technical colleges run by PAAET requires a secondary school certificate and Kuwaiti
citizenship or citizenship in a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) country. An admission test and a placement test in English are also administered.

**Special education**

This type of education aims at providing special assistance to those pupils suffering from various disabilities. Special education in Kuwait deals with four main disabilities: visual impairment (through *Al Noor* –Light– schools); physical impairment (through *Al Rajaa* –Hope– schools); hearing impairment (through *Al Amal* –Expectation– schools); and mental disability (learning aptitude category, through intellectual education schools; training aptitude category, through *Al Wafa'a* –Faithfulness– schools).

There are 14 educational establishments offering special education and rehabilitation, including: *Al-Amal*, for the deaf, at the kindergarten and primary levels; *Al-Noor*, for the blind, at the kindergarten, preliminary, primary and intermediate levels; *Al-Rajaa*, at the nursery, primary, intermediate, and secondary levels; the Intellectual Education School (experience system), at the first and second circles (groups); the Intellectual Education Rehabilitation School, which offers expectation rehabilitation and education rehabilitation; and *Al-Wafa’a*, offering preparation and rehabilitation at the nursery, first, second, and third levels. In 1999/2000, the number of students enrolled in special schools was 2,018, assisted by 623 teachers. In 2003/04, the number of students enrolled in special needs education was 2,077 (all stages).

The main objectives of these schools are fostering independence, self-reliance, and integration into society. The length of study ranges from two to six years according to the type of disability.

The student-teacher ratio was 3:1 in 1995/96, which can be considered an ideal percentage and an appropriate teaching load based on the special needs of these students.

Innovations in the curricula of special schools include the preparation of new textbooks for Islamic Education, social sciences and Arabic language in *Al Amal* schools for the deaf (fourth year of primary education). For the second year rehabilitation, textbooks for Islamic education, Arabic language and mathematics were introduced. In 1994/95, new textbooks for Islamic education, sciences and mathematics were also prepared for the third year rehabilitation at schools for the mentally retarded. In 1995/96, new textbooks for social studies were prepared for the third and the fifth year levels of rehabilitation.

**Private education**

The State of Kuwait endeavors to provide learning opportunities for every citizen and for all residents on its territory. Non-governmental schools were established to provide an alternative to government schools, and to provide increased educational opportunities for the resident children who could not be admitted to government

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
schools due to lack of places. These schools are under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, through the Department of Non-Governmental Education.

Because of the high growth rates in Kuwait’s economy, and the ensuing expansion in all public and private institutions, the inflow of migrants to Kuwait rose sharply, reaching about 920,163 persons in 1995, representing 58% of the overall population of the country. At the same time, there was a noticeable drop in services, including government education. In order to provide learning opportunities for all residents in the country, private education (Arabic and foreign) emerged and developed greatly in the last few years. Thus, the private sector has become a main partner in providing general education.

Arabic schools are obliged to use the curricula approved by the Ministry of Education. They are equivalent to government schools. Private Arabic education expanded and developed at high rates, due to population growth, the excess of migrants from Arab countries, the increasing demand by Kuwaitis to enrol their children in private schools (about 7.1% of the total number of the student body in Arabic schools in 1995/96), as well as to the restrictions on registration in government schools (due mostly to limited capacity for accommodating children from Arab communities). In 1999/2000, there were 149 Arabic schools with 2,255 classes. There were 74,775 students enrolled and the number of teaching staff was 3,952.

Private foreign education was established essentially to meet the requirements of the foreign communities, according to their education systems. Thus, there emerged the British, American, Iranian, French, Pakistani and Indian schools, as well as other foreign schools. Foreign schools are subject to State supervision, through the Ministry of Education. Each school has its own curricula, depending on the educational system it follows, and has no obligation to adopt government school curricula, except in the case of the Arabic language and Islamic education at all stages. An examination of the development indicators for this sector shows that it has achieved tremendous growth rates, higher than those of the Arabic private education. In 1999/2000, there were 187 foreign schools with 1,917 classes. There were 50,221 students enrolled and the number of teaching staff was 3,145. Most foreign schools (163 schools) are co-educational.

Overall, enrolments in the private sector represented some 28% of total enrolment in 1999/2000. Teacher in the private sector represented about 19% of total teaching staff.

Means of instruction, equipment and infrastructure

The Ministry of Education is careful to supply government schools with textbooks before the beginning of the academic year. A number of experts both from outside and inside the Ministry write these books. Attention is not confined to the students’ textbooks but extends to the teachers’ textbooks at all educational levels. Moreover, it is to be noted that the Ministry supplies national schools with the required textbooks at a nominal fee.

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
Instructional materials have been supplied and developed by a specialized agency within the Ministry of Education since the 1950s. This agency provides materials for all classes, libraries, laboratories, workshops and for art, music and home economics classes.

The School Curricula and Textbooks Department is responsible for textbook content, and setting the relevant technical and educational specifications, as well as the supply of textbooks that are printed locally, and importing others from abroad.

**Adult and non-formal education**

Non-formal education is mainly provided through: literacy courses and adult education; the Child and Motherhood Centre; the Sultan Educational Society; and the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research.

In 1958, the first two literacy centres for men were opened, followed by the first two centres for women in 1963. On 11 January 1981, Law No. 4/1981 on literacy was issued. This law stipulates that illiterate Kuwaitis within the age bracket 14-40 for men, and 14-35 for women, are obliged to join literacy programmes. As a result of these efforts, the rate of illiteracy among Kuwaitis decreased from 57% (42% men, 72% women) in 1965 to 8.3% (4% men, 12.5% women) in 1994. Upon completion of the literacy stage, the learner is entitled to enter the Adult Education Centre at the first-year intermediate level. The same is true for any student who dropped out from school at an earlier stage and wishes to resume his/her education. Students of the Centre continue to study until they obtain the General Secondary Certificate. They may then, according to their educational level, enroll at the University of Kuwait or at one of the faculties or centres of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training. In 1999/2000, there were 67 literacy centres (including evening religious institutes) with 9,740 learners enrolled and 1,224 teachers.

The government paid great attention to the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency, by establishing special associations to care for youth with behavioural problems. Among these educational associations is the Educational Centre for Youth. In compliance with the Law on Delinquency, social centres for students with behavioural problems were established. These centres strive to provide their students with a scientific and general knowledge background in order to ensure their future and prepare them to become responsible citizens.

Intermediate and secondary students, against whom a penal ruling has been issued, enrol at the Collective Reform (Al Islah Al Mushtarak) School, affiliated to the Central Prison, and the Collective Guidance (Al Rashad Al Mushtarak) School, affiliated to the Social Care Center. These schools are supervised by both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Centre provides stationery, clothes and suitable transport facilities for delinquents throughout the academic year. Youth are subject to immediate enrolment in the school upon arrival. In addition, the centre provides guidance, a suitable learning environment and supervision of study performance. An analytical report on the end-of-year results is prepared to determine the reasons for failure and thus avoid them in the future, and to consider and

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
emphasize the factors for success. Successful students are honored at the end of the academic year as an incentive for achieving continued success.

Governmental and non-governmental community programmes offer opportunities for continuing education. Governmental Community programmes are centres affiliated to the official educational organizations. Their aim is to link these organizations with the community by providing the opportunity for continuous education according to students’ needs and abilities. These centres also prepare specialized courses to meet labour development requirements in the different ministries and organizations. These are the Centre for Community Services and Continuous Education at the University of Kuwait, the Centre for Community Services and continuous Education at the Central Organization for Applied Education and Training (which, in 1994/95, organized 33 programmes attended by 2,317 students), and the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs.

Non-governmental community programmes (private institutes) support non-formal education by offering courses for which there is demand by the public. Most of these courses are supplementary to the subjects offered under the formal education system. Foreign language courses, secretarial and computer courses are also offered. These schools fall under the supervision of the Private Education Department of the Ministry of Education. The Child and Motherhood Centre, established in cooperation with UNESCO, is one such centre.

**Teaching staff**

When the education system in Kuwait was established, the government sought educational personnel from outside. The first teachers and administrators in the country were Palestinians and Egyptians. With the increasing number of students and schools, however, the demand for teachers and administrators increased, and the government began to take serious steps towards developing a strong Kuwaiti teaching force.

Today, two institutes train teachers: the College of Basic Education, which offers academic, cultural and pedagogical training; and the Faculty of Education, at the University of Kuwait. Both offer a four-year programme (eight semesters) leading to a bachelor’s degree. Teaching staff at both institutes must have a Ph.D. or a M.A. The programme itself combines training for general subject class teachers and teachers of specialized subjects. A “credit hours” system was applied as of the academic year 1977/1978, requiring 68 credit hours for graduation. A variety of subjects are offered in order to satisfy the needs of the labour market.

The College of Basic Education trains primary school teachers, female teachers for kindergartens, and other technical staff. The training programme is divided into three areas: cultural training, comprising 48 credit hours (38%); academic training, comprising 40 credit hours (32%); vocational training, comprising 38 credit hours (30%).

The Faculty of Education, University of Kuwait, offers three programmes for training kindergarten teachers, one programme for primary school teachers, another

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
for training male and female teachers of intermediate and secondary schools, and two
diploma-level programmes: diploma of pedagogical training; and diploma of
pedagogical guidance. The Faculty has also established a centre for the development
of education to encourage research, publication and translation. In addition to
academic duties and research, the teaching staff of the faculty offers consultations,
lectures and seminars at the State’s educational institutions.

In its efforts to prepare qualified Kuwaiti professionals, the Faculty set itself a
number of objectives which include offering studies at M.A and Ph.D. levels, training
psychological counsellors at all educational levels, raising the level of pedagogical
awareness, introducing new specializations such as artistic education, information
technologies, home economics, library, communication and education technology,
and special education. The Institute trains specialists in the fields of education
planning, curricula development, evaluation and pedagogical assessment, pedagogical
and academic rehabilitation for those who have no academic qualifications, and
provides pedagogical and other services in the areas of social activities of a
pedagogical nature.

The Teacher Training Faculty, Kuwait University, and the Basic Teacher
Training College, at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, base
preparation on a system combining specialized subjects and vocational training. The
faculties accept applicants who have obtained their Secondary General Certificate
(two semesters) or those who have completed the curricula system. Educational
programmes and plans in these faculties include three types of curricula: general
cultural curricula as required by the university; specialization curricula; faculty or
vocational curricula.

The pre-service training curriculum includes mastery of the basic knowledge
of the subject area for which the student is being oriented at the Faculty of Education,
mastery of the basic knowledge of vocational orientation, identification of the
fundamental principles of Islam and awareness of the significance of man’s
relationship with God, identification of the bases and principles of self-learning and
continued education, in-depth knowledge of linguistics.

The Ministry of Education, represented by the Development Department,
endeavors to co-operate with various scientific and educational institutions and
training establishments to make use of available experts in lecturing, workshop
management and practical application. The vocational training system for Ministry of
Education employees comprises diverse programmes of different objectives. These
programmes include upgrading work performance levels, completion of vocational
training, preparing for administrative positions, and training on the use of information
technologies.

The Ministry draws up an annual training plan for all the teaching staff, the
schools department, the Ministry’s civil service department and the educational
sector, to keep pace with the latest developments in education.

Self-improvement courses seek to update information, upgrade the skills and
expertise of trainers and acquaint them with the new trends in their field of work.
Self-improvement courses include: reading and reciting the Holy Qu’ran; practical studies; arts and crafts, music and physical training; chemistry and geology.

The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training has established a centre for vocational evaluation and development to acquaint its trainers and teachers with the latest scientific and educational developments in the field of curricula and teaching techniques so that they may be more efficient and effective in performing their tasks.

The Teacher training Faculty at Kuwait University has organized higher studies programmes for teachers whereby they may earn a Higher Teaching Diploma or a Master’s Degree in Teaching. At both Kuwait University and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, candidates must: hold the General Secondary School Certificate or equivalent, pass the aptitude tests of the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Basic Education, obtain a study permit from the armed forces, obtain study leave (if the candidate is an employee), present a certificate showing the candidate has passed the entire sequence of educational stages in Kuwaiti schools, obtain the required percentage of marks for admission to the university or college. In order to secure appointment as a teacher, the graduate must earn a certificate of specialization from the Faculty of Education, Kuwait University, or the College of Basic Education, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, or an equivalent qualification.

**Educational research and information**

Research plays a vital role in improving and developing education. Research is conducted by three institutions: the Educational Research and Curricula Centre, at the Ministry of Education; the scientific sections of the Faculty of Education, at the University of Kuwait; and the scientific sections of the Faculty of Basic Education.

The objectives focus on preparing and disseminating comparative studies on curricula and educational innovations in other countries; undertaking the necessary studies pertaining to educational outputs and the scientific level of student learning; assisting decision-makers in formulating educational policies compatible with the educational changes in the world. Areas of educational research include learning, emotions (dispositions, attitudes and values), behaviour, and skills.

The Educational Research and Curricula Centre, at the Ministry of Education, carries out research in areas such as: the Kuwaiti society’s concept of the development of school curricula; the role of school curricula in meeting the psychological, social and intellectual development of learners; evaluation of the teacher’s role in the educational process; evaluation of the school curricula in developing autodidactic capacities; evaluation of Guidance Offices in the official syllabus schools; evaluation and identification of new problems (brought about by changing circumstances) when developing the educational process.
References


Web resources


