

## The Nepali Education System

The system is basically to be divided into the following sectors with the Ministry of Education (<http://www.moe.gov.np/>) bearing responsibility for all three of them:

- preschool education; kindergarten (under age 6)
- school education: primary and secondary education (duration: 10 + 2 years, age 6 - 17)<sup>1</sup>
- higher education: (age 18 and up)<sup>2</sup>

Apart from these sectors there is vocational training offered after having finished the lower secondary level after grade 8.

Education	School/Level	from/after grade	to grade	from age	to age	Duration in years	Qualification/degree
Primary	Primary	1	5	6	11	5	
Middle	Lower Secondary	6	8	12	14	3	
Secondary	Lower Secondary	9	10	15	16	2	SLC
<i>Alternative:</i> Vocational	Secondary	8	10	15	17	2	TSLC
Secondary	Higher Secondary	11	12	18	20	2	+2 HSEB Certificate
<i>Vocational</i>	TEVT	11	13	16	19	3	Certificate/ Diploma
Higher	Higher Bachelor	12				3 to 4	BA, BBA, BE, BIT, BHM, BSW, BSc a.o.
Higher	Higher Master	BA				1 to 2	MA

<sup>1</sup> The language of instruction in primary and secondary education is Nepalese. Higher Education is offered in both English and Nepalese.

<sup>2</sup> The Nepalese education system described and compared with the Dutch system <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/library/education-system-nepal.pdf>

Preschool education is available for a small minority and mostly in urban areas only. It applies to around 60% of the richest fifth and around 14% of the poorest fifth of the overall population.<sup>3</sup>

School attendance is obligatory for the first five years. By law there are no fees due but some costs arise for books and stationary as well as for admission and the like so that in reality families with a very low income cannot afford school. This applies to about 10% of the overall population.<sup>4</sup>

From grade six there are fees to be paid.<sup>5</sup> About 70% of the children attend school from then on.<sup>6</sup> Three years of lower secondary grade education follow.

About 30 per cent of Nepali children attend private schools<sup>7</sup> since public schools are perceived as insufficient. Most middle-class families send their children to such schools.<sup>8</sup>

Students leave school after ten grades with the so called School Leaving Certificate (SLC). Passing grade ten is preliminary in order to be able to take part in SLC exams. With their SLC students are entitled to go on with one of the Plus Two colleges for two years in order to then pursue an academic program at one of the universities.

SLC is therefore of enormous relevance and known as a kind of bottleneck in a selection process in Nepal. It is quite a sticking point in educational careers. Not only for academic but also for vocational purposes it is of high importance. The level of the exams is being described as disproportionately high as compared to the contents of the curricula being taught. Passing the exams means high social prestige whereas failure means quite a stressful and humiliating experience.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> UNICEF [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/nepal\\_nepal\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/nepal_nepal_statistics.html)

<sup>4</sup> UNICEF [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/nepal\\_nepal\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/nepal_nepal_statistics.html)

<sup>5</sup> Vgl. Gemperli, Bettina 2014 Welche Relevanz hat Berufsberatung für Jugendliche in Entwicklungsländern? Eine explorative Studie in Nepal.: 56

<sup>6</sup> UNICEF [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/nepal\\_nepal\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/nepal_nepal_statistics.html)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.spotlightnepal.com/News/Article/-%E2%80%9CPrivate-And-Boarding-Schools-Live-Under-Uncertai>

<sup>8</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Private\\_school#Nepal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Private_school#Nepal)

<sup>9</sup> Vgl. Doehne, Thomas 2000 Zwischen Bildungsgewinn und Erfahrungsverlust: Schulerziehung in einem Bergdistrikt Nepals. Frankfurt a.M. Brandes & Apsel.

Only about half of the candidates pass the exams.<sup>10</sup> There is a high discrepancy between the success rates of students at public (30 -40%) and private schools (70 - 80%).<sup>11</sup>

Students are categorized into six divisions according to their score: <sup>12</sup>

- A+ above 90%
- A above 80%
- B above 60%
- C above 40%
- D above 25%
- E below 25%

Universities also offer professional and technical degrees. Out of the formal track, short-term programs focusing on skills development are also available. <sup>13</sup>

Vocationally-oriented secondary education is coordinated by CTEVT - Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (<http://ctevt.org.np/>).<sup>14</sup> Other providers than CTEV itself are private institutions, other governmental agencies, technical institutions of the Universities, community-based Secondary Schools (Annex Schools) and NGO.<sup>15</sup>

Vocationally-oriented secondary education that ways forms an alternative option to SLC. Following this path, students might eventually either study at a college or might even be entitled to university programs in case they wish. <sup>16</sup> The government is currently running a program to enhance vocational education and training.<sup>17</sup>

Students graduating the TSLC can now - since July 2015 - opt for the science stream in the general category, higher secondary in technical category under the HSEB or

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.ekantipur.com/2015/06/20/top-story/47.43-pc-students-pass-slc-test/406787.html>;  
<http://www.event.gov.np/pdf/matchninggrantsguidelines3.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Gemperli 2014: 57f.

<sup>12</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School\\_Leaving\\_Certificate\\_%28Nepal%29](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School_Leaving_Certificate_%28Nepal%29)

<sup>13</sup> UNESCO: <http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/go.php?q=World+TVET+Database&ct=NPL>

<sup>14</sup> The Nepalese education system described and compared with the Dutch system <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/library/education-system-nepal.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> UNESCO: <http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/go.php?q=World+TVET+Database&ct=NPL>

<sup>16</sup> For Shangri-La students it is a prior goal to have them leave school with SLC and not seek a TSLC by changing to another type of school after having finished lower secondary education (grade 8). SVTC programs offered to students at SIS save them one year of CTEVT courses under certain circumstances.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.event.gov.np/pdf/matchninggrantsguidelines3.pdf>

diploma courses provided by the Council for the Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT).<sup>18</sup>

So quite many students opt for a three-year vocational programme ending with a diploma.<sup>19</sup>

With the aim of providing certain professional and vocational skills to the people who are either unable to gain higher education or are interested to gain certain vocational/ professional skills for their better professional career, CTEVT through its own schools or affiliated technical schools and training centers has been running various vocational training programs of short duration ranging from 39 hours to 1500 hours. These courses are offered as per the demand and needs of the people, especially in the field of agriculture, engineering, health, tourism, management and computer.<sup>20</sup>

Various research studies show that more than 70 percent of TEVT graduates in an average are employed (including self employment). TEVT graduates are entitled to continue their education at universities in their relevant subject.<sup>21</sup>

As mentioned above, holders of SLC are entitled to go on with one of the Plus Two colleges for two years in order to then pursue an academic program at one of the universities.

Plus Two offers specialization - a choice between the general science or anything else (SLC score of 55% and higher), Management Commerce (medium grades) and Humanities and Education (lowest grades).<sup>22</sup> All specializations lead to the HSEB Certificate, which offers access to Bachelor's programs.<sup>23</sup> Responsible is the HSEB, Higher Secondary Education Board (<http://www.hseb.edu.np>).

Higher Education is for one thing offered at universities, which offer both professionally-oriented and academic education and are state-run except Kathmandu University, the first and so far only private one. Higher Education is provided by the universities' constituent and affiliated campuses. Constituent campuses are a part of

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<sup>18</sup> [http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2015/07/07/related\\_articles/hseb-allowed-to-start-classes-for-tslc-graduates/278136.html](http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2015/07/07/related_articles/hseb-allowed-to-start-classes-for-tslc-graduates/278136.html)

<sup>19</sup> Shangri-La students with a SLC result of more than 75% are heading for Plus Two Colleges, others for CTEVT trainings.

<sup>20</sup> <http://ctevt.org.np/page.php?page=37>. There are various short term vocational trainings and other skill trainings, which anybody can take part in.

<sup>21</sup> <http://ctevt.org.np/page.php?page=34>; The Nepalese education system described and compared with the Dutch system: <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/library/education-system-nepal.pdf>. Shangri-La students have to work for two years before the organisation considers to support and fund such a career.

<sup>22</sup> Gemperli 2014: 58

<sup>23</sup> The Nepalese education system described and compared with the Dutch system <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/library/education-system-nepal.pdf>

the university organization and receive government grants. Affiliated campuses include institutions categorized as community campuses or private campuses. Community campuses, on the other hand, are private non-profit institutions that receive a limited amount of government funding. Private campuses are commercial institutions. The campuses are located throughout Nepal, although a large number are based in Kathmandu. Most campuses offer programs in a small number of disciplines.<sup>24</sup>

Bachelor's programs generally have a duration of 3 to 4 years; law, medicine and veterinary take longer. Master's programs generally have a duration of 1 to 2 years; PhD programs are offered by a small number of campuses only and have a duration of 3 to 5 years.

Tribhuvan University (TU)

Nepal Sanskrit University (NSU)

Kathmandu University

Pokhara University

Purbanchal University

Lumbini Buddhist University

Agriculture and Forest University (AFU)

Mid-Western University (MWU)

Far-Western University (FWU)

There are about 30 Engineering Colleges, more than 50 Science and Management Colleges and about 20 Medical Colleges listed<sup>25</sup> many of them run by private initiatives.<sup>26</sup>

There has been a call to end political appointments in universities, since degrading the quality of higher education. Top executives in universities such as vice chancellors are appointed on political rather than academic grounds. Rather than qualified academic personalities it is (usually male candidates) who are being recommended by

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<sup>24</sup> The Nepalese education system described and compared with the Dutch system <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/library/education-system-nepal.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> According to The Himalayan Times, Aug.4<sup>th</sup> p.2 39 were closed down in 2015 alone after not having been active for two years.

<sup>26</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_universities\\_and\\_colleges\\_in\\_Nepal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_universities_and_colleges_in_Nepal)

the different political parties following a quota system on the basis of political power sharing, which is damaging the academic quality of the universities.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> The Himalayan Times, Aug.4<sup>th</sup> p.2