



# World TVET Database United Arab Emirates

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## Abbreviations

ACTVET	Abu Dhabi Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
ADTA	Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority
ADVETI	Abu Dhabi Vocational Education and Training Institute
CAA	Commission for Academic Accreditation
CEPA	Common Educational Proficiency Assessment
ECAE	Emirates College for Advanced Education
HCT	Higher Colleges of Technology
KHDA	Knowledge and Human Development Authority
MOHESR	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
NAPO	National Admission and Placement Office
NIVE	National Institute for Vocational Education
NQA	National Qualifications Authority
QFEmirates	National Qualifications Framework in UAE
UAE	United Arab Emirates
VEDC	Vocational Education Development Centre

## TVETipedia Glossary

Below are listed TVET terms mentioned in this report. Click on a term to read its definitions on the UNESCO-UNEVOC TVETipedia glossary.

Accreditation	Labour market
Adult learning/education	Learning outcomes
Assessment	Lifelong Learning
Assessor	National Qualifications Framework
Basic education	Non-formal education
Benchmarking	Occupational standard
Competence/y	Post-secondary education
Curriculum	Qualification
Dropout	Quality
Employer	Quality Assurance
Evaluation	Skills
Formal Education And Training	Skills development
General education	Stakeholder
Higher education	Teacher
Informal Learning	Teacher In VET
In-service training	Trainer
Job	TVET
Knowledge	TVET provider
Labour force	

# United Arab Emirates

Population:	9,157,000 (2015)
Youth population <sup>1</sup> :	1,163,000 (2015)
Median population age:	33.3 (2015)
Annual population growth (2010-2015) <sup>2</sup> :	1.89%



Data © OpenStreetMap Design © Mapbox

## 1. TVET mission, strategy and legislation

### TVET strategy

With regard to education, the UAE Government Strategy 2011-2013 focuses on three points:

- Develop students' skills, knowledge, and readiness for higher education;
- Promote student retention, educational attainment, and values; and
- Improve the quality of higher education and ensure accessibility

There is a clear emphasis by the UAE Government on skill development of the National population, with the aim of improving access to higher education. In 2010 the Abu Dhabi Executive Council created the Abu Dhabi Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ACTVET) as a body responsible for TVET in the emirate.

The Ministry of Education Strategy 2010-2020 takes a student-centred approach to education. The Strategy is based on ten strategic objectives:

- Ensure high quality curriculum is in place so that students are best prepared for the knowledge economy;
- Ensure all students receive excellent teaching from all educational staff;
- Develop primary and secondary education across the UAE and minimise drop outs;
- Ensure an excellent learning environment and tools to ensure that students' needs are met;
- Install a harmonised assessment on a federal level and ensure that students with special needs receive extra and individualised support to integrate them into the educational system;
- Ensure that an affordable, high quality standard of public and private education is accessible to all students;
- Promote National Identity and develop the students' sense of belonging;
- Foster the society's direct contribution to the school environment;
- Ensure that all support services in Zones are conducted in a timely and efficient way;
- and

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<sup>1</sup> Population aged 14-25

<sup>2</sup> All statistics compiled from the United Nation's Population Division's *World Population Prospects, the 2015 Revision* (<http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/DVD/>)

- Ensure that all support services in the Ministry are conducted in a timely and efficient way.

According to the national strategy for TVET, the training and development of the Emirati workforce is an integral part of UAE's strategic development plan known as 'Vision 2020'. In addition to conventional training, there are opportunities to train a skilled national workforce in higher education institutions, as the industry-based training is growing rapidly.

## TVET legislation

**The Constitution of 1971 (Article 17)** outlines the role of education in UAE's social development. That Article states "Education shall be compulsory at primary level and free of charge at all levels. Education shall be based on plans that propagate the spread of education and the eradication of illiteracy".

**Federal Law No. 11 of 1972** defines the specialisations of the different ministries. It is a federal law that endows ministries with the responsibility to:

- Provide education to all citizens and makes it compulsory at the primary level;
- Draw up curricula, examination systems and literacy programmes; and
- Ensure quality of education

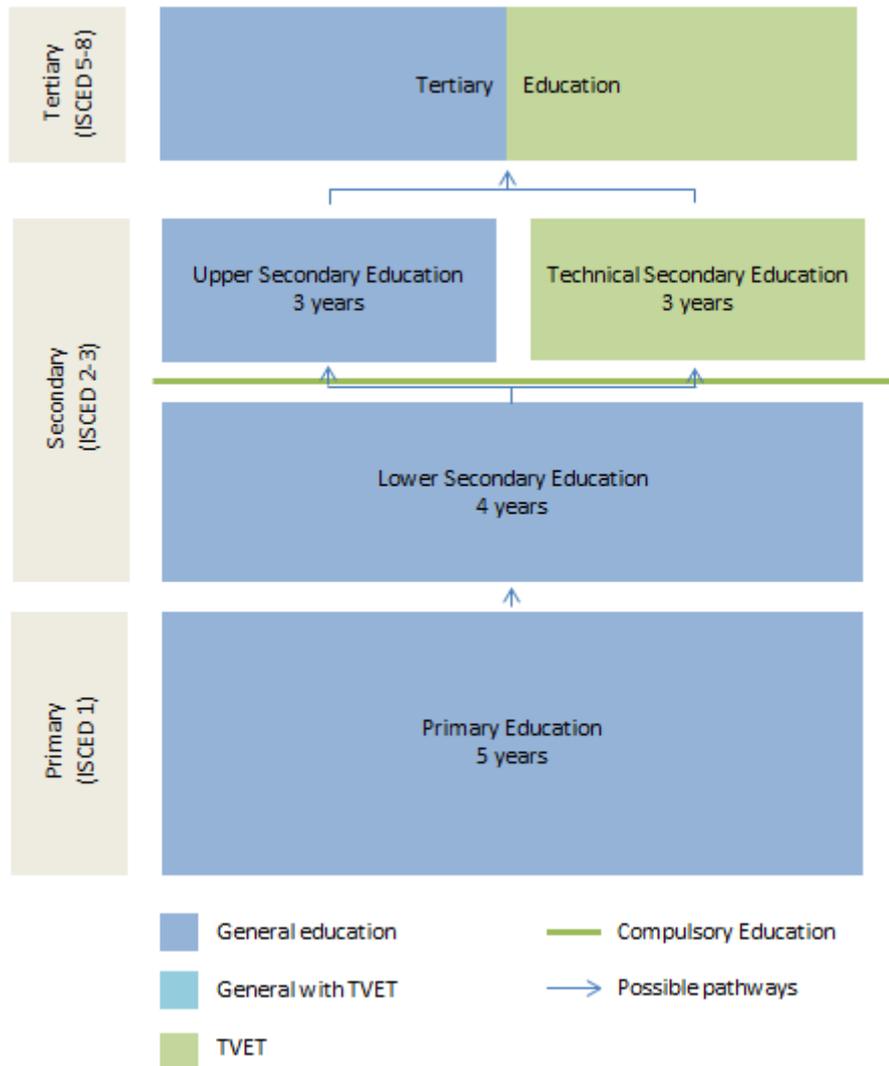
**The Law issued by the Ministerial Resolution No. 48072 of 1989** (amended by Ministerial Resolution No. 20/2) defines enrolment requirements for general and technical education. It outlines enrolment procedures and documents; and transfer requirements for students and teachers.

**Federal Decree No. 1 of 2010** established the National Qualifications Authority (NQA).

### *Sources:*

Government of the United Arab Emirates (2011). United Arab Emirates Government Strategy 2011-2013 –Putting Citizens First. Abu Dhabi: Government of the United Arab Emirates.  
Ministry of Education (2010). Strategy 2010-2020. Aiming in accomplishing a score of 10/10 in all of its initiative. Accessed: 26 June 2013.

## 2. TVET formal, non-formal and informal systems



Scheme compiled by UNESCO-UNEVOC from UNESCO-IBE (2010). World Data on Education VII Ed. 2010/11. United Arab Emirates. Geneva: UNESCO-IBE.

### Formal TVET system

Since a reform in 2000/1, basic education is divided into two stages – primary education (grades 1–5) and secondary education (grades 6–9) – which are both compulsory. Secondary education is offered in general secondary and technical schools. At general secondary schools, students take a common first year of core subjects followed by two years in which they can choose between a science or art track. Technical education comprises three streams – technical, agricultural and commercial. General education leads to the secondary school-leaving certificate while technical education leads to the technical secondary diploma.

Higher education is offered at higher education institutions such as universities and the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT). Students who apply through the National Admission and

Placement Office (NAPO) need to take the Common Educational Proficiency Assessment (CEPA) which forms part of the selection criteria for higher education. As in all other public institutions of higher education, entrance into the Higher Colleges of Technology is free for National students. There are a range of different programmes at HCT, covering six core educational divisions, which are run according to curricula developed in consultation with industry leaders, employers and commercial sector representatives.

Founded in 1988 by the Federal government of UAE, the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCTs) are dedicated to the delivery of technical and professional programmes of the highest quality to the students. HCTs offer various programmes in Engineering Technology, Health Sciences, Computer and Information Science, Business, Applied Communications and Education. Those programmes lead to applied diploma and applied Baccalaureate. As the largest higher education institution in the UAE, HCT's curriculum is designed to prepare graduates to pursue professional careers to meet the needs of the UAE's growing and diverse economy.

### **Non-formal and informal TVET systems**

As part of its Professional Development Strategy, the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA) runs tourism training, which aims at developing a pool of well-trained tourism professionals. The Industry Development Training Programmes comprise courses dealing with customer service, Abu Dhabi cultural heritage, tourism information services and many others.

Furthermore, a range of TVET providers are located in the Dubai Knowledge Village and the Dubai International Academic City which are education hubs providing language, academic and vocational programmes. Many international institutions offer programmes that give students the opportunity to develop their skills and enhance their careers.

#### ***Sources:***

UNESCO-IBE (2010). World Data on Education VII Ed. 2010/11. United Arab Emirates. Geneva: UNESCO-IBE.

## **3. Governance and financing**

### **Governance**

The UAE is a federation of seven Emirates - Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Fujairah, Sharjah, Dubai, Ras al-Khaimah and Umm al-Quwain. The National Government is responsible for all issues not granted to the Emirates, such as education.

The Ministry of Education is in charge of general education, literacy programmes and adult education. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has the responsibility for higher education and the Ministry for Social Affairs manages special education schools.

Established in 2006, the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) is responsible for developing knowledge and human resources in the Emirate of Dubai. KHDA is a regulatory authority in the Dubai Government which assists in the improvement of schools, universities, training institutes and all other human resource centres. The Authority also conducts research ranging from early childhood to adult learning.

The National Institute for Vocational Education (NIVE) is an autonomously managed organisation affiliated with the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA). Established in 2006, NIVE is mandated with developing a skilled labour force that meets the needs of the labour market. NIVE aims to provide "flexible, high quality, life-long, world-class vocational education, benchmarked against professional standards that will meet the current and future needs of stakeholders, the government, community, employers and individuals in the UAE and the Gulf region". The Institute develops TVET programmes that are learner-oriented, modular in nature, and designed to maximise the potential of trainees. The courses combine theory with practice, foster work ethic and allow for entry at different levels. They include a compulsory six-week period of Work Placement Learning which aims to expose students to the real-life work environment.

Established in 2010, the Abu Dhabi Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ACTVET) presides over TVET in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. ACTVET develops TVET policies and standards; licenses TVET instructors; provides TVET guidance and assistance to the Abu Dhabi Government and private institutions. It also undertakes educational research in cooperation with Abu Dhabi Educational Council; and develops partnerships with TVET stakeholders.

Established in 2010, the National Qualifications Authority (NQA) is in charge of classifying qualifications, and creating a unified system and reference point for all national qualifications. It undertakes its responsibilities in coordination with relevant bodies.

NQA works according to the following aims and objectives:

- Design plans and policies, and develop a comprehensive and unified national strategy for qualifications;
- Establish and continuously maintain standards and regulations for qualifications of higher education, general education and technical, vocational and professional education and training to keep pace with scientific and technological progress, and to meet the requirements of economic and social development;
- Develop policies and procedures for qualifications of higher education, general education and vocational, technical and professional education and training so as to obtain national and international accreditation (recognition);
- Develop and maintain systems, processes and procedures to assess learning outcomes that serve as the basis for awarding qualifications;
- Issue equivalencies for higher education, general education and vocational, technical, and professional education and training qualifications;
- Assess and accredit higher education, general education and vocational, technical, and professional education and training providers;
- Develop policies and procedures for access, transfer and progression of individuals within higher education, general education and vocational, technical, and professional education and training streams inside and outside the country;
- Advise individuals and entities to promote the concept of life-long learning;
- Establish and maintain systems, processes and procedures to ensure that the National Qualifications Framework is the national frame of reference for qualifications in the country;
- Analyse and provide qualifications-relevant data, and submit proposals to relevant entities, to improve the quality of higher education, general education and vocational, technical and professional education and training systems;

- Establish specialised committees to develop national occupational (skills) standards for all jobs in compliance with the National Qualifications Framework levels;
- Develop and maintain an integrated system to license assessors of vocational, technical and professional education and training qualifications;
- Support the efforts of all entities responsible for assessing and regulating workforce quality;
- Establish and maintain a national database for all education and training providers in the country, to include learners, accredited (recognised) national qualifications and national occupational (skills) standards;
- Conduct studies and periodic evaluations, so as to improve the overall performance of the national qualifications system; and
- Implement any other tasks or responsibilities assigned by the Council of Ministers

The Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA), which falls under the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHESR), is the federal agency charged with ensuring quality in education. CAA licenses post-secondary institutions and accredits individual training programmes.

The Commission strives to meet the following four goals:

- Ensuring Quality and Academic Standards: maintain and implement a quality framework which assures that institutions of higher education in the UAE operate in line with international academic, administrative, managerial, and operational standards;
- Diversifying Services: offer a broad range of appropriate services and activities that further enhances quality;
- Ensuring an Effective Operation: deliver efficient and effective quality-enhancing processes for a strongly developing higher education sector; and
- Developing an International Profile: play an active, cooperative and influential role in the international community of quality assurance organisations for higher education.

### *Sources:*

UNESCO-IBE (2010). World Data on Education VII Ed. 2010/11. United Arab Emirates. Geneva: UNESCO-IBE.

## 4. TVET teachers and trainers

All teachers are required to have a degree and teaching experience. Expatriate teachers have to sit a written exam which is followed by an interview that determines their job suitability and level at which they can teach.

The Emirates College for Advanced Education (ECAE) is the first teacher training college in the UAE. It was established in 2007 and is located in Abu Dhabi city. The college currently offers a four-year Bachelor of Education degree (B.Ed), training Emirati students to teach in a range of subjects including English, math and science. For Emirati students who don't fulfil the Bachelor Education programme requirements, ECAE offers a one-year Foundation Programme. ECAE also offers English training for in-service teachers and principals, offering a range of professional development courses. It provides a Postgraduate Diploma in Education as well.

The Higher Colleges of Education offer a four-year Bachelor of Education degree (B.Ed) which includes a common first-year and a specialisation starting from the second year. Specialisations are available in early childhood education, English language teaching in schools, primary education and educational technology.

**Sources:**

UNESCO-IBE (2010). World Data on Education VII Ed. 2010/11. United Arab Emirates. Geneva: UNESCO-IBE.

## 5. Qualifications and Qualifications Frameworks

### National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

The National Qualification Framework (QFEmirates) (was established in 2012 by the National Qualifications Authority (NQA). QFEmirates was designed to facilitate adequate description and comparison of qualifications; recognition of achievement in learning; and the correct usage of recognised and agreed common titles in higher, general and vocational education. It provides guidance and a reference tool for accreditation and awarding bodies; as well as for qualifications designers and developers. The Framework includes formal, non-formal and informal learning.

There are ten qualification levels, each representing a defined level of difficulty, complexity and depth of learning. Learning outcomes are the common criteria defining learners' abilities. QFEmirates defines learning outcomes according to knowledge, skill and aspects of competence (autonomy and responsibility; role in context; self-development). Credits are used to assess the amount of learning required to gain a qualification and facilitate international mobility. In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), one credit corresponds to 15 hours of learning. Credits may be accumulated to transfer between academic institutions.

Qualifications Framework for the United Arab Emirates (QFEmirates)



Source: Qualifications Framework Emirates – Handbook, National Qualifications Authority, 2012.

The National Institute for Vocational Education (NIVE) developed a Vocational Education Framework comprising five competency levels that focus on six skill areas (communication, information and communication technology, application of numbers, team work, improving own learning, problem solving).

The five competency levels are:

- Competence in a range of work activities, mostly routine and predictable;
- Competence in a variety of work activities, some complex and non-routine, in differing situations, with ability to take some individual responsibility or work in collaboration with others. Competence in a variety of work activities, some complex and non-routine, in differing situations, with ability to take some individual responsibility or work in collaboration with others;
- Competence in a broad range of work activities mainly complex and non-routine in a wide variety of situations, often involving the guidance or supervision of others;
- Competence in a broad range of complex technical or professional work activities in a wide variety of situations often with responsibility for others and allocation of resources; and
- Competence in the application of a significant range of fundamental principles and complex techniques in a wide and often unpredictable variety of work situations, with substantial autonomy and responsibility for the work of others; allocation of resources; analysis diagnosis, planning and evaluation.

## Quality assurance

In the United Arab Emirates, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHESR) is in charge of ensuring quality in education. All institutions providing TVET in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) must be licensed and have their programmes accredited to be recognised by MOHESR. Currently, the Higher Colleges of Technology are pursuing accreditation as a TVET institution.

Within the MOHESR, the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) ensures quality through institutional licensing and programme accreditation. To be licensed, institutions need to have a mission appropriate to post-secondary education and training. It must also meet requirements in governance structure, by-laws, regulations, policies, procedures, equipment, financial resources, staff and internal quality assurance. Institutional licences are granted for a period of five years and need to be renewed thereafter. Licenced institutions are required to report to CAA annually and display their status as 'licenced' or 'recognised by MOHESR' in all documents and advertising.

Only after being granted a licence may a TVET institution apply for accreditation of its training programmes. Accreditation must be obtained before TVET programmes can be advertised. The accreditation process entails a programme review which aims to ensure that training courses meet appropriate standards and internationally recognised criteria.

The CAA has published Standards for Licensure and Accreditation of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (2009) which define specific requirements for licensing and

accreditation. The Standards are designed to promote institutional quality and assure technical and vocational students and other stakeholders that licenced TVET institutions meet quality standards consistent with international best practices.

### ***Sources:***

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (2009). Standard for Licensure and Accreditation of Technical and Vocational Education and Training. Abu Dhabi: Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

National Qualifications Authority (2011). National Qualifications Framework. Accessed: 26 June 2013.

UNESCO-IBE (2010). World Data on Education VII Ed. 2010/11. United Arab Emirates. Geneva: UNESCO-IBE.

Webpage of the Abu Dhabi Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

## **6. Current reforms, major projects and challenges**

### **Challenges**

Low enrolment figures pose a challenge for TVET in the UAE. According to The National newspaper (2012) 'Young people who would benefit from learning technical skills choose degree courses instead because employers pay higher salaries to university graduates'. TVET is viewed as the second option in a country where public universities are free of charge for National students.

The lack of a national strategy for TVET is one reason why TVET funding and mechanisms are not in place. There is a need for cooperation between all TVET stakeholders to create a TVET system capable of producing skilled workers needed in a diversified and competitive economy. The recent development of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) indicates increased efforts in creating a coherent education system. It gives TVET graduates tangible qualifications that they can use in pursuing further studies.

### ***Sources:***

Swan, M (2012). Vocational education 'must not be neglected'. In *The National. Abu Dhabi*. Published on May 16, 2012. Accessed: 26 June 2013.

## **7. Links to UNEVOC centres and TVET institutions**

### **UNEVOC Centres**

- [Higher Colleges of Technology](#)

### **TVET Institutions**

- [Abu Dhabi Centre for Vocational Education and Training](#)
- [Dubai Knowledge Village](#)
- [Higher Colleges of Technology](#)

- [Institute of Applied Technology](#)
- [Vocational Education Development Centre](#)

## 8. References and further reading

### References

Government of the United Arab Emirates (2011). [United Arab Emirates Government Strategy 2011-2013 –Putting Citizens First](#). Abu Dhabi: Government of the United Arab Emirates.

Ministry of Education (2010). [Strategy 2010-2020. Aiming in accomplishing a score of 10/10 in all of its initiative](#). Accessed: 26 June 2013.

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UNESCO-IBE (2010). [World Data on Education VII Ed. 2010/11. United Arab Emirates](#). Geneva: UNESCO-IBE.

Webpage of the [Abu Dhabi Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training](#).

### Further reading

Webpage of the [Abu Dhabi Education Council](#).

Webpage of the [Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority](#).

Webpage of the British Council Vocational programme on [Skills for Employability](#).

Webpage of the [Commission for Academic Accreditation](#).

Webpage of the [Knowledge and Human Development Authority](#).

Webpage of the [Ministry of Education](#).

Webpage of the [National Institute for Vocational Education](#).

Webpage of the [National Qualification Authority](#).