



# Brunei Darussalam

*Revised version, September 2006.*

## Principles and general objectives of education

The education system in Brunei Darussalam has the following aims:

- to foster the all-round development of each individual from the physical, mental, spiritual as well as aesthetic point of view in order to develop a Brunei citizen who will uphold the aspirations of the country;
- to enable each individual to be fluent in Malay and devoted to the interests of the Malay language, whilst not neglecting English, in which proficiency is also essential;
- to inculcate the teaching of Islam so that each individual will honour and be faithful to the Islamic religion and live according to its tenets;
- to cultivate in each individual a sense of loyalty to the Monarch, the Country and the Law and an awareness of responsibility as a citizen, and the obligation to act upon that responsibility;
- to cultivate in each individual the values and cultural norms of Brunei society, centred on the principle of a Malay Islamic Monarchy;
- to instil a love of peace, harmony and mutual help and unity among the citizens and residents of the country;
- to instil in each individual the desire for progress, confidence in one's own ability, creativity, innovativeness and sensitivity to contemporary change in the interests of adaptation to the demands of the age, consistent with the cultural values, ethics and goals of the country;
- to accelerate the development of manpower resources that are capable, rational and responsible, so that people can improve their standard of living and make a contribution to the development of the country.

## Current educational priorities and concerns

Brunei Darussalam resumed its international responsibilities as a fully independent and sovereign nation on 31 December 1983, after almost one hundred years of British protection. Brunei Darussalam is one Asia's oldest kingdoms, having been in existence for more than 1,500 years and was an imperial power from the fifteenth to the sixteenth centuries. Oil, which was first discovered at Seria in 1929, is the most important mineral and it provides almost all of Brunei Darussalam's wealth.



The country had an estimated population of 276,300 people in 1993, made up of 145,800 (or 52%) males and 130,500 females. The overall increase was 8,500 or about 3.1% over that of 1992. The breakdown of population is: Malays, 185,200 (67%); other indigenous groups such as Murut and Dusun, 16,600 (6%); Chinese, 42,600 (15%); and other races, 31,900 (12%). Of the total population, 181,000 or 66% lived in Brunei/Muara District; 56,000 or 20% in Belait District; 30,700 or 11% in Tutong District; and 8,000 or 3% in Temburong District. In 1996, the total population was estimated at 305,100 persons.

In August 1969, the Brunei Youth Council organized a seminar on education which centred on the needs and importance of having a national education policy. This led directly to the establishment of an Education Commission in 1970. The subsequent report of the Commission was submitted to the government in 1972. The government adopted and implemented parts of the Report in 1974 and this formed the basis for the present organization and hierarchy of the Ministry of Education. This included the creation of an Education Council with representatives from various government bodies.

Although the national education policy of 1962 and the report of the Education Commission (1972) both recommended the use of Malay as the main medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools, subsequent events determined a change of emphasis in the final choice of language medium for the country's national education system. In 1984 a bilingual education policy (*dwibahasa*) was introduced. This bilingual policy should ensure that pupils attain a high degree of proficiency in both English and Malay.

The present education policy in Brunei Darussalam aims to create the most effective system of education for the country. Education is an on-going endeavour which seeks to develop the all-round potential of the individual, in order to bring into being an educated, devout, as well as dynamic, disciplined and responsible people. These qualities should complement the needs of the State founded on spiritual values which are noble in the sight of Allah. The policy forms a starting point which is oriented towards the specific character of Brunei Darussalam with emphasis on faith and obedience to Allah, priority for the Malay Language and loyalty to Monarch and State.

The major goals of the national education policy are:

- to promote and sustain an education system in which the Malay language will continue to play a leading role as the official national language, while the use of English and/or Arabic as medium of instruction is not neglected;
- to provide education in the Islamic religion, by ensuring that Islamic values and the Islamic way of life are integrated in the education system through an appropriate curriculum;
- to provide at least twelve years of education to every child, namely seven years in primary (including pre-school), three years in lower secondary and two years in upper secondary or vocational schools;



- to provide an integrated curriculum as well as suitable and uniform public examinations for all schools in the country;
- to provide educational opportunities for children to prepare them to play a useful role in fulfilling the needs and development of the country;
- to offer higher education to those with appropriate qualifications and experience according to the changing needs of the country;
- to form by the above means a national identity which serves as a foundation for loyalty to the Monarch and Brunei Darussalam;
- to build into the education system the qualities of efficiency and flexibility in order to fulfil the changing needs of the country.

The National Development Plan 1996-2000 was the seventh in the series and primarily aimed at giving an all-round enhancement to all facets of life of the people, with emphasis on economic diversification through the development of export-oriented non-oil base industries. The government has allocated a total of 7.2 billion Brunei dollars (B\$) for this purpose, with social services taking the lion's share at B\$1.98 billion; public utilities, B\$1.58 billion; transport and communications, B\$1.4 billion; industry and commerce, B\$907.66 million; public buildings, B\$623.83 million; security, B\$528.1 million; and miscellaneous, B\$173.3 million.

The Seventh National Development Plan focused on the qualitative aspect of the education system by making it more attractive for students to take mathematics and science subjects. Hence, the Ministry of Education gave priority to these subjects, apart from Malay and English, when considering academic achievement and certain academic levels or streams.

Whilst being conscious of the need to diversify its economic base, there is a desire to preserve the Brunei identity with its own norms, values, traditions and culture. One of the roles and also challenges for the Ministry is therefore to educate citizens who are able to play a role in a sophisticated technologically-oriented society and yet remain imbued with strong Islamic and Malay values. Education policies in Brunei Darussalam have been established with the aim of achieving these goals.

The education policy aims to establish an effective, efficient and equitable education system in agreement with the national philosophy, the Malay Islamic Monarchy. The education system will therefore provide opportunities for all Bruneians to realize their full potential so as to contribute to the development of a progressive and peaceful nation, where the Malay language and culture, Islamic faith and values, and loyalty and allegiance to the Monarch and the State are emphasized.

Recent policies aim at facilitating the merger of religious schools under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the schools under the Ministry of Education under the concept of 'one roof' following His Majesty's call for unity in education. Under the direction of the Education Council which was set up in 1999, the merger was implemented in phases beginning with the placement of three sections from the Department of Islamic Studies, Ministry of Religious Affairs, namely the



Inspectorate Section, the Examinations Section and the Curriculum Section under the existing School Inspectorate, Examinations and Curriculum Development Departments in the Ministry of Education respectively, effective 1 March 200. This was followed by the transfer of other sections. The merger was fully implemented in January 2002 with the transfer of the Department of Islamic Studies and all the religious schools under its jurisdiction to the Ministry of Education.

The merger of religious and regular schools allows the whole day schooling to be implemented as a pilot project in several primary and secondary schools. Under the whole day schooling, the schools share the same building, facilities and come under one school management but still following different curriculum. As a continuous effort towards establishing an integrated system of education, the Ministry of Education began efforts to integrate the curriculum by streamlining the contents of three curricula, that is, the religious school curriculum, one religious subject taught in the primary and secondary school curriculum and Al-Quran and Islamic religious knowledge taught in several schools as a pilot project, into one curricular component of Islamic education within the integrated education system.

## Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

Education in Brunei Darussalam is not compulsory but it is universal, with almost every child entering school at the age of 5 (pre-school) and remaining there until the age of 14-15 (lower secondary). The government provides free education to all citizens who attend public schools. Tuition, textbooks, transport where necessary and accommodation in hostels for students from rural areas are provided free.

In the country's **Education Act** there are only provisions binding private schools in the sultanate. The Act states that every private school in the country should be registered. Therefore, the Act may be cited as the Education (Non-Government Schools) Act of which nothing applies to government schools. The Ministry of Education provides for the establishment, regulation, operation and management of government schools. Examinations in the country are regulated by the Brunei Board of Examinations.

There is indeed a need to revise the Education Act and the Ministry of Education is currently in the process of working towards a much more comprehensive legal instrument.

## Administration and management of the education system

The **Ministry of Education** is responsible for the entire education system. At the top of the organizational structure is the Minister who is assisted by the Deputy Minister. Together, they are responsible for decision-making on all important policy matters.

The Ministry has two permanent Secretaries. The first is responsible for ministerial, administrative, international affairs and public relations; he/she is assisted by the Special Duties Officer. The second permanent Secretary is responsible for all professional aspects of policy and planning and its implementation; he/she is assisted by the Director General of Education.



There are eight departments, five units and a secretariat within the organizational structure of the Ministry of Education and these are headed by directors and other senior personnel. The departments and units include the following: Department of Schools; Department of Planning, Development and Research; Department of Curriculum Development; Department of Technical Education; Department of Examinations; Department of Administration and Services; Department of Co-Curriculum; Department of Schools Inspectorate; Special Education Unit; Unit of Planning and Building Maintenance; International and Public Relations Unit; Training and Scholarship Unit; the Unit for Recruitment of Teachers; and the Science, Technology and Environment Partnership Centre.

As part of the organizational structure of the Ministry there are the **Education Planning Council**, the **National Accreditation Council** and the **Technical and Vocational Education Council**. The Education Planning Council is chaired by the Minister of Education and provides a high-level forum for the discussion of the policy and planning issues as they relate to all levels of the education system. The Council includes in its membership the Deputy Minister, both Permanent Secretaries and all Directors.

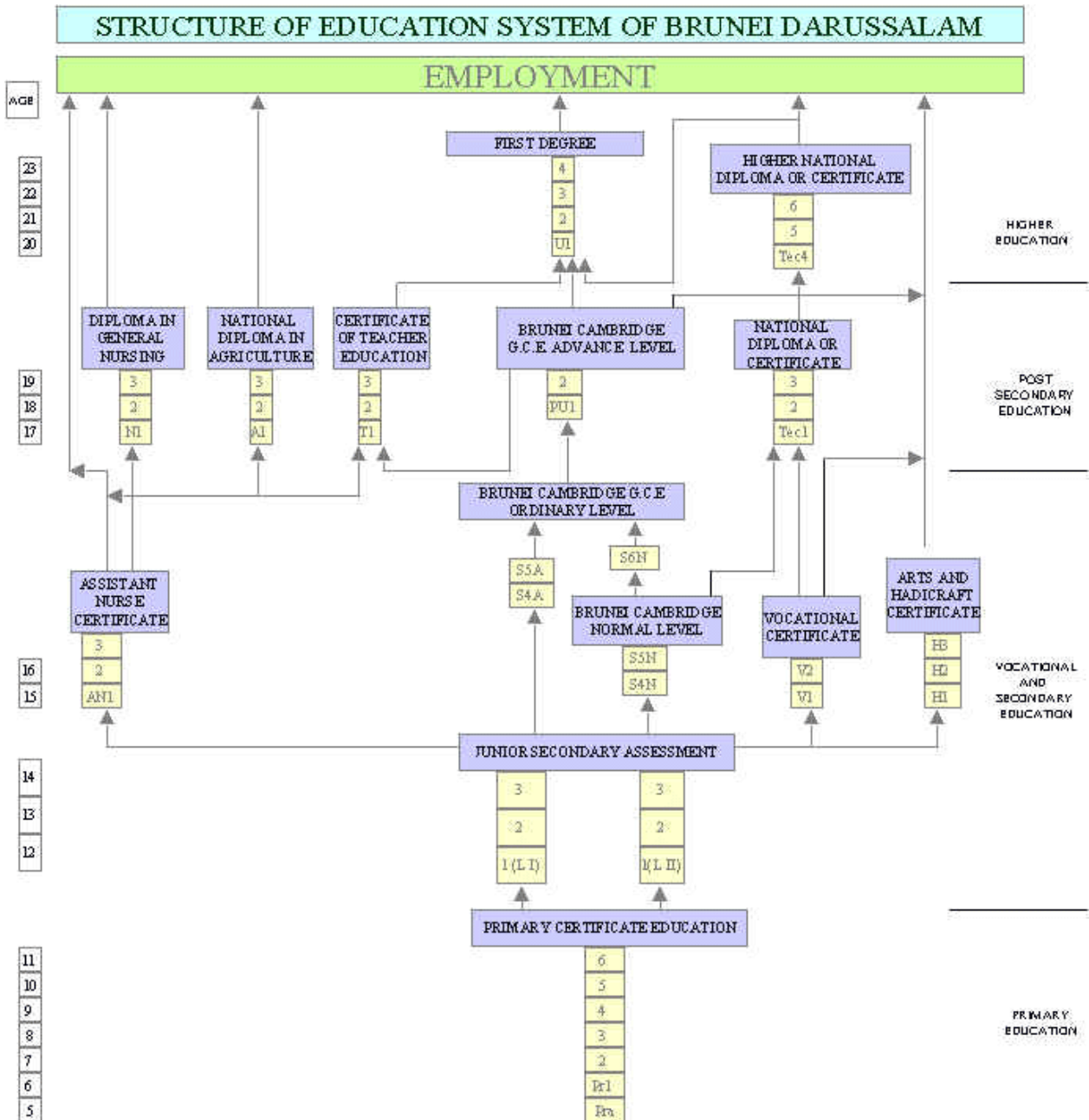
The Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council is chaired by the Minister of Education and is the sole national body responsible for evaluating and assessing qualifications recognized by the government. The Council is assisted by a Secretariat which is a unit within the office of Permanent Secretary I.

The Brunei Darussalam Technical and Vocational Education Council is chaired by the Deputy Minister of Education and validates programmes, establishes standards of performance, and awards certificates in the technical and vocational education and training system. The Council maintains close contact and liaison with both public and private sector agencies whose work and programmes may have relevance to technical and vocational education and training needs.

The **Ministry of Religious Affairs** is responsible for Islamic religious education. Religious schools under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the schools under the Ministry of Education have been merged in 2002.

## Structure and organization of the education system

### Brunei Darussalam: structure of the education system



Key:

|     |                      |
|-----|----------------------|
| Pm  | Primary              |
| S1A | Secondary (Academic) |
| LI  | Level I (Level one)  |
| LII | Level II (Level Two) |
| S4N | Secondary (Normal)   |
| N   | Nursing              |

|     |                   |
|-----|-------------------|
| AN  | Assistant Nursing |
| A   | Agriculture       |
| T   | Teacher           |
| Tec | Technical         |
| PU  | Pre-University    |
| U   | University        |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| V | Vocational |
| H | Handicraft |



## Pre-school education

Children enter the education system at the age of 5 and stay at the pre-school level for one year. However, in non-government schools, children may enter pre-schools at the age of 3 for three years before proceeding to primary education.

## Primary education

The duration of primary education is six years. The primary level is divided into lower primary (Grades I-III) and upper primary (Grades IV-VI). At the end of Grade VI, pupils sit the Primary Certificate of Education examination.

## Secondary education

Secondary education is divided into two cycles: lower secondary, lasting three years (Forms I-III), and upper secondary (Forms IV and V). Lower secondary Level I is for more academically inclined pupils, while Level II is for less able pupils. The upper secondary cycle is divided into two streams of study and lasts two or three years. Students who pass the Lower Secondary Assessment examination (known as PMB) with grade "O" (Ordinary) are streamed into a two-year upper secondary programme leading to the Brunei-Cambridge General Certificate of Education (GCE) O-level examinations. Those who pass with grade "N" (Normal) follow a two-year normal course and, since 1997, have sat the Brunei-Cambridge GCE N-level examinations. Only those who obtain enough credits proceed to the GCE O-level programme. Students who have completed the PMB, the N-level or the GCE O-level examinations can pursue vocational education in a technical or engineering college offering crafts or technician programmes (two and a half years of study).

Students who have adequate and relevant O-level results may proceed to the pre-university level. At this level, most students follow a two-year course leading to the GCE Advanced level (A-level) examination. Those who complete A-level courses with adequate and relevant passes may be eligible for entry to the University of Brunei Darussalam (UBD) or other tertiary institutions (colleges, institutes) or be awarded scholarships for further studies abroad. The minimum period of university studies is normally four academic years (or eight semesters). The maximum period is six academic years.

Schooling is free for all citizens of the country while non-citizens (permanent residents and expatriate workers) may apply for permission to send their children to government schools on a fee-paying basis. However, most prefer to send their children to private schools or abroad. The number of school days in a year varies between 202 and 210. There are four school terms in a typical school year.

## The financing of education

Education offered by government schools is almost entirely financed by the government. On the other hand, private schools are funded largely from school fees levied on students. In some cases, private school funds may also be supplemented by private donations from individuals and organizations.



With the establishment of local higher education institutions, the government policy on the granting of scholarships abroad is now limited to programmes unavailable in the country. Students are presently sent overseas for courses such as Medicine, Law, Engineering and Architecture. The Scholarship Section of the Ministry of Education is responsible for: special scheme awards; ordinary scheme awards; Royal Brunei Airlines scheme awards; admission from non-government schools to government schools; registration of private students; special privileges for students in government schools.

Allocations for these awards have been carefully devised to meet the national manpower development programme, with priority given to the requirements of national development plans.

### Government development expenditure on education

| Year | Total expenditure<br>(in B\$) |
|------|-------------------------------|
| 1990 | 116,304,032                   |
| 1991 | 31,930,298                    |
| 1992 | 34,514,002                    |
| 1993 | 219,622,879                   |
| 1994 | 89,834,504                    |
| 1995 | 54,271,186                    |
| 1996 | 28,548,422                    |
| 1997 | 33,264,679                    |
| 1998 | 21,957,000                    |

Source: Ministry of Education, 1998.

## The educational process

### Pre-primary education

The goals of pre-school education are:

- to nurture healthy character development, thinking ability, interests and skills of children;
- to provide general education for a child's mental, physical, emotional and social development;
- to provide basic education of the 3M (in Malay), or the 3R, namely reading, writing and arithmetic.





The suggested age for a child to enter the education system is 5 years. The age in private pre-schools may even be as low as 3 years, as the period of pre-school attendance is further extended to three years. Pre-school education became part of the primary school system in 1979, and since then it has become compulsory for children at the age of 5 to enroll in pre-school classes for one year before being admitted to Primary I.

The curriculum at this level covers basic language classes as well as arithmetic, civics, basic Islamic religious studies, physical education, and talent development, all of which are taught using surrounding elements. Lessons are held on an informal basis. There is no specific allocation time period per lesson since teaching is integrated and delivered through children's activities.

Children's abilities are continuously assessed and they are generally promoted to lower primary automatically.

### Primary education

The primary level is divided into lower primary (Grades I-III) and upper primary (Grades IV-VI). One year of pre-school education is considered as a stage of primary education. At the lower primary level, the medium of instruction is the Malay language. Pupils at the upper primary level follow the bilingual system of education. Subjects such as Islamic religious knowledge, arts and crafts, civics, physical education and history are taught in Malay, whereas subjects such as mathematics, geography and science are taught in English.

Primary education aims to give children a firm foundation in the basic skills of writing, reading and arithmetic. It also strives to provide opportunities for their personal growth and character development. As preparation for formal education is steadily built, the teaching of *jawi* writing (Arabic script) is emphasized beginning at Grade III.

At the end of upper primary education, pupils sit the Primary Certificate of Education (PCE) examination. The subjects examined are Malay, English, mathematics, general paper and science. Those who fail will sit the PCE examination again in January the following year. The weekly lesson timetable is shown in the table below:

### Primary education: weekly lesson timetable

| Subject                     | Number of weekly periods in each grade |           |           |               |           |           |
|-----------------------------|--|-----------|-----------|---------------|-----------|-----------|
|                             | Lower primary                          |           |           | Upper primary |           |           |
|                             | I                                      | II        | III       | IV            | V         | VI        |
| Malay language              | 10                                     | 10        | 10        | 10            | 10        | 10        |
| English language            | 10                                     | 10        | 10        | 10            | 10        | 10        |
| Mathematics                 | 12                                     | 12        | 12        | 10            | 10        | 10        |
| General knowledge/Science   | 4                                      | 4         | 4         | 3             | 3         | 3         |
| Islamic religious knowledge | 3                                      | 3         | 3         | 3             | 3         | 3         |
| Physical education          | 2                                      | 2         | 2         | 2             | 2         | 2         |
| Arts and crafts             | 2                                      | 2         | 2         | 2             | 2         | 2         |
| Civics                      | 2                                      | 2         | 2         | 2             | 2         | 2         |
| History                     | –                                      | –         | –         | 2             | 2         | 2         |
| Geography                   | –                                      | –         | –         | 2             | 2         | 2         |
| <b>Total weekly periods</b> | <b>45</b>                              | <b>45</b> | <b>45</b> | <b>46</b>     | <b>46</b> | <b>46</b> |

*Source:* Ministry of Education, 1998. Each teaching period lasts 30 minutes.

In 2004 there were 126 government pre-school/primary schools with a total enrolment of 32,421 pupils. There were 2,549 teachers, of whom 1,749 were women.

According to a research conducted by the Special Education Unit on Grades I-VI, a total of 1,597 pupils failed and repeated their respective grade in 1998. That number represents about 5% (4.93%) of the total number of primary pupils. This is seen to be high, considering the Ministry of Education's attempt to facilitate the progress of pupils throughout the grades.

### Secondary education

Secondary education is divided into two cycles: lower secondary (Forms I-III) and upper secondary (Forms IV and V).

The duration of lower secondary education is three years. At the end of lower secondary education pupils sit the Lower Secondary Assessment (PMB) examination as a non-terminal public examination. It assists the channelling of students to either vocational schools or to the academic stream and it serves as a national assessment for students' achievement after three years of secondary education. The weekly lesson timetable is shown below:

### Lower secondary education: weekly lesson timetable

| Subject   | Number of weekly periods in each form |           |           |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
|   | I                                     | II        | III       |
| <i>Examination subjects:</i>                        |                                       |           |           |
| Malay language                                      | 4                                     | 4         | 4         |
| English language                                    | 7                                     | 7         | 7         |
| Mathematics   | 6                                     | 6         | 6         |
| Integrated science                                  | 6                                     | 6         | 6         |
| History   | 3                                     | 3         | 3         |
| Geography   | 4                                     | 4         | 4         |
| Religious knowledge                                 | 3                                     | 3         | 3         |
| <i>Non-examination subjects:</i>                    |                                       |           |           |
| Physical education                                  | 2                                     | 2         | 2         |
| Malay Islamic Monarchy                              | 2                                     | 2         | 2         |
| <i>Optional subjects (one among the following):</i> |                                       |           |           |
| Commercial studies                                  |                                       |           |           |
| Woodwork  |                                       |           |           |
| Home science  |                                       |           |           |
| Arts  |                                       |           |           |
| Arabic language                                     | 3                                     | 3         | 3         |
| Food and nutrition                                  |                                       |           |           |
| Metalwork   |                                       |           |           |
| French language                                     |                                       |           |           |
| Computer studies                                    |                                       |           |           |
| Agricultural science                                |                                       |           |           |
| <b>Total weekly periods (min.)</b>                  | <b>40</b>                             | <b>40</b> | <b>40</b> |

*Source:* Ministry of Education, 1998. Each teaching period lasts 35 minutes.

The upper secondary cycle is divided into two streams of study lasting two or three years. Students who pass the Lower Secondary Assessment examination with grade "O" (Ordinary) are streamed to a two-year upper secondary programme leading to the Brunei-Cambridge GCE O-level examinations, and those who pass with grade "N" (Normal) follow a two-year normal course and sit the Brunei-Cambridge GCE N-level examinations since 1997. Only those who obtain enough credits proceed to the GCE O-level programme. The weekly lesson timetable is shown below:

## Upper secondary education: weekly lesson timetable

| Subject                            | Number of weekly periods in each form |           |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|
|                                    | IV                                    | V         |
| Malay language                     | 4-5                                   | 4-5       |
| English language                   | 6-8                                   | 6-8       |
| Mathematics                        | 6                                     | 6         |
| Additional mathematics             | 4-6                                   | 4-6       |
| Biology                            | 5-6                                   | 5-6       |
| Physics                            | 5-6                                   | 5-6       |
| Chemistry                          | 5-6                                   | 5-6       |
| Combined science                   | 5-7                                   | 5-7       |
| 'Double science' [sic]             | 5-7                                   | 5-7       |
| Human and social biology           | 5-7                                   | 5-7       |
| History                            | 4-6                                   | 4-6       |
| Geography                          | 4-6                                   | 4-6       |
| Principles of accounting           | 4-6                                   | 4-6       |
| Commerce                           | 4-5                                   | 4-5       |
| Economics                          | 4-6                                   | 4-6       |
| Malay literature                   | 4-5                                   | 4-5       |
| Woodwork                           | 4-6                                   | 4-6       |
| Home management                    | 4-5                                   | 4-5       |
| Malay Islamic Monarchy             | 2                                     | 2         |
| Arts                               | 4-6                                   | 4-6       |
| Religious knowledge                | 4-5                                   | 4-5       |
| English literature                 | 4-5                                   | 4-5       |
| Agricultural sciences              | 4-5                                   | 4-5       |
| Computer studies                   | 4-5                                   | 4-5       |
| Geometric and mechanical drawing   | 4-6                                   | 4-6       |
| Food and nutrition                 | 4-6                                   | 4-6       |
| <b>Total weekly periods (min.)</b> | <b>40</b>                             | <b>40</b> |

Source: Ministry of Education, 1998. Each teaching period lasts 35 minutes.

In 2004 there were 28 government secondary schools with a total enrolment of 29,494 students and 2,745 teachers (including teachers at the pre-university level).

Students who have completed the PMB, the N-level or the GCE O-level examinations can pursue technical, vocational or career courses in a vocational school, technical or engineering college offering crafts or technician programmes (two and a half years of study).

National Trade Certificate III (NTC-3) courses are one and a half years' in duration, which include a period of industrial attachment. The minimum entry qualification into a NTC-3 course is completion of Form III. However, priority is given to applicants who have passed the PMB. On successful completion, students will be awarded the National Certificate III. National Trade Certificate II (NTC-2) courses last one year. The minimum entry qualification into a NTC-2 course is successful completion of a related NTC-3 course (or equivalent) and at least one year of relevant working experience. On successful completion, students are awarded the National Trade Certificate II. The assessment of students' performance at craft level is based on their marks in semester assignments which make up 70% of the total marks, with the remaining 30% coming from a project. A full-time craft course is two and a



half years in duration (including six months of industrial attachment). The entry requirement is a completion of Form III or a pass in the PMB examination.

The technician courses consist of two levels: a pre-national diploma or certificate course, and a national diploma or certificate course. On successful completion of the courses, students are awarded a diploma by the Brunei Darussalam Technical and Vocational Education Council. Technician-level courses of 2½ years duration are offered on a “sandwich” basis and lead to the Brunei National Diploma (BND). The sandwich method of course delivery consists of alternate periods of instruction at the College and training with an employer on-the-job.

Students who have adequate and relevant O-level results may proceed to the pre-university level. At this level, most students follow a two-year course leading to the Brunei-Cambridge GCE A-level examination.

Those students who complete A-level courses with adequate and relevant passes may be eligible for entry to the University or other tertiary institutions (or be awarded scholarships for further studies abroad).

In 2004 the total enrolment in technical and vocational education (government sector) was 3,113 students. The total number of teachers was 616.

The Secondary Section within the Department of Schools has its own objectives to achieve the finalities of secondary education. These objectives are:

- to maximize the effective use of educational resources;
- to be involved in the preparation of effective curricular and co-curricular matters;
- to improve interaction and communication with schools and parents/guardians in solving students problems;
- to improve students academic achievement;
- to enable teaching and learning to be more systematic and effective;
- to develop the professionalism of teachers through staff development programmes;
- to provide an environment conducive to learning.

### **Assessing learning achievement nationwide**

Public examinations are the means of assessment. Pupils and students sit mid-year and end-of-year exams, and they also sit national and international level examinations. At the end of the primary level, pupils sit the Primary Certificate Examination (PCE) which is conducted nationwide. This examination is for entry into the lower secondary level.

As already mentioned, the Junior Secondary Assessment Examination (PMB) awaits students at the end of the three-year lower secondary level to assess their achievement and to determine to a certain extent their suitability for the various possible channels.

To ensure that the quality of education and students achievement in the country are at least on a par with the international level, the Ministry of Education has established links with the Cambridge Board of Examinations for the upper secondary and the pre-university levels.

### Results of the Brunei-Cambridge A-level examinations

|  | Nov. 1994 | Nov. 1995 | Nov. 1996     | Nov. 1997 | June 1998 |
|--|-----------|-----------|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| No. of Colleges                                  | 2         | 3         | Not available | 3         | 4         |
| Private candidates                               | 19        | 127       | Not available | 124       | -         |
| No. of candidates (including private candidates) | 638       | 702       | Not available | 815       | 418       |
| Achieved one 'A level subject and above          | 429       | 510       | Not available | 651       | 239       |
| Absent from examination                          | 58        | 75        | Not available | 0         | 29        |

Source: Ministry of Education, 1998.

### Results of the Brunei-Cambridge O-level examinations

|               | No. of schools | No. of private candidates | Total No. of candidates | GCE | GCE | GCE | GCE | GCE | GCE | GCE   | GCE   | GCE   | GCE | Absent | % of passes [3 - 8] |
|---------------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|-------|-----|--------|---------------------|
|               |                |                           |                         | 9   | 8   | 7   | 6   | 5   | 4   | 3     | 2     | 1     | 0   |        |                     |
| December 1994 | 28             | 597                       | 4,973                   | NA  | 195 | 196 | 170 | 274 | 413 | 881   | NA    | NA    | NA  | 452    | 45.98               |
| December 1995 | 30             | 515                       | 5,462                   | NA  | 213 | 164 | 194 | 269 | 679 | 1,142 | NA    | NA    | NA  | 375    | 48.72               |
| December 1996 | 36             | 635                       | 5,366                   | NA  | 194 | 190 | 205 | 275 | 520 | 1,017 | 1,259 | 1,022 | 684 | NA     | 44.74               |
| November 1997 | 38             | 526                       | 4,683                   | 7   | 223 | 185 | 214 | 307 | 504 | 896   | 1,088 | 769   | 490 | NA     | 49.88               |

Source: Ministry of Education, 1998. (NA: Not applicable/Not available).

## Higher education

Government post-secondary and higher education institutions comprise the University, two institutes (*Institut Teknologi Brunei*–Brunei Institute of Technology– and *Institut Pengajian Islam*–Institute of Islamic Studies), the Nursing College, the Teacher Training (Islamic) College, and six vocational/technical colleges.



*Universiti Brunei Darussalam* (UDB) is the only university in the country, established in October 1985. In 1998, the University accommodated more than 200 academic staff and about 1,600 students (over 3,600 in 2004) in six faculties, namely: arts and social sciences, management and administrative studies, Islamic studies, science, Sultan Hassanah Bolkuah Institute of Education, and Academy of Brunei Studies.

The University operates on a semester system. There are two semesters in an academic year, each made up of fourteen weeks of teaching periods with a one-week break in the middle, a week for revision and two weeks for examinations. The first semester is followed by five weeks of vacation and the second by a twelve-week vacation. The minimum period of study for degree graduation is normally four academic years (eight semesters). The maximum period is six academic years.

The academic programmes are based on a unit system under which a student has to accumulate a minimum number of credit-units for graduation. The minimum number of credit-units to be accumulated is 124 for most programmes. Each programme is made up of a number of separate courses in each year, and each course carries with it a specified number of credit-units. A single credit-unit is usually equivalent to approximately fourteen hours of lectures and tutorials in a semester (i.e. one hour per week). A practical session or a laboratory class of two or three hours is usually equivalent to a one-hour lecture/tutorial (or one credit unit).

The semester examination normally constitutes 60 to 80% of the total marks allocated to the course, and the continuous assessment of course work during the semester normally constitutes 20 to 40% of the total marks allocated to the course. At the end of each semester every student is required to take the examinations prescribed for the courses taken. If the student passes these examinations, he/she is credited with the credit-unit value assigned to the course. There is a supplementary (re-sit) examination and a student may be permitted to re-take only once any course examination that he/she has failed. A student who fails the supplementary examination must repeat the course if it is a compulsory course.

If a student fails in a compulsory course, he/she is required to repeat that course in the following semester or academic year, depending on when the course is offered. Similarly, the student will be required to repeat a failed elective course or take another elective course in its place. Notwithstanding this, he/she can proceed to some courses prescribed for the following semester provided that the total number of credit-unit courses taken does not exceed the maximum allowed for that particular semester. A student enrolled in any programme is permitted to progress to the next academic year as far as he/she maintains an active registration status. To maintain this status, the student has to successfully obtain at least two-thirds of the credit units registered in each semester examination.

A student who fails to maintain an active registration status in any semester examination will be put on probation and given a probationary registration status. He/she may continue with this status for a maximum of three consecutive semesters. If he/she fails to achieve an active registration status within this period, his/her registration as a student will terminate. This system gives students the advantage of continuing their studies though they have failed a certain number of courses. It also



enables the student to repeat a failed course beyond the minimum period of four years for graduation so as to make up the required minimum number of credit-units for graduation provided he/she does not go beyond the prescribed maximum period of six years.

Students are selected on merit and those with the best and most relevant GCE A-level passes will be selected for interview at UBD before the final selection is made. Other qualifications deemed equivalent to GCE A-level may also be acceptable. Applicants must be prepared to attend any interview and take any test required by the University Admissions Committee and after acceptance must be certified medically fit to follow the programme by any government or any recognized private doctor.

The degrees awarded on completion of the prescribed programmes are classified as follows: First class honours; Second class honours (upper division); Second class honours (lower division); Third class honours; Pass.

Nine honours degree programmes are offered, each normally spread over a minimum period of four years, and leading to the award of the following first degrees:

- *Malay Medium:* Bachelor of Arts Education (BA Ed).
- *English Medium:* Bachelor of Arts Education (BA Ed); Bachelor of Science Education (BSc. Ed); Bachelor of Arts Primary Education (BA Pr. Ed); Bachelor of Arts (BA): (a) management studies; (b) public policy and administration; major in economics, geography or English language studies, and minor in economics, geography, accounting and finance, mathematics or English language studies; Bachelor of Science (BSc): mathematics with computer science; Bachelor of Engineering (B Eng): electrical and electronic engineering, joint degree programme with the University of Glasgow, United Kingdom (UK); Bachelor of Science (BSc): computer science, joint degree programme with the University of Strathclyde, UK; Bachelor of Commerce (B Com.): the degree in Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting is a joint degree programme with the University of Birmingham, UK; Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA).

Other programmes include: certificate in education (English medium); post-graduate certificate in education (English or Malay medium); master in educational management (English medium and part-time); master in public policy (English medium); Master in petroleum geoscience (English medium); certificate in teaching of Malay language (Malay medium); certificate in educational management (Malay medium); certificate in early childhood education (English medium); and certificate in special education (English medium and part-time).

There is a year-abroad scheme, whereby students who have done well in their first two years at the University have the opportunity to do their third year at an overseas university and return to UBD to complete their degree.

The primary objective of the Brunei Institute of Technology (ITB) is to cater to a range of interests in technical and commercial education. In order to meet this





objective, the Institute continually seeks close links with employers in both the public and private sectors with the purpose of determining their training needs and the appropriateness of the courses provided. Related to this objective is the Institute's goal to train men and women to be professionally competent, inspired and dedicated towards personal growth and service to the nation.

The ITB has three well-established departments (business and management, computing and information systems, electrical and electronic engineering) and two new departments: civil engineering and mechanical engineering. Except for the Higher National Diploma (HND) course by part-time study, courses generally take two and a half years (five semesters) to complete and include a six-month period of supervised work experience. The total enrolment in 2004 was 482 students.

## Special education

Since its establishment in 1994, the Special Education Unit of the Ministry of Education has catered to pupils with learning problems or special education needs. One of the Unit's initial tasks was to devise a course for teachers to become Learning Assistance Teachers (LAT) in government schools. Due to the lack of human resources in this area, LATs are only provided in certain schools at the lower primary level. Hence, there are still a number of schools, mostly small, without learning assistance teachers.

LATs are responsible for: screening; diagnosing; implementing special education plans; setting up a learning assistance centre; involving subject specialists in remedial programmes; drafting individual educational plans; and connecting with parents and outside agencies when necessary.

LATs are continually trained. The courses include special education, classroom management, children with special needs and refresher courses. A series of workshops are also conducted particularly for teachers participating in pilot projects.

Among the strategies adopted to handle pupils with learning problems, there is a pilot project that moves away from the traditional approach to a more concrete, hands-on approach with an emphasis on practical application of skills. This is targeted at pupils who are non-academically inclined, overaged for the grade (repeaters), having experienced failure, with low motivation in the regular school programmes, low self-esteem and a language deficiency in Malay and English.

There are eighty-nine learning assistance centres in primary schools, and nine in secondary schools are presently in the process of implementation. Concerning the latter, the LATs task is, among others, to screen all Form I students by administering tests in basic skills (Malay, English and mathematics).

In order to ensure smooth entry of children with severe impairments into the school system, the Special Education Unit also participates in the Multi-Disciplinary Committee at Raja Isteri Pengiran Anal Saleha Hospital.

## Private education

Although government schools largely dominate the education sector, there are a number of private schools operating in the country. Non-government schools are self-funded largely through the levy of school fees on students and at times private donations from individuals and organizations.

As mentioned earlier, the Education Act of Brunei Darussalam may be cited as the Education (Non-Government Schools) Act, as it only provides for “the registration of, and control of secular education in, schools not wholly maintained or wholly managed or controlled by the government and for matters connected therewith.”

Private schools are monitored by the Non-Government School Section under the Department of Schools. This is to ensure that they operate following the national curriculum and maintain the quality of education at an acceptable standard. Private educational establishments range from pre-primary to pre-university levels.

Statistics concerning non-government schools are presented in the tables below:

### Pre-school education

| Year | No. of schools | Total enrolment (MF) | No. of teachers (MF) |
|------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1990 | 30             | 4,120                | 149                  |
| 1991 | 31             | 4,385                | 156                  |
| 1992 | 31             | 4,414                | 151                  |
| 1993 | 32             | 4,434                | 201                  |
| 1994 | 45             | 6,582                | 243                  |
| 1995 | 52             | 7,765                | 286                  |
| 1996 | 54             | 7,702                | 294                  |
| 1997 | 60             | 8,342                | 309                  |

Source: Ministry of Education, 1998.



### Primary education

| Year | No. of schools | Total enrolment (MF) | No. of teachers (MF) |
|------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1990 | 27             | 9,099                | 397                  |
| 1991 | 24             | 12,165               | 425                  |
| 1992 | 28             | 12,206               | 414                  |
| 1993 | 32             | 12,009               | 430                  |
| 1994 | 37             | 11,412               | 488                  |
| 1995 | 36             | 13,263               | 504                  |
| 1996 | 40             | 14,387               | 574                  |
| 1997 | 42             | 15,128               | 726                  |

Source: Ministry of Education, 1998. For the year 2000, the total enrolment was 24,370.

### Secondary education

| Year | No. of schools | Total enrolment (MF) | No. of teachers (MF) |
|------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1990 | 10             | 3,023                | 97                   |
| 1991 | 10             | 3,623                | 98                   |
| 1992 | 10             | 3,059                | 104                  |
| 1993 | 10             | 2,877                | 102                  |
| 1994 | 10             | 3,098                | 105                  |
| 1995 | 10             | 3,152                | 135                  |
| 1996 | 10             | 3,270                | 182                  |
| 1997 | 11             | 3,425                | 186                  |

Source: Ministry of Education, 1998. For the year 2000, the total enrolment was 4,038.

In 2004 there were 78 formal schools (kindergarten/pre-school to primary level), 59 tuition, 21 computer, 8 music, and one tailoring schools as well as six tertiary-level institutions. In the same year, there were 1,695 teachers employed in formal schools to cater to the needs of 24,662 students (an additional 5,184 students were enrolled in 13 private education establishments at the secondary and pre-university level). Although all formal schools are requested to follow the national curriculum, certain international schools follow their own curriculum provision. Tertiary-level institutions follow a curriculum of their own choice based on the curriculum of the foreign universities to which they are affiliated.



## Means of instruction, equipment and infrastructure

The Ministry of Education strives to facilitate the education system in the country by providing a number of educational facilities and support services. With the establishment of the Co-Curriculum Department and the Special Education Unit, Brunei Darussalam introduced its first school feeding scheme as early as the 1940s.

With the purpose of accommodating pupils from rural areas who studied at schools in Badar Seri Begawan (then Brunei town), the first hostel was built in 1954. The number of hostels grew in order to cope with an increasing number of pupils who required accommodation. In the mid-1980s, some of the hostels were closed due to the declining demand for this type of service. This was mainly due to improvements in the road and transport system and the establishment of more schools in rural areas. Transport is also provided for students living in areas more than eight kilometers from their schools.

Another educational infrastructure is the Educational Resource Library. This is to provide a variety of library services for the purpose of research as well as reference and planning of teaching and learning strategies for officers, teachers and students.

Textbooks, supplementary and reference books for government schools are supplied and financed by the government, while private schools obtain their supplies from local bookshops. Realizing the need to keep up with the pace of technology, the Ministry of Education is making efforts to familiarize students with computers. Computer courses are offered in government secondary schools and are assessed in examinations.

With the government's attempts to make science and mathematics attractive to pupils as early as the primary level, the use of computers has been intensified and greater involvement of the private sector in the curriculum design and development is encouraged. The use of Internet is also promoted and students are encouraged to design their school's official home page through national competitions and awards.

## Adult and non-formal education

Adult education, called continuing education, is one of the responsibilities of the Department of Technical Education at the Ministry of Education. It is open to all school leavers in the country whether they are already working or not. There are a number of programmes offered for school leavers and these range from academic and technical courses to language courses and community programmes, as shown below:

- *Home science*: Flower arrangement; Embroidery and needlework; Weaving; Tailoring; Cookery.
- *Academic classes*: Lower secondary education; Upper secondary education.
- *Malay language for non-Malay*.
- *Foreign languages* (English, Japanese, Arabic, French, Chinese).



- *Technical courses*: Construction science; Construction drawing; Material and calculations; Construction theory; Technical English.
- *Commercial classes*: Typing and shorthand; Book-keeping; Accounting.

Community programmes include: Home science; Classes for the disabled; Programmes conducted at the Vocational Training Centre for the Disabled; Programmes conducted at *Taman Noorhidayah* (Centre for women with social problems, e.g. domestic violence, runaways, teenagers with problems); Programmes conducted at the Drug Rehabilitation Centre; Programmes conducted at the Jerudong prison.

Enrolment is open to both citizens and foreign residents in the country; the latter, however, have to pay an extra 50% of the minimal fee charged for a certain course. The Ministry of Education offers community programmes with the co-operation of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports. Salaries for teaching staff, who are normally teachers under the Department of Schools, are borne by the Ministry of Education and the fees levied on students constitute government revenue.

#### Enrolments in continuing education (1998)

| Course                           | Classes | No. of students |
|----------------------------------|---------|-----------------|
| Home science                     | 72      | 1,323           |
| Academic                         |         | 480             |
| Foreign languages                |         | 226             |
| Technical                        |         | 60              |
| Commerce (first session):        |         | 752             |
| – Typing                         | 41      | 645             |
| – Shorthand                      | 6       | 107             |
| Disabled children guidance class | 20      | 128             |
| <i>Taman Noorhidayah</i>         | 2       | 28              |
| Drug Rehabilitation Centre       | 2       | 24              |
| Jerudong prison                  | 2       | 41              |
| <b>Total</b>                     |         | 3,075           |

Source: Ministry of Education, 1998.

As a result of the continuous effort by the Ministry of Education to provide education for all through the provision of formal and non-formal education, the literacy rate in the country had risen from 69% to 92.5% in 2001.



## Teaching staff

Teachers at the primary level are required to have a minimum academic qualification of GCE O-level (others join after their A-level) and follow a three-year training programme at the Sultan Hassanal Bolkhiah Institute of Education.

At the secondary level, teachers are required to have a first degree. Graduates in disciplines other than education must enrol into the post-graduate certificate of education courses within the first three years of their service before they can be confirmed in their position.

Principals are normally sent to Singapore for a one-year course (Diploma in School Management), while school inspectors are sent in the United Kingdom for the Her Majesty Inspectors (HMI) course (three months). Short- and long-term professional training programmes are also arranged for headmasters according to the needs. These courses are: school management; supervisory and leadership teaching; school staff development; skills for preparing school programmes; skills for guidance and counselling; implementation and evaluation of school curriculum; public relations; financial management.

## Educational research and information

The present link and admission of Brunei Darussalam to educational organizations such as the South East Asian Ministry of Education Organization (SEAMEO), the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), the Asian Pacific Economic Co-operation Education Forum (APEC Education Forum), and the International Council on Education for Teachers (ICET), reflects the need for access to international information. The Ministry of Education itself is growing in the use of high technology in the information superhighway.

Information concerning educational research is not available.

## References

Ministry of Education of Brunei Darussalam. *General information concerning the education system*. 1998 and 2003.

Ministry of Education of Brunei Darussalam. *Educational profile of Brunei Darussalam*. Document prepared for the International Bureau of Education. October 1998.

## Web resources

Ministry of Education: <http://www.moe.gov.bn/> [In English and Malay. Last checked: October 2007.]

For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/links.htm>