



Australian Government
Department of Education and Training

VIETNAM SCHOOL EDUCATION POLICY AND SYSTEM UPDATE
July 2018

1. Vietnam's education and training structure

Vietnam's education and training system encompasses formal and non-formal¹ education and includes four main levels:

- Early Childhood Education: nurseries (3 months–3 years old) and kindergarten (3–5 years old);
- General Education: primary education (grades 1–5), lower-secondary education (grades 6–9), and upper-secondary education (grades 10–12);
- Vocational Education and Training (VET); and
- Higher Education.

The administration of education and training is undertaken at both central and local levels. At the central level, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) is responsible for the overall national education system - except for VET, where policy responsibility was transferred to the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) 1 January 2017.

MOET's main responsibilities include education policy, curricula for early childhood and general education, identifying learning outcomes for higher education, setting standards for textbooks and teaching materials, budget planning and quality assurance.

Under Resolution No. 25/2016/QH14 - a five-year national financial plan for 2016–2020, the government aims to allocate twenty per cent of the total budget to education and training².

2. The school education system

2.1. Governance

Schools are under the administration of the Provincial Department of Education and Training (DOET), and District-level Bureau of Education and Training.

The MOET's centralised authority over policies and curriculum ensures homogeneous standards for goals and regulations across the country. However, management responsibility for school buildings, staffing, and the distribution of financial resources is with local governments. Upper

¹ In Vietnam, non-formal education (NFE) is the mode of education that aims to support life-long learning by providing organised learning activities that cater to those not enrolled in formal education. NFE serves the diverse learning needs of individuals, helping the illiterate acquire a basic level of reading and writing and allowing those who dropped out of the formal education system to study and work at the same time.

² <http://tapchitaichinh.vn/co-che-chinh-sach/chinh-sach-moi/tung-buoc-co-cau-lai-chi-ngan-sach-nha-nuoc-theo-huong-tich-cuc-98350.html>

secondary schools and professional schools are managed at the provincial level by DOET, and lower secondary schools and primary schools are managed locally at district level by District Office of Education and Training.

In addition, a number of high quality special or gifted schools operated by universities are administered by MOET rather than local authorities. These include the Foreign Language Specialised School under University of Foreign Languages and International Studies and the High School for the Gifted under Hanoi University of Education.

2.2. Types of ownership

As prescribed in *Article 48 of Vietnam's Education Law 2005*, there are three types of educational establishments:

- Public education establishments: established and monitored by the State (the central Government). The State also nominates their administrators and decides staff quotas. The State invests in infrastructure and allocates funding for ongoing regular spending.
- People-founded educational establishments: Social or economic organisations apply for permission from the State to set up an institution with non-State budget capital.
- Private educational establishments: Individuals or groups of individuals apply for permission from the State to set up and invest in the institution by themselves.

The people-founded and private educational establishments are collectively referred to as non-public educational establishments.

2.3. Statistics

Primary education³

	Academic year 2016-2017			Academic year 2017-2018		
	Total	Public	Non-public	Total	Public	Non-public
Number of schools	15,052	11,939	113	14,937	14,695	242
Number of students	7,801,560	7,733,318	68,242	8,041,842	7,882,145	159,697
Number of teachers	397,098	392,123	2,149	396,600	390,783	5,817

Lower Secondary education⁴

	Academic year 2016-2017			Academic year 2017-2018		
	Total	Public	Non-public	Total	Public	Non-public
Number of schools	10,928	10,873	55	10,939	10,887	52
Number of students	5,235,524	5,178,829	56,695	5,373,312	5,312,715	60,597
Number of teachers	310,953	306,128	4,825	306,110	300,990	5,120

³ Ministry of Education and Training (2018). *Primary Education Statistics*. <https://www.moet.gov.vn/thong-ke/Pages/thong-ke-giao-duc-tieu-hoc.aspx?ItemID=5392>

⁴ Ministry of Education and Training (2018). *Secondary Education Statistics*. [https://www.moet.gov.vn/content/tintuc/Lists/News/Attachments/5393/20.4%20THCS%20-%20TK%4%90N%202017-2018%20\(PB%2030.3.18\)%20final.pdf](https://www.moet.gov.vn/content/tintuc/Lists/News/Attachments/5393/20.4%20THCS%20-%20TK%4%90N%202017-2018%20(PB%2030.3.18)%20final.pdf)

Upper Secondary education⁵

	Academic year 2016-2017			Academic year 2017-2018		
	Total	Public	Non-public	Total	Public	Non-public
Number of schools	2,391	2,110	281	2,398	2,114	284
Number of students	2,477,175	2,290,929	186,246	2,508,564	2,313,315	195,249
Number of teachers	150,721	136,830	13,891	150,288	135,819	14,469

3. School policy and system update

3.1. The amended Education Law

In the recent meeting of the National Assembly in May 2018, the draft of the amended Education Law was introduced for discussion and feedback. The amended law is expected to be passed by the National Assembly in November 2018. Compared to the existing 2005 Education Law, the draft proposed four distinctive amendments. Firstly, the draft amendment suggests higher salary for teachers to ensure teachers are being motivated to produce better education quality. Secondly, the draft proposes to streamline general education into two stages: (1) Basic education (primary and under secondary education) and (2) Job-oriented education (upper secondary education or professional secondary education). Thirdly, teachers' qualifications are nationally standardised to ensure a better general education outcome in Vietnam [for instance, primary school teachers are required to obtain a college degree (diploma level) at least]. Fourthly, lower secondary school students will be provided with tuition-free education (this means the government commits to have education universalisation from grade 1 – grade 9, instead of from year 1 – year 5 as it is now).

The amendment is to reflect the objectives of general education in Vietnam in order to meet the changing requirements of contemporary education as well as of industry. Apart from focusing on academic competency, ideological education, creativity and soft skills as prescribed in Article 27 of the existing education law, the proposed amended law also emphasises the significance of lifelong learning and compatibility between Vietnam education and internationally recognised standards.

3.2. Highlights relating to school sector from Decree 86 on foreign cooperation and investment in education and training

Decree 86, which will take effect on 1st August 2018 replacing *Decree 73 (2012)*, applies to foreign cooperation and investment activities in education and training in Vietnam from early childhood education, school to higher education sectors. It does not apply to vocational education and training which is regulated by *Decree 48*. The amendment of *Decree 48* is expected to be approved by late 2018.

⁵ Ministry of Education and Training (2018). *High School Education Statistics*.

[https://www.moet.gov.vn/content/tintuc/Lists/News/Attachments/5394/THPT%20-%20TK%20C4%90N%202017-2018%20\(PB%2030.3.18\).pdf](https://www.moet.gov.vn/content/tintuc/Lists/News/Attachments/5394/THPT%20-%20TK%20C4%90N%202017-2018%20(PB%2030.3.18).pdf)

The foreign cooperation and investment activities in education and training regulated by *Decree 86* include education linkage programs at early childhood education and school level. This is to deliver integrated Vietnamese and foreign school curriculum to Vietnamese students in Vietnam. This mode of cooperation is open to private Vietnamese schools and kindergartens in partnership with legal and accredited educational establishments abroad. This is a new component compared with *Decree 73*.

The DOET Director shall approve education linkage programs, in consultation with MOET for approval of the curriculum delivered under the programs. The Minister of Education and Training shall approve the integrated Vietnamese and foreign curriculum delivered in the education linkage programs.

Education institutions delivering education linkage programs in Vietnam need to undertake accreditation in accordance with Vietnam's current regulations. The foreign curriculum to be integrated and delivered in the education linkage programs should be accredited or recognised for quality by legislative agencies in their home countries.

Vietnamese students that foreign-invested kindergartens and schools can admit should be lower than 50% of the total enrolments. This is a lift from 0% for kindergarten, 10% for primary schools and 20% for secondary schools under *Decree 73*.

3.3. Projects supporting policy and system reforms

Renovation of General Education Project (2016-2021)

The General Education Project's objective is to raise student learning outcomes by: (i) revising and implementing the curriculum following a competency-based approach; and (ii) improving the effectiveness of instruction by creating and disseminating textbooks aligned with the revised curriculum.

There are three components to the project:

1. ***Curriculum development.*** This component will support the development and implementation of a revised curriculum that is competency-based for all school subjects from grades 1-12.
2. ***Development and dissemination of aligned textbooks.*** This component will support the development a set of textbooks aligned with the new curriculum and the provision of aligned textbooks to schools with high numbers of economically-disadvantaged students.
3. ***Learning assessment and analysis for continuous improvement of curriculum and policy.*** This component includes three sub-components: establishment of the National Centre for Sustainable Development of General Education Quality (NCSDGEQ) and the National Center for Foreign Language Testing (NCFLT); research and capacity-building on curriculum development and assessment; and expansion of the national large-scale assessment system.

The Project has received 77 million dollars from the World Bank's Official Development Assistance (ODA) and 3 million dollars from Vietnam's reciprocal fund. As of 2018, the draft curriculum has been piloted in a number of schools at all levels.

Secondary Education Sector Development Program, phase II (2017-2023)

The Program is supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) which has provided USD 107 million dollars and is executed by MOET. Based on the reforms initiated during phase I, the phase II of the Program introduces new features to improve the quality and relevance of secondary education, increase equitable access to education for disadvantaged adolescents, and strengthen education governance. Specifically, those features include i) pedagogically innovative school models; ii) upgrading teacher standards; iii) strengthening science, technology, engineering and mathematics education; iv) providing locally-tailored cognitive skill-oriented vocational guidance and v) targeting support to emerging disadvantaged groups; and vi) strengthening locally-based decision-making.

Enhancing Teacher Education Program (2016-2021)

The Program's objective is to strengthen teacher education institutions to enhance teacher and principal effectiveness through improved continuous professional development. The National Teacher Education Program establishes a new framework for the provision of training, retraining and continuing professional development of school teachers and principals in order to meet the requirements of the Fundamental and Comprehensive Education Reform.

The program focuses on (i) improving capacity of leading Teacher Training universities and central teacher management units to enhance teacher and principal education effectiveness; (ii) developing a teacher and principal training needs assessment system; (iii) providing school-based and continuous professional development for teachers and principals; (iv) ensuring that teachers and principals have access to capacity building programs and resources through an information and communication technology-based system; and (v) mobilising world-class expertise to help develop and operationalise the strategies for improving school-based capacity building for teachers and principals.