Every individual within the Sultanate’s territory is entitled by law to have access to education. Oman commits to meet the quality education criteria and seeks continuously to plan and conduct educational projects that take into consideration the economic, social, scientific and technological development and then adapt these developments to its national educational philosophy, goals and policies.

**Rules and Regulations:**

- The Basic Statute of the State: Regulations regarding the organization and dissemination of education (cultural principles – chapter 2 – article 13) state that: education is one of the corner stones for the development of the country. The country strives to disseminate education among people, offer it for free, combat illiteracy and build schools, institutions, colleges and universities under the supervision of the government and in accordance with the law.

- Future Vision for Oman’s Economy (Oman 2020): Disseminate, encourage and care for knowledge and education development by finding the appropriate environment, give priority to the basic education and enable it to everyone through an efficient system that provides opportunities for both citizens and residents.

**School Infrastructure:**

The increasing number of school age group within the population has encouraged the Ministry of Education (MOE) to build more and more schools. Today, the number of government schools has reached 1037 school (2011/2012). Those changes also urged the ministry to take several measures aimed at improving
school buildings and educational services. Among these measures are the following:

- **Eliminating double shift schools (Morning/ Evening):** the number of schools following this system has been minimized to only 4.7% of total government schools (2011/2012).
- **Replacing old buildings:** the demolition process is done upon the approval of specialized committees.
- **Bringing education to people:** building schools for communities far away from existing schools while taking into account several considerations such as: the number of students in those communities and their ages, quality of roads leading to the exciting schools (paved / unpaved) and the status of those existing schools after building new schools to serve their current students.
- **Allocation of separate buildings for separate cycles/levels:** first cycle (grades 1 to 4), second cycle (grades 5 to 10) and third cycle (grades 11 and 12).

Regarding the building, the Ministry of Education provides all required in-school facilities including: classrooms, teachers rooms, management rooms (*Principle, Principle assistant, School coordinator, social specialist, psychologist, school activities specialist, finance and administration coordinator, database expert*), Multi-purpose hall, computer labs, science labs, learning resources center, vocational guidance office, activities rooms, health visitor room, server room, meeting hall, stores, canteen, playgrounds, toilets (*for students, teachers and special needs students*) and an assembly yard with a sunshade.

In terms of services, besides being free of charge, Oman government schools also offer free transportation for students, provide various in-class learning facilities according to curricula requirements, and supply the learning resource center with the required educational tools.
**Students per class (SPC)**

The maximum number of students per class in the first cycle of basic education (grades 1-4) is 30 students. It goes up to 35 students for the second and third cycles. The same arrangement was recently applied to general education schools as well, marking a change in the average number of students per class through the years, as it gradually dropped from 76.3% in 1970 to 33.4% in 1990 to 32.4% in 2000 and finally reached 26.4% in the current academic year (2011-2012). The following table displays the average class density according to the type of education and cycle in the academic year 2010/2011:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type/ Grades or Cycles</th>
<th>SPC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Education (grades 1-10)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education (grades 1-6)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education (grades 7-9)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades (10-12)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, General Education system is being gradually substituted with the Basic Education system. In the academic year 2010/2011, students enrolled in basic education system have reached 81.4% in comparison with students in the General education system who are only 18.6% of the total number of students, making basic education classes dominant by 80%.

**Student/Teacher ratio**

The Ministry had gradually lowered the student/teacher ratio from 1970 until now by employing the growing qualified Omani cadres. The ratio has dropped down from 35.4% in 1970 to 23.5% in 1990 to 21.0% in 2000 to 11.9% in 2010/2011 then finally reached 10.0% in the current academic year 2011/2012. The table below displays the student/teacher ratio according to the educational type/grade in the academic year 2010/2011:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type/ Grades</th>
<th>Student/Teacher ratio (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Education (grades 1-10)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education (grades 1-6)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education (grades 7-9)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades (10-12)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teachers’ academic qualifications**

- The Ministry coordinates with both Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) to set the criteria of a qualified Omani teacher. MOE also provides senior university students with in-school training to further qualify them.

- When the Education development process started in Oman in 1970, there was a demanding need to hire teachers as soon as possible. Therefore, in 1972 for example, 50% of the Omani teachers had less than high school certificates and only 8% were university graduates. Today, however, teachers with university degrees of bachelors, high diploma, masters and doctorate have reached 88.3% and the remaining 11.7% carry a diploma from the Teachers Training College (a two years diploma taken after high school certificate). The table below displays the teachers distribution according to their certificates (2010/2011):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certificate</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diploma after high schools certificate</td>
<td>11.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>81.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Diploma</td>
<td>5.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The Ministry has further qualified the teachers by encouraging them to obtain higher certificates. For instance, English teachers carrying a diploma
from the Teachers Training College were given the opportunity to pursue higher university degrees in coordination with the University of Leeds in UK.

• Since 1997, the teachers are required by law to have a university certificate in the field of education or a university certificate plus education diploma.

Professional development for teachers

Professional development for employees in general and teachers in particular is essential in the educational process in Oman. The teachers’ role is vital for they translate the philosophy and goals of MOE into reality through their knowledge, skills and educational experience.

Therefore, within the framework of the educational improvement process and the growing understanding of the importance of training and qualification enhancement, the ministry has established extensive training programs which aimed at all kinds of employees within the ministry. It also provided university level opportunities that ranged from bachelor degrees to PHDs both in and out of Oman.

To achieve the desired quality improvement, MOE will:

1. Enhance the efficiencies of the administrative and technical personnel in the education training centers in each governorate.
2. Provide education training centers in the governorates with professional academic and vocational human resources.
3. Equip the education training centers with the required modern materials and tools.
4. Benefit from local, Arab and international education experiences through forums and other training programs.
5. Promote professional development in education training centers and schools as well for schools are also considered centers for professional development.
6. Establish a professional and effective information technology system for quality management whether centralized or decentralized through the application of e-training and a training management system in the educational portal.

7. Measurement and diversity are essential in quality. New teachers are assessed for their educational skills and then a training program is designed to qualify them.

8. Involve of all employees in the field of education in order to come up with the needed programs and include them in the professional development plan.

9. Set training programs terms and conditions and formulate appropriate related forms.

The training programs included three levels: central, local and in-school training. Teachers were given the largest share of central and local training as their training takes 70% of the ministry’s training plan with 45% of the budget allocated to their professional development. The Ministry also planned for schools to be a center of professional development. It has allocated 779,220 US$ that are distributed as 1,298US$ for each school to plan in-school training programs during the academic year.

**Among the professional development projects allocated for teachers:**

- Video training for teachers
- Procedural Educational Research training program
- Intel Education Initiative
- Information and communication technology in education
- Cambridge International Diploma for Teachers
- IC3 and internet training program for civil services employees
- Distance training project
- Summer Education Forum for educators in Dhofar Governorate
- Spring Board program for ladies.
Other professional development initiatives included: expanding the participation of teachers in forums, conferences and seminars in and out of the Sultanate, increasing the number of training centers and issuing publications and periodicals concerned with education issues and updates.

**Teaching and learning processes**

**Teaching criteria:** the methods and techniques used to develop students’ education attainment. These criteria are represented as follows:

**First:** Quality of teaching and learning

Measured by the following indicators:

- Clarity and effectiveness of the lesson plan
- Content accuracy
- Classroom management effectiveness
- Time investment
- Employment of learning resources
- Records management and activation

**Second:** Meeting learning needs

Measured by the following indicators:

- Diversity of teaching methods for effective learning
- Motivation strategies
- Consideration of individual needs
- Teaching students to be self-educated

**Third:** Evaluation effectiveness

- Effectiveness and diversity of evaluation methods
- Activation of students work to promote their learning process
- Providing feedback that commensurate with the students different levels
• Employment of continuous formative assessment

**Fourth**: Teacher self-development

Measured by the following indicators:

- Objectivity
- Strengths and weaknesses
- Performance quality in a specific subject
- Professional development plan
- In-class performance and diversity of teaching methods
- Self-development through conducting research, preparing reports, undertaking developmental projects and updating knowledge

**Fifth**: Senior teacher effectiveness

Measured by the following indicators:

- Assessment of the training needs of fellow teachers and providing them with the necessary tools to fulfill those needs
- Diversity in supervision methods in class visits
- Contribution to curriculum development
- Participation in professional development programs
- Assessment of same subject teachers performances
**Learning criteria**: learning means acquiring knowledge and skills, applying them and forming positive attitudes and behaviors towards them. These criteria are represented as follows:

**First**: Student attainment and understanding of new knowledge and skills

Measured by the following indicators:

- Attainment of knowledge and skills
- Employment of skills and positive behaviors
- Attainment and employment of positive leanings

**Second**: Student Employment of knowledge and skills

Measured by the following indicators:

- Student analysis of knowledge and skills in educational situations
- Student application of knowledge and skills in various educational activities
- The Linking between the knowledge and skills acquired
- Students expressing their opinion about knowledge acquired

**Third**: Student acquiring positive values and learnings:

Measured by the following indicators:

- Possession of positive ethics
- Positive teacher-student relationship
- Student team work ethics
- Involvement in the subject activities
- Demonstration of enthusiasm and efficiency
- Quality of student work
- Student self-learning
School management: school management is a group of administrative processes performed by the administrative and technical cadres who include: principle, principle assistant, senior teachers, schools coordinator, social specialist and other faculty members who all contribute in the improvement of the school performance in all spheres.

The management is measured by the following criteria:

First: Activation of school planning

Measured by the following indicators:

- Involving all school faculty members in planning
- Having a vision and a message that inspires the faculty to work in the school
- Planning professional development according to the faculty needs
- Clear goals regarding the school performance
- Effective methods to achieve those goals
- Setting clear standards for performance in the school plan

Second: The organization of the administrative work (authorization / building / regulations / school records and files).

Measured by the following indicators:

- Delegation of powers as appropriate
- Employment of school facilities
- Activation of school systems and regulations
- Activation of school records and files
- Involvement in the coordination of the school work
**Third:** Supervising learning and teaching

Measured by the following indicators:

1. Following various supervisory methods such as class visits and meetings
2. Implementing professional development programs that are in accordance with actual needs and are characterized by diversity and quality.
3. Monitoring of training impact
4. Supervising the activation of learning resources
5. Creating an appropriate learning environment.
6. Analyzing students assessment results and using them as a reference when organizing the school plan.

**Fourth:** Student care

Measured by the following indicators:

1. Monitoring attendance records in accordance with policy
2. Developing positive trends and treating negative trends
3. Providing various learning opportunities such as school activities and specialized groups.
4. Health care in schools in particular and community in general
5. Focusing on unique individuals (talented, excellent, slow, with special needs)

**Fifth:** Strengthen relationships with parents and local community institutions

Measured by the following indicators:

1. Constant communication with parents
2. Comprehensive feedback for parents on students’ performance
3. Support PTA
4. Involvement of parents and community organizations in order to enrich the student’s learning process.
5. Offer social services for communities
Sixth: School management self-development

Measured by the following indicators:

1. Keeping up with modern developments in school management
2. Continues self-development
3. Clear efforts and contributions within the school
4. Objectivity in evaluating the performance of the administration faculty
5. Acceptance of guidance by concerned authorities

Seventh: Development of organizational values

Measured by the following indicators:

1. Ensuring cooperative relationship within the school community
2. Encouraging team work
3. Encouraging creativity and innovation
4. Motivating employees for quality performance
5. Promoting performance efficiency

* Content Standards Curriculum:

1. Enhancing Islamic and national privacy for Omani society.
2. Taking into account the requirements and capabilities of the age level of students.
3. Focusing on the learner as a centered approach in the learning process.
4. Diversifying the presenting methods of the curriculum content.
5. Linking the Omani learner with the surrounding environment for positive interaction.
6. Providing self-learning opportunities for learners.
7. Acquiring the learners to use high-level thinking skills to solve problems.
8. Acquiring the learners to use the modern education technology.
9. Enhancing the principles among the learners that encourage them to communicate with the others, and take positive advantage of the surrounding world.

**Education assessment system (assessing students and activating learning results)**

Educational Evaluation is an important component in the teaching-learning process through which the principle of ensuring that the proficiency in the learning process is achieved. This is done by addressing students weaknesses, promoting their strengths, improving their performance and highlighting their talents and their creativity. Moreover, the principle of “the learner is the center of the teaching-learning process” should be activated.

In this context, since the academic year 1998-1999, the Ministry had applied the continuous evaluation system that consists of formative evaluation and final evaluation.

This evaluation method is designed to get comprehensive results that aim at improving the students educational needs. Each student from grade 1 to 12 have an evaluation form for each subject. These forms contain the continues evaluation tools that the teacher use to evaluate students. The form also include a table that shows the exams specifications and transfer and repeats of all classes, to be used as a reference for teachers and concerned education authorities.

Grade distribution in each level is as follows:

**Grades (1-4)**

- Continuous formative assessment (100% for all subjects)
**Grades (5-9)**

- Continuous assessment (using various assessment tools) by 60%
- Finals by 40% (Governorate level)

**Grades 10 and 11**

- Continuous assessment (using various assessment tools) by 30%
- Finals by 70% (Ministry level)

**Grading System**

1. Beside the student assessment form, there are other assessment tools such as oral assessments, projects, quizzes, daily observation, practical tests, reports and many other.

2. Students in grades 1 to 4 are continuously assessed through the year. The schools send to the parent three descriptive reports through the year and one performance report by the end of the year. The performance report will display grades in numbers only for each element and in letters for the overall performance on the subject.

3. Regarding grades 5 to 10, two descriptive reports are prepared in the middle of the first term and again in the middle of the second term. Moreover, a final performance report is prepared by the end of the first term and by the end of the year. The report will display grades in numbers and in letters for the overall performance on the subject.

4. Students in grades 11 and 12 are graded by the end of each term by calculating their grades appearing in all assessment tools. By the end of the
The final grade is calculated as the average of the grades in both terms.

5. Appropriate improvement plans are placed for students who do not achieve the desired level of performance in their studies during the academic year. These plans will be linked to the outputs of the learning material.

6. Follow-up treatment plans designed for students moving from fourth grade and applied by teachers of the second level (starting from grade 5).

7. The maximum pass mark of all the subjects in grades (1-12) is 100 while the minimum pass mark is 50.

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**International Studies Program**

*International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) & Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)*

Oman’s educational system has been witnessing continuous developments. It started the development process by applying the basic education system (1997/1998) and went from there to further developments such as developing post basic education, evaluation systems and curricula. This vast development in the educational system has necessitated a neutral evaluation. The evaluation aimed at finding whether educational outputs are meeting the expectations.
The subjects of math and science are among the subjects that experienced rapid development and fundamental changes in terms of scope, sequence of learning and teaching methods. Therefore, MOE found that it’s inevitable to use international evaluation standards to evaluate students’ performance on these subjects and contacted the International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievement to apply for TIMSS. This study is chosen for its Credibility, reliability and it’s a purely technical point of view. It will help the Ministry to compare student achievement in mathematics and science in the educational systems of different cultural, economic and social backgrounds. It will also help in training the national cadres of the participating countries conducting standard tests and collect data on the performance of students in grades four and eight. The Ministry has participated in the fifth conference of TIMSS(2011) as a follow-up to its participation in the fourth conference.

PIRLS was another study that Oman participated in. The study’s goals were to: 1- identify the level of achievement of fourth grade students in the Sultanate compared with other participating States and take the necessary steps to improve the process of teaching reading skills. 2- conduct a comparative study between the different educational areas and link them to different variables to be included in the results of tests and questionnaires done for the study.3- compare between the levels of students according to the Arabic language curricula of basic education curriculum, integrated curriculum and private schools curriculum.

PIRLS is going to last for five years, during which a reading skills international test will be conducted. The learner will be tested on ten texts: five literary and five informatics with 1000 words for each text. Results will be compared with those of students from other participating states. The test will focus on three areas: the understanding the material, the purpose of reading, the behaviors and reading trends of the targeted group.
Study on the evaluation of cycle one of basic education system:

Prepared by canadcom international institute- Toronto in cooperation with MOE in 2004 and the study includes reports, and information about the effectiveness of educational resources in basic education confers, equipment and learning for cycle one of basic education and an assessment of the financial aspects of basic education administrative practices in schools and in educational regions and the court of the Ministry and analysis of sts achievement Through assessment tools and tests, and Questionnaires.

Mechanisms and procedures used to collect information and promote the criteria used to ensure the quality of education:

- Student data and school buildings: data are collected through computerized programs within the Educational Portal such as the databases of the Department of Statistics and Indicators as well as the statistics teams that gather data through field visits to schools and provinces. For more details, please visit the education portal on www.moe.gove.om.
- Personnel, teachers and administrators data are obtained through the unified civil service program at the ministerial level in the Sultanate as well as the data in the portal.