



Free and compulsory education was established in 1870 and prospered until the early 20th century. After faltering for 50 years under military regimes, the education system began to expand again in 1953 when democracy was restored. The literacy rate is now about 89%. Education was aided by the influence of Horace Mann, which led to the continuing presence of teachers from the U.S., and by international organizations, such as Unesco, which conduct adult literacy programs. Rich with oil deposits and one of the founding members of OPEC in 1976, Venezuela enjoyed prosperity until world

oil prices collapsed. Public education is free at all levels and is considered a citizen's right. The government has not kept up with the great demand for education in a population of well over 20 million. The Education Minister reports directly to the President in a highly centralized system. Private institutions, even though they are self-supporting, must register with the Education Ministry, which determines their curricula. Until 1981, the law required six years of primary, compulsory education. This was then changed to nine years, with secondary education divided into two streams--academic (two

years) and technical/vocational (three years). About two-thirds of students choose the academic stream. Technical-vocational education is also available at postsecondary level at *institutos universitarios* and *colegios universitarios*. The six oldest universities which existed before 1958 have a higher status than the "experimental" universities (characterized by fewer faculties and an emphasis on vocational-technical education) and polytechnics founded in the 1970s and 1980s. There is also one open university, the *Universidad Nacional Abierta*, founded in 1977.

Credential Name

Entrance Requirement

Length of Program

Type of Program

Gives Access to

Level: *Educación Media Diversificada y Profesional (Diversified & Professional Secondary Education)* following 9 years of basic (compulsory) education

Bachillerato:

en humanidades

en ciencias

commercial

Técnico or Técnico Medio en (specialization)

Certificado de Educación Básica

2-3 years

academic/technical

further study

3 years

technical/vocational

further study

Level: *Educación Superior (Higher Education)*

Non-university

Título de Técnico Superior

*Título de Tecnólogo**

Bachillerato/Técnico

2-3 years

tech./prof.

further study

4-4.5 yrs.

academic/prof.

further study

University

Título de Técnico Superior

Licenciatura/Título Profesional

Abogado

Arquitecto

Ingeniero

Psicólogo

Doctor en Medicina

Diploma de Especialista

Maestría or Magister

Doctorado

Bachillerato/Técnico

Bachillerato/Técnico

Bachillerato/Técnico

Bachillerato/Técnico

Bachillerato/Técnico

Bachillerato/Técnico

Bachillerato/Técnico

Licenciatura/Título Profesional

Licenciatura/Título Profesional

Maestría/Magister or comparable study

replaced by the *título de ingeniero* (see above).

3 years

academic/prof.

further study

4-6 years

academic/prof.

further study

5 years

academic/prof.

further study

5-6 years

academic/prof.

further study

5 years

academic/prof.

further study

5 years

academic/prof.

further study

6 years

academic/prof.

further study

1 year

academic

further study

2 years + thesis

academic

further study

3 years + dissertation

academic

further study

*Since the 1970s it has been de-emphasized and replaced by the *título de ingeniero* (see above).