

Web Content Extraction

URL: <https://wenr.wes.org/2019/10/education-in-rwanda>

Project: 02ca5d7f-9fa0-4763-9332-16fb95b953d0

Extracted: 2026-01-20 12:27:22

Education System Profiles Education in Rwanda October 15, 2019 Stefan Trines Stefan Trines, Research Editor, WENR Panoramic view at the city business district of Kigali, Rwanda, 2016

Rising from the Ashes of Genocide: Rwanda in the 21st Century Rwanda is a small landlocked country in central Africa that has been to hell and back. Over just 100 days in 1994, Rwandan armed forces, extremist militias, and radicalized civilians from the nation's ethnic Hutu majority massacred an estimated 800,000 ethnic Tutsis, as well as political opponents, in one of the world's most horrific genocides since World War II. The ensuing civil war resulted in the displacement of a third of Rwanda's population. Some two million people, predominantly Hutus, fled to neighboring countries as the Tutsi-dominated Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) advanced militarily on Kigali, Rwanda's capital. Yet, merely 25 years after these apocalyptic events, Rwanda is regarded as one of the most economically dynamic nations on the continent and a model of development. A tiny mountainous country in which close to 90 percent of the population lived by subsistence farming at the beginning of the century is now frequently hailed as the "Singapore of Africa ." Rwanda has averaged economic growth rates of around 8 percent for the past 15 years . It's the only low-income economy featured in the World Bank's ease of doing business index (ranked 29th out of 190 countries). Contemporary Kigali is one of the cleanest and safest cities in Africa and has become a technology hub . Towering over this remarkable turnaround is Rwanda's strongman, President Paul Kagame. Inseparable from Rwanda's fate for the past 25 years, Kagame led the RPF into Rwanda from exile in Uganda in 1994. He subsequently served as defense minister and vice president before he was elected president in 2000 and began to laser-focus on the goal of turning Rwanda into a middle-income knowledge economy. Often viewed as an incorruptible, visionary leader , Kagame has found many admirers around the world —a fact that helped make Rwanda a " donor darling " in the international aid community. However, Kagame's image was tarnished when in 2017 he reneged on his pledge not to run for a third term and held a referendum to change the Rwandan constitution to allow him to stay in office. Increasing reports of political repression and opposition politicians that "disappear" have made him look more like other African autocrats who cling to power past their time. The organization Reporters Without Borders ranks Rwanda 155 th out of 180 countries in its current World Press Freedom Index . On the upside, Rwanda's achievements over the past decades are remarkable. While the country remains a least developed country ranked 158th out of 189 on the United Nations' Human Development Index , it has succeeded in reducing extreme poverty by 24 percent and lifting some one million people out of poverty since the beginning of the century. Life expectancy has lengthened by 35 years since the 1990s. Rwanda is also one of the least corrupt countries in Africa . Internationally, Rwanda in 2007 joined the East African Community (EAC) and transformed itself from a Francophone nation allied with France to an Anglophone nation that joined the Commonwealth in 2009. Aside from Mozambique , it is the only country in the organization without historical ties to Britain. English was introduced as an official language and the language of instruction in schools. Education is a government priority. The Rwandan government realizes that raising the level of educational attainment is crucial for the economic prosperity of this tiny country that lacks natural resources. Notably, Rwanda has one of the highest elementary school enrollment rates on the continent. In 2012 the country won the prestigious Commonwealth Education Good Practice Award following the construction of more than 8,600 classrooms between 2009 and 2011 . At present, Rwanda's government in partnership with Microsoft is building "smart" classrooms across the country and plans to bring computers, internet connectivity, and basic software packages to all of Rwanda's schools by 2020 . The country's development strategy prioritizes "science and technology education and ICT skills," and emphasizes "vocational and technical training in the fields of technology, engineering and management" to develop human capital and turn Rwanda into a "sophisticated knowledge-based economy." However, the country has a long way to go to realize these goals. Enrollment ratios in

secondary and higher education are still low, and 32 percent of Rwandans are unable to read and write, according to national statistics . Funding levels are suboptimal. Rwanda spends only 11 percent of its total government budget on education, and education expenditures have fallen from 4.9 percent of GDP in 2013 to 3.2 percent in 2017—below the average expenditure of 4 percent in sub-Saharan Africa. Shortages of qualified university instructors and the lack of well-developed research universities are other obstacles to progress. The University of Rwanda (UR), the country's nascent flagship institution, did not start offering doctoral programs until 2014; only 22 percent of its instructors held a PhD in 2018 . The university is emerging as an increasingly important academic hub in East Africa, but of all enrollments those of graduate programs are still low, standing at 5 percent. Teaching the Genocide in Rwanda Hutus and Tutsis are two African ethnic groups that live in both Rwanda and Burundi. While the two groups speak the same language and practice the same religions, German and Belgian colonial rulers deepened ethnic distinctions and conflict between them by favoring the elites of the existing Tutsi monarchy in their colonial administrations in a strategy of “divide and rule.” After independence, the Hutus, which make up about 84 percent of the population in both Rwanda and Burundi, captured the new states and brutally repressed the Tutsis. There were several horrendous mass killings that preceded the 1994 genocide. Many Tutsis were forced to flee the two countries. Those that stayed experienced severe discrimination: The ethnicity of citizens was recorded on apartheid-like identity cards and became a dominant criterion for social hierarchies. After the genocide, Rwanda faced the question of how to teach the history of ethnic conflict and genocide in its school curricula. The new government first suspended all Rwandan history classes for more than a decade before it put forward a carefully crafted “official Rwandan history” “from which no deviation was permitted .” The goal is to instill a sense of collective and unifying “Rwandanness” and prevent the resurgence of inter-ethnic conflict. While the genocide is commemorated each year and the topic of “genocide studies” has recently been incorporated in school curricula, discussing ethnicity itself is still taboo. The Rwandan government has outlawed the use of the ethnic labels “Hutu” and “Tutsi”. Some consider this suppression of open public discourse on ethnic conflict a necessary step toward reconciliation. Critics, on the other hand, accuse the government of creating a one-sided version of history and telling a Tutsi-friendly narrative. Discussing the killing of Hutus at the hands of the RPF, for instance, can result in lengthy jail sentences .

International Student Mobility Given that Rwanda is a country of only 12.4 million people, the total number of Rwandan international students is relatively minor. According to UNESCO statistics , there were 4,839 Rwandans enrolled in degree programs in other countries in 2017 (compared with 85,000 Nigerians). However, the country has a very high outbound mobility ratio. The percentage of Rwandan students enrolled internationally exceeded 15 percent in the early 2000s when the country was still reeling from the impact of the genocide, before it gradually decreased to a still high 6 percent in 2017. For comparison, Nigeria had an outbound mobility ratio of 3.7 percent in 2011. Overall, the number of Rwandan international students has declined in recent years, possibly because of the growing availability of study options in Rwanda's own nascent higher education system, including those offered by an increasing number of transnational education providers in the country. The number of Rwandan international degree-seeking students dropped by 22 percent since 2012, when there were 6,227 Rwandans studying abroad, according to UNESCO. The United States is by far the most popular destination country of mobile Rwandan degree students, accounting for almost 25 percent of enrollments. That makes Rwanda the ninth-largest sub-Saharan African sending country of international students in the U.S., despite its small population. The Open Doors data of the Institute of International Education show that the number of Rwandan students in the country has more than doubled over the past five years and reached 1,232 in the 2017/18 academic year—an increase of 13.2 percent over 2016/17. Most Rwandans—70 percent—are enrolled at the undergraduate level, while 17 percent study in graduate programs, 2 percent in non-degree programs, and 10.5 percent pursue Optional Practical Training. According to Rwandan media reports , the reasons for the growing popularity of the U.S. as a study destination include a growing awareness of the “U.S. college and university application process among students, parents, and educators; Rwandan government partnerships with U.S. higher education institutions such as the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, as well as scholarship programs like, for example, the Bridge-to-Rwanda program or the EducationUSA Scholars Program” run by the U.S. State Department. The Rwandan government also promotes student mobility with national scholarship programs, which it views as an investment in human capital development . Given the scarce financial means of Rwandan students, scholarships are crucial for

driving mobility. Finally, the switch to English as the language of instruction has made it easier for Rwandan students to study in English-speaking countries like the United States. The next most popular destination country among Rwandan students after the U.S. is the neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), accounting for 13 percent of enrollments. Sizable numbers of Rwandan students prefer to study in French at low-cost institutions in the Congolese city of Goma, but it remains to be seen how recent outbreaks of the Ebola virus will affect student flows in the border region. In August 2019, the Rwandan government closed the border and stopped Rwandan school and university students from crossing into the DRC. Armed conflict in the region can also impact student flows. Other popular destinations are France (8.5 percent), Canada (6 percent), India (5.6 percent), and South Africa (4.5 percent), according to UNESCO. It should be noted that the Canadian government reports much higher numbers than UNESCO. The government statistics show that the number of Rwandan students in Canada spiked by more than 700 percent over the past decade, from 120 students in 2007 to 1,030 in 2018. ¹ Inbound Mobility Interestingly, the number of international students in Rwanda has surged in recent years, if on a low base level in terms of total enrollments. Within just three years, the number of international degree-seeking students in Rwanda quadrupled from 778 students in 2015 to 3,052 in 2018 (per UNESCO). The vast majority of these students are from other East African countries; more than two-thirds come from the neighboring DRC, Burundi, and Uganda. One reason for this growing inflow is the regional integration and harmonization of education systems within the East African Community (EAC), as well as growing research collaboration between EAC member countries. Research and scholarship funding by international organizations also help boost mobility in the region. The World Bank, for example, funded the establishment of 24 academic centers of excellence at African universities in the Eastern and Southern Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence Project (ACE II, following ACE I for Western and Central Africa) in 2016. Designed to function as regional incubators of technical innovation and graduate research in eight African countries, these ACE II centers have capacity and funding for more than 3,500 graduate students over a span of five years, including at least 700 PhD students. Four of the centers are housed at the University of Rwanda (UR) and attract graduate students from other African countries like Burundi, which does not host any ACE centers. Beyond that, there are sizable numbers of Congolese refugees and students that come to Rwanda to access education of a higher quality than is available in the eastern DRC. A Brief History of Education in Rwanda Western education was introduced in Rwanda in the 20th century, when Christian missionaries began to establish churches and schools throughout the region, beginning with the founding of the first school in Rwanda by Roman Catholic missionaries in 1900. Rather than establishing direct control over education, both the German and Belgian colonial governments left many aspects of education to religious institutions, so that “almost all the schools were owned by the Catholic and Protestant churches” when Rwanda became independent in 1962. The new Rwandan government expanded the role of the state but did not monopolize education. Rather, it subsidized many of the religious schools—a practice that continues today in the form of so-called “government-aided schools,” which are privately managed schools that receive government funding for teacher salaries and other expenses. The governments that ruled Rwanda between 1962 and 1994 nevertheless established a public education system, developed a national curriculum, and created the country’s first higher education institutions (HEIs). They succeeded in increasing access to education in the impoverished rural country. The elementary gross enrollment ratio (GER), for instance, increased from 46 percent in 1973 to 65 percent in 1990. At the same time, the education policies of these Hutu-dominated governments were central to intensifying the conflict between Hutus and Tutsis, just like those of the previous colonial rulers. Whereas Tutsis were recruited for administrative positions and trained at the best schools during the Belgian administration, they were now discriminated against. By the 1970s, admission into public and government-aided schools was strictly based on ethnic and regional quotas that helped reinforce divisions, while school curricula disseminated anti-Tutsi propaganda. When the tensions eventually erupted in the 1994 genocide, schooling in Rwanda came to an immediate halt. As education researcher Anna Obura described it, “teachers and children were killed or fled; schools and colleges were destroyed, burned, looted and pillaged, and their vehicles stolen.... The Ministry of Education was brought to a standstill. The walls of the ministry were shelled, with all windows blown out, and doors broken, furniture smashed and looted, and documents pillaged and scattered.” Reconstructing the Rwandan school system after this cataclysm was a monumental task. The murder of some 800,000 citizens and displacement of a third of the population had all but destroyed

the country's social institutions. It has been estimated that nearly two-thirds of Rwandan schools were non-functional in 1994, while more than half of elementary school teachers were either killed or displaced, many of them as refugees outside of the country. Given this turmoil, the progress Rwanda has made in reconstructing and improving its education system over the past 25 years is impressive. Notably, the country achieved almost full participation in elementary education within just one decade after introducing free elementary education in 2003. As the World Bank put it, "Rwanda increased [the] primary gross enrollment ratio (GER) to over 100 percent in 2013. By 2017, practically all primary and secondary schools had toilets, nearly 60 percent had tap water, and hydroelectric supply is available in more than 55 percent of primary schools and in more than 70 percent of secondary schools.... computers are available in nearly 70 percent of the primary schools and 85 percent of secondary schools. The Internet is accessible in 25 percent of primary, and in more than 40 percent of secondary schools." However, significant problems remain. Access to early childhood education is limited, classrooms are overcrowded, and elementary schooling remains plagued by high repetition rates and urban-rural divides. Despite the introduction of free education until grade nine in 2007, GERs in lower secondary education are a far cry from the rates achieved at the elementary level and remained below 46 in 2017 (per UNESCO). Learning outcomes are often mediocre, and teacher training needs to be improved, observers say. Rwanda's GER in higher education, meanwhile, remains below the average in sub-Saharan Africa and is stagnant at around 8 percent . Less than 4 percent of Rwandans above the age of 25 have had any type of higher education.

Administration of the Education System

The Republic of Rwanda, as it's officially called, is administratively divided into five provinces: the Eastern, Northern, Southern, and Western provinces, as well as Kigali City. The five provinces are further subdivided into 30 districts (*akarere*), 416 sectors (*imirenge*), 2,148 cells (*utugari*), and 14,837 villages (*imudungu*). School education is centrally overseen by the national Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) in Kigali and administered locally by District Education Offices (DEOs). Whereas the MINEDUC sets the overall policies and strategies, DEOs manage and monitor schools at the local level. Overall goals for the education systems are generally set forth in multi-year strategic education sector development plans. The Rwanda Education Board (REB), an agency of the MINEDUC, is responsible for developing school curricula, examinations in the school system, and standards for teacher training. Higher education, on the other hand, is the sole responsibility of the central government and overseen by the Higher Education Council (HEC), an agency under the MINEDUC established in 2007. The HEC is tasked with setting standards and enhancing and monitoring the quality of education and research at HEIs; it is also responsible for the vetting and recognition of private HEIs and the accreditation of their programs.

A Rapid Switch to English: The Language of Instruction

Rwanda has four official languages: Kinyarwanda, English, French, and, since 2017, Kiswahili . Whereas Kinyarwanda, a Bantu language, is spoken as the native tongue by almost all Rwandans and used as the language of instruction during the first three years of elementary education , English has since 2009 replaced French as the official language of instruction at higher levels of education. Following the 1994 genocide and the ouster of the Hutu regime, the new regime, which was dominated by Tutsi refugees returning from exile in English-speaking Uganda and Tanzania, realigned Rwanda from a Francophone to an Anglophone nation. Francophonie and the French language, first imposed by Belgium during its colonial rule, were discredited because of France's support for the previous Hutu regime. In addition, Rwanda's government saw switching to English as beneficial for foreign trade, international relations, socioeconomic modernization, and regional integration in the East African Community (EAC). President Kagame in 2003 made English an official language of Rwanda and switched out French in favor of English as the medium of instruction following the country's ascendance to the EAC in 2007. While English is now a mandatory subject from grade one, French is taught as a foreign language beginning in third grade —a drastic change from previous years, when 95 percent of Rwandan schools used French as the language of instruction beginning when most pupils reached the age of nine. The switch brought with it tremendous challenges, since most of Rwanda's schoolteachers had been educated in French and therefore had insufficient English language abilities. According to government surveys, some 85 percent of elementary school teachers and 66 percent of secondary teachers had only limited English skills when the reform was initiated in 2009. Rwanda consequently had to launch a large-scale retraining program for more than 50,000 teachers and recruit them from neighboring English-speaking countries . Despite these efforts, the English proficiency of the Rwandan population, including teachers, remains somewhat limited. As

education researcher Maria Ambrozy told World Politics Review in 2017, “[The] implementation of English as the language of instruction ... was one of the most abrupt policies introduced by the Rwandan government. While other policies have also been introduced with limited notice, this one stands out, as it had an impact on the entire population, and there was insufficient time allowed for the change. For example, teachers were required to learn and/or adopt English in four months.... The government ... overestimated the number of teachers who would be able to educate students effectively in a new language. The consequence of these planning failures was that initial results are below expectations. In due course, many of the logistical issues—for example, a shortage of English-language text books—were resolved, but a large cohort of children have progressed through the education system with limited language skills and subject knowledge.” In higher education, the Rwandan government seeks to boost the use of English by requiring Rwandan universities to teach English courses as a compulsory part of their curricula. Students must not only muster an English proficiency exam to be admitted, they must also pass English language exams during their studies to progress from one academic year to the next. The government is currently also rolling out mandatory English tests for university instructors. It hopes to extend these tests to schoolteachers in the coming years with the help of the British Council. Academic Calendar Rwanda’s school calendar used to be aligned with the academic calendars of other EAC countries, but the government recently changed it to avoid classes during Rwanda’s dry season, which is hot. It’s now divided into trimesters that run from January to April, April to July, and August to November, respectively. Year-end and final graduation examinations are held in November. Rwandan universities usually use semester systems that comprise two semesters of 15 weeks each, as well as a summer semester, depending on the institution. Trimester systems may also be used. Regulations put forward by the HEC stipulate that one semester comprises 12 weeks of classes in addition to one week of orientation and two weeks reserved for examinations at the end of the semester. The academic year usually runs from September to July. Basic Education School education is divided into six years of elementary education, three years of lower-secondary education, and three years of senior secondary education (6+3+3). Until recently, the first nine years were categorized as basic education, offered free of charge at public schools, and compulsory for all children. However, in 2012 President Kagame fulfilled a 2010 election campaign promise to extend free education to grade 12 in a unified 12-year basic education cycle. Since that year, pupils who complete grade nine can enroll in grade 10 in public schools free of charge, a change that resulted in an increase in upper-secondary school enrollments. The GER in upper-secondary education jumped from 21 percent in 2010 to 30 percent in 2017, according to UNESCO data. It should be noted that what is termed tuition-free education in Rwanda isn’t truly free. Parents have to pay for items like “parent-teacher association (PTA) contributions, mock exam fees, purchasing reams of paper for the school, passport photos for exams, registration fees, and school reports, among others. Such costs ... pose serious challenges for successful school attendance, performance, and completion.” However, the introduction of tuition-free upper-secondary education has caused a decline in private high schools in Rwanda in recent years. More than 30 private schools closed in 2017 alone, while 70 percent of the member schools of the Rwanda Private Schools Association struggled to stay afloat in 2018, according to the association. This demise accelerates a downward trend that already began with the introduction of free lower-secondary education in 2007. In contrast to the privatization trends in many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, it reverses prior advances in privatization in Rwanda. Aside from cost considerations, public high schools are increasingly competitive since they are better equipped because of improved government spending. While recent government statistics show that the number of private secondary schools rebounded and grew in 2018, the percentage of students enrolled in private upper-secondary schools dropped from 43 percent to 26 percent between 2012 and 2017, per UNESCO statistics. This follows an even larger decline in enrollments in private lower-secondary schools from 32 percent to 7 percent between 2007 in 2012. There are three types of schools in Rwanda: public, private, and government-aided private schools. Given the historical importance of churches in Rwandan education, most private and government-aided schools are religiously affiliated institutions; more than half are run by the Catholic Church. Close to a third of private schools are in Kigali. According to the latest education statistics published by the MINEDUC, there were 522 public secondary schools, 892 government-aided schools, and 314 private schools in Rwanda in 2018. The average number of students per school increased from 376 to 403 in public schools and from 350 to 408 in government-aided schools, but decreased from 313

to 250 in private schools between 2016 and 2018. Elementary Education Elementary education is divided into two cycles of three years each: Primary one to three (P1 to P3) and Primary four to six (P4 to P6). As noted, Kinyarwanda is the language of instruction in the first cycle before English is introduced as the sole medium of instruction in grade four. There are 20 contact hours per week and a total of 39 weeks per year in both cycles. Children generally enter elementary education at the age of seven. Most pupils attend boarding schools. Except for French, which isn't introduced until grade four, the current curriculum, adopted in 2016, features the same subjects in both cycles: Kinyarwanda, English, mathematics, social and religious studies, science and technology, creative arts, and physical education. One recent change is the greater emphasis on continual competency-based assessment to foster critical thinking and minimize rote learning. That said, examinations remain highly important. There's an exam at the end of each grade, as well as a final external graduation examination at the end of the sixth year. Pupils who pass the national exam, administered by schools under the auspices of the Rwanda Education Board (REB), are awarded the Primary Leaving Certificate. More than 250,000 pupils sat for the exam in 2018. The pass rate was 81 percent. Lower-Secondary Education (Ordinary Level) Lower-secondary education is called "ordinary level" and spans grades seven to nine (S1 to S3). Admission is based on the Primary Leaving Examination. Grade averages are used to determine whether pupils are admitted to their school of choice, but the REB is currently introducing a new system of "random placement" that randomly allocates pupils to schools irrespective of their grades. The current competency-based curriculum includes English, Kinyarwanda, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, information technology, history, geography, entrepreneurship, French, Kiswahili, and physical education, as well as one elective subject (artistic subjects, home science, or agriculture). The number of contract hours is increased to 30 per week in lower-secondary education. Grade nine concludes with an external ordinary level (O Level) examination. Some 99,000 students sat for the exams in 2018. The pass rate decreased from 90 percent in 2017 to 83 percent—a drop attributed to challenges related to the implementation of the new curriculum. Graduates have the option of proceeding to general academic upper-secondary programs (advanced level), technical secondary education, or teacher training programs (discussed further below). Upper-Secondary Education (Advanced Level) Upper-secondary education encompasses grades 10 to 12 (S4 to S6). Admission requires the O Level examinations and is competitive; high grades are required for admission into desirable schools. There are three separate streams in the general academic track: sciences, humanities, and languages. Within these streams, students can choose from a variety of different subject combinations, for example, physics-chemistry-mathematics, or mathematics-physics-computer science. (See the official national curriculum for all available combinations.) While there are a few compulsory subjects (religion, physical education, computer studies), curricula are specialized and vary considerably by stream. A plurality of 36 percent of upper-secondary students were enrolled in the science stream in 2018, while only 13.5 percent studied humanities, 13 percent languages, and the remainder enrolled in vocational and teacher training programs. At the end of grade 12, students sit for final A Level examinations in at least five subjects (the three specialization subjects, entrepreneurship, and a mandatory "general paper"). The exams are held in November and conducted by schools under the auspices of the REB, which issues the final examination certificate. The grading scale used in the examinations is shown below. Secondary grading in Rwanda is complicated. A Level examination subjects are graded at two different levels: The "subsidiary pass" (with a credit value of one point) and the "principal pass" (with a credit value between two and six points, depending on the grade). While the mandatory general paper is always graded with a single passing grade of S (subsidiary), subsidiary passes in other subjects denote that the subject wasn't completed at the advanced level. All candidates who achieve subsidiary passes in at least three subjects are nevertheless awarded the final Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education. However, it should be noted that Rwandan universities typically require a minimum of at least two principal passes with a grade of C or higher for admission. Finally, the A Level examination results also indicate an overall "weighted aggregate grade" on a percentage scale from 0 to 100 that is used by HEIs to rank students for admission purposes. To derive the aggregate grade, principal subject scores are multiplied by three (while the subsidiary grade for the general paper is not). A recent REB instruction manual illustrates this calculation method with the following example: "If a candidate doing physics, chemistry and math..., Entrepreneurship plus General Paper obtains A in math, A in physics, A in Chemistry and A in Entrepreneurships and S in General Paper then that candidate's weighted aggregate will be $(3 \times 6) + (3 \times 6) + (3 \times 6) + (3 \times 6) + (1 \times 1) = 73$ points." Some

42,000 students sat for the A Level exams in 2018; the pass rate was 88 percent . In addition to regular high school students, independent “private” candidates may also sit for the examinations. To be eligible for this pathway, candidates must have completed a minimum of nine years of schooling at least five years prior. The overall number of private candidates has increased as of late but only makes up a small percentage of all test takers (1,369 candidates in 2018). Most private candidates are students who previously attended school but failed examinations, school dropouts seeking to re-enter the system, or graduates attempting to improve their grades for university admission. Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) Rwanda’s genocide and civil war decimated the country’s human capital, and created a desperate need to reconstruct the country’s TVET system. TVET is provided by technical secondary schools and vocational training centers at the secondary level, as well as by polytechnics at the post-secondary level. The government has in recent years adopted various measures to better integrate the different forms of TVET and expand the system, including the creation of the TVET qualifications framework and the establishment of a single oversight body, the Workforce Development Authority (WDA) under the MINEDUC. The TVET system has since grown significantly, although enrollment levels still fall short of official goals. The government recently sought to boost enrollments in TVET programs to 60 percent of all upper-secondary enrollments by 2017 (up from 38 percent in 2013). While the total number of upper-secondary TVET students has increased from 64,866 in 2013 to 79,388 in 2018, the percentage of TVET students among all upper-secondary students actually dropped to 34 percent. There were 360 TVET institutions and 102,485 learners at all levels of TVET in Rwanda in 2018 , most of them enrolled in private technical secondary schools. Technical secondary school programs are three years in length (S4 to S6) and require the completion of nine years of education (O Level) for admission. Curricula include a small general education component (English, mathematics, political studies, and science subjects), as well as technical subjects in a vocational field, such as agriculture, construction, engineering technology, nursing, or secretarial studies. A practical internship is usually part of the program. At the end of grade 12, students sit for the external National Technical and Professional Examination conducted by the WDA. To graduate, they must pass a certain number of subjects and achieve a required minimum aggregate grade, as well as pass a “practical paper”. Graduates are awarded the National Advanced Certificate of Technical Secondary Education A2, an upper-secondary school leaving qualification that prepares students for employment but also provides access to higher education. In addition to technical secondary programs, there are different types of more practically oriented, competency-based certificate programs offered by vocational training centers that are designed to prepare students for direct entry into the labor force. This type of education is currently undergoing changes, and the introduction of overlapping qualifications frameworks can make the classification of these programs confusing. In general, secondary level programs are between one and three years in length , although there are also shorter continuing education programs. While completion of grade nine is generally the benchmark criterion for admission into formal programs, students can also be admitted based on work experience. Curricular specializations range from culinary arts to office administration, software programming, or welding . At the post-secondary level, TVET is provided by a small number of private colleges and the public Rwanda Polytechnic (RP), a large institution created in 2017 as the result of the merger of eight Integrated Polytechnic Regional Colleges (IPRCs) across Rwanda. RP’s constituent IPRCs offer an applied post-secondary Diploma and an Advanced Diploma program in fields like civil engineering, information technology, or wildlife management. Programs are between two and three years in length and may include an industrial internship. Admission requires an upper-secondary qualification like the Certificate of Technical Secondary Education A2. Tertiary Education Rwanda’s tertiary education sector is small but growing rapidly. Before the genocide, higher education was dominated by one institution, the National University of Rwanda, and largely a privilege of Hutu elites —a situation that changed drastically after the war. While the system graduated merely 2,000 students in the decades between 1963 (when the National University of Rwanda was founded) and 1994, there are now 40 HEIs in the country with a total enrollment of slightly more than 89,000 students (2018). The overall number of students has doubled within the last decade while the tertiary GER jumped from 3 percent in 2005 to around 7 percent today, per UNESCO statistics. 2 Enrollments are predominantly in undergraduate programs: There were only six PhDs and 1,338 master’s degrees among the 23,100 academic qualifications awarded in Rwanda in 2016/17 . Higher Education Institutions Despite this strong growth, tertiary enrollments declined slightly last year while the

number of HEIs in Rwanda dropped drastically from 54 to 40 between 2017 and 2018. The reasons for this decrease are the merger of the eight regional IPRCs into the Rwanda Polytechnic, as well as the closure of several private institutions over quality concerns. In 2017, the government shut down five private HEIs: Singhad Technical Education Society-Rwanda, Rusizi International University, Nile Source Polytechnic of Applied Arts, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, and a local branch of the Open University of Tanzania. In 2019, the government also closed two departments of the private University of Gitwe because of insufficient facilities and teaching staff. Most Rwandan HEIs—37 out of 40—are private. For the most part these institutions are relatively new, smaller, specialized universities and HEIs and religiously affiliated institutions, as well as transnational providers like the Cyprus-based Unicaf, Mount Kenya University, or Carnegie Mellon University Africa. Together, private institutions enrolled 57 percent of all tertiary students in 2018. The number of public HEIs, by contrast, is minute despite enrolling 43 percent of students. There are only three: the University of Rwanda (UR); the Institute of Legal Practice and Development, Rwanda's dedicated postgraduate institution for legal education; and Rwanda Polytechnic (RP). However, it should be noted that both UR and RP are large, multi-campus institutions. UR is the country's largest and preeminent multi-faculty research university with 14 campuses and some 29,000 students. It was created in 2013 as a merger of all other public HEIs in Rwanda, including the National University of Rwanda. Quality Assurance and Accreditation The HEC is the designated quality assurance body in Rwandan tertiary education. Its mission is to "improve the organization and functioning of higher learning institutions," to "set norms and standards for accrediting private higher learning institutions," and to monitor compliance with these norms. TVET providers are separately accredited by the WDA. All private universities in Rwanda must be accredited by the HEC, which was established in 2007. Candidates for accreditation that meet certain minimum criteria in terms of facilities and staffing are first granted an initial license to operate. They are then evaluated by the HEC one year prior to the graduation of the first student cohort. They may then receive a definitive operating permit, or be ordered to rectify shortcomings or suspend operations. Accreditation decisions are based on HEC site visits during which auditors review facilities and samples of student works, observe lectures, and assess the viability of institutional self-assessments. Final operating permits are granted for a set list of authorized degree programs. If HEIs want to offer additional programs, they need to apply again and enter into an additional agreement with the HEC. A list of accredited programs is available on the HEC's website. University Admissions Admission into university programs requires at least the Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education with two passes in principal subjects plus demonstrated competency in English (the Advanced Certificate of Technical Secondary Education may also be accepted). Beyond that, requirements vary by institution and program. Admission to UR requires applicants to have passing scores on the general paper and two or more principal passes in major-related subjects with a total of 18 points for arts and social science programs, and 24 points for science, technology, and medical programs. All applicants must also pass an English language proficiency exam. Credit System and Grading Scale Rwanda has in recent years adopted several standardization measures to facilitate the transfer of credits between institutions and the intraregional recognition of academic qualifications within the EAC. In 2008, it introduced a credit system called Credit Accumulation and Modular Scheme (CAMS) that is modeled after the European ECTS credit system, although it uses different credit units. CAMS defines one year of study as 120 credits, which means that a four-year bachelor's degree requires the completion of 480 credits. This system is identical to the East African Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (EACAT) developed for use throughout the EAC. Per official HEC guidelines, academic programs should comprise study modules of 10, 15, or 20 credit units, although some variations are permitted. One credit represents 10 hours of notional learning time. Grading scales in Rwanda are not standardized across the board. Several HEIs, including UR, use the scale shown below, but older French-style 0-20 grading scales are also used by private institutions. Degrees may be awarded with a British-style degree classification. The Tertiary Degree Structure Rwanda in 2007 adopted a qualifications framework for higher education that benchmarks academic qualifications at seven levels. However, while this framework is still in use, it should be noted that there are plans to integrate different frameworks in the TVET and higher education sectors into a new, unified National Qualifications Framework. Older French credential names like the *Diplôme de Licence* or *Diplôme d'Ingénieur* are no longer in use. Certificate, Diploma, and Advanced Diploma A number of private HEIs offer post-secondary short-term certificate programs and accredited diploma and

advanced diploma programs of two- and three-year duration. UR offers a few three-year Advanced Diploma programs in nursing and allied health fields, as well as two-year diploma programs in education. In addition, the HEC defines certificate and diploma qualifications as exit qualifications in incomplete bachelor's programs rather than distinct study programs. Students who complete one year of study (120 credits) before dropping out may receive a Certificate of Higher Education, whereas students who complete two or two and a half years of study may be awarded a Diploma in Higher Education or an Advanced Diploma in Higher Education, respectively. Bachelor's Degree

There are two main types of bachelor's degrees in standard academic disciplines in Rwanda: three-year ordinary degrees (360 credits) and four-year honors degrees (480 credits). The modules of these programs are generally completed sequentially from level one to four, representing each of the four years of study. Programs are usually specialized with few general education requirements, except for English and computer skills. Honors programs may require a project in the final year. There are some shortened "academic upgrade" programs available in fields like nursing that allow students to complete a bachelor's degree in two years based on a diploma qualification. In terms of subject specializations, official HEC guidelines provide for single-subject honors programs, programs that combine a major subject with a minor subject, and triple-minor programs (the specific credit requirements for majors and minors in these subject combinations are detailed in the HEC guidelines). Degree names include the Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts, but some certificates simply indicate the name as "Bachelor's Degree." Medical and Dental Education

Medical education in Rwanda has evolved only slowly, and the country continues to suffer from doctor shortages. There were 1,176 general physicians and 495 specialists in Rwanda in 2016—a ratio of one physician for every 12,000 people . Dental education, in particular, is still embryonic; the first batch of dental students in Rwanda did not graduate before 2018. There were reportedly 40 registered dentists in the country as of 2018 , so that some dental students themselves had never experienced a dental office visit before they took up studies. Until the early 2010s, all medical training took place at the National University and outside the country in Europe . Today, it is provided by UR and a small handful of private institutions. Since 2013, medical and dental education is regulated by the Rwanda Medical and Dental Council . Entry-to-practice qualifications in medicine and dentistry are earned after long five-year bachelor programs pegged at level 5 of the qualifications framework. The final credentials are called Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (Honors) and Bachelor of Dental Surgery (Honors). The curriculum includes an initial period of pre-medical studies followed by clinical studies. To become licensed, candidates must also complete a mandatory one-year rotating clinical internship and pass a qualifying exam . Graduate medical education takes four additional years of training and concludes with the award of a Master of Medicine in a medical specialty. Master's, Postgraduate Certificate, and Postgraduate Diploma

Master's programs are between one and two years in length. Admission requirements include an honors bachelor's degree with high grades (second-class honors, upper division), as well as good English skills. Programs commonly require coursework and the preparation of a thesis, but coursework-only and research-only master's programs also exist. Common credentials awarded include the Master of Arts, Master of Science, or Master of Business Administration. Shorter postgraduate programs lead to the Postgraduate Certificate (60 credits) and the Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits). Master's and other graduate programs are only offered by a limited number of HEIs. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) As in the case of medical training, advanced research education in Rwanda is still nascent. UR did not begin to offer PhD programs until 2014 , and it is presently the only university in the country that provides this type of education. Admission requires a master's degree; programs involve at least three years of research and the defense of a dissertation. Teacher Education Rwanda has a tremendous need for qualified teachers, especially following the switch to English as the language of instruction and the introduction of free basic education up to grade 12. To improve teacher training standards and develop capacity, the government established the Rwanda Teacher Service Commission in 2008, and is currently seeking to establish a formal licensing process for teachers. However, despite allocating substantial resources to teacher training, the system remains plagued by shortages. There were 5,000 open vacancies for schoolteachers in 2019—a gap the government sought to close by recruiting teachers from Kenya and other countries. Domestic students are incentivized with tuition-free programs to enroll in teacher training programs. Teacher training is provided by 16 public teacher training colleges and—since the merger and incorporation of the former Kigali Institute of Education—the newly established University of Rwanda College of Education. Elementary school teachers can

teach with an A2 level certificate in primary education—a secondary level credential earned after three years of study at a teacher training college following the O Level exams (9+3). Lower-secondary teachers, by comparison, must have a Diploma in Education (level A1)—a credential earned after two years of post-secondary study (12+2) that prepares students to teach two subjects. Upper-secondary school teachers must have a four-year bachelor's degree in education from UR. Like the diploma, the bachelor's degree prepares students to teach two subjects. Holders of bachelor's degrees in other disciplines may obtain an upper-secondary teaching qualification by earning a Postgraduate Diploma in Education—a one-year in-service program. UR Master of Education degrees may also qualify holders to teach, depending on the program. WES Documentation Requirements Secondary Education Photocopy of the graduation certificate or diploma (for example, Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education, Certificate of Technical Secondary Education) submitted by the applicant Final Examination Results—sent directly by the Rwanda Board of Education or other applicable body, For U.S. applications: Word-for-word translations of all documents not issued in English Higher Education Degree certificate—submitted by the applicant Academic transcript—sent directly by the institution attended For completed doctoral programs—a written statement confirming the award of the degree sent by the institution attended For U.S. applications: Word-for-word translations of all documents not issued in English Sample Documents Click here for a PDF file of the academic documents referred to below. Rwanda Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education National Advanced Certificate of Technical Secondary Education (A2) Advanced Diploma (Polytechnic) Bachelor of Science (Honors) Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery Master of Science 1. When comparing international student numbers, it is important to note that numbers provided by different agencies and governments vary because of differences in data capture methodology, definitions of “international student,” and types of mobility captured (credit, degree, and so on). The data of the UNESCO Institute Statistics provide a good point of reference for comparison since they are compiled according to one standard method. It should be pointed out, however, that the data only include students enrolled in tertiary degree programs. They do not include students on shorter study abroad exchanges, or those enrolled at the secondary level or in short-term language training programs, for instance. 2. According to national statistics the GER is slightly higher at 8 percent in 2017/18 . The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of World Education Services (WES). Education System Profiles [HEADING] Education System Profiles Education in Rwanda October 15, 2019 Stefan Trines Stefan Trines, Research Editor, WENR Panoramic view at the city business district of Kigali, Rwanda, 2016 Rising from the Ashes of Genocide: Rwanda in the 21st Century Rwanda is a small landlocked country in central Africa that has been to hell and back. Over just 100 days in 1994, Rwandan armed forces, extremist militias, and radicalized civilians from the nation's ethnic Hutu majority massacred an estimated 800,000 ethnic Tutsis, as well as political opponents, in one of the world's most horrific genocides since World War II. The ensuing civil war resulted in the displacement of a third of Rwanda's population. Some two million people, predominantly Hutus, fled to neighboring countries as the Tutsi-dominated Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) advanced militarily on Kigali, Rwanda's capital. Yet, merely 25 years after these apocalyptic events, Rwanda is regarded as one of the most economically dynamic nations on the continent and a model of development. A tiny mountainous country in which close to 90 percent of the population lived by subsistence farming at the beginning of the century is now frequently hailed as the “Singapore of Africa .” Rwanda has averaged economic growth rates of around 8 percent for the past 15 years . It's the only low-income economy featured in the World Bank's ease of doing business index (ranked 29th out of 190 countries). Contemporary Kigali is one of the cleanest and safest cities in Africa and has become a technology hub . Towering over this remarkable turnaround is Rwanda's strongman, President Paul Kagame. Inseparable from Rwanda's fate for the past 25 years, Kagame led the RPF into Rwanda from exile in Uganda in 1994. He subsequently served as defense minister and vice president before he was elected president in 2000 and began to laser-focus on the goal of turning Rwanda into a middle-income knowledge economy. Often viewed as an incorruptible, visionary leader , Kagame has found many admirers around the world —a fact that helped make Rwanda a “ donor darling ” in the international aid community. However, Kagame's image was tarnished when in 2017 he reneged on his pledge not to run for a third term and held a referendum to change the Rwandan constitution to allow him to stay in office. Increasing reports of political repression and opposition politicians that “disappear” have made him look more

like other African autocrats who cling to power past their time. The organization Reporters Without Borders ranks Rwanda 155 th out of 180 countries in its current World Press Freedom Index . On the upside, Rwanda's achievements over the past decades are remarkable. While the country remains a least developed country ranked 158th out of 189 on the United Nations' Human Development Index , it has succeeded in reducing extreme poverty by 24 percent and lifting some one million people out of poverty since the beginning of the century. Life expectancy has lengthened by 35 years since the 1990s. Rwanda is also one of the least corrupt countries in Africa . Internationally, Rwanda in 2007 joined the East African Community (EAC) and transformed itself from a Francophone nation allied with France to an Anglophone nation that joined the Commonwealth in 2009. Aside from Mozambique , it is the only country in the organization without historical ties to Britain. English was introduced as an official language and the language of instruction in schools. Education is a government priority. The Rwandan government realizes that raising the level of educational attainment is crucial for the economic prosperity of this tiny country that lacks natural resources. Notably, Rwanda has one of the highest elementary school enrollment rates on the continent. In 2012 the country won the prestigious Commonwealth Education Good Practice Award following the construction of more than 8,600 classrooms between 2009 and 2011 . At present, Rwanda's government in partnership with Microsoft is building "smart" classrooms across the country and plans to bring computers, internet connectivity, and basic software packages to all of Rwanda's schools by 2020 . The country's development strategy prioritizes "science and technology education and ICT skills," and emphasizes "vocational and technical training in the fields of technology, engineering and management" to develop human capital and turn Rwanda into a "sophisticated knowledge-based economy." However, the country has a long way to go to realize these goals. Enrollment ratios in secondary and higher education are still low, and 32 percent of Rwandans are unable to read and write, according to national statistics . Funding levels are suboptimal. Rwanda spends only 11 percent of its total government budget on education, and education expenditures have fallen from 4.9 percent of GDP in 2013 to 3.2 percent in 2017—below the average expenditure of 4 percent in sub-Saharan Africa. Shortages of qualified university instructors and the lack of well-developed research universities are other obstacles to progress. The University of Rwanda (UR), the country's nascent flagship institution, did not start offering doctoral programs until 2014; only 22 percent of its instructors held a PhD in 2018 . The university is emerging as an increasingly important academic hub in East Africa, but of all enrollments those of graduate programs are still low, standing at 5 percent. Teaching the Genocide in Rwanda Hutus and Tutsis are two African ethnic groups that live in both Rwanda and Burundi. While the two groups speak the same language and practice the same religions, German and Belgian colonial rulers deepened ethnic distinctions and conflict between them by favoring the elites of the existing Tutsi monarchy in their colonial administrations in a strategy of "divide and rule." After independence, the Hutus, which make up about 84 percent of the population in both Rwanda and Burundi, captured the new states and brutally repressed the Tutsis. There were several horrendous mass killings that preceded the 1994 genocide. Many Tutsis were forced to flee the two countries. Those that stayed experienced severe discrimination: The ethnicity of citizens was recorded on apartheid-like identity cards and became a dominant criterion for social hierarchies. After the genocide, Rwanda faced the question of how to teach the history of ethnic conflict and genocide in its school curricula. The new government first suspended all Rwandan history classes for more than a decade before it put forward a carefully crafted "official Rwandan history" "from which no deviation was permitted ." The goal is to instill a sense of collective and unifying "Rwandanness" and prevent the resurgence of inter-ethnic conflict. While the genocide is commemorated each year and the topic of "genocide studies" has recently been incorporated in school curricula, discussing ethnicity itself is still taboo. The Rwandan government has outlawed the use of the ethnic labels "Hutu" and "Tutsi". Some consider this suppression of open public discourse on ethnic conflict a necessary step toward reconciliation. Critics, on the other hand, accuse the government of creating a one-sided version of history and telling a Tutsi-friendly narrative. Discussing the killing of Hutus at the hands of the RPF, for instance, can result in lengthy jail sentences . International Student Mobility Given that Rwanda is a country of only 12.4 million people, the total number of Rwandan international students is relatively minor. According to UNESCO statistics , there were 4,839 Rwandans enrolled in degree programs in other countries in 2017 (compared with 85,000 Nigerians). However, the country has a very high outbound mobility ratio. The percentage of Rwandan students enrolled internationally exceeded 15 percent in the

early 2000s when the country was still reeling from the impact of the genocide, before it gradually decreased to a still high 6 percent in 2017. For comparison, Nigeria had an outbound mobility ratio of 3.7 percent in 2011. Overall, the number of Rwandan international students has declined in recent years, possibly because of the growing availability of study options in Rwanda's own nascent higher education system, including those offered by an increasing number of transnational education providers in the country. The number of Rwandan international degree-seeking students dropped by 22 percent since 2012, when there were 6,227 Rwandans studying abroad, according to UNESCO. The United States is by far the most popular destination country of mobile Rwandan degree students, accounting for almost 25 percent of enrollments. That makes Rwanda the ninth-largest sub-Saharan African sending country of international students in the U.S., despite its small population. The Open Doors data of the Institute of International Education show that the number of Rwandan students in the country has more than doubled over the past five years and reached 1,232 in the 2017/18 academic year—an increase of 13.2 percent over 2016/17. Most Rwandans—70 percent—are enrolled at the undergraduate level, while 17 percent study in graduate programs, 2 percent in non-degree programs, and 10.5 percent pursue Optional Practical Training. According to Rwandan media reports, the reasons for the growing popularity of the U.S. as a study destination include a growing awareness of the “U.S. college and university application process among students, parents, and educators; Rwandan government partnerships with U.S. higher education institutions such as the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, as well as scholarship programs like, for example, the Bridge-to-Rwanda program or the EducationUSA Scholars Program” run by the U.S. State Department. The Rwandan government also promotes student mobility with national scholarship programs, which it views as an investment in human capital development. Given the scarce financial means of Rwandan students, scholarships are crucial for driving mobility. Finally, the switch to English as the language of instruction has made it easier for Rwandan students to study in English-speaking countries like the United States. The next most popular destination country among Rwandan students after the U.S. is the neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), accounting for 13 percent of enrollments. Sizable numbers of Rwandan students prefer to study in French at low-cost institutions in the Congolese city of Goma, but it remains to be seen how recent outbreaks of the Ebola virus will affect student flows in the border region. In August 2019, the Rwandan government closed the border and stopped Rwandan school and university students from crossing into the DRC. Armed conflict in the region can also impact student flows. Other popular destinations are France (8.5 percent), Canada (6 percent), India (5.6 percent), and South Africa (4.5 percent), according to UNESCO. It should be noted that the Canadian government reports much higher numbers than UNESCO. The government statistics show that the number of Rwandan students in Canada spiked by more than 700 percent over the past decade, from 120 students in 2007 to 1,030 in 2018. 1 Inbound Mobility Interestingly, the number of international students in Rwanda has surged in recent years, if on a low base level in terms of total enrollments. Within just three years, the number of international degree-seeking students in Rwanda quadrupled from 778 students in 2015 to 3,052 in 2018 (per UNESCO). The vast majority of these students are from other East African countries; more than two-thirds come from the neighboring DRC, Burundi, and Uganda. One reason for this growing inflow is the regional integration and harmonization of education systems within the East African Community (EAC), as well as growing research collaboration between EAC member countries. Research and scholarship funding by international organizations also help boost mobility in the region. The World Bank, for example, funded the establishment of 24 academic centers of excellence at African universities in the Eastern and Southern Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence Project (ACE II, following ACE I for Western and Central Africa) in 2016. Designed to function as regional incubators of technical innovation and graduate research in eight African countries, these ACE II centers have capacity and funding for more than 3,500 graduate students over a span of five years, including at least 700 PhD students. Four of the centers are housed at the University of Rwanda (UR) and attract graduate students from other African countries like Burundi, which does not host any ACE centers. Beyond that, there are sizable numbers of Congolese refugees and students that come to Rwanda to access education of a higher quality than is available in the eastern DRC. A Brief History of Education in Rwanda Western education was introduced in Rwanda in the 20th century, when Christian missionaries began to establish churches and schools throughout the region, beginning with the founding of the first school in Rwanda by Roman Catholic missionaries in 1900. Rather than establishing direct control over education, both the German and Belgian colonial governments

left many aspects of education to religious institutions, so that “almost all the schools were owned by the Catholic and Protestant churches ” when Rwanda became independent in 1962. The new Rwandan government expanded the role of the state but did not monopolize education. Rather, it subsidized many of the religious schools—a practice that continues today in the form of so-called “government-aided schools,” which are privately managed schools that receive government funding for teacher salaries and other expenses. The governments that ruled Rwanda between 1962 and 1994 nevertheless established a public education system, developed a national curriculum, and created the country’s first higher education institutions (HEIs). They succeeded in increasing access to education in the impoverished rural country. The elementary gross enrollment ratio (GER), for instance, increased from 46 percent in 1973 to 65 percent in 1990 . At the same time, the education policies of these Hutu-dominated governments were central to intensifying the conflict between Hutus and Tutsis, just like those of the previous colonial rulers. Whereas Tutsis were recruited for administrative positions and trained at the best schools during the Belgian administration, they were now discriminated against. By the 1970s, admission into public and government-aided schools was strictly based on ethnic and regional quotas that helped reinforce divisions , while school curricula disseminated anti-Tutsi propaganda. When the tensions eventually erupted in the 1994 genocide, schooling in Rwanda came to an immediate halt. As education researcher Anna Obura described it, “teachers and children were killed or fled; schools and colleges were destroyed, burned, looted and pillaged, and their vehicles stolen.... The Ministry of Education was brought to a standstill. The walls of the ministry were shelled, with all windows blown out, and doors broken, furniture smashed and looted, and documents pillaged and scattered .” Reconstructing the Rwandan school system after this cataclysm was a monumental task. The murder of some 800,000 citizens and displacement of a third of the population had all but destroyed the country’s social institutions. It has been estimated that nearly two-thirds of Rwandan schools were non-functional in 1994, while more than half of elementary school teachers were either killed or displaced, many of them as refugees outside of the country. Given this turmoil, the progress Rwanda has made in reconstructing and improving its education system over the past 25 years is impressive. Notably, the country achieved almost full participation in elementary education within just one decade after introducing free elementary education in 2003. As the World Bank put it , “Rwanda increased [the] primary gross enrollment ratio (GER) to over 100 percent in 2013. By 2017, practically all primary and secondary schools had toilets, nearly 60 percent had tap water, and hydroelectric supply is available in more than 55 percent of primary schools and in more than 70 percent of secondary schools.... computers are available in nearly 70 percent of the primary schools and 85 percent of secondary schools. The Internet is accessible in 25 percent of primary, and in more than 40 percent of secondary schools.” However, significant problems remain. Access to early childhood education is limited, classrooms are overcrowded, and elementary schooling remains plagued by high repetition rates and urban-rural divides. Despite the introduction of free education until grade nine in 2007, GERs in lower secondary education are a far cry from the rates achieved at the elementary level and remained below 46 in 2017 (per UNESCO). Learning outcomes are often mediocre, and teacher training needs to be improved, observers say. Rwanda’s GER in higher education, meanwhile, remains below the average in sub-Saharan Africa and is stagnant at around 8 percent . Less than 4 percent of Rwandans above the age of 25 have had any type of higher education.

Administration of the Education System

The Republic of Rwanda, as it’s officially called, is administratively divided into five provinces: the Eastern, Northern, Southern, and Western provinces, as well as Kigali City. The five provinces are further subdivided into 30 districts (akarere), 416 sectors (imirenge), 2,148 cells (utugari), and 14,837 villages (imudungu) . School education is centrally overseen by the national Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) in Kigali and administered locally by District Education Offices (DEOs). Whereas the MINEDUC sets the overall policies and strategies, DEOs manage and monitor schools at the local level. Overall goals for the education systems are generally set forth in multi-year strategic education sector development plans. The Rwanda Education Board (REB), an agency of the MINEDUC, is responsible for developing school curricula, examinations in the school system, and standards for teacher training. Higher education, on the other hand, is the sole responsibility of the central government and overseen by the Higher Education Council (HEC), an agency under the MINEDUC established in 2007. The HEC is tasked with setting standards and enhancing and monitoring the quality of education and research at HEIs; it is also responsible for the vetting and recognition of private HEIs and the accreditation of their programs. A Rapid Switch to English: The

Language of Instruction Rwanda has four official languages: Kinyarwanda, English, French, and, since 2017, Kiswahili . Whereas Kinyarwanda, a Bantu language, is spoken as the native tongue by almost all Rwandans and used as the language of instruction during the first three years of elementary education , English has since 2009 replaced French as the official language of instruction at higher levels of education. Following the 1994 genocide and the ouster of the Hutu regime, the new regime, which was dominated by Tutsi refugees returning from exile in English-speaking Uganda and Tanzania, realigned Rwanda from a Francophone to an Anglophone nation. Francophonie and the French language, first imposed by Belgium during its colonial rule, were discredited because of France's support for the previous Hutu regime. In addition, Rwanda's government saw switching to English as beneficial for foreign trade, international relations, socioeconomic modernization, and regional integration in the East African Community (EAC). President Kagame in 2003 made English an official language of Rwanda and switched out French in favor of English as the medium of instruction following the country's ascendance to the EAC in 2007. While English is now a mandatory subject from grade one, French is taught as a foreign language beginning in third grade—a drastic change from previous years, when 95 percent of Rwandan schools used French as the language of instruction beginning when most pupils reached the age of nine. The switch brought with it tremendous challenges, since most of Rwanda's schoolteachers had been educated in French and therefore had insufficient English language abilities. According to government surveys, some 85 percent of elementary school teachers and 66 percent of secondary teachers had only limited English skills when the reform was initiated in 2009. Rwanda consequently had to launch a large-scale retraining program for more than 50,000 teachers and recruit them from neighboring English-speaking countries . Despite these efforts, the English proficiency of the Rwandan population, including teachers, remains somewhat limited. As education researcher Maria Ambrozy told World Politics Review in 2017 , “[The] implementation of English as the language of instruction ... was one of the most abrupt policies introduced by the Rwandan government. While other policies have also been introduced with limited notice, this one stands out, as it had an impact on the entire population, and there was insufficient time allowed for the change. For example, teachers were required to learn and/or adopt English in four months.... The government ... overestimated the number of teachers who would be able to educate students effectively in a new language. The consequence of these planning failures was that initial results are below expectations. In due course, many of the logistical issues—for example, a shortage of English-language text books—were resolved, but a large cohort of children have progressed through the education system with limited language skills and subject knowledge.” In higher education, the Rwandan government seeks to boost the use of English by requiring Rwandan universities to teach English courses as a compulsory part of their curricula . Students must not only muster an English proficiency exam to be admitted, they must also pass English language exams during their studies to progress from one academic year to the next . The government is currently also rolling out mandatory English tests for university instructors. It hopes to extend these tests to schoolteachers in the coming years with the help of the British Council . Academic Calendar Rwanda's school calendar used to be aligned with the academic calendars of other EAC countries, but the government recently changed it to avoid classes during Rwanda's dry season, which is hot. It's now divided into trimesters that run from January to April, April to July, and August to November , respectively. Year-end and final graduation examinations are held in November. Rwandan universities usually use semester systems that comprise two semesters of 15 weeks each, as well as a summer semester, depending on the institution. Trimester systems may also be used. Regulations put forward by the HEC stipulate that one semester comprises 12 weeks of classes in addition to one week of orientation and two weeks reserved for examinations at the end of the semester. The academic year usually runs from September to July. Basic Education School education is divided into six years of elementary education, three years of lower-secondary education, and three years of senior secondary education (6+3+3). Until recently, the first nine years were categorized as basic education, offered free of charge at public schools, and compulsory for all children. However, in 2012 President Kagame fulfilled a 2010 election campaign promise to extend free education to grade 12 in a unified 12-year basic education cycle. Since that year, pupils who complete grade nine can enroll in grade 10 in public schools free of charge, a change that resulted in an increase in upper-secondary school enrollments . The GER in upper-secondary education jumped from 21 percent in 2010 to 30 percent in 2017, according to UNESCO data . It should be noted that what is termed tuition-free education in Rwanda isn't truly

free. Parents have to pay for items like “parent-teacher association (PTA) contributions, mock exam fees, purchasing reams of paper for the school, passport photos for exams, registration fees, and school reports, among others. Such costs ... pose serious challenges for successful school attendance, performance, and completion.” However, the introduction of tuition-free upper-secondary education has caused a decline in private high schools in Rwanda in recent years. More than 30 private schools closed in 2017 alone, while 70 percent of the member schools of the Rwanda Private Schools Association struggled to stay afloat in 2018, according to the association. This demise accelerates a downward trend that already began with the introduction of free lower-secondary education in 2007. In contrast to the privatization trends in many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, it reverses prior advances in privatization in Rwanda. Aside from cost considerations, public high schools are increasingly competitive since they are better equipped because of improved government spending. While recent government statistics show that the number of private secondary schools rebounded and grew in 2018, the percentage of students enrolled in private upper-secondary schools dropped from 43 percent to 26 percent between 2012 and 2017, per UNESCO statistics. This follows an even larger decline in enrollments in private lower-secondary schools from 32 percent to 7 percent between 2007 and 2012. There are three types of schools in Rwanda: public, private, and government-aided private schools. Given the historical importance of churches in Rwandan education, most private and government-aided schools are religiously affiliated institutions; more than half are run by the Catholic Church. Close to a third of private schools are in Kigali. According to the latest education statistics published by the MINEDUC, there were 522 public secondary schools, 892 government-aided schools, and 314 private schools in Rwanda in 2018. The average number of students per school increased from 376 to 403 in public schools and from 350 to 408 in government-aided schools, but decreased from 313 to 250 in private schools between 2016 and 2018. Elementary Education Elementary education is divided into two cycles of three years each: Primary one to three (P1 to P3) and Primary four to six (P4 to P6). As noted, Kinyarwanda is the language of instruction in the first cycle before English is introduced as the sole medium of instruction in grade four. There are 20 contact hours per week and a total of 39 weeks per year in both cycles. Children generally enter elementary education at the age of seven. Most pupils attend boarding schools. Except for French, which isn’t introduced until grade four, the current curriculum, adopted in 2016, features the same subjects in both cycles: Kinyarwanda, English, mathematics, social and religious studies, science and technology, creative arts, and physical education. One recent change is the greater emphasis on continual competency-based assessment to foster critical thinking and minimize rote learning. That said, examinations remain highly important. There’s an exam at the end of each grade, as well as a final external graduation examination at the end of the sixth year. Pupils who pass the national exam, administered by schools under the auspices of the Rwanda Education Board (REB), are awarded the Primary Leaving Certificate. More than 250,000 pupils sat for the exam in 2018. The pass rate was 81 percent. Lower-Secondary Education (Ordinary Level) Lower-secondary education is called “ordinary level” and spans grades seven to nine (S1 to S3). Admission is based on the Primary Leaving Examination. Grade averages are used to determine whether pupils are admitted to their school of choice, but the REB is currently introducing a new system of “random placement” that randomly allocates pupils to schools irrespective of their grades. The current competency-based curriculum includes English, Kinyarwanda, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, information technology, history, geography, entrepreneurship, French, Kiswahili, and physical education, as well as one elective subject (artistic subjects, home science, or agriculture). The number of contact hours is increased to 30 per week in lower-secondary education. Grade nine concludes with an external ordinary level (O Level) examination. Some 99,000 students sat for the exams in 2018. The pass rate decreased from 90 percent in 2017 to 83 percent—a drop attributed to challenges related to the implementation of the new curriculum. Graduates have the option of proceeding to general academic upper-secondary programs (advanced level), technical secondary education, or teacher training programs (discussed further below). Upper-Secondary Education (Advanced Level) Upper-secondary education encompasses grades 10 to 12 (S4 to S6). Admission requires the O Level examinations and is competitive; high grades are required for admission into desirable schools. There are three separate streams in the general academic track: sciences, humanities, and languages. Within these streams, students can choose from a variety of different subject combinations, for example, physics-chemistry-mathematics, or mathematics-physics-computer science. (See the official national curriculum for all available combinations.) While there are a few

compulsory subjects (religion, physical education, computer studies), curricula are specialized and vary considerably by stream. A plurality of 36 percent of upper-secondary students were enrolled in the science stream in 2018, while only 13.5 percent studied humanities, 13 percent languages, and the remainder enrolled in vocational and teacher training programs. At the end of grade 12, students sit for final A Level examinations in at least five subjects (the three specialization subjects, entrepreneurship, and a mandatory “general paper”). The exams are held in November and conducted by schools under the auspices of the REB, which issues the final examination certificate. The grading scale used in the examinations is shown below. Secondary grading in Rwanda is complicated. A Level examination subjects are graded at two different levels: The “subsidiary pass” (with a credit value of one point) and the “principal pass” (with a credit value between two and six points, depending on the grade). While the mandatory general paper is always graded with a single passing grade of S (subsidiary), subsidiary passes in other subjects denote that the subject wasn’t completed at the advanced level. All candidates who achieve subsidiary passes in at least three subjects are nevertheless awarded the final Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education. However, it should be noted that Rwandan universities typically require a minimum of at least two principal passes with a grade of C or higher for admission. Finally, the A Level examination results also indicate an overall “weighted aggregate grade” on a percentage scale from 0 to 100 that is used by HEIs to rank students for admission purposes. To derive the aggregate grade, principal subject scores are multiplied by three (while the subsidiary grade for the general paper is not). A recent REB instruction manual illustrates this calculation method with the following example: “If a candidate doing physics, chemistry and math..., Entrepreneurship plus General Paper obtains A in math, A in physics, A in Chemistry and A in Entrepreneurships and S in General Paper then that candidate’s weighted aggregate will be $(3 \times 6) + (3 \times 6) + (3 \times 6) + (3 \times 6) + (1 \times 1) = 73$ points.” Some 42,000 students sat for the A Level exams in 2018; the pass rate was 88 percent. In addition to regular high school students, independent “private” candidates may also sit for the examinations. To be eligible for this pathway, candidates must have completed a minimum of nine years of schooling at least five years prior. The overall number of private candidates has increased as of late but only makes up a small percentage of all test takers (1,369 candidates in 2018). Most private candidates are students who previously attended school but failed examinations, school dropouts seeking to re-enter the system, or graduates attempting to improve their grades for university admission. Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) Rwanda’s genocide and civil war decimated the country’s human capital, and created a desperate need to reconstruct the country’s TVET system. TVET is provided by technical secondary schools and vocational training centers at the secondary level, as well as by polytechnics at the post-secondary level. The government has in recent years adopted various measures to better integrate the different forms of TVET and expand the system, including the creation of the TVET qualifications framework and the establishment of a single oversight body, the Workforce Development Authority (WDA) under the MINEDUC. The TVET system has since grown significantly, although enrollment levels still fall short of official goals. The government recently sought to boost enrollments in TVET programs to 60 percent of all upper-secondary enrollments by 2017 (up from 38 percent in 2013). While the total number of upper-secondary TVET students has increased from 64,866 in 2013 to 79,388 in 2018, the percentage of TVET students among all upper-secondary students actually dropped to 34 percent. There were 360 TVET institutions and 102,485 learners at all levels of TVET in Rwanda in 2018, most of them enrolled in private technical secondary schools. Technical secondary school programs are three years in length (S4 to S6) and require the completion of nine years of education (O Level) for admission. Curricula include a small general education component (English, mathematics, political studies, and science subjects), as well as technical subjects in a vocational field, such as agriculture, construction, engineering technology, nursing, or secretarial studies. A practical internship is usually part of the program. At the end of grade 12, students sit for the external National Technical and Professional Examination conducted by the WDA. To graduate, they must pass a certain number of subjects and achieve a required minimum aggregate grade, as well as pass a “practical paper”. Graduates are awarded the National Advanced Certificate of Technical Secondary Education A2, an upper-secondary school leaving qualification that prepares students for employment but also provides access to higher education. In addition to technical secondary programs, there are different types of more practically oriented, competency-based certificate programs offered by vocational training centers that are designed to prepare students for direct entry into the labor force. This type of education is currently undergoing changes, and the

introduction of overlapping qualifications frameworks can make the classification of these programs confusing. In general, secondary level programs are between one and three years in length , although there are also shorter continuing education programs. While completion of grade nine is generally the benchmark criterion for admission into formal programs, students can also be admitted based on work experience. Curricular specializations range from culinary arts to office administration, software programming, or welding . At the post-secondary level, TVET is provided by a small number of private colleges and the public Rwanda Polytechnic (RP), a large institution created in 2017 as the result of the merger of eight Integrated Polytechnic Regional Colleges (IPRCs) across Rwanda. RP's constituent IPRCs offer an applied post-secondary Diploma and an Advanced Diploma program in fields like civil engineering, information technology, or wildlife management. Programs are between two and three years in length and may include an industrial internship. Admission requires an upper-secondary qualification like the Certificate of Technical Secondary Education A2. Tertiary Education Rwanda's tertiary education sector is small but growing rapidly. Before the genocide, higher education was dominated by one institution, the National University of Rwanda, and largely a privilege of Hutu elites—a situation that changed drastically after the war. While the system graduated merely 2,000 students in the decades between 1963 (when the National University of Rwanda was founded) and 1994, there are now 40 HEIs in the country with a total enrollment of slightly more than 89,000 students (2018). The overall number of students has doubled within the last decade while the tertiary GER jumped from 3 percent in 2005 to around 7 percent today, per UNESCO statistics. 2 Enrollments are predominantly in undergraduate programs: There were only six PhDs and 1,338 master's degrees among the 23,100 academic qualifications awarded in Rwanda in 2016/17 . Higher Education Institutions Despite this strong growth, tertiary enrollments declined slightly last year while the number of HEIs in Rwanda dropped drastically from 54 to 40 between 2017 and 2018. The reasons for this decrease are the merger of the eight regional IPRCs into the Rwanda Polytechnic, as well as the closure of several private institutions over quality concerns . In 2017, the government shut down five private HEIs: Singhad Technical Education Society-Rwanda, Rusizi International University, Nile Source Polytechnic of Applied Arts, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, and a local branch of the Open University of Tanzania. In 2019, the government also closed two departments of the private University of Gitwe because of insufficient facilities and teaching staff . Most Rwandan HEIs—37 out of 40—are private. For the most part these institutions are relatively new, smaller, specialized universities and HEIs and religiously affiliated institutions, as well as transnational providers like the Cyprus-based Unicaf, Mount Kenya University, or Carnegie Mellon University Africa. Together, private institutions enrolled 57 percent of all tertiary students in 2018. The number of public HEIs, by contrast, is minute despite enrolling 43 percent of students. There are only three: the University of Rwanda (UR); the Institute of Legal Practice and Development, Rwanda's dedicated postgraduate institution for legal education; and Rwanda Polytechnic (RP). However, it should be noted that both UR and RP are large, multi-campus institutions. UR is the country's largest and preeminent multi-faculty research university with 14 campuses and some 29,000 students . It was created in 2013 as a merger of all other public HEIs in Rwanda, including the National University of Rwanda. Quality Assurance and Accreditation The HEC is the designated quality assurance body in Rwandan tertiary education. Its mission is to "improve the organization and functioning of higher learning institutions," to "set norms and standards for accrediting private higher learning institutions ," and to monitor compliance with these norms. TVET providers are separately accredited by the WDA. All private universities in Rwanda must be accredited by the HEC, which was established in 2007. Candidates for accreditation that meet certain minimum criteria in terms of facilities and staffing are first granted an initial license to operate. They are then evaluated by the HEC one year prior to the graduation of the first student cohort. They may then receive a definitive operating permit, or be ordered to rectify shortcomings or suspend operations. Accreditation decisions are based on HEC site visits during which auditors review facilities and samples of student works, observe lectures, and assess the viability of institutional self-assessments . Final operating permits are granted for a set list of authorized degree programs. If HEIs want to offer additional programs, they need to apply again and enter into an additional agreement with the HEC . A list of accredited programs is available on the HEC's website . University Admissions Admission into university programs requires at least the Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education with two passes in principal subjects plus demonstrated competency in English (the Advanced Certificate of Technical Secondary Education may also be

accepted). Beyond that, requirements vary by institution and program. Admission to UR requires applicants to have passing scores on the general paper and two or more principal passes in major-related subjects with a total of 18 points for arts and social science programs, and 24 points for science, technology, and medical programs. All applicants must also pass an English language proficiency exam . Credit System and Grading Scale Rwanda has in recent years adopted several standardization measures to facilitate the transfer of credits between institutions and the intraregional recognition of academic qualifications within the EAC. In 2008, it introduced a credit system called Credit Accumulation and Modular Scheme (CAMS) that is modeled after the European ECTS credit system, although it uses different credit units. CAMS defines one year of study as 120 credits, which means that a four-year bachelor's degree requires the completion of 480 credits. This system is identical to the East African Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (EACAT) developed for use throughout the EAC . Per official HEC guidelines , academic programs should comprise study modules of 10, 15, or 20 credit units, although some variations are permitted. One credit represents 10 hours of notional learning time. Grading scales in Rwanda are not standardized across the board. Several HEIs, including UR, use the scale shown below, but older French-style 0-20 grading scales are also used by private institutions. Degrees may be awarded with a British-style degree classification. The Tertiary Degree Structure Rwanda in 2007 adopted a qualifications framework for higher education that benchmarks academic qualifications at seven levels. However, while this framework is still in use, it should be noted that there are plans to integrate different frameworks in the TVET and higher education sectors into a new, unified National Qualifications Framework . Older French credential names like the Diplôme de Licence or Diplôme d'Ingénieur are no longer in use. Certificate, Diploma, and Advanced Diploma A number of private HEIs offer post-secondary short-term certificate programs and accredited diploma and advanced diploma programs of two- and three-year duration. UR offers a few three-year Advanced Diploma programs in nursing and allied health fields, as well as two-year diploma programs in education. In addition, the HEC defines certificate and diploma qualifications as exit qualifications in incomplete bachelor's programs rather than distinct study programs. Students who complete one year of study (120 credits) before dropping out may receive a Certificate of Higher Education, whereas students who complete two or two and a half years of study may be awarded a Diploma in Higher Education or an Advanced Diploma in Higher Education, respectively. Bachelor's Degree There are two main types of bachelor's degrees in standard academic disciplines in Rwanda: three-year ordinary degrees (360 credits) and four-year honors degrees (480 credits). The modules of these programs are generally completed sequentially from level one to four, representing each of the four years of study. Programs are usually specialized with few general education requirements, except for English and computer skills. Honors programs may require a project in the final year. There are some shortened "academic upgrade" programs available in fields like nursing that allow students to complete a bachelor's degree in two years based on a diploma qualification. In terms of subject specializations, official HEC guidelines provide for single-subject honors programs, programs that combine a major subject with a minor subject, and triple-minor programs (the specific credit requirements for majors and minors in these subject combinations are detailed in the HEC guidelines). Degree names include the Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts, but some certificates simply indicate the name as "Bachelor's Degree." Medical and Dental Education Medical education in Rwanda has evolved only slowly, and the country continues to suffer from doctor shortages. There were 1,176 general physicians and 495 specialists in Rwanda in 2016—a ratio of one physician for every 12,000 people . Dental education, in particular, is still embryonic; the first batch of dental students in Rwanda did not graduate before 2018. There were reportedly 40 registered dentists in the country as of 2018 , so that some dental students themselves had never experienced a dental office visit before they took up studies. Until the early 2010s, all medical training took place at the National University and outside the country in Europe . Today, it is provided by UR and a small handful of private institutions. Since 2013, medical and dental education is regulated by the Rwanda Medical and Dental Council . Entry-to-practice qualifications in medicine and dentistry are earned after long five-year bachelor programs pegged at level 5 of the qualifications framework. The final credentials are called Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (Honors) and Bachelor of Dental Surgery (Honors). The curriculum includes an initial period of pre-medical studies followed by clinical studies. To become licensed, candidates must also complete a mandatory one-year rotating clinical internship and pass a qualifying exam . Graduate medical education takes four additional years of training and concludes with the award of a Master

of Medicine in a medical specialty. Master's, Postgraduate Certificate, and Postgraduate Diploma Master's programs are between one and two years in length. Admission requirements include an honors bachelor's degree with high grades (second-class honors, upper division), as well as good English skills. Programs commonly require coursework and the preparation of a thesis, but coursework-only and research-only master's programs also exist. Common credentials awarded include the Master of Arts, Master of Science, or Master of Business Administration. Shorter postgraduate programs lead to the Postgraduate Certificate (60 credits) and the Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits). Master's and other graduate programs are only offered by a limited number of HEIs. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) As in the case of medical training, advanced research education in Rwanda is still nascent. UR did not begin to offer PhD programs until 2014, and it is presently the only university in the country that provides this type of education. Admission requires a master's degree; programs involve at least three years of research and the defense of a dissertation. Teacher Education Rwanda has a tremendous need for qualified teachers, especially following the switch to English as the language of instruction and the introduction of free basic education up to grade 12. To improve teacher training standards and develop capacity, the government established the Rwanda Teacher Service Commission in 2008, and is currently seeking to establish a formal licensing process for teachers. However, despite allocating substantial resources to teacher training, the system remains plagued by shortages. There were 5,000 open vacancies for schoolteachers in 2019—a gap the government sought to close by recruiting teachers from Kenya and other countries. Domestic students are incentivized with tuition-free programs to enroll in teacher training programs. Teacher training is provided by 16 public teacher training colleges and—since the merger and incorporation of the former Kigali Institute of Education—the newly established University of Rwanda College of Education. Elementary school teachers can teach with an A2 level certificate in primary education—a secondary level credential earned after three years of study at a teacher training college following the O Level exams (9+3). Lower-secondary teachers, by comparison, must have a Diploma in Education (level A1)—a credential earned after two years of post-secondary study (12+2) that prepares students to teach two subjects. Upper-secondary school teachers must have a four-year bachelor's degree in education from UR. Like the diploma, the bachelor's degree prepares students to teach two subjects. Holders of bachelor's degrees in other disciplines may obtain an upper-secondary teaching qualification by earning a Postgraduate Diploma in Education—a one-year in-service program. UR Master of Education degrees may also qualify holders to teach, depending on the program. WES Documentation Requirements Secondary Education Photocopy of the graduation certificate or diploma (for example, Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education, Certificate of Technical Secondary Education) submitted by the applicant Final Examination Results—sent directly by the Rwanda Board of Education or other applicable body, For U.S. applications: Word-for-word translations of all documents not issued in English Higher Education Degree certificate—submitted by the applicant Academic transcript—sent directly by the institution attended For completed doctoral programs—a written statement confirming the award of the degree sent by the institution attended For U.S. applications: Word-for-word translations of all documents not issued in English Sample Documents Click here for a PDF file of the academic documents referred to below. Rwanda Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education National Advanced Certificate of Technical Secondary Education (A2) Advanced Diploma (Polytechnic) Bachelor of Science (Honors) Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery Master of Science 1. When comparing international student numbers, it is important to note that numbers provided by different agencies and governments vary because of differences in data capture methodology, definitions of “international student,” and types of mobility captured (credit, degree, and so on). The data of the UNESCO Institute Statistics provide a good point of reference for comparison since they are compiled according to one standard method. It should be pointed out, however, that the data only include students enrolled in tertiary degree programs. They do not include students on shorter study abroad exchanges, or those enrolled at the secondary level or in short-term language training programs, for instance. 2. According to national statistics the GER is slightly higher at 8 percent in 2017/18. The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of World Education Services (WES). Education in Rwanda [HEADING] Education in Rwanda October 15, 2019 Stefan Trines October 15, 2019 Stefan Trines Stefan Trines, Research Editor, WENR Panoramic view at the city business district of Kigali, Rwanda, 2016 Rising from the Ashes of Genocide: Rwanda in the 21st Century Rwanda is a

small landlocked country in central Africa that has been to hell and back. Over just 100 days in 1994, Rwandan armed forces, extremist militias, and radicalized civilians from the nation's ethnic Hutu majority massacred an estimated 800,000 ethnic Tutsis, as well as political opponents, in one of the world's most horrific genocides since World War II. The ensuing civil war resulted in the displacement of a third of Rwanda's population. Some two million people, predominantly Hutus, fled to neighboring countries as the Tutsi-dominated Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) advanced militarily on Kigali, Rwanda's capital. Yet, merely 25 years after these apocalyptic events, Rwanda is regarded as one of the most economically dynamic nations on the continent and a model of development. A tiny mountainous country in which close to 90 percent of the population lived by subsistence farming at the beginning of the century is now frequently hailed as the "Singapore of Africa." Rwanda has averaged economic growth rates of around 8 percent for the past 15 years. It's the only low-income economy featured in the World Bank's ease of doing business index (ranked 29th out of 190 countries). Contemporary Kigali is one of the cleanest and safest cities in Africa and has become a technology hub. Towering over this remarkable turnaround is Rwanda's strongman, President Paul Kagame. Inseparable from Rwanda's fate for the past 25 years, Kagame led the RPF into Rwanda from exile in Uganda in 1994. He subsequently served as defense minister and vice president before he was elected president in 2000 and began to laser-focus on the goal of turning Rwanda into a middle-income knowledge economy. Often viewed as an incorruptible, visionary leader, Kagame has found many admirers around the world—a fact that helped make Rwanda a "donor darling" in the international aid community. However, Kagame's image was tarnished when in 2017 he reneged on his pledge not to run for a third term and held a referendum to change the Rwandan constitution to allow him to stay in office. Increasing reports of political repression and opposition politicians that "disappear" have made him look more like other African autocrats who cling to power past their time. The organization Reporters Without Borders ranks Rwanda 155th out of 180 countries in its current World Press Freedom Index. On the upside, Rwanda's achievements over the past decades are remarkable. While the country remains a least developed country ranked 158th out of 189 on the United Nations' Human Development Index, it has succeeded in reducing extreme poverty by 24 percent and lifting some one million people out of poverty since the beginning of the century. Life expectancy has lengthened by 35 years since the 1990s. Rwanda is also one of the least corrupt countries in Africa. Internationally, Rwanda in 2007 joined the East African Community (EAC) and transformed itself from a Francophone nation allied with France to an Anglophone nation that joined the Commonwealth in 2009. Aside from Mozambique, it is the only country in the organization without historical ties to Britain. English was introduced as an official language and the language of instruction in schools. Education is a government priority. The Rwandan government realizes that raising the level of educational attainment is crucial for the economic prosperity of this tiny country that lacks natural resources. Notably, Rwanda has one of the highest elementary school enrollment rates on the continent. In 2012 the country won the prestigious Commonwealth Education Good Practice Award following the construction of more than 8,600 classrooms between 2009 and 2011. At present, Rwanda's government in partnership with Microsoft is building "smart" classrooms across the country and plans to bring computers, internet connectivity, and basic software packages to all of Rwanda's schools by 2020. The country's development strategy prioritizes "science and technology education and ICT skills," and emphasizes "vocational and technical training in the fields of technology, engineering and management" to develop human capital and turn Rwanda into a "sophisticated knowledge-based economy." However, the country has a long way to go to realize these goals. Enrollment ratios in secondary and higher education are still low, and 32 percent of Rwandans are unable to read and write, according to national statistics. Funding levels are suboptimal. Rwanda spends only 11 percent of its total government budget on education, and education expenditures have fallen from 4.9 percent of GDP in 2013 to 3.2 percent in 2017—below the average expenditure of 4 percent in sub-Saharan Africa. Shortages of qualified university instructors and the lack of well-developed research universities are other obstacles to progress. The University of Rwanda (UR), the country's nascent flagship institution, did not start offering doctoral programs until 2014; only 22 percent of its instructors held a PhD in 2018. The university is emerging as an increasingly important academic hub in East Africa, but of all enrollments those of graduate programs are still low, standing at 5 percent. Teaching the Genocide in Rwanda Hutus and Tutsis are two African ethnic groups that live in both Rwanda and Burundi. While the two groups speak the same language and practice the same religions, German and

Belgian colonial rulers deepened ethnic distinctions and conflict between them by favoring the elites of the existing Tutsi monarchy in their colonial administrations in a strategy of “divide and rule.” After independence, the Hutus, which make up about 84 percent of the population in both Rwanda and Burundi, captured the new states and brutally repressed the Tutsis. There were several horrendous mass killings that preceded the 1994 genocide. Many Tutsis were forced to flee the two countries. Those that stayed experienced severe discrimination: The ethnicity of citizens was recorded on apartheid-like identity cards and became a dominant criterion for social hierarchies. After the genocide, Rwanda faced the question of how to teach the history of ethnic conflict and genocide in its school curricula. The new government first suspended all Rwandan history classes for more than a decade before it put forward a carefully crafted “official Rwandan history” “from which no deviation was permitted.” The goal is to instill a sense of collective and unifying “Rwandanness” and prevent the resurgence of inter-ethnic conflict. While the genocide is commemorated each year and the topic of “genocide studies” has recently been incorporated in school curricula, discussing ethnicity itself is still taboo. The Rwandan government has outlawed the use of the ethnic labels “Hutu” and “Tutsi”. Some consider this suppression of open public discourse on ethnic conflict a necessary step toward reconciliation. Critics, on the other hand, accuse the government of creating a one-sided version of history and telling a Tutsi-friendly narrative. Discussing the killing of Hutus at the hands of the RPF, for instance, can result in lengthy jail sentences.

International Student Mobility Given that Rwanda is a country of only 12.4 million people, the total number of Rwandan international students is relatively minor. According to UNESCO statistics, there were 4,839 Rwandans enrolled in degree programs in other countries in 2017 (compared with 85,000 Nigerians). However, the country has a very high outbound mobility ratio. The percentage of Rwandan students enrolled internationally exceeded 15 percent in the early 2000s when the country was still reeling from the impact of the genocide, before it gradually decreased to a still high 6 percent in 2017. For comparison, Nigeria had an outbound mobility ratio of 3.7 percent in 2011. Overall, the number of Rwandan international students has declined in recent years, possibly because of the growing availability of study options in Rwanda’s own nascent higher education system, including those offered by an increasing number of transnational education providers in the country. The number of Rwandan international degree-seeking students dropped by 22 percent since 2012, when there were 6,227 Rwandans studying abroad, according to UNESCO. The United States is by far the most popular destination country of mobile Rwandan degree students, accounting for almost 25 percent of enrollments. That makes Rwanda the ninth-largest sub-Saharan African sending country of international students in the U.S., despite its small population. The Open Doors data of the Institute of International Education show that the number of Rwandan students in the country has more than doubled over the past five years and reached 1,232 in the 2017/18 academic year—an increase of 13.2 percent over 2016/17. Most Rwandans—70 percent—are enrolled at the undergraduate level, while 17 percent study in graduate programs, 2 percent in non-degree programs, and 10.5 percent pursue Optional Practical Training. According to Rwandan media reports, the reasons for the growing popularity of the U.S. as a study destination include a growing awareness of the “U.S. college and university application process among students, parents, and educators; Rwandan government partnerships with U.S. higher education institutions such as the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, as well as scholarship programs like, for example, the Bridge-to-Rwanda program or the EducationUSA Scholars Program” run by the U.S. State Department. The Rwandan government also promotes student mobility with national scholarship programs, which it views as an investment in human capital development. Given the scarce financial means of Rwandan students, scholarships are crucial for driving mobility. Finally, the switch to English as the language of instruction has made it easier for Rwandan students to study in English-speaking countries like the United States. The next most popular destination country among Rwandan students after the U.S. is the neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), accounting for 13 percent of enrollments. Sizable numbers of Rwandan students prefer to study in French at low-cost institutions in the Congolese city of Goma, but it remains to be seen how recent outbreaks of the Ebola virus will affect student flows in the border region. In August 2019, the Rwandan government closed the border and stopped Rwandan school and university students from crossing into the DRC. Armed conflict in the region can also impact student flows. Other popular destinations are France (8.5 percent), Canada (6 percent), India (5.6 percent), and South Africa (4.5 percent), according to UNESCO. It should be noted that the Canadian government reports much higher numbers than UNESCO. The government statistics

show that the number of Rwandan students in Canada spiked by more than 700 percent over the past decade, from 120 students in 2007 to 1,030 in 2018. ¹ Inbound Mobility Interestingly, the number of international students in Rwanda has surged in recent years, if on a low base level in terms of total enrollments. Within just three years, the number of international degree-seeking students in Rwanda quadrupled from 778 students in 2015 to 3,052 in 2018 (per UNESCO). The vast majority of these students are from other East African countries; more than two-thirds come from the neighboring DRC, Burundi, and Uganda. One reason for this growing inflow is the regional integration and harmonization of education systems within the East African Community (EAC), as well as growing research collaboration between EAC member countries. Research and scholarship funding by international organizations also help boost mobility in the region. The World Bank, for example, funded the establishment of 24 academic centers of excellence at African universities in the Eastern and Southern Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence Project (ACE II, following ACE I for Western and Central Africa) in 2016. Designed to function as regional incubators of technical innovation and graduate research in eight African countries, these ACE II centers have capacity and funding for more than 3,500 graduate students over a span of five years, including at least 700 PhD students. Four of the centers are housed at the University of Rwanda (UR) and attract graduate students from other African countries like Burundi, which does not host any ACE centers. Beyond that, there are sizable numbers of Congolese refugees and students that come to Rwanda to access education of a higher quality than is available in the eastern DRC. A Brief History of Education in Rwanda Western education was introduced in Rwanda in the 20th century, when Christian missionaries began to establish churches and schools throughout the region, beginning with the founding of the first school in Rwanda by Roman Catholic missionaries in 1900. Rather than establishing direct control over education, both the German and Belgian colonial governments left many aspects of education to religious institutions, so that “almost all the schools were owned by the Catholic and Protestant churches” when Rwanda became independent in 1962. The new Rwandan government expanded the role of the state but did not monopolize education. Rather, it subsidized many of the religious schools—a practice that continues today in the form of so-called “government-aided schools,” which are privately managed schools that receive government funding for teacher salaries and other expenses. The governments that ruled Rwanda between 1962 and 1994 nevertheless established a public education system, developed a national curriculum, and created the country’s first higher education institutions (HEIs). They succeeded in increasing access to education in the impoverished rural country. The elementary gross enrollment ratio (GER), for instance, increased from 46 percent in 1973 to 65 percent in 1990. At the same time, the education policies of these Hutu-dominated governments were central to intensifying the conflict between Hutus and Tutsis, just like those of the previous colonial rulers. Whereas Tutsis were recruited for administrative positions and trained at the best schools during the Belgian administration, they were now discriminated against. By the 1970s, admission into public and government-aided schools was strictly based on ethnic and regional quotas that helped reinforce divisions, while school curricula disseminated anti-Tutsi propaganda. When the tensions eventually erupted in the 1994 genocide, schooling in Rwanda came to an immediate halt. As education researcher Anna Obura described it, “teachers and children were killed or fled; schools and colleges were destroyed, burned, looted and pillaged, and their vehicles stolen.... The Ministry of Education was brought to a standstill. The walls of the ministry were shelled, with all windows blown out, and doors broken, furniture smashed and looted, and documents pillaged and scattered.” Reconstructing the Rwandan school system after this cataclysm was a monumental task. The murder of some 800,000 citizens and displacement of a third of the population had all but destroyed the country’s social institutions. It has been estimated that nearly two-thirds of Rwandan schools were non-functional in 1994, while more than half of elementary school teachers were either killed or displaced, many of them as refugees outside of the country. Given this turmoil, the progress Rwanda has made in reconstructing and improving its education system over the past 25 years is impressive. Notably, the country achieved almost full participation in elementary education within just one decade after introducing free elementary education in 2003. As the World Bank put it, “Rwanda increased [the] primary gross enrollment ratio (GER) to over 100 percent in 2013. By 2017, practically all primary and secondary schools had toilets, nearly 60 percent had tap water, and hydroelectric supply is available in more than 55 percent of primary schools and in more than 70 percent of secondary schools.... computers are available in nearly 70 percent of the primary schools and 85 percent of secondary schools. The Internet is accessible in 25 percent of primary,

and in more than 40 percent of secondary schools.” However, significant problems remain. Access to early childhood education is limited, classrooms are overcrowded, and elementary schooling remains plagued by high repetition rates and urban-rural divides. Despite the introduction of free education until grade nine in 2007, GERs in lower secondary education are a far cry from the rates achieved at the elementary level and remained below 46 in 2017 (per UNESCO). Learning outcomes are often mediocre, and teacher training needs to be improved, observers say. Rwanda’s GER in higher education, meanwhile, remains below the average in sub-Saharan Africa and is stagnant at around 8 percent . Less than 4 percent of Rwandans above the age of 25 have had any type of higher education. Administration of the Education System The Republic of Rwanda, as it’s officially called, is administratively divided into five provinces: the Eastern, Northern, Southern, and Western provinces, as well as Kigali City. The five provinces are further subdivided into 30 districts (akarere), 416 sectors (imerenge), 2,148 cells (utugari), and 14,837 villages (imudungu) . School education is centrally overseen by the national Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) in Kigali and administered locally by District Education Offices (DEOs). Whereas the MINEDUC sets the overall policies and strategies, DEOs manage and monitor schools at the local level. Overall goals for the education systems are generally set forth in multi-year strategic education sector development plans. The Rwanda Education Board (REB), an agency of the MINEDUC, is responsible for developing school curricula, examinations in the school system, and standards for teacher training. Higher education, on the other hand, is the sole responsibility of the central government and overseen by the Higher Education Council (HEC), an agency under the MINEDUC established in 2007. The HEC is tasked with setting standards and enhancing and monitoring the quality of education and research at HEIs; it is also responsible for the vetting and recognition of private HEIs and the accreditation of their programs. A Rapid Switch to English: The Language of Instruction Rwanda has four official languages: Kinyarwanda, English, French, and, since 2017, Kiswahili . Whereas Kinyarwanda, a Bantu language, is spoken as the native tongue by almost all Rwandans and used as the language of instruction during the first three years of elementary education , English has since 2009 replaced French as the official language of instruction at higher levels of education. Following the 1994 genocide and the ouster of the Hutu regime, the new regime, which was dominated by Tutsi refugees returning from exile in English-speaking Uganda and Tanzania, realigned Rwanda from a Francophone to an Anglophone nation. Francophonie and the French language, first imposed by Belgium during its colonial rule, were discredited because of France’s support for the previous Hutu regime. In addition, Rwanda’s government saw switching to English as beneficial for foreign trade, international relations, socioeconomic modernization, and regional integration in the East African Community (EAC). President Kagame in 2003 made English an official language of Rwanda and switched out French in favor of English as the medium of instruction following the country’s ascendance to the EAC in 2007. While English is now a mandatory subject from grade one, French is taught as a foreign language beginning in third grade —a drastic change from previous years, when 95 percent of Rwandan schools used French as the language of instruction beginning when most pupils reached the age of nine. The switch brought with it tremendous challenges, since most of Rwanda’s schoolteachers had been educated in French and therefore had insufficient English language abilities. According to government surveys, some 85 percent of elementary school teachers and 66 percent of secondary teachers had only limited English skills when the reform was initiated in 2009. Rwanda consequently had to launch a large-scale retraining program for more than 50,000 teachers and recruit them from neighboring English-speaking countries . Despite these efforts, the English proficiency of the Rwandan population, including teachers, remains somewhat limited. As education researcher Maria Ambrozy told World Politics Review in 2017 , “[The] implementation of English as the language of instruction ... was one of the most abrupt policies introduced by the Rwandan government. While other policies have also been introduced with limited notice, this one stands out, as it had an impact on the entire population, and there was insufficient time allowed for the change. For example, teachers were required to learn and/or adopt English in four months.... The government ... overestimated the number of teachers who would be able to educate students effectively in a new language. The consequence of these planning failures was that initial results are below expectations. In due course, many of the logistical issues—for example, a shortage of English-language text books—were resolved, but a large cohort of children have progressed through the education system with limited language skills and subject knowledge.” In higher education, the Rwandan government seeks to boost the use of English by requiring Rwandan

universities to teach English courses as a compulsory part of their curricula . Students must not only muster an English proficiency exam to be admitted, they must also pass English language exams during their studies to progress from one academic year to the next . The government is currently also rolling out mandatory English tests for university instructors. It hopes to extend these tests to schoolteachers in the coming years with the help of the British Council . Academic Calendar Rwanda's school calendar used to be aligned with the academic calendars of other EAC countries, but the government recently changed it to avoid classes during Rwanda's dry season, which is hot. It's now divided into trimesters that run from January to April, April to July, and August to November , respectively. Year-end and final graduation examinations are held in November. Rwandan universities usually use semester systems that comprise two semesters of 15 weeks each, as well as a summer semester, depending on the institution. Trimester systems may also be used. Regulations put forward by the HEC stipulate that one semester comprises 12 weeks of classes in addition to one week of orientation and two weeks reserved for examinations at the end of the semester. The academic year usually runs from September to July. Basic Education School education is divided into six years of elementary education, three years of lower-secondary education, and three years of senior secondary education (6+3+3). Until recently, the first nine years were categorized as basic education, offered free of charge at public schools, and compulsory for all children. However, in 2012 President Kagame fulfilled a 2010 election campaign promise to extend free education to grade 12 in a unified 12-year basic education cycle. Since that year, pupils who complete grade nine can enroll in grade 10 in public schools free of charge, a change that resulted in an increase in upper-secondary school enrollments . The GER in upper-secondary education jumped from 21 percent in 2010 to 30 percent in 2017, according to UNESCO data . It should be noted that what is termed tuition-free education in Rwanda isn't truly free. Parents have to pay for items like "parent-teacher association (PTA) contributions, mock exam fees, purchasing reams of paper for the school, passport photos for exams, registration fees, and school reports, among others. Such costs ... pose serious challenges for successful school attendance, performance, and completion ." However, the introduction of tuition-free upper-secondary education has caused a decline in private high schools in Rwanda in recent years. More than 30 private schools closed in 2017 alone , while 70 percent of the member schools of the Rwanda Private Schools Association struggled to stay afloat in 2018, according to the association. This demise accelerates a downward trend that already began with the introduction of free lower-secondary education in 2007. In contrast to the privatization trends in many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, it reverses prior advances in privatization in Rwanda. Aside from cost considerations, public high schools are increasingly competitive since they are better equipped because of improved government spending. While recent government statistics show that the number of private secondary schools rebounded and grew in 2018 , the percentage of students enrolled in private upper-secondary schools dropped from 43 percent to 26 percent between 2012 and 2017, per UNESCO statistics . This follows an even larger decline in enrollments in private lower-secondary schools from 32 percent to 7 percent between 2007 in 2012. There are three types of schools in Rwanda: public, private, and government-aided private schools. Given the historical importance of churches in Rwandan education, most private and government-aided schools are religiously affiliated institutions; more than half are run by the Catholic Church. Close to a third of private schools are in Kigali . According to the latest education statistics published by the MINEDUC, there were 522 public secondary schools, 892 government-aided schools, and 314 private schools in Rwanda in 2018. The average number of students per school increased from 376 to 403 in public schools and from 350 to 408 in government-aided schools, but decreased from 313 to 250 in private schools between 2016 and 2018. Elementary Education Elementary education is divided into two cycles of three years each: Primary one to three (P1 to P3) and Primary four to six (P4 to P6). As noted, Kinyarwanda is the language of instruction in the first cycle before English is introduced as the sole medium of instruction in grade four. There are 20 contact hours per week and a total of 39 weeks per year in both cycles. Children generally enter elementary education at the age of seven. Most pupils attend boarding schools. Except for French, which isn't introduced until grade four, the current curriculum , adopted in 2016, features the same subjects in both cycles: Kinyarwanda, English, mathematics, social and religious studies, science and technology, creative arts, and physical education. One recent change is the greater emphasis on continual competency-based assessment to foster critical thinking and minimize rote learning. That said, examinations remain highly important. There's an exam at the end of each grade, as well as a final

external graduation examination at the end of the sixth year. Pupils who pass the national exam, administered by schools under the auspices of the Rwanda Education Board (REB), are awarded the Primary Leaving Certificate. More than 250,000 pupils sat for the exam in 2018. The pass rate was 81 percent. Lower-Secondary Education (Ordinary Level) Lower-secondary education is called “ordinary level” and spans grades seven to nine (S1 to S3). Admission is based on the Primary Leaving Examination. Grade averages are used to determine whether pupils are admitted to their school of choice, but the REB is currently introducing a new system of “random placement” that randomly allocates pupils to schools irrespective of their grades. The current competency-based curriculum includes English, Kinyarwanda, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, information technology, history, geography, entrepreneurship, French, Kiswahili, and physical education, as well as one elective subject (artistic subjects, home science, or agriculture). The number of contract hours is increased to 30 per week in lower-secondary education. Grade nine concludes with an external ordinary level (O Level) examination. Some 99,000 students sat for the exams in 2018. The pass rate decreased from 90 percent in 2017 to 83 percent—a drop attributed to challenges related to the implementation of the new curriculum. Graduates have the option of proceeding to general academic upper-secondary programs (advanced level), technical secondary education, or teacher training programs (discussed further below). Upper-Secondary Education (Advanced Level) Upper-secondary education encompasses grades 10 to 12 (S4 to S6). Admission requires the O Level examinations and is competitive; high grades are required for admission into desirable schools. There are three separate streams in the general academic track: sciences, humanities, and languages. Within these streams, students can choose from a variety of different subject combinations, for example, physics-chemistry-mathematics, or mathematics-physics-computer science. (See the official national curriculum for all available combinations.) While there are a few compulsory subjects (religion, physical education, computer studies), curricula are specialized and vary considerably by stream. A plurality of 36 percent of upper-secondary students were enrolled in the science stream in 2018, while only 13.5 percent studied humanities, 13 percent languages, and the remainder enrolled in vocational and teacher training programs. At the end of grade 12, students sit for final A Level examinations in at least five subjects (the three specialization subjects, entrepreneurship, and a mandatory “general paper”). The exams are held in November and conducted by schools under the auspices of the REB, which issues the final examination certificate. The grading scale used in the examinations is shown below. Secondary grading in Rwanda is complicated. A Level examination subjects are graded at two different levels: The “subsidiary pass” (with a credit value of one point) and the “principal pass” (with a credit value between two and six points, depending on the grade). While the mandatory general paper is always graded with a single passing grade of S (subsidiary), subsidiary passes in other subjects denote that the subject wasn’t completed at the advanced level. All candidates who achieve subsidiary passes in at least three subjects are nevertheless awarded the final Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education. However, it should be noted that Rwandan universities typically require a minimum of at least two principal passes with a grade of C or higher for admission. Finally, the A Level examination results also indicate an overall “weighted aggregate grade” on a percentage scale from 0 to 100 that is used by HEIs to rank students for admission purposes. To derive the aggregate grade, principal subject scores are multiplied by three (while the subsidiary grade for the general paper is not). A recent REB instruction manual illustrates this calculation method with the following example: “If a candidate doing physics, chemistry and math..., Entrepreneurship plus General Paper obtains A in math, A in physics, A in Chemistry and A in Entrepreneurships and S in General Paper then that candidate’s weighted aggregate will be $(3 \times 6) + (3 \times 6) + (3 \times 6) + (3 \times 6) + (1 \times 1) = 73$ points.” Some 42,000 students sat for the A Level exams in 2018; the pass rate was 88 percent. In addition to regular high school students, independent “private” candidates may also sit for the examinations. To be eligible for this pathway, candidates must have completed a minimum of nine years of schooling at least five years prior. The overall number of private candidates has increased as of late but only makes up a small percentage of all test takers (1,369 candidates in 2018). Most private candidates are students who previously attended school but failed examinations, school dropouts seeking to re-enter the system, or graduates attempting to improve their grades for university admission. Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) Rwanda’s genocide and civil war decimated the country’s human capital, and created a desperate need to reconstruct the country’s TVET system. TVET is provided by technical secondary schools and vocational training centers at the secondary level, as well as by polytechnics at the post-secondary level. The government has in

recent years adopted various measures to better integrate the different forms of TVET and expand the system, including the creation of the TVET qualifications framework and the establishment of a single oversight body, the Workforce Development Authority (WDA) under the MINEDUC. The TVET system has since grown significantly, although enrollment levels still fall short of official goals. The government recently sought to boost enrollments in TVET programs to 60 percent of all upper-secondary enrollments by 2017 (up from 38 percent in 2013). While the total number of upper-secondary TVET students has increased from 64,866 in 2013 to 79,388 in 2018, the percentage of TVET students among all upper-secondary students actually dropped to 34 percent. There were 360 TVET institutions and 102,485 learners at all levels of TVET in Rwanda in 2018, most of them enrolled in private technical secondary schools. Technical secondary school programs are three years in length (S4 to S6) and require the completion of nine years of education (O Level) for admission. Curricula include a small general education component (English, mathematics, political studies, and science subjects), as well as technical subjects in a vocational field, such as agriculture, construction, engineering technology, nursing, or secretarial studies. A practical internship is usually part of the program. At the end of grade 12, students sit for the external National Technical and Professional Examination conducted by the WDA. To graduate, they must pass a certain number of subjects and achieve a required minimum aggregate grade, as well as pass a “practical paper”. Graduates are awarded the National Advanced Certificate of Technical Secondary Education A2, an upper-secondary school leaving qualification that prepares students for employment but also provides access to higher education. In addition to technical secondary programs, there are different types of more practically oriented, competency-based certificate programs offered by vocational training centers that are designed to prepare students for direct entry into the labor force. This type of education is currently undergoing changes, and the introduction of overlapping qualifications frameworks can make the classification of these programs confusing. In general, secondary level programs are between one and three years in length, although there are also shorter continuing education programs. While completion of grade nine is generally the benchmark criterion for admission into formal programs, students can also be admitted based on work experience. Curricular specializations range from culinary arts to office administration, software programming, or welding. At the post-secondary level, TVET is provided by a small number of private colleges and the public Rwanda Polytechnic (RP), a large institution created in 2017 as the result of the merger of eight Integrated Polytechnic Regional Colleges (IPRCs) across Rwanda. RP’s constituent IPRCs offer an applied post-secondary Diploma and an Advanced Diploma program in fields like civil engineering, information technology, or wildlife management. Programs are between two and three years in length and may include an industrial internship. Admission requires an upper-secondary qualification like the Certificate of Technical Secondary Education A2. Tertiary Education Rwanda’s tertiary education sector is small but growing rapidly. Before the genocide, higher education was dominated by one institution, the National University of Rwanda, and largely a privilege of Hutu elites—a situation that changed drastically after the war. While the system graduated merely 2,000 students in the decades between 1963 (when the National University of Rwanda was founded) and 1994, there are now 40 HEIs in the country with a total enrollment of slightly more than 89,000 students (2018). The overall number of students has doubled within the last decade while the tertiary GER jumped from 3 percent in 2005 to around 7 percent today, per UNESCO statistics. 2 Enrollments are predominantly in undergraduate programs: There were only six PhDs and 1,338 master’s degrees among the 23,100 academic qualifications awarded in Rwanda in 2016/17. Higher Education Institutions Despite this strong growth, tertiary enrollments declined slightly last year while the number of HEIs in Rwanda dropped drastically from 54 to 40 between 2017 and 2018. The reasons for this decrease are the merger of the eight regional IPRCs into the Rwanda Polytechnic, as well as the closure of several private institutions over quality concerns. In 2017, the government shut down five private HEIs: Singhad Technical Education Society-Rwanda, Rusizi International University, Nile Source Polytechnic of Applied Arts, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, and a local branch of the Open University of Tanzania. In 2019, the government also closed two departments of the private University of Gitwe because of insufficient facilities and teaching staff. Most Rwandan HEIs—37 out of 40—are private. For the most part these institutions are relatively new, smaller, specialized universities and HEIs and religiously affiliated institutions, as well as transnational providers like the Cyprus-based Unicaf, Mount Kenya University, or Carnegie Mellon University Africa. Together, private institutions enrolled 57 percent of all tertiary students in

2018. The number of public HEIs, by contrast, is minute despite enrolling 43 percent of students. There are only three: the University of Rwanda (UR); the Institute of Legal Practice and Development, Rwanda's dedicated postgraduate institution for legal education; and Rwanda Polytechnic (RP). However, it should be noted that both UR and RP are large, multi-campus institutions. UR is the country's largest and preeminent multi-faculty research university with 14 campuses and some 29,000 students . It was created in 2013 as a merger of all other public HEIs in Rwanda, including the National University of Rwanda. Quality Assurance and Accreditation The HEC is the designated quality assurance body in Rwandan tertiary education. Its mission is to "improve the organization and functioning of higher learning institutions," to "set norms and standards for accrediting private higher learning institutions ," and to monitor compliance with these norms. TVET providers are separately accredited by the WDA. All private universities in Rwanda must be accredited by the HEC, which was established in 2007. Candidates for accreditation that meet certain minimum criteria in terms of facilities and staffing are first granted an initial license to operate. They are then evaluated by the HEC one year prior to the graduation of the first student cohort. They may then receive a definitive operating permit, or be ordered to rectify shortcomings or suspend operations. Accreditation decisions are based on HEC site visits during which auditors review facilities and samples of student works, observe lectures, and assess the viability of institutional self-assessments . Final operating permits are granted for a set list of authorized degree programs. If HEIs want to offer additional programs, they need to apply again and enter into an additional agreement with the HEC . A list of accredited programs is available on the HEC's website . University Admissions Admission into university programs requires at least the Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education with two passes in principal subjects plus demonstrated competency in English (the Advanced Certificate of Technical Secondary Education may also be accepted). Beyond that, requirements vary by institution and program. Admission to UR requires applicants to have passing scores on the general paper and two or more principal passes in major-related subjects with a total of 18 points for arts and social science programs, and 24 points for science, technology, and medical programs. All applicants must also pass an English language proficiency exam . Credit System and Grading Scale Rwanda has in recent years adopted several standardization measures to facilitate the transfer of credits between institutions and the intraregional recognition of academic qualifications within the EAC. In 2008, it introduced a credit system called Credit Accumulation and Modular Scheme (CAMS) that is modeled after the European ECTS credit system, although it uses different credit units. CAMS defines one year of study as 120 credits, which means that a four-year bachelor's degree requires the completion of 480 credits. This system is identical to the East African Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (EACAT) developed for use throughout the EAC . Per official HEC guidelines , academic programs should comprise study modules of 10, 15, or 20 credit units, although some variations are permitted. One credit represents 10 hours of notional learning time. Grading scales in Rwanda are not standardized across the board. Several HEIs, including UR, use the scale shown below, but older French-style 0-20 grading scales are also used by private institutions. Degrees may be awarded with a British-style degree classification. The Tertiary Degree Structure Rwanda in 2007 adopted a qualifications framework for higher education that benchmarks academic qualifications at seven levels. However, while this framework is still in use, it should be noted that there are plans to integrate different frameworks in the TVET and higher education sectors into a new, unified National Qualifications Framework . Older French credential names like the Diplôme de Licence or Diplôme d'Ingénieur are no longer in use. Certificate, Diploma, and Advanced Diploma A number of private HEIs offer post-secondary short-term certificate programs and accredited diploma and advanced diploma programs of two- and three-year duration. UR offers a few three-year Advanced Diploma programs in nursing and allied health fields, as well as two-year diploma programs in education. In addition, the HEC defines certificate and diploma qualifications as exit qualifications in incomplete bachelor's programs rather than distinct study programs. Students who complete one year of study (120 credits) before dropping out may receive a Certificate of Higher Education, whereas students who complete two or two and a half years of study may be awarded a Diploma in Higher Education or an Advanced Diploma in Higher Education, respectively. Bachelor's Degree There are two main types of bachelor's degrees in standard academic disciplines in Rwanda: three-year ordinary degrees (360 credits) and four-year honors degrees (480 credits). The modules of these programs are generally completed sequentially from level one to four, representing each of the four years of study. Programs are usually specialized with few general education requirements,

except for English and computer skills. Honors programs may require a project in the final year. There are some shortened “academic upgrade” programs available in fields like nursing that allow students to complete a bachelor’s degree in two years based on a diploma qualification. In terms of subject specializations, official HEC guidelines provide for single-subject honors programs, programs that combine a major subject with a minor subject, and triple-minor programs (the specific credit requirements for majors and minors in these subject combinations are detailed in the HEC guidelines). Degree names include the Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts, but some certificates simply indicate the name as “Bachelor’s Degree.”

Medical and Dental Education

Medical education in Rwanda has evolved only slowly, and the country continues to suffer from doctor shortages. There were 1,176 general physicians and 495 specialists in Rwanda in 2016—a ratio of one physician for every 12,000 people . Dental education, in particular, is still embryonic; the first batch of dental students in Rwanda did not graduate before 2018. There were reportedly 40 registered dentists in the country as of 2018 , so that some dental students themselves had never experienced a dental office visit before they took up studies. Until the early 2010s, all medical training took place at the National University and outside the country in Europe . Today, it is provided by UR and a small handful of private institutions. Since 2013, medical and dental education is regulated by the Rwanda Medical and Dental Council . Entry-to-practice qualifications in medicine and dentistry are earned after long five-year bachelor programs pegged at level 5 of the qualifications framework. The final credentials are called Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (Honors) and Bachelor of Dental Surgery (Honors). The curriculum includes an initial period of pre-medical studies followed by clinical studies. To become licensed, candidates must also complete a mandatory one-year rotating clinical internship and pass a qualifying exam . Graduate medical education takes four additional years of training and concludes with the award of a Master of Medicine in a medical specialty. Master’s, Postgraduate Certificate, and Postgraduate Diploma Master’s programs are between one and two years in length. Admission requirements include an honors bachelor’s degree with high grades (second-class honors, upper division), as well as good English skills. Programs commonly require coursework and the preparation of a thesis, but coursework-only and research-only master’s programs also exist. Common credentials awarded include the Master of Arts, Master of Science, or Master of Business Administration. Shorter postgraduate programs lead to the Postgraduate Certificate (60 credits) and the Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits). Master’s and other graduate programs are only offered by a limited number of HEIs.

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

As in the case of medical training, advanced research education in Rwanda is still nascent. UR did not begin to offer PhD programs until 2014 , and it is presently the only university in the country that provides this type of education. Admission requires a master’s degree; programs involve at least three years of research and the defense of a dissertation.

Teacher Education

Rwanda has a tremendous need for qualified teachers, especially following the switch to English as the language of instruction and the introduction of free basic education up to grade 12. To improve teacher training standards and develop capacity, the government established the Rwanda Teacher Service Commission in 2008, and is currently seeking to establish a formal licensing process for teachers. However, despite allocating substantial resources to teacher training, the system remains plagued by shortages. There were 5,000 open vacancies for schoolteachers in 2019—a gap the government sought to close by recruiting teachers from Kenya and other countries. Domestic students are incentivized with tuition-free programs to enroll in teacher training programs. Teacher training is provided by 16 public teacher training colleges and—since the merger and incorporation of the former Kigali Institute of Education—the newly established University of Rwanda College of Education. Elementary school teachers can teach with an A2 level certificate in primary education—a secondary level credential earned after three years of study at a teacher training college following the O Level exams (9+3). Lower-secondary teachers, by comparison, must have a Diploma in Education (level A1)—a credential earned after two years of post-secondary study (12+2) that prepares students to teach two subjects. Upper-secondary school teachers must have a four-year bachelor’s degree in education from UR. Like the diploma, the bachelor’s degree prepares students to teach two subjects. Holders of bachelor’s degrees in other disciplines may obtain an upper-secondary teaching qualification by earning a Postgraduate Diploma in Education—a one-year in-service program. UR Master of Education degrees may also qualify holders to teach, depending on the program.

WES Documentation Requirements

Secondary Education Photocopy of the graduation certificate or diploma (for example, Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education,

Certificate of Technical Secondary Education) submitted by the applicant Final Examination Results—sent directly by the Rwanda Board of Education or other applicable body, For U.S. applications: Word-for-word translations of all documents not issued in English Higher Education Degree certificate—submitted by the applicant Academic transcript—sent directly by the institution attended For completed doctoral programs—a written statement confirming the award of the degree sent by the institution attended For U.S. applications: Word-for-word translations of all documents not issued in English Sample Documents Click here for a PDF file of the academic documents referred to below. Rwanda Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education National Advanced Certificate of Technical Secondary Education (A2) Advanced Diploma (Polytechnic) Bachelor of Science (Honors) Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery Master of Science 1. When comparing international student numbers, it is important to note that numbers provided by different agencies and governments vary because of differences in data capture methodology, definitions of “international student,” and types of mobility captured (credit, degree, and so on). The data of the UNESCO Institute Statistics provide a good point of reference for comparison since they are compiled according to one standard method. It should be pointed out, however, that the data only include students enrolled in tertiary degree programs. They do not include students on shorter study abroad exchanges, or those enrolled at the secondary level or in short-term language training programs, for instance. 2. According to national statistics the GER is slightly higher at 8 percent in 2017/18 . The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of World Education Services (WES). Stefan Trines, Research Editor, WENR Panoramic view at the city business district of Kigali, Rwanda, 2016

[HEADING] Rising from the Ashes of Genocide: Rwanda in the 21st Century Rwanda is a small landlocked country in central Africa that has been to hell and back. Over just 100 days in 1994, Rwandan armed forces, extremist militias, and radicalized civilians from the nation’s ethnic Hutu majority massacred an estimated 800,000 ethnic Tutsis, as well as political opponents, in one of the world’s most horrific genocides since World War II. The ensuing civil war resulted in the displacement of a third of Rwanda’s population. Some two million people, predominantly Hutus, fled to neighboring countries as the Tutsi-dominated Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) advanced militarily on Kigali, Rwanda’s capital. Yet, merely 25 years after these apocalyptic events, Rwanda is regarded as one of the most economically dynamic nations on the continent and a model of development. A tiny mountainous country in which close to 90 percent of the population lived by subsistence farming at the beginning of the century is now frequently hailed as the “ Singapore of Africa .” Rwanda has averaged economic growth rates of around 8 percent for the past 15 years . It’s the only low-income economy featured in the World Bank’s ease of doing business index (ranked 29th out of 190 countries). Contemporary Kigali is one of the cleanest and safest cities in Africa and has become a technology hub . Towering over this remarkable turnaround is Rwanda’s strongman, President Paul Kagame. Inseparable from Rwanda’s fate for the past 25 years, Kagame led the RPF into Rwanda from exile in Uganda in 1994. He subsequently served as defense minister and vice president before he was elected president in 2000 and began to laser-focus on the goal of turning Rwanda into a middle-income knowledge economy. Often viewed as an incorruptible, visionary leader , Kagame has found many admirers around the world —a fact that helped make Rwanda a “ donor darling ” in the international aid community. However, Kagame’s image was tarnished when in 2017 he reneged on his pledge not to run for a third term and held a referendum to change the Rwandan constitution to allow him to stay in office. Increasing reports of political repression and opposition politicians that “disappear” have made him look more like other African autocrats who cling to power past their time. The organization Reporters Without Borders ranks Rwanda 155 th out of 180 countries in its current World Press Freedom Index . On the upside, Rwanda’s achievements over the past decades are remarkable. While the country remains a least developed country ranked 158th out of 189 on the United Nations’ Human Development Index , it has succeeded in reducing extreme poverty by 24 percent and lifting some one million people out of poverty since the beginning of the century. Life expectancy has lengthened by 35 years since the 1990s. Rwanda is also one of the least corrupt countries in Africa . Internationally, Rwanda in 2007 joined the East African Community (EAC) and transformed itself from a Francophone nation allied with France to an Anglophone nation that joined the Commonwealth in 2009. Aside from Mozambique , it is the only country in the organization without historical ties to Britain. English was introduced as an official language and the language of instruction in schools. Education is a government priority. The Rwandan government realizes that

raising the level of educational attainment is crucial for the economic prosperity of this tiny country that lacks natural resources. Notably, Rwanda has one of the highest elementary school enrollment rates on the continent. In 2012 the country won the prestigious Commonwealth Education Good Practice Award following the construction of more than 8,600 classrooms between 2009 and 2011 . At present, Rwanda's government in partnership with Microsoft is building "smart" classrooms across the country and plans to bring computers, internet connectivity, and basic software packages to all of Rwanda's schools by 2020 . The country's development strategy prioritizes "science and technology education and ICT skills," and emphasizes "vocational and technical training in the fields of technology, engineering and management" to develop human capital and turn Rwanda into a "sophisticated knowledge-based economy." However, the country has a long way to go to realize these goals. Enrollment ratios in secondary and higher education are still low, and 32 percent of Rwandans are unable to read and write, according to national statistics . Funding levels are suboptimal. Rwanda spends only 11 percent of its total government budget on education, and education expenditures have fallen from 4.9 percent of GDP in 2013 to 3.2 percent in 2017—below the average expenditure of 4 percent in sub-Saharan Africa. Shortages of qualified university instructors and the lack of well-developed research universities are other obstacles to progress. The University of Rwanda (UR), the country's nascent flagship institution, did not start offering doctoral programs until 2014; only 22 percent of its instructors held a PhD in 2018 . The university is emerging as an increasingly important academic hub in East Africa, but of all enrollments those of graduate programs are still low, standing at 5 percent. [HEADING] Teaching the Genocide in Rwanda Hutus and Tutsis are two African ethnic groups that live in both Rwanda and Burundi. While the two groups speak the same language and practice the same religions, German and Belgian colonial rulers deepened ethnic distinctions and conflict between them by favoring the elites of the existing Tutsi monarchy in their colonial administrations in a strategy of "divide and rule." After independence, the Hutus, which make up about 84 percent of the population in both Rwanda and Burundi, captured the new states and brutally repressed the Tutsis. There were several horrendous mass killings that preceded the 1994 genocide. Many Tutsis were forced to flee the two countries. Those that stayed experienced severe discrimination: The ethnicity of citizens was recorded on apartheid-like identity cards and became a dominant criterion for social hierarchies. After the genocide, Rwanda faced the question of how to teach the history of ethnic conflict and genocide in its school curricula. The new government first suspended all Rwandan history classes for more than a decade before it put forward a carefully crafted "official Rwandan history" "from which no deviation was permitted ." The goal is to instill a sense of collective and unifying "Rwandanness" and prevent the resurgence of inter-ethnic conflict. While the genocide is commemorated each year and the topic of "genocide studies" has recently been incorporated in school curricula, discussing ethnicity itself is still taboo. The Rwandan government has outlawed the use of the ethnic labels "Hutu" and "Tutsi". Some consider this suppression of open public discourse on ethnic conflict a necessary step toward reconciliation. Critics, on the other hand, accuse the government of creating a one-sided version of history and telling a Tutsi-friendly narrative. Discussing the killing of Hutus at the hands of the RPF, for instance, can result in lengthy jail sentences . [HEADING] International Student Mobility Given that Rwanda is a country of only 12.4 million people, the total number of Rwandan international students is relatively minor. According to UNESCO statistics , there were 4,839 Rwandans enrolled in degree programs in other countries in 2017 (compared with 85,000 Nigerians). However, the country has a very high outbound mobility ratio. The percentage of Rwandan students enrolled internationally exceeded 15 percent in the early 2000s when the country was still reeling from the impact of the genocide, before it gradually decreased to a still high 6 percent in 2017. For comparison, Nigeria had an outbound mobility ratio of 3.7 percent in 2011. Overall, the number of Rwandan international students has declined in recent years, possibly because of the growing availability of study options in Rwanda's own nascent higher education system, including those offered by an increasing number of transnational education providers in the country. The number of Rwandan international degree-seeking students dropped by 22 percent since 2012, when there were 6,227 Rwandans studying abroad, according to UNESCO. The United States is by far the most popular destination country of mobile Rwandan degree students, accounting for almost 25 percent of enrollments. That makes Rwanda the ninth-largest sub-Saharan African sending country of international students in the U.S., despite its small population. The Open Doors data of the Institute of International Education show that the number of Rwandan students in the country has more than doubled over

the past five years and reached 1,232 in the 2017/18 academic year—an increase of 13.2 percent over 2016/17. Most Rwandans—70 percent—are enrolled at the undergraduate level, while 17 percent study in graduate programs, 2 percent in non-degree programs, and 10.5 percent pursue Optional Practical Training. According to Rwandan media reports, the reasons for the growing popularity of the U.S. as a study destination include a growing awareness of the “U.S. college and university application process among students, parents, and educators; Rwandan government partnerships with U.S. higher education institutions such as the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, as well as scholarship programs like, for example, the Bridge-to-Rwanda program or the EducationUSA Scholars Program” run by the U.S. State Department. The Rwandan government also promotes student mobility with national scholarship programs, which it views as an investment in human capital development. Given the scarce financial means of Rwandan students, scholarships are crucial for driving mobility. Finally, the switch to English as the language of instruction has made it easier for Rwandan students to study in English-speaking countries like the United States. The next most popular destination country among Rwandan students after the U.S. is the neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), accounting for 13 percent of enrollments. Sizable numbers of Rwandan students prefer to study in French at low-cost institutions in the Congolese city of Goma, but it remains to be seen how recent outbreaks of the Ebola virus will affect student flows in the border region. In August 2019, the Rwandan government closed the border and stopped Rwandan school and university students from crossing into the DRC. Armed conflict in the region can also impact student flows. Other popular destinations are France (8.5 percent), Canada (6 percent), India (5.6 percent), and South Africa (4.5 percent), according to UNESCO. It should be noted that the Canadian government reports much higher numbers than UNESCO. The government statistics show that the number of Rwandan students in Canada spiked by more than 700 percent over the past decade, from 120 students in 2007 to 1,030 in 2018. 1

[HEADING] Inbound Mobility Interestingly, the number of international students in Rwanda has surged in recent years, if on a low base level in terms of total enrollments. Within just three years, the number of international degree-seeking students in Rwanda quadrupled from 778 students in 2015 to 3,052 in 2018 (per UNESCO). The vast majority of these students are from other East African countries; more than two-thirds come from the neighboring DRC, Burundi, and Uganda. One reason for this growing inflow is the regional integration and harmonization of education systems within the East African Community (EAC), as well as growing research collaboration between EAC member countries. Research and scholarship funding by international organizations also help boost mobility in the region. The World Bank, for example, funded the establishment of 24 academic centers of excellence at African universities in the Eastern and Southern Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence Project (ACE II, following ACE I for Western and Central Africa) in 2016. Designed to function as regional incubators of technical innovation and graduate research in eight African countries, these ACE II centers have capacity and funding for more than 3,500 graduate students over a span of five years, including at least 700 PhD students. Four of the centers are housed at the University of Rwanda (UR) and attract graduate students from other African countries like Burundi, which does not host any ACE centers. Beyond that, there are sizable numbers of Congolese refugees and students that come to Rwanda to access education of a higher quality than is available in the eastern DRC.

[HEADING] A Brief History of Education in Rwanda Western education was introduced in Rwanda in the 20th century, when Christian missionaries began to establish churches and schools throughout the region, beginning with the founding of the first school in Rwanda by Roman Catholic missionaries in 1900. Rather than establishing direct control over education, both the German and Belgian colonial governments left many aspects of education to religious institutions, so that “almost all the schools were owned by the Catholic and Protestant churches” when Rwanda became independent in 1962. The new Rwandan government expanded the role of the state but did not monopolize education. Rather, it subsidized many of the religious schools—a practice that continues today in the form of so-called “government-aided schools,” which are privately managed schools that receive government funding for teacher salaries and other expenses. The governments that ruled Rwanda between 1962 and 1994 nevertheless established a public education system, developed a national curriculum, and created the country’s first higher education institutions (HEIs). They succeeded in increasing access to education in the impoverished rural country. The elementary gross enrollment ratio (GER), for instance, increased from 46 percent in 1973 to 65 percent in 1990. At the same time, the education policies of these Hutu-dominated governments were central to intensifying the conflict between Hutus and Tutsis,

just like those of the previous colonial rulers. Whereas Tutsis were recruited for administrative positions and trained at the best schools during the Belgian administration, they were now discriminated against. By the 1970s, admission into public and government-aided schools was strictly based on ethnic and regional quotas that helped reinforce divisions, while school curricula disseminated anti-Tutsi propaganda. When the tensions eventually erupted in the 1994 genocide, schooling in Rwanda came to an immediate halt. As education researcher Anna Obura described it, “teachers and children were killed or fled; schools and colleges were destroyed, burned, looted and pillaged, and their vehicles stolen.... The Ministry of Education was brought to a standstill. The walls of the ministry were shelled, with all windows blown out, and doors broken, furniture smashed and looted, and documents pillaged and scattered.” Reconstructing the Rwandan school system after this cataclysm was a monumental task. The murder of some 800,000 citizens and displacement of a third of the population had all but destroyed the country’s social institutions. It has been estimated that nearly two-thirds of Rwandan schools were non-functional in 1994, while more than half of elementary school teachers were either killed or displaced, many of them as refugees outside of the country. Given this turmoil, the progress Rwanda has made in reconstructing and improving its education system over the past 25 years is impressive. Notably, the country achieved almost full participation in elementary education within just one decade after introducing free elementary education in 2003. As the World Bank put it, “Rwanda increased [the] primary gross enrollment ratio (GER) to over 100 percent in 2013. By 2017, practically all primary and secondary schools had toilets, nearly 60 percent had tap water, and hydroelectric supply is available in more than 55 percent of primary schools and in more than 70 percent of secondary schools.... computers are available in nearly 70 percent of the primary schools and 85 percent of secondary schools. The Internet is accessible in 25 percent of primary, and in more than 40 percent of secondary schools.” However, significant problems remain. Access to early childhood education is limited, classrooms are overcrowded, and elementary schooling remains plagued by high repetition rates and urban-rural divides. Despite the introduction of free education until grade nine in 2007, GERs in lower secondary education are a far cry from the rates achieved at the elementary level and remained below 46 in 2017 (per UNESCO). Learning outcomes are often mediocre, and teacher training needs to be improved, observers say. Rwanda’s GER in higher education, meanwhile, remains below the average in sub-Saharan Africa and is stagnant at around 8 percent. Less than 4 percent of Rwandans above the age of 25 have had any type of higher education.

[HEADING] Administration of the Education System

The Republic of Rwanda, as it’s officially called, is administratively divided into five provinces: the Eastern, Northern, Southern, and Western provinces, as well as Kigali City. The five provinces are further subdivided into 30 districts (akarere), 416 sectors (imerenge), 2,148 cells (utugari), and 14,837 villages (imudungu). School education is centrally overseen by the national Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) in Kigali and administered locally by District Education Offices (DEOs). Whereas the MINEDUC sets the overall policies and strategies, DEOs manage and monitor schools at the local level. Overall goals for the education systems are generally set forth in multi-year strategic education sector development plans. The Rwanda Education Board (REB), an agency of the MINEDUC, is responsible for developing school curricula, examinations in the school system, and standards for teacher training. Higher education, on the other hand, is the sole responsibility of the central government and overseen by the Higher Education Council (HEC), an agency under the MINEDUC established in 2007. The HEC is tasked with setting standards and enhancing and monitoring the quality of education and research at HEIs; it is also responsible for the vetting and recognition of private HEIs and the accreditation of their programs.

[HEADING] A Rapid Switch to English: The Language of Instruction

Rwanda has four official languages: Kinyarwanda, English, French, and, since 2017, Kiswahili. Whereas Kinyarwanda, a Bantu language, is spoken as the native tongue by almost all Rwandans and used as the language of instruction during the first three years of elementary education, English has since 2009 replaced French as the official language of instruction at higher levels of education. Following the 1994 genocide and the ouster of the Hutu regime, the new regime, which was dominated by Tutsi refugees returning from exile in English-speaking Uganda and Tanzania, realigned Rwanda from a Francophone to an Anglophone nation. Francophonie and the French language, first imposed by Belgium during its colonial rule, were discredited because of France’s support for the previous Hutu regime. In addition, Rwanda’s government saw switching to English as beneficial for foreign trade, international relations, socioeconomic modernization, and regional integration in the East African Community (EAC). President Kagame in 2003 made English

an official language of Rwanda and switched out French in favor of English as the medium of instruction following the country's ascendance to the EAC in 2007. While English is now a mandatory subject from grade one, French is taught as a foreign language beginning in third grade—a drastic change from previous years, when 95 percent of Rwandan schools used French as the language of instruction beginning when most pupils reached the age of nine. The switch brought with it tremendous challenges, since most of Rwanda's schoolteachers had been educated in French and therefore had insufficient English language abilities. According to government surveys, some 85 percent of elementary school teachers and 66 percent of secondary teachers had only limited English skills when the reform was initiated in 2009. Rwanda consequently had to launch a large-scale retraining program for more than 50,000 teachers and recruit them from neighboring English-speaking countries. Despite these efforts, the English proficiency of the Rwandan population, including teachers, remains somewhat limited. As education researcher Maria Ambrozny told *World Politics Review* in 2017, "[The] implementation of English as the language of instruction ... was one of the most abrupt policies introduced by the Rwandan government. While other policies have also been introduced with limited notice, this one stands out, as it had an impact on the entire population, and there was insufficient time allowed for the change. For example, teachers were required to learn and/or adopt English in four months.... The government ... overestimated the number of teachers who would be able to educate students effectively in a new language. The consequence of these planning failures was that initial results are below expectations. In due course, many of the logistical issues—for example, a shortage of English-language text books—were resolved, but a large cohort of children have progressed through the education system with limited language skills and subject knowledge." In higher education, the Rwandan government seeks to boost the use of English by requiring Rwandan universities to teach English courses as a compulsory part of their curricula. Students must not only muster an English proficiency exam to be admitted, they must also pass English language exams during their studies to progress from one academic year to the next. The government is currently also rolling out mandatory English tests for university instructors. It hopes to extend these tests to schoolteachers in the coming years with the help of the British Council.

[HEADING] Academic Calendar Rwanda's school calendar used to be aligned with the academic calendars of other EAC countries, but the government recently changed it to avoid classes during Rwanda's dry season, which is hot. It's now divided into trimesters that run from January to April, April to July, and August to November, respectively. Year-end and final graduation examinations are held in November. Rwandan universities usually use semester systems that comprise two semesters of 15 weeks each, as well as a summer semester, depending on the institution. Trimester systems may also be used. Regulations put forward by the HEC stipulate that one semester comprises 12 weeks of classes in addition to one week of orientation and two weeks reserved for examinations at the end of the semester. The academic year usually runs from September to July.

[HEADING] Basic Education School education is divided into six years of elementary education, three years of lower-secondary education, and three years of senior secondary education (6+3+3). Until recently, the first nine years were categorized as basic education, offered free of charge at public schools, and compulsory for all children. However, in 2012 President Kagame fulfilled a 2010 election campaign promise to extend free education to grade 12 in a unified 12-year basic education cycle. Since that year, pupils who complete grade nine can enroll in grade 10 in public schools free of charge, a change that resulted in an increase in upper-secondary school enrollments. The GER in upper-secondary education jumped from 21 percent in 2010 to 30 percent in 2017, according to UNESCO data. It should be noted that what is termed tuition-free education in Rwanda isn't truly free. Parents have to pay for items like "parent-teacher association (PTA) contributions, mock exam fees, purchasing reams of paper for the school, passport photos for exams, registration fees, and school reports, among others. Such costs ... pose serious challenges for successful school attendance, performance, and completion." However, the introduction of tuition-free upper-secondary education has caused a decline in private high schools in Rwanda in recent years. More than 30 private schools closed in 2017 alone, while 70 percent of the member schools of the Rwanda Private Schools Association struggled to stay afloat in 2018, according to the association. This demise accelerates a downward trend that already began with the introduction of free lower-secondary education in 2007. In contrast to the privatization trends in many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, it reverses prior advances in privatization in Rwanda. Aside from cost considerations, public high schools are increasingly competitive since they are better equipped

because of improved government spending. While recent government statistics show that the number of private secondary schools rebounded and grew in 2018, the percentage of students enrolled in private upper-secondary schools dropped from 43 percent to 26 percent between 2012 and 2017, per UNESCO statistics. This follows an even larger decline in enrollments in private lower-secondary schools from 32 percent to 7 percent between 2007 and 2012. There are three types of schools in Rwanda: public, private, and government-aided private schools. Given the historical importance of churches in Rwandan education, most private and government-aided schools are religiously affiliated institutions; more than half are run by the Catholic Church. Close to a third of private schools are in Kigali. According to the latest education statistics published by the MINEDUC, there were 522 public secondary schools, 892 government-aided schools, and 314 private schools in Rwanda in 2018. The average number of students per school increased from 376 to 403 in public schools and from 350 to 408 in government-aided schools, but decreased from 313 to 250 in private schools between 2016 and 2018.

[HEADING] Elementary Education Elementary education is divided into two cycles of three years each: Primary one to three (P1 to P3) and Primary four to six (P4 to P6). As noted, Kinyarwanda is the language of instruction in the first cycle before English is introduced as the sole medium of instruction in grade four. There are 20 contact hours per week and a total of 39 weeks per year in both cycles. Children generally enter elementary education at the age of seven. Most pupils attend boarding schools. Except for French, which isn't introduced until grade four, the current curriculum, adopted in 2016, features the same subjects in both cycles: Kinyarwanda, English, mathematics, social and religious studies, science and technology, creative arts, and physical education. One recent change is the greater emphasis on continual competency-based assessment to foster critical thinking and minimize rote learning. That said, examinations remain highly important. There's an exam at the end of each grade, as well as a final external graduation examination at the end of the sixth year. Pupils who pass the national exam, administered by schools under the auspices of the Rwanda Education Board (REB), are awarded the Primary Leaving Certificate. More than 250,000 pupils sat for the exam in 2018. The pass rate was 81 percent.

[HEADING] Lower-Secondary Education (Ordinary Level) Lower-secondary education is called "ordinary level" and spans grades seven to nine (S1 to S3). Admission is based on the Primary Leaving Examination. Grade averages are used to determine whether pupils are admitted to their school of choice, but the REB is currently introducing a new system of "random placement" that randomly allocates pupils to schools irrespective of their grades. The current competency-based curriculum includes English, Kinyarwanda, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, information technology, history, geography, entrepreneurship, French, Kiswahili, and physical education, as well as one elective subject (artistic subjects, home science, or agriculture). The number of contact hours is increased to 30 per week in lower-secondary education. Grade nine concludes with an external ordinary level (O Level) examination. Some 99,000 students sat for the exams in 2018. The pass rate decreased from 90 percent in 2017 to 83 percent—a drop attributed to challenges related to the implementation of the new curriculum. Graduates have the option of proceeding to general academic upper-secondary programs (advanced level), technical secondary education, or teacher training programs (discussed further below).

[HEADING] Upper-Secondary Education (Advanced Level) Upper-secondary education encompasses grades 10 to 12 (S4 to S6). Admission requires the O Level examinations and is competitive; high grades are required for admission into desirable schools. There are three separate streams in the general academic track: sciences, humanities, and languages. Within these streams, students can choose from a variety of different subject combinations, for example, physics-chemistry-mathematics, or mathematics-physics-computer science. (See the official national curriculum for all available combinations.) While there are a few compulsory subjects (religion, physical education, computer studies), curricula are specialized and vary considerably by stream. A plurality of 36 percent of upper-secondary students were enrolled in the science stream in 2018, while only 13.5 percent studied humanities, 13 percent languages, and the remainder enrolled in vocational and teacher training programs. At the end of grade 12, students sit for final A Level examinations in at least five subjects (the three specialization subjects, entrepreneurship, and a mandatory "general paper"). The exams are held in November and conducted by schools under the auspices of the REB, which issues the final examination certificate. The grading scale used in the examinations is shown below. Secondary grading in Rwanda is complicated. A Level examination subjects are graded at two different levels: The "subsidiary pass" (with a credit value of one point) and the "principal pass" (with a credit value between two and six points, depending on

the grade). While the mandatory general paper is always graded with a single passing grade of S (subsidiary), subsidiary passes in other subjects denote that the subject wasn't completed at the advanced level. All candidates who achieve subsidiary passes in at least three subjects are nevertheless awarded the final Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education. However, it should be noted that Rwandan universities typically require a minimum of at least two principal passes with a grade of C or higher for admission. Finally, the A Level examination results also indicate an overall "weighted aggregate grade" on a percentage scale from 0 to 100 that is used by HEIs to rank students for admission purposes. To derive the aggregate grade, principal subject scores are multiplied by three (while the subsidiary grade for the general paper is not). A recent REB instruction manual illustrates this calculation method with the following example: "If a candidate doing physics, chemistry and math..., Entrepreneurship plus General Paper obtains A in math, A in physics, A in Chemistry and A in Entrepreneurships and S in General Paper then that candidate's weighted aggregate will be $(3 \times 6) + (3 \times 6) + (3 \times 6) + (3 \times 6) + (1 \times 1) = 73$ points." Some 42,000 students sat for the A Level exams in 2018; the pass rate was 88 percent. In addition to regular high school students, independent "private" candidates may also sit for the examinations. To be eligible for this pathway, candidates must have completed a minimum of nine years of schooling at least five years prior. The overall number of private candidates has increased as of late but only makes up a small percentage of all test takers (1,369 candidates in 2018). Most private candidates are students who previously attended school but failed examinations, school dropouts seeking to re-enter the system, or graduates attempting to improve their grades for university admission.

[HEADING] Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) Rwanda's genocide and civil war decimated the country's human capital, and created a desperate need to reconstruct the country's TVET system. TVET is provided by technical secondary schools and vocational training centers at the secondary level, as well as by polytechnics at the post-secondary level. The government has in recent years adopted various measures to better integrate the different forms of TVET and expand the system, including the creation of the TVET qualifications framework and the establishment of a single oversight body, the Workforce Development Authority (WDA) under the MINEDUC. The TVET system has since grown significantly, although enrollment levels still fall short of official goals. The government recently sought to boost enrollments in TVET programs to 60 percent of all upper-secondary enrollments by 2017 (up from 38 percent in 2013). While the total number of upper-secondary TVET students has increased from 64,866 in 2013 to 79,388 in 2018, the percentage of TVET students among all upper-secondary students actually dropped to 34 percent. There were 360 TVET institutions and 102,485 learners at all levels of TVET in Rwanda in 2018, most of them enrolled in private technical secondary schools. Technical secondary school programs are three years in length (S4 to S6) and require the completion of nine years of education (O Level) for admission. Curricula include a small general education component (English, mathematics, political studies, and science subjects), as well as technical subjects in a vocational field, such as agriculture, construction, engineering technology, nursing, or secretarial studies. A practical internship is usually part of the program. At the end of grade 12, students sit for the external National Technical and Professional Examination conducted by the WDA. To graduate, they must pass a certain number of subjects and achieve a required minimum aggregate grade, as well as pass a "practical paper". Graduates are awarded the National Advanced Certificate of Technical Secondary Education A2, an upper-secondary school leaving qualification that prepares students for employment but also provides access to higher education. In addition to technical secondary programs, there are different types of more practically oriented, competency-based certificate programs offered by vocational training centers that are designed to prepare students for direct entry into the labor force. This type of education is currently undergoing changes, and the introduction of overlapping qualifications frameworks can make the classification of these programs confusing. In general, secondary level programs are between one and three years in length, although there are also shorter continuing education programs. While completion of grade nine is generally the benchmark criterion for admission into formal programs, students can also be admitted based on work experience. Curricular specializations range from culinary arts to office administration, software programming, or welding. At the post-secondary level, TVET is provided by a small number of private colleges and the public Rwanda Polytechnic (RP), a large institution created in 2017 as the result of the merger of eight Integrated Polytechnic Regional Colleges (IPRCs) across Rwanda. RP's constituent IPRCs offer an applied post-secondary Diploma and an Advanced Diploma program in fields like civil engineering, information technology, or wildlife

management. Programs are between two and three years in length and may include an industrial internship. Admission requires an upper-secondary qualification like the Certificate of Technical Secondary Education A2. [HEADING] Tertiary Education Rwanda's tertiary education sector is small but growing rapidly. Before the genocide, higher education was dominated by one institution, the National University of Rwanda, and largely a privilege of Hutu elites—a situation that changed drastically after the war. While the system graduated merely 2,000 students in the decades between 1963 (when the National University of Rwanda was founded) and 1994, there are now 40 HEIs in the country with a total enrollment of slightly more than 89,000 students (2018). The overall number of students has doubled within the last decade while the tertiary GER jumped from 3 percent in 2005 to around 7 percent today, per UNESCO statistics. 2 Enrollments are predominantly in undergraduate programs: There were only six PhDs and 1,338 master's degrees among the 23,100 academic qualifications awarded in Rwanda in 2016/17. [HEADING] Higher Education Institutions Despite this strong growth, tertiary enrollments declined slightly last year while the number of HEIs in Rwanda dropped drastically from 54 to 40 between 2017 and 2018. The reasons for this decrease are the merger of the eight regional IPRCs into the Rwanda Polytechnic, as well as the closure of several private institutions over quality concerns. In 2017, the government shut down five private HEIs: Singhad Technical Education Society-Rwanda, Rusizi International University, Nile Source Polytechnic of Applied Arts, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, and a local branch of the Open University of Tanzania. In 2019, the government also closed two departments of the private University of Gitwe because of insufficient facilities and teaching staff. Most Rwandan HEIs—37 out of 40—are private. For the most part these institutions are relatively new, smaller, specialized universities and HEIs and religiously affiliated institutions, as well as transnational providers like the Cyprus-based Unicaf, Mount Kenya University, or Carnegie Mellon University Africa. Together, private institutions enrolled 57 percent of all tertiary students in 2018. The number of public HEIs, by contrast, is minute despite enrolling 43 percent of students. There are only three: the University of Rwanda (UR); the Institute of Legal Practice and Development, Rwanda's dedicated postgraduate institution for legal education; and Rwanda Polytechnic (RP). However, it should be noted that both UR and RP are large, multi-campus institutions. UR is the country's largest and preeminent multi-faculty research university with 14 campuses and some 29,000 students. It was created in 2013 as a merger of all other public HEIs in Rwanda, including the National University of Rwanda. [HEADING] Quality Assurance and Accreditation The HEC is the designated quality assurance body in Rwandan tertiary education. Its mission is to "improve the organization and functioning of higher learning institutions," to "set norms and standards for accrediting private higher learning institutions," and to monitor compliance with these norms. TVET providers are separately accredited by the WDA. All private universities in Rwanda must be accredited by the HEC, which was established in 2007. Candidates for accreditation that meet certain minimum criteria in terms of facilities and staffing are first granted an initial license to operate. They are then evaluated by the HEC one year prior to the graduation of the first student cohort. They may then receive a definitive operating permit, or be ordered to rectify shortcomings or suspend operations. Accreditation decisions are based on HEC site visits during which auditors review facilities and samples of student works, observe lectures, and assess the viability of institutional self-assessments. Final operating permits are granted for a set list of authorized degree programs. If HEIs want to offer additional programs, they need to apply again and enter into an additional agreement with the HEC. A list of accredited programs is available on the HEC's website. [HEADING] University Admissions Admission into university programs requires at least the Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education with two passes in principal subjects plus demonstrated competency in English (the Advanced Certificate of Technical Secondary Education may also be accepted). Beyond that, requirements vary by institution and program. Admission to UR requires applicants to have passing scores on the general paper and two or more principal passes in major-related subjects with a total of 18 points for arts and social science programs, and 24 points for science, technology, and medical programs. All applicants must also pass an English language proficiency exam. [HEADING] Credit System and Grading Scale Rwanda has in recent years adopted several standardization measures to facilitate the transfer of credits between institutions and the intraregional recognition of academic qualifications within the EAC. In 2008, it introduced a credit system called Credit Accumulation and Modular Scheme (CAMS) that is modeled after the European ECTS credit system, although it uses different credit units. CAMS defines one year of study as 120 credits, which means that a

four-year bachelor's degree requires the completion of 480 credits. This system is identical to the East African Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (EACAT) developed for use throughout the EAC . Per official HEC guidelines , academic programs should comprise study modules of 10, 15, or 20 credit units, although some variations are permitted. One credit represents 10 hours of notional learning time. Grading scales in Rwanda are not standardized across the board. Several HEIs, including UR, use the scale shown below, but older French-style 0-20 grading scales are also used by private institutions. Degrees may be awarded with a British-style degree classification.

[HEADING] The Tertiary Degree Structure Rwanda in 2007 adopted a qualifications framework for higher education that benchmarks academic qualifications at seven levels. However, while this framework is still in use, it should be noted that there are plans to integrate different frameworks in the TVET and higher education sectors into a new, unified National Qualifications Framework . Older French credential names like the *Diplôme de Licence* or *Diplôme d'Ingénieur* are no longer in use.

[HEADING] Certificate, Diploma, and Advanced Diploma A number of private HEIs offer post-secondary short-term certificate programs and accredited diploma and advanced diploma programs of two- and three-year duration. UR offers a few three-year Advanced Diploma programs in nursing and allied health fields, as well as two-year diploma programs in education. In addition, the HEC defines certificate and diploma qualifications as exit qualifications in incomplete bachelor's programs rather than distinct study programs. Students who complete one year of study (120 credits) before dropping out may receive a Certificate of Higher Education, whereas students who complete two or two and a half years of study may be awarded a Diploma in Higher Education or an Advanced Diploma in Higher Education, respectively.

[HEADING] Bachelor's Degree There are two main types of bachelor's degrees in standard academic disciplines in Rwanda: three-year ordinary degrees (360 credits) and four-year honors degrees (480 credits). The modules of these programs are generally completed sequentially from level one to four, representing each of the four years of study. Programs are usually specialized with few general education requirements, except for English and computer skills. Honors programs may require a project in the final year. There are some shortened "academic upgrade" programs available in fields like nursing that allow students to complete a bachelor's degree in two years based on a diploma qualification. In terms of subject specializations, official HEC guidelines provide for single-subject honors programs, programs that combine a major subject with a minor subject, and triple-minor programs (the specific credit requirements for majors and minors in these subject combinations are detailed in the HEC guidelines). Degree names include the Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts, but some certificates simply indicate the name as "Bachelor's Degree."

[HEADING] Medical and Dental Education Medical education in Rwanda has evolved only slowly, and the country continues to suffer from doctor shortages. There were 1,176 general physicians and 495 specialists in Rwanda in 2016—a ratio of one physician for every 12,000 people . Dental education, in particular, is still embryonic; the first batch of dental students in Rwanda did not graduate before 2018. There were reportedly 40 registered dentists in the country as of 2018 , so that some dental students themselves had never experienced a dental office visit before they took up studies. Until the early 2010s, all medical training took place at the National University and outside the country in Europe . Today, it is provided by UR and a small handful of private institutions. Since 2013, medical and dental education is regulated by the Rwanda Medical and Dental Council . Entry-to-practice qualifications in medicine and dentistry are earned after long five-year bachelor programs pegged at level 5 of the qualifications framework. The final credentials are called Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (Honors) and Bachelor of Dental Surgery (Honors). The curriculum includes an initial period of pre-medical studies followed by clinical studies. To become licensed, candidates must also complete a mandatory one-year rotating clinical internship and pass a qualifying exam . Graduate medical education takes four additional years of training and concludes with the award of a Master of Medicine in a medical specialty.

[HEADING] Master's, Postgraduate Certificate, and Postgraduate Diploma Master's programs are between one and two years in length. Admission requirements include an honors bachelor's degree with high grades (second-class honors, upper division), as well as good English skills. Programs commonly require coursework and the preparation of a thesis, but coursework-only and research-only master's programs also exist. Common credentials awarded include the Master of Arts, Master of Science, or Master of Business Administration. Shorter postgraduate programs lead to the Postgraduate Certificate (60 credits) and the Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits). Master's and other graduate programs are only offered by a limited number of HEIs.

[HEADING] Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) As in the case of medical

training, advanced research education in Rwanda is still nascent. UR did not begin to offer PhD programs until 2014, and it is presently the only university in the country that provides this type of education. Admission requires a master's degree; programs involve at least three years of research and the defense of a dissertation. [HEADING] Teacher Education Rwanda has a tremendous need for qualified teachers, especially following the switch to English as the language of instruction and the introduction of free basic education up to grade 12. To improve teacher training standards and develop capacity, the government established the Rwanda Teacher Service Commission in 2008, and is currently seeking to establish a formal licensing process for teachers. However, despite allocating substantial resources to teacher training, the system remains plagued by shortages. There were 5,000 open vacancies for schoolteachers in 2019—a gap the government sought to close by recruiting teachers from Kenya and other countries. Domestic students are incentivized with tuition-free programs to enroll in teacher training programs. Teacher training is provided by 16 public teacher training colleges and—since the merger and incorporation of the former Kigali Institute of Education—the newly established University of Rwanda College of Education. Elementary school teachers can teach with an A2 level certificate in primary education—a secondary level credential earned after three years of study at a teacher training college following the O Level exams (9+3). Lower-secondary teachers, by comparison, must have a Diploma in Education (level A1)—a credential earned after two years of post-secondary study (12+2) that prepares students to teach two subjects. Upper-secondary school teachers must have a four-year bachelor's degree in education from UR. Like the diploma, the bachelor's degree prepares students to teach two subjects. Holders of bachelor's degrees in other disciplines may obtain an upper-secondary teaching qualification by earning a Postgraduate Diploma in Education—a one-year in-service program. UR Master of Education degrees may also qualify holders to teach, depending on the program. [HEADING] WES Documentation Requirements [HEADING] Secondary Education Photocopy of the graduation certificate or diploma (for example, Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education, Certificate of Technical Secondary Education) submitted by the applicant Final Examination Results—sent directly by the Rwanda Board of Education or other applicable body, For U.S. applications: Word-for-word translations of all documents not issued in English Photocopy of the graduation certificate or diploma (for example, Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education, Certificate of Technical Secondary Education) submitted by the applicant Final Examination Results—sent directly by the Rwanda Board of Education or other applicable body, For U.S. applications: Word-for-word translations of all documents not issued in English [HEADING] Higher Education Degree certificate—submitted by the applicant Academic transcript—sent directly by the institution attended For completed doctoral programs—a written statement confirming the award of the degree sent by the institution attended For U.S. applications: Word-for-word translations of all documents not issued in English Degree certificate—submitted by the applicant Academic transcript—sent directly by the institution attended For completed doctoral programs—a written statement confirming the award of the degree sent by the institution attended [HEADING] Sample Documents Click here for a PDF file of the academic documents referred to below. Rwanda Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education National Advanced Certificate of Technical Secondary Education (A2) Advanced Diploma (Polytechnic) Bachelor of Science (Honors) Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery Master of Science Rwanda Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education National Advanced Certificate of Technical Secondary Education (A2) Advanced Diploma (Polytechnic) Bachelor of Science (Honors) Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery Master of Science 1. When comparing international student numbers, it is important to note that numbers provided by different agencies and governments vary because of differences in data capture methodology, definitions of “international student,” and types of mobility captured (credit, degree, and so on). The data of the UNESCO Institute Statistics provide a good point of reference for comparison since they are compiled according to one standard method. It should be pointed out, however, that the data only include students enrolled in tertiary degree programs. They do not include students on shorter study abroad exchanges, or those enrolled at the secondary level or in short-term language training programs, for instance. 2. According to national statistics the GER is slightly higher at 8 percent in 2017/18. The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of World Education Services (WES).