

Education System in Cambodia

Cambodian Studies
Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

In Cambodia, the education system consists of general education and higher education. Under the constitution, every citizen has the right to access qualitative education and its general education in public schools, free of charge.

General Education

General education is divided into primary education and secondary education, consisting of 6 years for primary, 3 years for lower secondary, and 3 years for upper secondary education. Children are enrolled in grade 1, of the general education program, at the age of 6 years, or at least 70 months, on the date of the beginning of the school year.

Primary education is comprised of grades 1 through 6, lower secondary education grades 7 through 9, and upper secondary education grades 10 through 12. According to Education Law, every citizen has the right to access at least 9 years of public school education, free of charge. At the end of lower secondary school, the grade 9 national examination is conducted, and the successful candidates obtain a diploma, as an admission to upper secondary school. At the end of upper secondary school, the grade 12 national examination is conducted, which authorizes the completion of secondary education and qualifies as the admission to university.

Pre-primary Education

Early childhood education is the preparatory period of the education system, for children from birth to before kindergarten, provided at community childcare centers or at home, with the support of the government. Multi-lingual education programs for indigenous children are provided in state and community pre-schools, and in primary schools from grades 1 to 3, in concerned provinces. Students with disabilities have the same rights as those without disabilities, and have the right to receive special education, in separate classes, at community schools in their neighborhood. Currently, inclusive education programs for children with disabilities are provided in state and community pre-schools, and in primary schools in Phnom Penh, and several other provinces. There are also special schools for children with visual and hearing impairments, in cooperation with NGO.

Non-Formal Education

Non-Formal Education gives all citizens access to basic education and lifelong learning, through either a re-entry or an equivalency program, for students who dropped out, at any education level.

Higher Education

Higher education is conducted at institutions such as universities and research institutions. The establishment of the first private university was authorized in 1997, and others have followed, one after another, since 2000. In the past, the state university remitted the entire tuition fee for all new students; however, they started establishing a quota for self-funded students in 2001. The examinees apply to his/her school of choice at the high school national exam. If the examinee earns a grade of A in the compulsory subjects, he/she gets a total exemption of the tuition fee, excluding the school of medicine. If a student scores a grade of B or C, he/she gets partial tuition exemption, and for grades of D or E, he/she is required to pass an entrance examination, for the individual universities. If a student scores a grade of F, he/she gets disqualified from university. The admission requirements, such as the subjects of examination, the submission of a high school certificate and a certificate of standardized English tests, depend on respective universities. Even if the examinee fails the high school national exam, he/she can get into a two-year associate degree course.

Higher Educational Institution

Currently, there are 121 higher education institutions, such as universities, in 20 provinces of Cambodia. The total number breaks down to 48 state/public schools and 73 private schools (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, 2017), under the jurisdiction of relevant ministries. The primary state/public higher educational institutions, such as universities, are listed in the chart below.

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Chart 1 : Higher Education Institutes and the Relevant Ministries/Institutions

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport Total number: 73 (State 13, Private 60)	Royal University of Phnom Penh, Royal University of Law and Economics, National University of Management, Svay Rieng University, University of Battambang, Mean Chey University, Institute of Technology of Cambodia, Chea Sim University of Kamchaymear, National Institute of Education, Economics and Finance Institute, Royal School of Administration, and so on.
Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training: 25 (State 12)	National Polytechnic Institute of Cambodia, National Technical Training Institute, Preah Kossamak Polytechnic Institute, such as the State Institute for Technical and Vocational Education and Training: TVET.
Ministry of National Defense: 5 (State only)	National Defense University
Ministry of Cult and Religion: 3 (State only)	Preah Sihanouk Raja Buddhist University
Ministry of Agriculture: 3 (State only)	Royal University of Agriculture, Preah Leap National School of Agriculture, Kampong Cham National School of Agriculture
Ministry of Health: 2 (State only)	University of Health Science
Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts: 1 (State only)	Royal University of Fine Arts
Ministry of Interior: 1 (State only)	Police Academy of Cambodia
Ministry of Public Work and Transport: 1 (State only)	
National Bank of Cambodia: 1 (State only)	
Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation: 1 (State only)	
Ministry of Mine and Energy: 1 (State only)	
Ministry of Post and	

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Telecommunication: 1 (State only)	
Ministry of Economy and Finance: 1 (State only)	
Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction: 1 (State only)	
Council of Minister: 1 (State only)	Royal Academy of Cambodia

Academic Calendar

Undergraduate

1. A case of State School

The year three students of the Department of Khmer Literature, Royal University of Phnom Penh (scholarship course)

- Academic year: two semesters

Semester one: September to January; Semester two: February to June

The examinations are held in the final week of each semester.

- Monday through Friday courses begin at 7 am and 1 pm (only English classes in the afternoon).
- Methodology of class: lecture, group work and presentation.

2. A case of Private School

Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia

- Academic year: three semesters

Semester one: November to April; Semester two: April to August; and Semester three: August to November. The examinations are held in the final week of each semester.

- The duration of a class is 90 minute long, the morning shift starts at 8 am, the afternoon shift at 2 pm, the evening shift at 5:30 pm. Weekend courses are offered as well.
- Monday through Friday courses begin at 7 am and 1 pm (only English classes in the afternoon).

Postgraduate

1. A case of State School

Master of Education, Royal University of Phnom Penh

- Academic year: six semesters

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Semester one begins in January, each semester lasts 15 weeks.

- Saturday classes start at 8 am and 2 pm; Sunday classes are only in the morning

2. A case of Private School

Master of Education, Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia

- Academic year is as same as the undergraduate school.

Classes begin at 5:30 pm on Fridays; 2 pm on Saturdays; and 8 am and 2 pm on Sundays.

Remote Education

The ASEAN Cyber University Project for e-Learning was proposed at the ASEAN-Korea Summit in 2009. The project aims to increase access to higher education through distance learning, in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. In Cambodia, the project began in 2011, with setting up the system and service, under the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport. The e-Learning Center opened at the Institute of Technology of Cambodia. Since 2016, the model of e-Learning has expanded to the University of Health Sciences and the Royal University of Agriculture, in collaboration with the Cyber University of Korea.

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