

Chile

Demographics for Chile

Population:	15,980,912 (July 2005 est.)
GDP (by PPP method):	US\$169.1 billion
Currency (inc code):	Chilean Peso (CLP)
Language(s):	Spanish
Internet country code:	.cl

The Chilean education system has three levels: primary, secondary, and tertiary. Chilean education is supervised by the Ministry of Education, a branch of the national government, under laws, rules, and regulations established either in the Constitution or approved by Congress. Education is compulsory in the primary and secondary levels.

Primary education

Students enrolled in the educational system in Chile start at the pre-kindergarten or kindergarten level. Although these two years are not obligatory, most parents enroll their children in pre-school at the age of five. The Chilean government offers free schooling at this level through kindergartens run by municipalities at no cost to parents. Additionally, this level of schooling is available in private schools.

At age seven, students must enroll in elementary school for eight years. Students may be enrolled in public schools (free tuition) or private schools. A total of 45 percent of students attend public schools that depend on local municipalities for funding. Private schools are governed autonomously but must comply with the national curriculum set by the Ministry of Education. Most private schools are run by the Catholic Church or other not-for-profit organizations, some financially dependent on foreign communities living inside

the country (and whose respective governments provide these schools with funding). Schools may teach in a language besides Spanish, as is common in many of the foreign-sponsored schools, but the majority of schools teach in Spanish.

Secondary education

Secondary education in Chile lasts for four years. Although there are technical/vocational schools, 95 percent of students are enrolled in high schools that have a scientific/humanities based curricula, which prepares them for further education at the tertiary level. After completing four years of high school, students receive a certificate of graduation.

Tertiary education

Tertiary education in Chile is provided in three types of institutions:

1. Centros de Formación Técnica (technical training institutes), which provide two-year programs in technical fields, such as mechanical engineering, accounting, computing, or secretarial skills, which prepare students for immediate entry into the workforce in technical positions. There are 111 CFTs.
2. Institutos profesionales (professional institutes), which provide four-year programs in professional and technical skills, again in subjects such as accounting, design, health services, tourism, computer programming, etc. There are 43 IPs.
3. Universities, where students obtain a professional title and/or academic degree. Only universities may offer programs in the following fields: medicine, nursing, law, engineering, business administration, economics, journalism, education, architecture, sociology, psychology, dentistry, and veterinary medicine. There are 25 “traditional” universities in the country, which means that these universities were created before 1981. During the 1980s, new regulations were established by the government which allowed for the creation of “private” universities, although these are single purpose not-for-profit organizations. The “traditional” universities have autonomy in the degrees, programs, curriculums, etc. that they offer. The new universities are closely supervised by the Ministry of Education for a minimum of ten years, at which time these new private universities may be accredited as autonomous bodies by the Consejo Superior de Educación, the Council for Higher Education, the governmental body in charge of supervising all universities. Total enrollment in tertiary education is 600,000 students, of which two-thirds are enrolled in universities, a quarter in the professional institutes and the rest in the technical centers. There are 63 universities in total.

The university academic degrees existing under Chilean law are the Licenciatura, Magister and Doctor. The Licenciatura is equivalent to a baccalaureate (bachelor's) degree and the Magister and Doctor degrees correspond to the master's and doctoral degrees in Europe. The Licenciatura degree is a four-year program, while the length of the Magister and Doctor degrees on the academic policies of the university granting the degree (generally two and four years, respectively). On the other hand, universities grant professional titles in most fields (Titulo profesional), which are a requirement for those seeking positions in the civil service or to practice professions such as medicine, law, engineering, architecture, etc. Professional degrees have as a requirement a previous Licenciatura in the same field.

Undergraduate students admitted to "traditional" universities in the country are selected through a standardized test taken by all high school seniors (it is similar to the SAT test in the USA); this test is called the Prueba de Selección Universitaria (PSU). All high school students in Chile who want to continue their education in "traditional" universities (some 140,000 per year), have to take the PSU exam. Once they have their PSU scores, students apply for admission according to their preference for field of study and institution to the 25 "traditional" universities through a centralized process, run by the National Admissions System (DEMRE). Through this process each university enrolls students in their different academic programs, ranked according to the weighted averages of students' PSU scores and high school grades. The system is "money blind". Private universities enroll the excess demand of students of lower academic potential who are not offered places in the "traditional" universities.

Structure of business and management education

In the fields of business administration and economics at university level, after completion of a four-year Licenciatura en Ciencias Económicas y Administrativas, the student has to continue to study for an additional year, in order to receive the professional degree of Ingeniero Comercial (commercial engineer), with a major in business administration or economics. This is considered as an undergraduate degree. The professional title of commercial engineer is a widely recognized professional title in Chile and is required for a career in business in the country. There are more than 60 universities that grant undergraduate degrees in business administration with a total enrollment of 70,000 students.

Magister in Administración de Empresas, MBA programs, exist in 13 universities, with an approximate enrollment of 2,000 students, both in full-time and executive versions, and last two academic years. However, most universities offering MBA programs offer one-year MBA programs for individuals who have had previous training in business and economics at

undergraduate level. In “traditional” universities these programs are established without government supervision.

There are no doctoral programs in business administration in Chile.

Issues facing business schools

The main issues facing business schools are:

- *Academic qualifications of faculty.* Since there are no doctoral programs in business administration in Chile, the main problem schools have is establishing an academically qualified faculty. A few institutions have been able to structure a full-time faculty with PhDs, but the great majority rely for their teaching upon faculty with MBA degrees.
- *Research.* The lack of qualified faculty makes most institutions into teaching institutions in which no research is done. This means that teaching is not grounded on the business reality of the country, but based on paradigms developed in other areas of the world. This fact reflects, for instance in the use of cases, which have not been developed locally.
- *Proliferation of business school programs of diverse quality.* Given the high demand for business education, practically all universities in Chile have entered the field to capitalize on this demand, many of them without having the academic resources in terms of faculty, bibliographical materials, etc. Thus, the offerings of both undergraduate and MBA programs vary significantly in quality. A few schools have obtained international accreditations, with AACSB, AMBA, etc. to avoid this problem.
- *Drop in demand for MBA programs.* In the last four years, the demand for MBA programs has declined, as has been the experience in most of the world. Part of the problem emerged when graduates of MBA programs of lower quality confronted the market and realized that the investment in time and money they had made had no payback, discrediting the MBA as a degree.
- *Internationalization.* Most Chilean programs in business education are “local” in their student body and faculty. Hence, practically all teaching is done in Spanish. A few schools have been able to establish a more international approach to their programs, particularly the University of Chile, the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile and the Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez.

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