



EDUCATION FACT SHEET - BURUNDI

<p>Burundi: In brief</p>	<p>Population: 11,530,580 (2020 est.)ⁱ Size: 27,830 sq. kilometersⁱⁱ</p> <p>National Languages: Kirundi (official, universally spoken) French (official, administrative) English (official, not widely spoken)ⁱⁱⁱ</p> <p>Literacy: 68%^{iv} Youth Literacy: 88%^v Female Youth Literacy: 86%^{vi}</p> <p>National Curriculum: Yes Years of Public School: 12 Primary (Fundamental) School: 9 years Secondary (Post-Fundamental) School: 3 years <i>Note: The current school system just transitioned to a 12-year system from the old 13-year system. Students graduating in 2019 were the inaugural class for the new system.</i></p> <p>Primary Language of Instruction: French</p> <p>High School Leaving Exams: Yes Date of Exams: Early August</p>
<p>Academic Calendar</p>	<p>Primary, secondary: Starting month: September Ending month: July</p> <p>Public Tertiary: Starting month: January Ending month: December</p> <p>Private Tertiary: Depends on school</p>

Education system	<p><i>Note: the new academic model does not split secondary education into two tiers, like most school systems. Its equivalent of primary education in most school systems is also longer, a total of 9 years. These two qualities make it unique from all other major school systems globally.</i></p> <p><i>Note also that in 2016, the public school structure was changed to a 12-year system. The class graduating upper secondary school in 2018 was nominally the last class under the “old” 13-year system. Students graduating in 2019 were largely using the new system, though there were students who studied under the old system until end of their lower secondary. Students graduating in 2020 and later will all have studied under the new system.</i></p> <p>The current system is structured so that the primary school cycle lasts 9 years and secondary lasts 3 years, with the cycles named Fundamental and Post-Fundamental respectively. Children officially enter Fundamental education at age 6.</p> <p>Fundamental (Primary) Education</p> <p>Fundamental education is compulsory, and the net matriculation rate for primary schools is around 97%. However, around 55% of these students will drop out before completing the primary cycle. Gender representation at the primary level is well balanced.</p> <p>30% of students start their studies one or more years late, and 24%^{vii} of students every year will be required to repeat the previous grade. These effects are especially pronounced in rural areas of the country.</p> <p>Public primary education is tuition-free, however costs such as uniforms and notebooks (both of which are strictly required) can be prohibitive for low-income students. In rural areas, the opportunity cost of not having children participate in agriculture can also prevent participation. All these effects contribute to low primary completion rates.</p> <p>Post-Fundamental (Secondary) Education</p> <p>Somewhere between 5% and 30% will attend Post-Fundamental studies. Gender representation at the Post-Fundamental level is also well-balanced.</p> <p>Entry into the Post-Fundamental school system is mediated by a national exam. Students are placed into specialized tracks based on that examination taken at the end of primary studies.</p>
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	<p>Both public and private schools charge tuition at the secondary level. This severely limits access for low-income students.</p> <p>Tertiary Education One national university and around a half-dozen private universities provide traditional tertiary studies to around 5% of tertiary-aged students each year. At the tertiary level, a student is about 3 times as likely to be male as to be female.</p> <p>Public and Private Schools At the primary level, public schools are free. At the secondary level, tuition is charged in both public and private institutions. While public secondary tuition is low compared to its private counterpart, the cost is still a barrier for a majority of Burundians.</p> <p>Private schools exist throughout the country, and will generally provide a more consistent education for students. However, they are prohibitively expensive for nearly the entire population.</p> <p>There are also a few public schools with reputations for academic excellence that surpass even the top private schools. These elite institutions are highly selective and have separate admissions policies.</p> <p>Rural and Urban Schools All factors constant, urban schools tend to be more rigorous and provide a more consistent education. However, a number of boarding schools exist throughout the country that provide their students with a relatively higher quality education.</p>
<p>National School System</p>	<p>Education Tracks and Exams Entrance into secondary studies is mediated by a national exam taken during the final year of primary school (grade 9). This exam determines whether a student will be allowed to begin Post-Fundamental studies, and is used by the Ministry of Education to place students at secondary schools throughout the country.</p> <p>The results of this exam determine whether a student will be admitted to one of five university-bound tracks at the secondary level, or will be assigned to a variety of other technical school options.</p>

	<p>State technical schools are attended in lieu of a traditional secondary education. They teach disciplines such as agriculture, nursing, accounting, or prepare students to be electricians or mechanics. The A3 diploma indicates that the student attended a two-year technical school and is eligible for trade work. The A2 diploma is issued after a three- or four-year technical school and prepares a student either for further studies at the university level (<i>e.g.</i> in accounting) or for work.</p> <p>What would usually be considered upper secondary education is split into five main specialization tracks. Graduates of these tracks who pass the national exit examination are eligible for university studies.</p> <p>English Language In public schools, English is introduced as a foreign language in 2nd or 3rd grade of Fundamental cycle. The quality of English education is highly dependent on teacher qualifications and availability; it is not uncommon for an English teacher to have little or no formal training in the subject. This issue is especially prevalent in rural schools.</p>
<p>Secondary Education</p>	<p>College-bound students mainly specialize in one of five areas at the secondary level. Students are placed into these tracks by the Ministry of Education based on their 9th grade leaving exam. While it is theoretically possible for a student to appeal their placement, this is somewhat rare.</p> <p>The five specializations tracks are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economics, which focuses on the social sciences and finance; • Languages, which focuses on languages and humanities; • Math-Physics-Technology, which focuses on math and physics; and • Biology-Chemistry-Earth Science, which focuses on biology and chemistry. • Social Sciences and Humanities <p>The students take common courses in all the 9 years of Fundamental education, but courses are concentrated according to the tracks students take as they progress to higher classes in Post-Fundamental studies. Students in all tracks take the following courses in Post-Fundamental:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Languages (English, French, Kirundi, and Kiswahili) • Entrepreneurship, • Math*,

- Biology**,
- Chemistry**,
- Physics**,
- Civics, and
- Physical education.

* Done during first 2 years of post-fundamental by Languages track

** Not done by Languages and Economics tracks

School Grades – Secondary

Students are graded on a percentage-based system; they also receive a class ranking. Equivalent grades in Burundi are much lower than their US counterparts, with the typical median yearly grade somewhere between 55% and 60%.

Interpretation:

- Grades for each school year will almost always fall between 40% and 85%.
- Anything less than 55% is considered failing and requires repetition of the grade; typical class repetition rates are between 5% and 10%.
- Scores higher than 70% are highly uncommon and considered stellar.
- Scores between different specialization tracks should be considered equivalent.

Burundi 2018 Grade Distribution (core courses)

	Letters Track	Science Track
Average	57.1%	56.9%
Max	87.6%	87.6%
95th Percentile	68.1%	69.6%
3rd Quartile	60.5%	60.5%
Median	56.3%	56.0%
1st Quartile	52.9%	52.1%

Class Rank – Post-Fundamental

Class rank is assigned within each specialization track, with somewhere between 10 and 50 students per track per school.

A select number of schools in Burundi (both public and private) function as “elite institutions” with admission based on test results. In these

cases, class rank may not be a useful metrics for student evaluation, as all students should be considered highly qualified.

National Exam

A state-administered exam, tailored to each specialization track, is taken by all graduating students upon completion of their final year of secondary school. Score distribution varies wildly around the country, but scores of above 70% designate the very top scholars. Student scores on the national exam are combined with their scores from the final year Post-Fundamental studies, to get a final weighted score. The final weighted score determines whether a student get a Diplôme d'État and their eligibility to apply for university programs. The respective weight given to the national exam raw score and the final year score is 80% and 20%.

This weighted score is what is reported in the student's "Attestation de Reussite" and "Releve des Resultats". The latter gives a breakdown of the score per subject.

- Only about one third of scholars will score above a 50% on the exam.
- Scores higher than 60% qualify a student to study at the national university.
- Private universities will generally accept students with scores above 50%.

Certifications:

The Certificat des Humanités Générales is issued to students upon completion of their secondary studies. These are usually available to students in August, immediately after graduation.

The Diplôme d'État is issued to students if they pass the national leaving exam. These are usually available to students between nine and twelve months after graduation.

Diplomas (at both the secondary and tertiary levels) include the following indicators, based on grades and/or national exam results:

- 90-100% : Excellent
- 80-89% : Plus grand fruit "(The highest distinction)"
- 70-79% : Grand fruit "(High distinction)"
- 60-69% : Fruit (Distinction)

- 50-59% : Pass/Satisfaction

Secondary School Percent Ranking Tables

College-bound Tracks:

BCST (Science: Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science) had 15,069 test-takers in 2019.

ECO (Economics) had 2,914 test-takers in 2019.

LA (Languages) had 20,638 test-takers in 2019.

MPT (Science: Math, Physics, Technology) had 626 test-takers in 2019.

SSH (Social Sciences and Humanities) had 5,015 test-takers in 2019.

Combined Academics Summary by Section - 2019

	BCST	ECO	LA	MPT	SSH
n	15,069	2,914	20,638	626	5,015
Mean	44.0%	48.0%	47.9%	52.1%	46.4%
STD	11.6%	11.7%	10.3%	12.3%	9.0%
Min	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q1	36.8%	41.6%	41.8%	43.2%	41.5%
Median	42.8%	47.8%	47.5%	51.7%	46.4%
Q3	50.9%	55.1%	54.1%	59.9%	51.6%
Max	90.2%	82.8%	84.5%	88.7%	75.6%

Percentiles of Combined Academics by Section - 2019

%ile	Score (Combined Academics)				
	BCST	ECO	LA	MPT	SSH
5th	30%	32%	34%	34%	35%
10th	32%	36%	37%	37%	37%
15th	34%	38%	39%	39%	39%
20th	36%	40%	41%	41%	40%
25th	37%	42%	42%	43%	41%
30th	38%	43%	43%	45%	43%
35th	39%	44%	44%	47%	43%
40th	40%	45%	45%	48%	45%
45th	41%	47%	46%	50%	46%
50th	43%	48%	47%	52%	46%
55th	44%	49%	49%	53%	47%
60th	46%	51%	50%	54%	48%
65th	47%	52%	51%	56%	49%
70th	49%	53%	53%	58%	50%

75th	51%	55%	54%	60%	52%
80th	53%	57%	56%	62%	53%
85th	56%	60%	58%	65%	54%
90th	59%	62%	61%	69%	57%
95th	64%	66%	65%	73%	60%

Percent Rank of Combined Academics by Section - 2019

Score	Percent Rank				
	BCST	ECO	LA	MPT	SSH
0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
1%	1.5%	1.5%	1.0%	0.1%	1.1%
2%	1.5%	1.5%	1.0%	0.1%	1.1%
3%	1.5%	1.5%	1.0%	0.1%	1.1%
4%	1.5%	1.5%	1.0%	0.1%	1.1%
5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.0%	0.1%	1.1%
6%	1.5%	1.5%	1.0%	0.1%	1.1%
7%	1.5%	1.5%	1.0%	0.1%	1.1%
8%	1.6%	1.5%	1.0%	0.1%	1.1%
9%	1.6%	1.5%	1.0%	0.1%	1.1%
10%	1.6%	1.5%	1.0%	0.1%	1.1%
11%	1.6%	1.5%	1.0%	0.1%	1.1%
12%	1.6%	1.5%	1.0%	0.1%	1.1%
13%	1.6%	1.5%	1.0%	0.1%	1.1%
14%	1.6%	1.5%	1.0%	0.1%	1.1%
15%	1.6%	1.5%	1.0%	0.1%	1.1%
16%	1.7%	1.5%	1.1%	0.3%	1.2%
17%	1.7%	1.6%	1.1%	0.3%	1.2%
18%	1.8%	1.7%	1.2%	0.3%	1.2%
19%	1.8%	1.8%	1.2%	0.3%	1.2%
20%	1.8%	1.9%	1.2%	0.3%	1.3%
21%	1.8%	1.9%	1.2%	0.3%	1.3%
22%	1.8%	1.9%	1.2%	0.3%	1.3%
23%	1.9%	1.9%	1.2%	0.3%	1.3%
24%	1.9%	1.9%	1.2%	0.3%	1.3%
25%	1.9%	2.0%	1.2%	0.6%	1.3%
26%	2.1%	2.1%	1.3%	0.7%	1.3%
27%	2.4%	2.2%	1.3%	0.7%	1.3%
28%	3.0%	2.5%	1.4%	0.9%	1.3%
29%	3.9%	3.0%	1.6%	1.2%	1.4%
30%	5.2%	3.5%	2.0%	1.5%	1.5%
31%	6.9%	4.3%	2.3%	2.0%	1.8%

	32%	8.8%	5.3%	2.9%	3.5%	2.2%
	33%	11.2%	6.2%	3.7%	3.9%	2.9%
	34%	14.2%	7.6%	4.7%	4.6%	3.9%
	35%	17.6%	8.8%	6.1%	6.3%	5.6%
	36%	21.4%	10.5%	7.5%	7.8%	7.1%
	37%	25.6%	12.5%	9.7%	9.9%	9.2%
	38%	29.9%	14.5%	11.9%	12.1%	11.6%
	39%	34.2%	16.8%	14.6%	14.2%	14.7%
	40%	38.4%	19.3%	17.8%	16.2%	18.5%
	41%	42.8%	23.2%	21.7%	19.1%	22.6%
	42%	47.2%	26.6%	25.7%	21.5%	27.6%
	43%	50.9%	30.2%	29.8%	24.4%	32.3%
	44%	54.5%	34.1%	34.3%	27.3%	37.3%
	45%	58.2%	38.4%	38.7%	30.8%	42.3%
	46%	61.6%	42.3%	43.2%	32.7%	47.6%
	47%	64.5%	46.3%	47.9%	36.2%	52.7%
	48%	67.4%	50.6%	52.3%	38.9%	58.9%
	49%	70.1%	54.5%	56.6%	42.6%	64.2%
	50%	72.5%	58.0%	60.6%	45.2%	68.5%
	51%	75.1%	61.5%	64.4%	47.7%	72.9%
	52%	77.4%	65.3%	68.0%	51.2%	76.5%
	53%	79.6%	68.6%	71.5%	55.9%	80.1%
	54%	81.8%	72.1%	74.6%	57.9%	83.4%
	55%	83.7%	74.8%	77.6%	62.1%	86.3%
	56%	85.5%	77.0%	80.1%	64.2%	88.6%
	57%	86.9%	79.6%	82.4%	67.2%	90.4%
	58%	88.4%	81.8%	84.8%	70.1%	92.1%
	59%	89.9%	83.8%	86.8%	71.4%	93.5%
	60%	91.2%	85.8%	88.5%	75.0%	94.7%
	61%	92.3%	87.7%	90.2%	76.3%	95.7%
	62%	93.4%	89.1%	91.8%	78.5%	96.7%
	63%	94.3%	91.0%	93.1%	80.9%	97.4%
	64%	95.0%	92.4%	94.3%	82.4%	98.0%
	65%	95.6%	93.5%	95.2%	84.1%	98.5%
	66%	96.3%	94.6%	96.2%	85.9%	98.9%
	67%	97.0%	95.5%	96.9%	87.5%	99.3%
	68%	97.5%	96.3%	97.6%	88.6%	99.4%
	69%	98.0%	97.1%	97.9%	90.2%	99.6%
	70%	98.3%	97.5%	98.4%	91.2%	99.7%
	71%	98.6%	98.0%	98.7%	92.3%	99.8%
	72%	98.8%	98.5%	99.0%	93.7%	99.8%
	73%	99.1%	98.9%	99.2%	94.4%	99.9%
	74%	99.2%	99.2%	99.4%	95.6%	99.9%

75%	99.3%	99.5%	99.5%	96.4%	99.9%
76%	99.5%	99.7%	99.7%	96.8%	100.0%
77%	99.6%	99.8%	99.7%	97.1%	100.0%
78%	99.6%	99.8%	99.8%	97.7%	100.0%
79%	99.7%	99.8%	99.9%	98.2%	100.0%
80%	99.8%	99.9%	99.9%	98.5%	100.0%
81%	99.8%	99.9%	99.9%	98.7%	100.0%
82%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	98.8%	100.0%
83%	99.9%	100.0%	99.9%	99.2%	100.0%
84%	99.9%	100.0%	99.9%	99.3%	100.0%
85%	99.9%	100.0%	100.0%	99.5%	100.0%
86%	99.9%	100.0%	100.0%	99.6%	100.0%
87%	99.9%	100.0%	100.0%	99.6%	100.0%
88%	99.9%	100.0%	100.0%	99.8%	100.0%
89%	99.9%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
90%	99.9%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
91%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
92%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
93%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
94%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
95%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
96%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
97%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
98%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
99%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
100%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Notes

Section Names

BCST	Science: Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science
ECO	Economics
LA	Languages
MPT	Science: Math, Physics, Technology
SSH	Social Sciences and Humanities

Percentiles of Combined Academics by Section

The percentile table identifies the score (disaggregated by section) that x% of test-takers scored less than or equal to. E.g. the 95th percentile was a score of 64% for BCST. This indicates that 95% of test-takers scored less than or equal to 64%.

Percent Rank of Combined Academics by Section

	<p>Percent rank is the percentage of test-takers that a particular score was higher than. E.g. a score of 50% in the BCST exam had a percent rank of 72.5%, meaning that 72.5% of test-takers scored less than or equal to 50%.</p>
<p>Tertiary Studies</p>	<p>Public University</p> <p>The University of Burundi is the premiere institution of higher education in the country. Students are admitted based on the weighted score of the national exam. Students are assigned a concentration by the ministry of education, similarly based on national exam results. It is possible, though uncommon, for students to request a different concentration than assigned.</p> <p>The university includes faculties of education, engineering, agriculture, various languages, and various sciences. There are also specialized institutes of applied pedagogy, applied economics, and statistics.</p> <p>All students who are admitted to the national university receive free tuition and are given a loan to help offset the cost of living expenses in the city. However, many students from low-income rural backgrounds still find the extra costs associated with study prohibitive and are unable to continue their studies for financial reasons.</p> <p>Students matriculate at the national university a full year and a half after graduating from secondary studies. Because of this delay, some student opt to attend private universities to continue their studies.</p> <p>Private Universities</p> <p>Private universities are generally perceived as less prestigious than the national university, but they may offer students more opportunities to choose their area of study and they would allow a student to avoid a year and a half interruption in studies. Private universities generally accept matriculating students with lower national exam results than the public university. Most private universities offer programs in French, though there are also some English-language programs.</p>
<p>SAT test centers</p>	<p>BURUNDI AMERICAN INTL ACADEMY, Behind Kings Conference Center, Bujumbura, Burundi, Center Code: 76500</p> <p>Assorted test center options in Rwanda</p>

ACT test centers	Assorted test center options in Rwanda
IELTS/TOEFL	<p>TOEFL: Bujumbura, Burundi, Center Code A603 Paper Delivered Test ONLY</p> <p>Kigali, Rwanda iBT Available</p> <p>IELTS: British Council Rwanda (Kigali)</p>
Best time for Admission Officers to visit	<p>May (final trimester of the year) Late September/October (first trimester) February (second trimester)</p>
HALI contacts	<p>Tujenge Africa Foundation info@tujenge.org +257 22 27 98 75 Ben Dickensheets ben@tujenge.org David Bett david@tujenge.org</p>

ⁱ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=BI>

ⁱⁱ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.SRF.TOTL.K2?locations=BI>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://web.archive.org/web/20151117024558/http://www.iwacu-burundi.org/blogs/english/english-is-now-official-language-of-burundi/>

^{iv} <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS?locations=BI>

^v <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.1524.LT.ZS?locations=BI>

^{vi} <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.1524.LT.FE.ZS?locations=BI>

^{vii} <http://uis.unesco.org/country/BI#slideoutmenu>