



## Refugees Country Briefing

# AFGHANISTAN

This document was developed in the framework of the EU-funded project “Refugees and Recognition – Toolkit for recognition of higher education for refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation” by the ENIC-NARIC centres of France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom.

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This country briefing – especially developed to help with the evaluation of credentials of refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation – should give orientation on the education system in AFGHANISTAN in the light of recent political and economic developments in this country. It presents a systematised overview on its higher education system and links to the available information sources that are useful for the evaluation of qualifications of refugees coming from AFGHANISTAN, even in cases where candidates present insufficient or lack of documentation.

## The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan



Source: CIA World Factbook

**Location:** Afghanistan is located in Central Asia, north and west of Pakistan, east of Iran, and south of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.

**Population:** 29, 1 million

**Ethnic Groups:** The main ethnic groups are Pashtun (42%); Tajik (27%); Hazara (9%); Uzbek (9%); Aimak (a Persian-speaking nomadic group) (4%); Turkmen (3%); and Baloch (2%).

**Religion:** Islam (sunni)

**Languages:** The official languages are Dari (Afghan Persian) and Pashtu. Dari is spoken by 50 % of the population, and Pashtu is spoken as a first language by 35 %. Turkic languages (primarily Turkmen and Uzbek) are spoken by 11 % of the population. Many Afghans speak more than one language; Dari is the most common second language.

## 1. Current situation

Up to 1932, there were no higher education institutes in Afghanistan and people with higher education had completed their education abroad. It was not until 1946 that the first higher institution was established. Over the years the establishment of higher education institutions continued.

During Soviet occupation between of 1979 – 1989, Afghanistan adapted the education system of the Soviet Union. By 1996, there were some 14 higher institutions in Afghanistan. This process, however, was reversed when the Taliban seized power and the number of institutions decreased to seven. In addition, the rule of Taliban led to shortages in resources such as teachers, books, outdated syllabus etc. The rule of Taliban led to fewer students in general and girls in particular, as girls were denied educational opportunity.

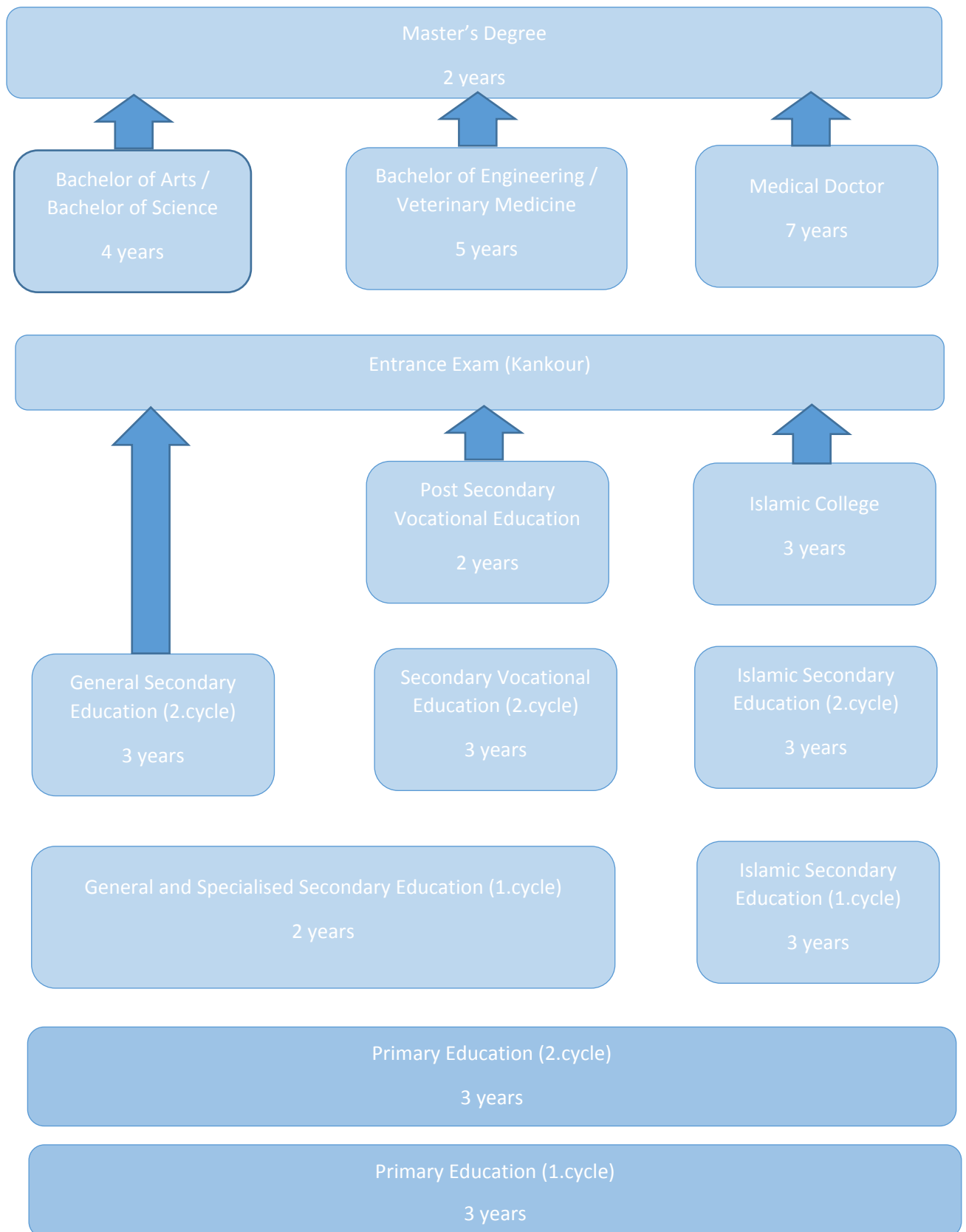
After the fall of the Taliban, efforts have been made to improve the situation in the country. The number of public and private institutions has increased. The number of students that are registered at primary, secondary and tertiary education has also increased.

The current situation in the country remains unstable. Afghan nationals were the second biggest group of asylum seekers (after Syria) in many European countries in 2015-2016.

*Approaches to evaluation of the qualifications from Afghanistan can be different in different ENIC-NARIC countries depending on the mandate of the evaluation authorities. More information on assessment practices of documentation from Afghanistan can be obtained from the E-learning modules to be developed within the framework of the EU-funded project “Refugees and Recognition – Toolkit for recognition of higher education for refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation” by the ENIC-NARIC centres of France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom.*



## 2. Education chart



### 3. Education System

Ministry of Education has the responsibility of general education and vocational education. General education comprises primary school, lower secondary school and higher secondary school. Education is compulsory for children aged 6 – 14.

#### General education

##### Primary school

Grades 1 to 6 (starting age 6 – 8 and is compulsory)

##### Lower secondary school

Grades 7 to 9 (starting age 13 – 15 and is compulsory)

##### Higher secondary school / upper secondary

Grades 9 to 12 (starting age 16 – 19)

**12th grade Graduation Certificate** / شهادت نامه دوره ثانوی (shahadat nameye doreye sanavi)

The certificate is issued in three languages: Pashtu, Dari and English

#### Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MOLSAMD) is responsible for short-term courses of non-formal and informal TVET, and the Ministry of Education (MoE) is responsible for the formal TVET.

Technical and Vocational training is provided by technical and vocational schools where students are taught skills needed to perform a certain job. Programs last for 2 – 5 years and comprise following fields of studies:

- Agriculture
- Business Education
- Construction and Engineering
- Fine Arts
- Special and Inclusive Education Sectors

The education will eventually lead to a Diploma (2-3 years) or Associate Degree (4-5 years) respectively.

#### Higher Education

Tertiary education is provided both by public and private higher education institutions. Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) has the responsibility for the tertiary education. There are different types of higher education institutions in Afghanistan universities, polytechnics, institutes and higher teachers' colleges. Afghanistan has 25 public university and 140 private institutes (recognized by MoHE).

### Admission criteria to Bachelor's Degrees

Completion of 12<sup>th</sup> grade and passing the competitive Kankour exam – Kankour (national entrance exam).

### Admission criteria to Master's Degrees

Completion of a bachelor's degree with passing grade of at least 65%. In addition, one also has to have completed a foreign language course as part of the bachelor's degree.

### Types of qualifications

#### Bachelor's Degrees

Bachelor of Arts:	4 years
Bachelor of Science:	4 years
Bachelor of Engineering:	5 years
Bachelor of Pharmacy:	5 years

**Degrees in Veterinary Medicine:** 5 years

**Degrees in Medicine:** 7 years (include one year of pre-medical and one year of internship).

Institutions tend to issue educational documents in English as well as in Dari and Pashtu.

Minimum amount of credits for a 4-year bachelor's degree is 136 credits. Credits per semester do not surpass 21 credits.

Bachelor's degree consists of the following:

Basic subjects:	30%
Specialized subjects:	50%
Optional subjects:	12%
Diploma project:	8%

#### Master's Degrees

There is a limited amount of master's degrees being offered in Afghanistan. Those who have the financial means complete their master's degrees abroad.

Master's degrees have a nominal length of study of 2 years and include a thesis. Thesis is an independent research work of 100 – 150 pages.

Graduation requirements for Master Degrees are an average passing grade of 65% for all subjects and defence of the thesis.

**Higher education institution in Afghanistan do not offer Ph. D-programs.**

## Grading system in Higher education

- A = 90–100%
- B = 80–89%
- C = 70–79%
- D = 55–69%

## 4. Certification / Documentation

National format norms for the documentation:

- Degree certificates are usually issued in English, sometimes in all three languages – English, Dari, Pashto
- Degree certificates and transcripts issued on two separate A-4 horizontal sheets
- Degree certificates and transcripts contain logo and name of the university
- Transcripts usually contain a picture of the holder
- Transcripts contain name of the holder and the name of the his/her father
- Transcripts contain date of enrolment and date of graduation
- Transcripts should have two signatures (Chancellor and Dean of Faculty)

## 5. Useful sources and links

Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE)

<http://www.mohe.gov.af/da>

UNESCO – World Data on Education: Afghanistan

[UNESCO](#)

[International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training](#)

[UNEVOC](#)

Kabul Medical University

[kmu](#)

## 6. Evaluation tips and recommendations

Verifications of the credentials can be made in the verification database at the MoHE website <http://mohe.gov.af/en>. The verification code, stated on the transcript, can track the newly completed education. Elder transcripts do not have such code and cannot be verified by the MoHE website. Furthermore, the verification code is only stated on the documents issued in Dari.

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