

Pakistan

Demographics for Pakistan

Population:	162,419,946 (July 2005 est.)
GDP (by PPP method):	US\$347.3 billion
Currency (inc code):	Pakistani Rupee (PKR)
Language(s):	Punjabi, Sindhi, Siraiqi, Pashtu, Urdu (official), Balochi, Hindko, Brahui, English (official), Burushaski, others
Internet country code:	.pk

Elementary and secondary education

Elementary and secondary level education in Pakistan is organized as five years for the elementary or primary stage, five years for the lower secondary stage, and two years for the higher secondary stage.

Elementary or primary education covers grades one to five. The language of instruction at this stage is either Urdu or the regional language in public schools, and English in private schools. The curriculum includes reading, writing, arithmetic, general science, social studies, religious studies and physical education. Students are assessed through coursework, class participation and examinations and promoted from one grade to another automatically.

Lower secondary education covers grades six to ten. The language of instruction is Urdu or the regional language in public schools and English in private schools. The curriculum for lower secondary schools is prescribed by the Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE). Students who wish to apply for a scholarship take the grade eight examination conducted by the respective provincial education departments. The language of instruction for

most of the public schools also changes to English for grades nine to ten. During the lower secondary stage, students choose a science stream or a general stream of study. Students are assessed through coursework and examinations on an annual basis. The BISE holds annual examinations for grades nine and ten.

At the Higher Secondary Education (HSE) level, students specialize in science or arts. In addition to Islamic Studies and English, students may choose either four science subjects or four subjects from the social sciences or general group. The language of instruction for most of the public schools and all private schools is English. The BISE holds annual examinations for grades 11 and 12. At the HSE level, some students opt for the examination of General Certificate of Education (GCE).

Higher education

Stage 1

Traditionally, a Bachelor's degree used to be awarded after a two-year program, but this two-year Bachelor's degree is currently being phased out. The Honor's Bachelor's Degree is awarded after three years of full time study in arts, humanities, sciences, business and commerce. A Bachelor's degree in engineering, pharmacy and computer sciences takes four years, and medicine requires five years of study. Policies and standards for admission into professional schools usually include specific entrance tests and higher secondary education scores.

Stage 2

The Master's degree requires two years of study after the two-year Bachelor's degree and one year after the three or four year Bachelor's degree.

Stage 3

A Doctoral degree normally requires a minimum of three years of study beyond the Master's degree (www.wes.org/ewenr/05jan/feature.htm#Pakistan). However, the Doctor of Literature (DLitt), Doctor of Science (DSc) and Doctor of Law (LLD) are awarded after five to seven years of study.

Higher education commission (HEC)

The HEC accredits and prescribes the guidelines under which all institutions of higher education may operate in Pakistan. It also monitors all degree-granting higher education programs for quality.

Educational institutions must meet legal and academic requirements with respect to campus facilities, faculty, staff and financial resources. If the institution fulfills the infrastructure requirements, the HEC recommends the granting of a charter, either to the provincial government or to the federal government for institutions located within their jurisdiction. Charters are usually granted by acts of provincial parliaments or the federal parliament.

Management and business education

Business education has become very popular in Pakistan in the last few years. A large number of public and private institutions offer degrees in business education. There are 87 HEC recognized academic institutions offering business degrees in Pakistan. Of these 28 are in the public sector and 59 are in the private sector (www.hec.gov.pk/htmls/hei/collunilist.htm).

At the undergraduate level, Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) is offered either in three or four year programs. The three-year degree is called BBA Honors. Most of the schools require one or two internships during the summers.

Admission to the BBA requires SAT or a local test and HSE grades. The first two years usually cover broad subject areas including traditional liberal arts subjects. The final one or two years focus on the specialization areas.

Some of the schools follow an annual system where graduation is based on the final exam result, whereas other schools have a semester system where graduation depends on the final GPA.

There are four types of Master's in Business Administration (MBA) programs that are designed for specific student needs. Admission to an MBA program usually requires a Bachelor's degree, GMAT or a local test and some work experience (this is preferred but not required in most of the cases). The regular two year MBA program usually covers core courses in the first year followed by an internship in summer and more specialized courses such as, finance, marketing, operations, international business, human resource management and information technology in the second year. Students are continuously assessed through coursework, class participation, case study evaluation, business projects, take home assignments and examinations. Students with a BBA degree are usually exempted from some of the core courses and are able to complete an MBA degree in one year instead of two. There is also a one-year MBA which follows the British model and covers all the required courses within eleven to twelve months. Evening or Executive MBA (EMBA) programs are designed for working professionals who attend classes only in the evening or weekends. In some cases, EMBA programs require a few weeks of full-time on campus study supplemented by distance learning spread over two to three years.

Business doctoral programs have received enormous attention recently in Pakistan. According to the new education policy developed by HEC, each business school must have a certain number of PhD faculty for a given size of student body. The HEC is offering many indigenous and foreign scholarship programs to motivate non-PhD business faculty members to get a Doctorate. These programs prepare candidates to conduct highly specialized scholarly research. The minimum requirement for admission into a PhD program is a Master's degree, high GMAT or GRE score, recommendation letters from academic and corporate supervisors and work experience. After completing the course work and passing comprehensive exams, PhD scholars are required to

conduct high-level research under the supervision of their advisory committee. Some PhD programs follow the British pattern and do not require any course work.

As per HEC requirements, after the PhD dissertation is approved by the supervisors it is sent for evaluation by two technical experts from technologically advanced countries. Both the experts must approve the dissertation for it to be processed further. After approval by the two foreign experts, the dissertation is presented to a local Dissertation Defense Committee. A PhD degree is awarded subsequent to a successful defense.

Faculty

In business institutions, faculty having both academic and corporate experience is usually preferred. Foreign-qualified faculty is also sought to bridge the gap between local and foreign exposure. For the past few years, PhD faculty has been considered a must for Pakistani business education. The HEC has emphasized PhD faculty induction in business education and has provided many facilities and scholarships for this purpose. New PhDs are usually hired as assistant professors and are promoted to associate professors after specific research publications and teaching experience. Promotion to full professor normally requires several more publications and many years of additional teaching experience.

In public sector universities, staff is usually hired at lecturer grade after a four-year Bachelor's or a Master's degree. They are then promoted to assistant professor after some years of teaching experience and a few publications with a requirement of a Master's degree if they do not already have it. They are promoted to associate professor after getting a PhD or several years of additional teaching experience and additional publications. The designation of professor is based on additional publications and teaching experience.

Various programs have been initiated by the HEC to promote business faculty. Initiation of indigenous and foreign scholarships for local faculty, short term teacher exchange programs for local faculty, hiring of eminent educationists and researchers having PhDs, short term and long term foreign faculty hiring program, placement of fresh PhD scholars returning from Abroad Program (www.hec.gov.pk/htmls/HPFacultyHiringProgram.htm) and tenure track system are a few of the schemes for creating and maintaining quality in the business education system. However, the quality of faculty varies from institution to institution depending upon the organization's own goals and quality standards.

Students

Approximately 87 business institutions (Central Bureau of Education and Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2004) are recognized by HEC in Pakistan. In 2003 there were about 58,425 students (Provincial Bureaus of Statistics, 2005) in business, management or commerce, taught by 1,819 faculty members. The

faculty-student ratio is approximately 1:38 which is not a very encouraging figure. However, HEC's planning in this regard is a positive step, which hopefully will show improved results in the coming years.

Accreditation

With the support of the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD), the Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA) awarded certificates of South Asian Quality Assurance (SAQS) to several Pakistani business schools which fulfilled jointly developed criteria. A few business schools in Pakistan have also applied for certification with European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS).

Issues facing Pakistani business schools

Business schools in Pakistan are facing a number of issues including lack of quality faculty, variable quality of business graduates, uncertain demand in the job market and lack of locally relevant research.

The biggest problem the Pakistani business schools face is the lack of qualified faculty. Good faculty is an internationally tradable commodity, which is in high demand and Pakistan, being a developing country, has been facing the problem of attracting, retaining and maintaining good business faculty for years. While the brain drain has been partly responsible for the movement of qualified people away from Pakistan, the problem is greatly exacerbated by the lack of good local PhD programs.

The job market for business graduates in Pakistan is also mixed. Most of the business graduates are in surplus and reportedly without good jobs. The main reason for this is that the existing business education does not teach business skills that are marketable. Another reason for this problem is too much stress on abstract and bookish knowledge and a lack of emphasis on future oriented practical and technical business training.

Business education in Pakistan does not enjoy a favorable research environment or a strong system of incentives and scholarships for researchers. There is usually a very low percentage of funds allocated to research activities and curriculum development in most business schools.

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References

- Central Bureau of Education and Provincial Bureau of Statistics (2004), *Pakistan Statistical Year Book 2004*, pp. 134-6.
- Provincial Bureaus of Statistics (2005), *Pakistan Statistical Pocket Book 2005*, Government of Pakistan, Statistics Division, Federal Bureau of Statistics, p. 53.

