

AFGHANISTAN



(Last updated 2023)

Afghanistan is located in Central Asia, north and west of Pakistan, east of Iran, and south of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.

Capital: Kabul, 4,600 million (2021)

Official name: The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

State organization: In terms of the form of state, Afghanistan is an Islamic Republic; in terms of the form of government, it is a presidential republic. The Constitution has been suspended since 16 August 2021, the internationally recognized government is in exile and, after the complete withdrawal of US troops, the country is in the hands of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, established in 1996 by the Taliban group, which re-established its own government on 7 September 2021.



Currency: Afghani

Population: 38,346,720. Pashtun (42%); Tajik (27%); Hazara (9%); Uzbek (9%); Aimak (a Persian-speaking nomadic group) (4%); Turkmen (3%); and Baloch (2%).

Languages: The official languages are Dari (Afghan Persian) and Pashtu. Dari is spoken by 50 % of the population, and Pashtu is spoken as a first language by 35 %. Turkic languages (primarily Turkmen and Uzbek) are spoken by 11 % of the population. Many Afghans speak more than one language; Dari is the most common second language.

Religions: Islam (99%).

Sunnis make up 84% and Shiites account for 15% (mainly ethnic Hazara).

History and current situation:

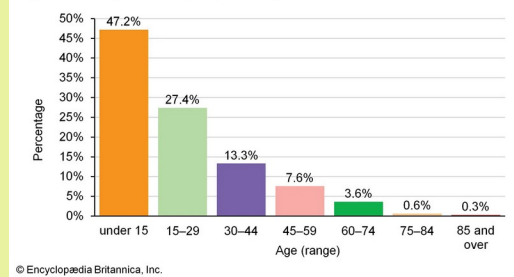
Archaeological evidence indicates that urban civilization began in the region occupied by modern Afghanistan between 3000 and 2000 B.C. The first historical documents date from the early part of the Iranian Achaemenian Dynasty, which controlled the region from 550 B.C. until 331 B.C. Between 330 and 327 B.C., Alexander the Great defeated the Achaemenian emperor Darius III and subdued local resistance in the territory that is now Afghanistan. Alexander's successors, the Seleucids, continued to infuse the region with Greek cultural influence. Shortly thereafter, the Mauryan Empire of India gained control of southern Afghanistan, bringing with it Buddhism. In the mid-third century B.C., nomadic Kushans established an empire that became a cultural and commercial center. From the end of the Kushan Empire in the third century A.D. until the seventh century, the region was fragmented and under the general protection of the Iranian Sassanian Empire. After defeating the Sassanians at the Battle of Qadisiya in 637, **Arab Muslims** began a 100-year process of conquering the Afghan tribes and introducing Islam. In 1220 all of Central Asia fell to the **Mongol** forces of Genghis Khan. Afghanistan remained fragmented until the 1380s, when **Timur** consolidated and expanded the existing Mongol Empire. Timur's descendants ruled Afghanistan until the early sixteenth century. **Babur**, a descendant of Tamerlane and founder of the Mughal Empire in the early 16th century, made Kabul the capital of an Afghan principality.

In 1504 the region fell under a new empire, the Mughals of northern India, who for the next two centuries contested Afghan territory with the Iranian Safavi Dynasty. With the death of the great Safavi leader Nadir Shah in 1747, indigenous **Pashtun**, who became known as the Durrani, began a period of at least nominal rule in Afghanistan that lasted until 1978. The first Durrani ruler, Ahmad Shah, known as the founder of the Afghan nation, united the Pashtun tribes and by 1760 built an empire extending to Delhi and the Arabian Sea. The empire fragmented after Ahmad Shah's death in 1772, was finally dissolved in 1826, giving way to the Emirate of Afghanistan and the Maratha Empire.

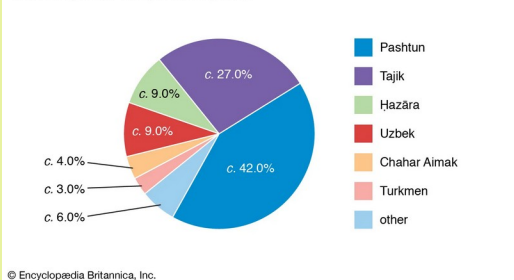
Dost Mohammad ruled at the beginning of **the Great Game**, a century-long contest for domination of Central Asia and Afghanistan **between Russia**, which was expanding to the south, **and Britain**, which was intent on protecting India. During this period, Afghan rulers were able to maintain virtual independence, although some compromises were necessary. In the **First Anglo-Afghan War** (1839–42), the British deposed Dost Mohammad, but they abandoned their Afghan garrisons in 1842. In the following decades, Russian forces approached the northern border of Afghanistan. In 1878 the British invaded and held most of Afghanistan in the **Second Anglo-Afghan War**.

In 1880 **Abdur Rahman**, a Durrani, began a 21-year reign that saw the balancing of British and Russian interests, the consolidation of the Afghan tribes, and the reorganization of civil administration into what is considered the modern Afghan state. During this period, the British secured the Durand Line (1893), dividing Afghanistan from British colonial territory to the southeast and sowing the seeds of future tensions over the division of the Pashtun tribes. Abdur Rahman's son Habibullah (ruled 1901–19) continued his father's administrative reforms and maintained Afghanistan's neutrality in World War I. In 1919, Afghanistan attacked British troops in India (the **third Anglo-Afghan war**). At the end of this brief conflict, Britain relinquished control over Afghan foreign policy by concluding the Treaty of Rawalpindi in August 1919. In memory of this event, Afghans celebrate their **Independence Day on 19 August**. In the interwar period, Afghanistan again was a

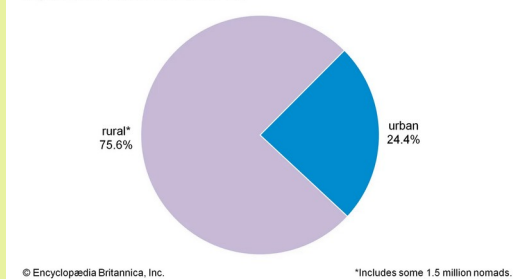
Afghanistan age breakdown (2020–21)



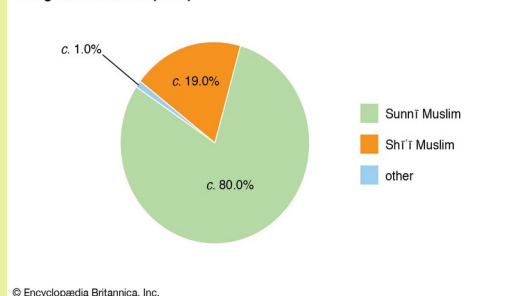
Ethnolinguistic composition (2004)



Afghanistan urban-rural (2019–20)



Religious affiliation (2009)

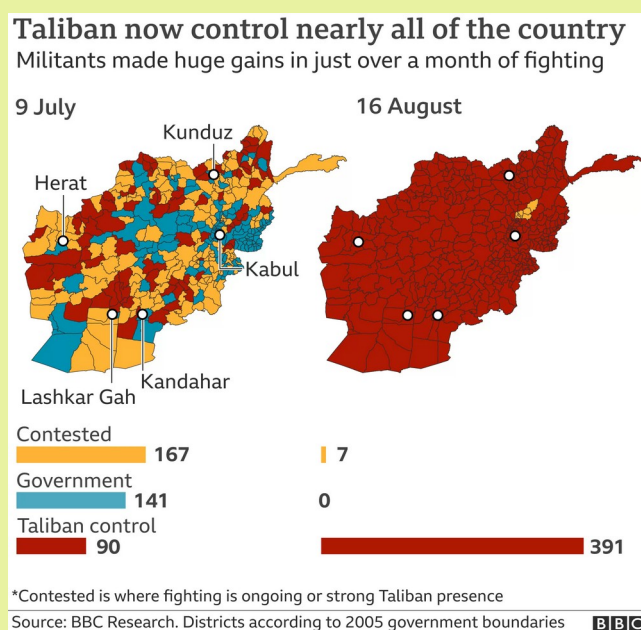


balancing point between two world powers; Habibullah's son Amanullah (ruled 1919–29) skillfully manipulated the new British-Soviet rivalry and established relations with major countries. Amanullah introduced his country's **first constitution in 1923**. However, resistance to his domestic reform program forced his abdication in 1929. In 1933 Amanullah's nephew Mohammad Zahir Shah, the last king of Afghanistan, began a 40-year reign. After World War II, in which Afghanistan remained neutral, the long-standing division of the Pashtun tribes caused tension with the neighboring state of Pakistan, founded on the other side of the Durand Line in 1948. In response, Afghanistan shifted its foreign policy toward the Soviet Union. A new constitution, ratified in 1964, liberalized somewhat the constitutional monarchy. However, in the ensuing decade economic and political conditions worsened. In 1973 Daoud overthrew the king and established a republic. When economic conditions did not improve and Daoud lost most of his political support, communist factions overthrew him in 1978. In 1979 the threat of tribal insurgency against the communist government triggered an invasion by 80,000 Soviet troops, who then endured a very effective decade-long guerrilla war. Between 1979 and 1989, two Soviet-sponsored regimes failed to defeat the loose federation of mujahideen guerrillas, supported by the US, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, that opposed the occupation. In 1988 the Soviet Union agreed to create a neutral Afghan state, and the last **Soviet troops left Afghanistan in 1989**. The agreement ended a war that killed thousands, devastated industry and agriculture, and created 5 to 6 million refugees.

The 1988 agreement did not settle differences between the government and the mujahideen. Among the leaders of the warring factions were Ahmad Shah Massoud, an ethnic Tajik; Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a Pashtun; and Abdul Rashid Dostum, an Uzbek. Despite several temporary alliances, struggles among the armed groups continued until one Islamic fundamentalist group, the **Taliban**, gained control of most of the country in 1996. The Taliban used an extremist interpretation of Islam to assert repressive control of society. The economy remained in ruins, and most government services ceased.

The Taliban granted al Qaeda the right to use Afghanistan as a base and after 9/11 rejected international pressure to surrender al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. When the United States and allies attacked Afghanistan in the fall of 2001, the Taliban government collapsed, but Taliban and al Qaeda leaders escaped. A United States–led International Security Assistance Force began the occupation.

In December 2001, Afghan leaders in exile signed the Bonn Agreement, forming an interim government, the Afghan Interim Administration, under the leadership of the Pashtun moderate Hamid **Karzai**. In 2002 Karzai was selected president of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, whose ruling council included disparate leaders of the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance. A new constitution was ratified in early 2004. In October 2004, an overwhelming popular vote elected Karzai president of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. However, regional warlords and large areas of Afghanistan remained beyond the control. Despite substantial international aid, the Afghan government, which included representatives from many factions, was unable to address numerous social and economic problems. The parliamentary elections of September 2005 gave regional warlords substantial power in both houses of the National Assembly, further jeopardizing Karzai's ability to unite the country. The resurgent Taliban intensified terrorist activities in areas beyond government control, particularly the southeastern provinces. In mid-2006, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces turned back a Taliban offensive aimed at Kandahar. However, beginning in 2007 the Taliban utilized safe havens in adjacent Pakistan to gradually restore and expand its control in Afghanistan. In early 2008, it controlled an estimated 10 percent of the country while the government controlled only an estimated 30 percent. Local tribes controlled the remaining territory. In 2012 President Hamid Karzai calls for American forces to leave Afghan villages and pull back to their bases after a U.S. soldier kills 16 Afghan civilians inside their homes. In 2013 The Afghan army takes over all military and security operations from NATO forces, then Obama announces timetable for significantly reducing U.S. troop sizes in Afghanistan by 2016.



Ashraf Ghani becomes president of Afghanistan in September 2014 after two rounds of voting, claims of election fraud and a power-sharing agreement with main rival Abdullah Abdullah.

NATO officially ends its combat mission in Afghanistan. In 2017 Trump commits to continued military involvement. In February 2019 U.S. and Taliban sign agreement on a peace deal that would serve as the preliminary terms for the **U.S. withdrawal from the country by May 2021**. In April 2021, the new US President Joe Biden announces his intention to carry out a total withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan by September. In June 2021, the Resolute Support mission ends for Italy with the return of the last Italian contingent from Afghanistan.

The withdrawal of the United States and coalition forces – and the subsequent **Taliban takeover of the country** – instigated large waves of displacement in Afghanistan, adding to the already-extensive displacement that existed in the country. Increased risks were notable for particular groups, including human rights activists, former employees or persons who had cooperated with the former government and western actors in the country, journalists and specific minority groups. As of December 2021, an estimated 3.4 million people were internally displaced and close to 6.5 million Afghans still lived as refugees in neighboring Iran and Pakistan, many of them without being registered or having a legal status.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Afghanistan:

The Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley represent the artistic and religious developments which from the 1st to the 13th centuries characterized ancient Bakhtria, integrating various cultural influences into the Gandhara school of Buddhist art. The area contains numerous Buddhist monastic ensembles and sanctuaries, as well as fortified edifices from the Islamic period. The site is also testimony to the tragic destruction by the Taliban of the two standing Buddha statues, which shook the world in March 2001.

Minaret and Archaeological Remains of Jam: the 65m-tall Minaret of Jam is a graceful, soaring structure, dating back to the 12th century. The innovative architecture and decoration of the Minaret of Jam played a significant role in the development of the arts and architecture of the Indian sub-continent and beyond.

The city of Herat, which is currently the regional capital of western Afghanistan, has long been of strategic, commercial and cultural significance to the wider region. Although the city has developed extensively in modern times, and has suffered the ravages of conflict, the site is unique in that it has largely retained its historical footprint, and many significant Islamic monuments have survived.

Daily life for **Afghan women** has changed radically. In the 1960s the wearing of a veil became voluntary, and women found employment in offices and shops; some women also received a university education. Until the conflict of the 1970s, the 20th Century had seen relatively steady progression for women's rights in the country. Afghan women were first eligible to vote in 1919 - only a year after women in the UK were given voting rights, and a year before the women in the United States were allowed to vote. In the 1950s purdah (gendered separation) was abolished; in the 1960s a new constitution brought equality to many areas of life, including political participation. But during coups and Soviet occupation in the 1970s, through civil conflict between Mujahideen groups and government forces in the '80s and '90s, and then under Taliban rule, women in Afghanistan had their rights increasingly rolled back. After the Taliban's capture of Kabul in 1996, authorities closed down girls' schools and forced women to give up employment in nearly all occupations. Strong penalties were applied against women who were not fully covered in the streets or who were found in the company of males unrelated to them. Afghan women's rights were a pretext for the US military occupation. After the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in August 2021, violence and discrimination against women and girls continues, women's education is suspended. In December 2022 a decree banned women from working in national and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), active since 1977: <http://www.rawa.org/index.php>

AFGHANISTAN MIGRATION

Since the fall of the Afghan government on 15 August 2021, several EU Member States and non-state actors have advocated EU initiatives to support Afghan citizens at risk. In addition to making the necessary arrangements to evacuate European citizens from Afghan territory on military flights, joint efforts were made to evacuate a number of Afghan nationals and their families. Thousands of Afghans who had worked with Western forces in various ways during the period between 2001 and 2021 wanted to flee abroad, fearing for their safety. Since the beginning of 2021, some 550 000 Afghans have been internally displaced, while 2.9 million Afghans were already internally displaced by the end of 2020. Moreover, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) – the UN refugee agency – has projected that half a million Afghans may seek to leave the country by the end of 2021, while it is estimated that 90 % of Afghan refugees outside the country live in neighboring Iran and Pakistan. Both countries also host large numbers of Afghans who migrated in search of better economic opportunities.

Evacuation: In a joint statement published by the US Department of State on 15 August 2021, more than 100 countries pledged to accept Afghans fleeing Afghanistan after the US military withdrawal from the country. The statement called for 'all parties to respect and facilitate the safe and orderly departure of foreign nationals and Afghans who wish to leave the country'. In several cases, evacuees were transferred to temporary transit centers, either to the US or to joint military bases in Germany, Spain, Italy, Kuwait and Qatar for facilitated processing. The EU's response to the challenges arising from the situation in Afghanistan focused on evacuating EU citizens and Afghan nationals, while work is still under way to determine solutions for people at risk in Afghanistan. To support evacuation efforts in Afghanistan, the EU put in place a dedicated crisis cell for the period between 15 and 30 August 2021. The crisis cell consisted of 100 staff from the EU institutions and a support team in Kabul, which also included three military officers from the EU military staff. During this period, the crisis cell assisted with the overall evacuation of more than 17 500 people from Kabul, including an estimated 4 100 EU nationals and 13 400 Afghan nationals. According to the European Commission, the EU and its Member States swiftly evacuated all staff from Afghanistan, while EU Member States together evacuated a total of 22 000 Afghans. Evacuations comprised EU citizens and Afghan nationals, military staff, diplomatic staff, and staff locally employed by EU embassies and military missions, including their families. Close to 520 EU local staff were evacuated from Kabul, including 430 local staff together with their relatives, and 75 contractors at risk. Belgian, German, French and Italian contingents supported the extraction and evacuation of EU personnel. Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands also supported transfers through Islamabad (Pakistan). Spain set up a processing camp for newly arrived Afghans in Madrid. Evacuated Afghans were to remain in this camp for a maximum of 72 hours before either applying for asylum in Spain or relocating to another EU country. An EEAS team has also been deployed to Torrejón Air Base in Spain to help with the resettlement of Afghan local staff working with the EU.

Latest EU developments: EU Member States are already hosting Afghans: almost 300 000 Afghan nationals have residence permits and live in Europe. The Justice and Home Affairs Council of 31 August 2021 concluded that EU Member States could provide support in the form of resettlement on a voluntary basis, while prioritizing vulnerable people, such as women and children. At the same time, the Council called for greater cooperation with neighboring and transit countries in areas that have been hosting increased numbers of migrants and refugees, with a view to reinforcing their capacity to provide refugees and host communities with protection, dignified and safe reception conditions, and sustainable livelihoods. Some EU Member States have committed to accept refugees from Afghanistan, but without a pledge regarding their number, as the pledging exercise for the coming year is still ongoing. Ireland, for instance, has announced that it has granted 150 Afghans places in the country's refugee protection programme, while Germany and France have announced that some Afghan refugees in need of protection will be accepted, without however giving a specific number. Some Member States, including Czechia, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Austria and Poland, have however stated that they will not be accepting additional refugees from Afghanistan. Furthermore, most EU Member States have not yet put forward plans detailing how they intend to facilitate refugee access to the EU through safe and legal pathways. Germany is said to have stated that Afghan citizens in need of protection would not need to apply for asylum to enter Germany, but would be treated in the same way as German government agencies' local staff and be issued a three-year residence permit. At the same time, as the situation in

More than **5.7 million** Afghans and host communities in 5 neighboring countries in need of support.

28 million people expected to need humanitarian assistance in 2023.

1.1 million children under 5 years old are acutely malnourished and need medical treatment.

More than **6.5 million** Afghans live in Iran and Pakistan.

UNHCR support:

<https://help.unhcr.org/afghanistan/>

Support in Afghanistan:

<https://help.unhcr.org/afghanistan/support/>

Relocation Programmes:

<https://help.unhcr.org/afghanistan/relocation/>

Family Reunification:

<https://help.unhcr.org/afghanistan/family-reunification/>

For more information on country-specific criteria and how to apply, please go to the Family Reunification sections of the relevant country page:

<https://help.unhcr.org/>

EASO Country of origin information reports:

September 2021, Afghanistan Security situation update:

<https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/>

[2021_09_EASO_COI_Report_Afghanistan_Security_situation_update.pdf](https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/publication/5a971f2e-02c8-11eb-8919-01aa75ed71a1)

August 2020, Afghanistan key socio-economic indicators, focus on Kabul City, Mazar-e Sharif and Herat City:

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/5a971f2e-02c8-11eb-8919-01aa75ed71a1>

Afghanistan: individuals targeted under societal and legal norms:

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/350ca8b8-2029-11e8-ac73-01aa75ed71a1>

Afghanistan remains uncertain, certain EU Member States, including Germany, France and the Netherlands have announced the suspension of decisions on returns of Afghan nationals to Afghanistan.

European Parliament position: In a September 2021 resolution on the situation in Afghanistan, Parliament called on the EU and its Member States to cooperate on the evacuation of EU citizens and Afghans at risk, and establish humanitarian corridors for Afghan refugees seeking protection in neighboring countries. The resolution stressed that the European asylum and migration policy should focus on resettling those most at risk and most vulnerable, while it called for more humanitarian aid and a special visa programme for Afghan women seeking protection from the Taliban regime. Moreover, the resolution called once again on the Commission to present a legislative proposal for humanitarian visas, and on Member States to share responsibility fairly for offering protection.

Afghan refugees in Europe:

According to the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), since 2014, Afghans have been among the three largest groups of asylum-seekers and refugees in the EU+ countries (i.e. EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland). Approximately 46 300 applications for international protection were lodged in the EU+ in June 2021. Applications submitted by Afghan nationals increased for the fifth consecutive month, to about 7 300 in July, which accounted for 15 % of the total asylum applications submitted in the EU+. This was the highest number of applications by Afghans since October 2016, exceeding pre-pandemic levels. A further 123 000 Afghan asylum-seekers

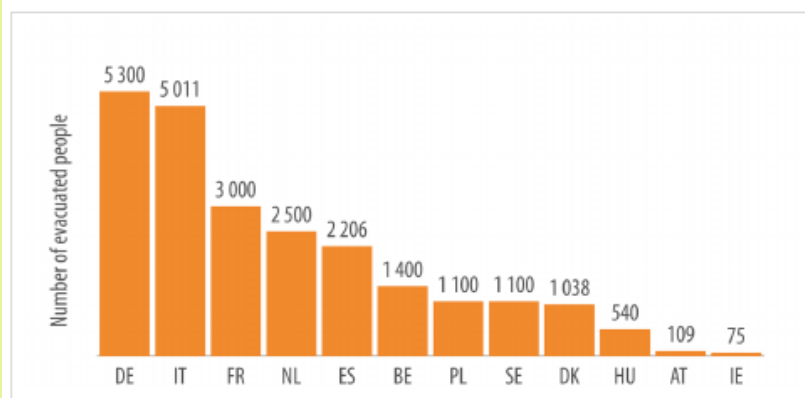
have arrived in Europe since August 2021. Half of them have obtained either humanitarian or statutory protection in Europe as refugees under the Geneva Convention. During June 2021, EU+ asylum authorities issued at least 36 900 first instance decisions, slightly more than in May, but were outpaced by the increase in applications. A third of all decisions were issued to Syrians, Afghans and Pakistanis. Overall, Afghan refugees had a recognition rate of 62 % in the EU in the first quarter of 2021. The majority of Afghan refugees are hosted by neighbouring countries Pakistan and Iran, followed by Germany, which was hosting 5.5 % of Afghan refugees at the end of 2020. The population of Afghan nationals on EU territory is not evenly distributed among Member States. In addition to Germany, France, Austria and Sweden are also hosting large numbers of Afghan refugees. The Afghans who were granted legal status in the EU during the first months of 2021 arrived mainly in Germany, Greece, France and Italy. Between January and July 2021, the majority (45 %) of refugees and migrants arriving in Greece by sea were from Afghanistan.

More than one year since the Taliban takeover of the country, and even though the majority of Afghan refugees are being hosted in the neighbouring countries, the efforts of European governments to provide protection in Europe have been too little and have come too late. Instead, efforts have been made to prevent Afghans from arriving in Europe and to reduce protection for Afghan asylum seekers despite their growing protection needs. Afghan asylum seekers are highly impacted by violence at the borders, pushbacks, and use of the ‘safe third country clause’. DRC’s PRAB initiative collected 1,911 cases of pushbacks at the EU’s borders; more than half of them were reported to be Afghan asylum seekers. Barriers also persist for those who are able to access the territory and request asylum as several European governments suspended the examination of Afghan asylum applications in August 2021. The number of pending cases concerning Afghan asylum seekers significantly increased to nearly 100,000 applications in April, as Eurostat data show. The overall first-instance recognition rates for Afghan asylum seekers keep falling in Europe, from 73% in April to 53% in May, according to the European Union Asylum Agency’s (EUAA) statistics, with the recognition rate greatly varying from one Member State (MS) to another MS without any credible reason for the differences to be discerned from the nature of the cases. Shortly after Afghanistan’s collapse, the EU and its MS promised to continue evacuating their local staff and Afghans at risk; however, since then, too little effort has been made to evacuate them to Europe. With some exceptions, the majority of MS have now stopped the evacuation of their local staff and Afghans at risk. Whereas the EU’s MS committed to admitting 36,000 Afghans at risk through humanitarian admissions between 2021 and 2022, as of April 2022, only 28,700 of these places had been filled with the majority to Germany, mostly through evacuations surrendering the events in August 2021, including former local staff.

Thousands of local staff and Afghans are at risk are either stuck in Afghanistan or living in a precarious situation in the neighboring countries. In the European countries where evacuation and humanitarian admission programmes continue, the evacuation process is very slow and non-transparent, with many bureaucratic obstacles remaining for Afghans to access

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Figure 1 – Number of people evacuated from Afghanistan



Data source: official national communications or media, BE (Belgium), DK (Denmark), DE (Germany), IE (Ireland), ES (Spain), FR (France), IT (Italy), HU (Hungary), NL (Netherlands), AT (Austria), PL (Poland), SE (Sweden).

these pathways and several schemes promised but not operating at scale yet. Moreover, the Taliban are not always cooperative in allowing people to cross the border. Recently Der Spiegel reported that the Taliban are blocking efforts by the German government to evacuate their former local staff and others at risk. (source: ECRE)

Humanitarian corridors to Italy

'Italian plan for the Afghan people': a memorandum of understanding for the implementation of humanitarian corridors to Afghanistan was signed on Thursday, 4 November 2021, in Rome (https://www.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/2021-11/protocollo_corridoi.pdf). The aim of the protocol is to promote the opening of a legal entry channel for Afghan citizens in need of international protection through the activation of humanitarian corridors from neighboring countries, starting with Pakistan and Iran.

The document represents the synthesis of work coordinated by the Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration in which representatives of the MAECI, the Italian Bishops' Conference, the Community of Sant'Egidio, the Federation of Evangelical Churches, the Tavola Valdese, ARCI, INMP, IOM, UNHCR.

The protocol involves a total of 1,200 migrants; Caritas will take charge of their reception for 300, the Community of Sant'Egidio for 200, the Tavola Valdese for 200, ARCI for 100, and the Ministry of the Interior for the remaining 400 migrants.

In 2022, more humanitarian corridors were activated for Afghan nationals leaving Iran and Pakistan. For those fleeing the war in Ukraine and Afghanistan, places in the Reception and Integration System (SAI) managed by local authorities are increasing.

ASGI about Italian situation (in Italian):

<https://www.asgi.it/media/comunicati-stampa/sicurezza-italia-afghanistan/>

<https://www.asgi.it/asilo-e-protezione-internazionale/afghanistan-proposte-tavolo-asilo-immigrazione/>

<https://www.asgi.it/asilo-e-protezione-internazionale/afghanistan-visti-umanitari/>

<https://www.asgi.it/notizie/se-i-corridoi-diventano-lunico-strumento-possibile-di-ingresso-per-motivi-umanitari-le-derive-di-una-visione-distorta-dell'azione-umanitaria/>

Tabella 1 - Decisioni positive sull'asilo riguardanti i cittadini afgani (16/8/2020 - 15/8/2022)

16/8/2020-15/8/2021	Maggiorenni			Minorenni			Minorenni non accompagnati			Totale generale
	Femmine	Maschi	Totale	Femmine	Maschi	Totale	Femmine	Maschi	Totale	
Status di rifugiato	17	129	146	9	11	20	1	2	3	169
Status di Protezione Sussidiaria	2	1277	1279	0	0	0	0	0	0	1279
Tipologie complementari di protezione	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Totale	19	1410	1429	9	11	20	1	2	3	1452
Totale in %	1,3	97,1	98,4	0,6	0,8	1,4	0,1	0,1	0,2	100,0
16/8/2021-15/8/2022	Maggiorenni			Minorenni			Minorenni non accompagnati			Totale generale
	Femmine	Maschi	Totale	Femmine	Maschi	Totale	Femmine	Maschi	Totale	
Status di rifugiato	1082	1589	2671	954	964	1918	28	44	72	4661
Status di Protezione Sussidiaria	4	1341	1345	6	6	12	0	1	1	1358
Tipologie complementari di protezione	1	14	15	1	4	5	0	0	0	20
Totale	1087	2944	4031	961	974	1935	28	45	73	6039
Totale in %	18,0	48,7	66,7	15,9	16,1	32,0	0,5	0,7	1,2	100,0

Fonte: Commissione Nazionale per il diritto all'Asilo

Some data on Afghan migration in EU:

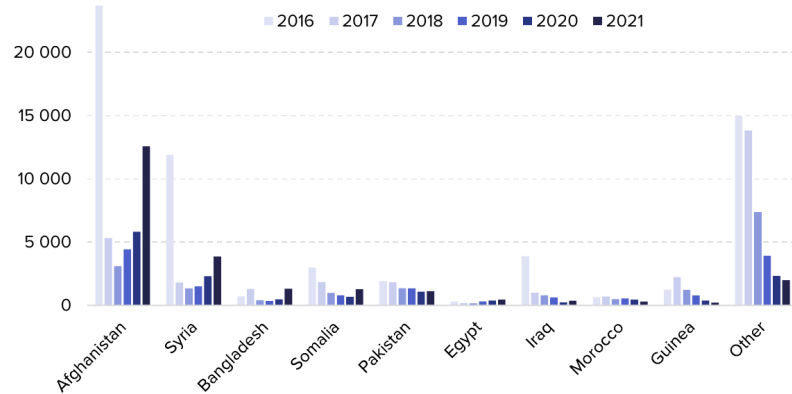
- Afghan nationals were the second biggest group of asylum seekers (after Syria) in many European countries in 2015-2016.
- The number of first-time Afghan applicants for international protection in EU+ countries doubled in 2021 compared to the previous year, and the number of subsequent applications submitted by Afghan nationals also increased.
- Afghan applicants strongly contributed to the increases in the number of applications for international protection in five countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia.
- Detected illegal border-crossings along the Western Balkan route rose steeply in August and September 2021.
- In 2021, 58% of repeated applications by Afghans were lodged in Germany (approximately 8,400 applications).
- Over one-quarter of all withdrawn applications in EU countries were by Afghan nationals, accounting for over 18,000 applications in 2021 compared to 5,000 in 2020. More than 60% of these withdrawals were by minors aged between 14 and 17 years old. These applications were largely withdrawn in Greece and other countries along the Balkan routes. The rate of withdrawals increased as of September 2021.

The absolute number of applications by unaccompanied minors from Afghanistan (12,600) and Syria (3,900) was the highest since the migration crisis in 2015-2016 and considerably higher than in each of the previous 4 years. In relative terms, more than one-half of all applications by unaccompanied children were lodged by Afghans (53%), followed at some distance by Syrians (16%), Bangladeshis (6%) and Somalis (5%), all with increasing trends compared to recent years. In total, 12% of all Afghans who sought

international protection in EU+ countries were unaccompanied minors. This share has remained at a similar level for several years and the trend shows no sign of depletion since the Taliban takeover of the country. Unaccompanied minors from Afghanistan mostly and increasingly applied for asylum in Austria, Bulgaria, Romania, Germany and Belgium (in descending order).

- Applications by Afghan nationals drove increases in the total number of applications in several EU+ countries. For example, Belgium and Denmark received between 40% and 50% more applications than in 2020, mainly driven by Afghans who were the largest group in both countries. The Netherlands (27,000) received the most applications in several years, up by three-quarters from 2020. This was primarily due to more Syrian, Afghan and Turkish applicants.
- Afghan citizens received more than double the number of decisions on Dublin requests compared to 2020, accounting for just under one-quarter of all decisions in 2021.
- Partially because of more positive decisions issued to Afghan applicants, overall recognition rates increased for example in Bulgaria (from 37% in 2020 to 62% in 2021), Czechia (10% to 27%), Denmark (23% to 41%), Estonia (36% to 67%), Latvia (13% to 40%), Lithuania (23% to 45%), Poland (17% to 67%) and Portugal (23% to 62%).
- Recognition rates have been increasing for Afghan nationals, from 31% in 2017 to 64% in 2021. If humanitarian protection were included in the calculation, the overall recognition rate for Afghans in 2021 would increase to 72%. The climb was partially triggered by the fact that some EU+ countries temporarily suspended issuing negative decisions to Afghans in the context of the Taliban takeover. Discrepancies in recognition rates were most apparent for applicants from Afghanistan, ranging from 11% in Bulgaria to 99% in Poland and Spain.
- In October, applications lodged by Afghans exceeded 15 000 for the first time since September 2021, in the aftermath of the Taliban takeover in August 2021. After six months of continuous increases, Afghan applications reached the second highest level since the refugee crisis. As in previous months, almost all (95 %) applied for the first time. Meanwhile, the number of applications by self-claimed UAMs from Afghanistan remained high (2 500 applications), close to the level recorded in September, which was the highest in seven years. Applications by Afghan UAMs amounted to around one sixth of all Afghan applications submitted in October.
- Looking at the first 10 months of the year, Afghans were the largest applicant group in the EU+, accounting for 13% of all applicants and almost half of all UAMs. There was also a notable rise in the number of Afghan nationals detected irregularly crossing EU external borders in the first 10 months of 2022 (some 31 800), more than twice as many as in the same period in 2021. The situation in Afghanistan is unlikely to change in the coming months with

Number of applications by unaccompanied minors by top countries of origin, 2016-2021



Source: Eurostat [[migr_asyunaa](#)] as of 22 April 2021.

28 million people expected to require humanitarian assistance in 2023.

- Afghans received the second highest number of decisions across all nationalities in October (only behind Syrians), with over 7 700 decisions issued. Nonetheless, this represented the lowest number of decisions issued to Afghans since May. Conversely, withdrawals increased by over a quarter to 4 600, the highest since January 2016. Almost all withdrawals were implicit (98 %), which point to secondary movements. Decisions, withdrawals and other closures brought total case closures in October to about 13 400, similar to the previous month. Despite the high number of case closures, the volume of pending applications remained stable at around 66 700 at the end of October. More than half of them had been pending for less than six months.
- The EU+ recognition rate for Afghans at first instance increased to 50 % in October albeit still far below the peak of October/November 2021 (91 %) following the Taliban takeover. The overall increase in the recognition rate was not driven by more positive decisions but rather by fewer decisions granting a humanitarian or national status, which do not contribute to the recognition rate in this context. Over four fifths of the positive decisions on Afghan cases in October granted refugee status, while the remainder granted subsidiary protection.
- Between October 2021 and September 2022, Afghans represented the largest group of applicants for international protection in the EU+, reaching approximately 13 700 in the month of September. Since October 2021, EU+ countries have issued approximately 77 400 decisions at first instance on Afghan applications, with a recognition rate of 61%. At the end of September 2022, some 64 700 Afghan applications were pending at first instance. Around half were awaiting a decision for less than six months. The latest asylum trends for applicants from Afghanistan, and other countries of origin, can be found on the EUAA website.

EUAA reports on the situation of Afghan refugees in Iran covers key developments between October 2020 and November 2022. The report aims to provide information on the situation of registered and unregistered Afghan refugees in the country, which is relevant for international protection status determination. Split into five chapters, the Country of Origin Information (COI) report describes the presence of Afghan refugees in Iran, examines their legal status, their treatment by the Iranian society and the state, cross border movements and their socio-economic situation in the country.

As of October 2020, around 780 000 Afghan refugees holding Amayesh cards (proof of registration) were registered in the country. In addition, between 2020 and second half of 2022, an estimated number of between 2.1 and 2.6 million undocumented Afghans, including former Amayesh cardholders, were living in Iran. Following the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021, many Afghans fled to Iran due to the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in their country. As of September 2022, the government of Iran recorded about one million new arrivals of Afghans, 65 % of whom were reportedly deported by the Iranian authorities back to Afghanistan, while smaller numbers returned voluntarily or travelled onwards to Türkiye and/or the European Union.



¹ This also includes new arrivals. In 2022, the Government conducted a 'recount' of the previously head counted population, and extended this recount to all undocumented Afghans residing in Iran, including those who had newly arrived due to the events in 2021 in Afghanistan. As of the end of August 2022, according to different statements by various government officials, 2.2 million Afghans have been provided with a 'headcount' slip.

² Unregistered Members of Registered Families.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

History:

After the entrance of Islam to Afghanistan, pre-Islamic religious education was replaced by Islamic religious education. The formal education institutions in Afghanistan never existed from its establishment (1747) until 1875. Despite that the foundations of modern education was laid in 1875, the number of established schools didn't exceed only four until 1919. King Amanullah Khan (ruled 1919-1929), gave importance to education and made the primary schools compulsory to all, but some Afghan clergymen opposed him especially due to female education issues. Despite this, there have been significant developments in education system during this period. In the following periods, progress continued in the education field more or less.

Up to 1932, there were no higher education institutes in Afghanistan and people with higher education had completed their education abroad. In 1946 Kabul University was established as the first university in Afghanistan. Over the years the establishment of higher education institutions continued.

During Soviet occupation between of 1979 – 1989, Afghanistan adapted the education system of the Soviet Union. However, education in this period was limited to the cities which were in the control of the central government. There was no formal education in many cities that were out of the central government's control. About five million Afghan Refugees in Pakistan and Iran and those who opposed the central government have established some schools and tried to continue their own education. In Pakistan, refugees have established some universities besides schools.

By 1996, there were some 14 higher institutions in Afghanistan. This process, however, was reversed when the Taliban seized power (1996-2001) and the number of institutions decreased to seven. In addition, the rule of Taliban led to shortages in resources such as teachers, books, outdated syllabus etc. The rule of Taliban led to fewer students in general and girls in particular, as girls were denied educational opportunity. The Taliban regime banned education of females and closed all girls' schools except the Kabul Medical Faculty. They left the medical faculty open because female patients were permitted to be examined only by female doctors. For this reason Taliban also had not banned women from working as doctors and nurses but they banned women working in all other areas. In this period, the numbers of religious madrasas have increased and almost all other schools have been transformed into madrasas. In 2001, the Taliban regime issued an educational law and pointed out in the mentioned law's second article that education is an equal right for all Afghan citizens. Also in the third article it is stated that women education will be regulated by a special law in accordance with the Sharia. However, this special law about female education was never issued after that onwards. After the fall of the Taliban, efforts have been made to improve the situation in the country. The number of public and private institutions has increased. The

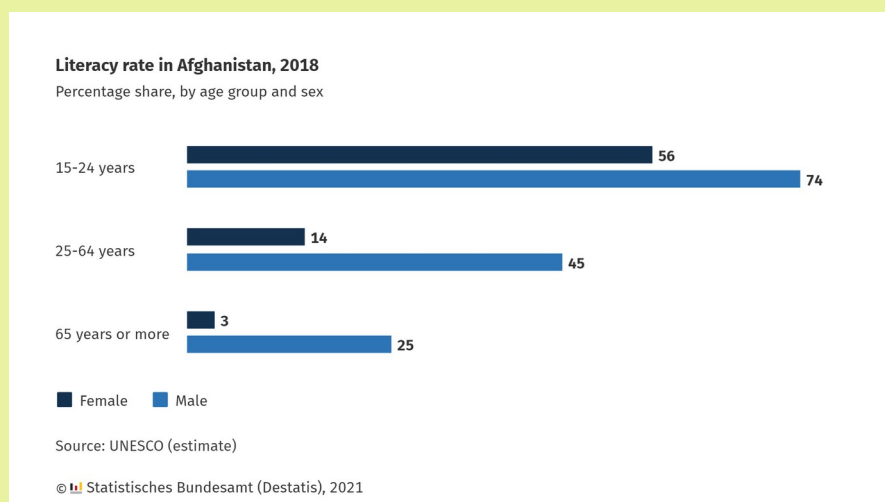
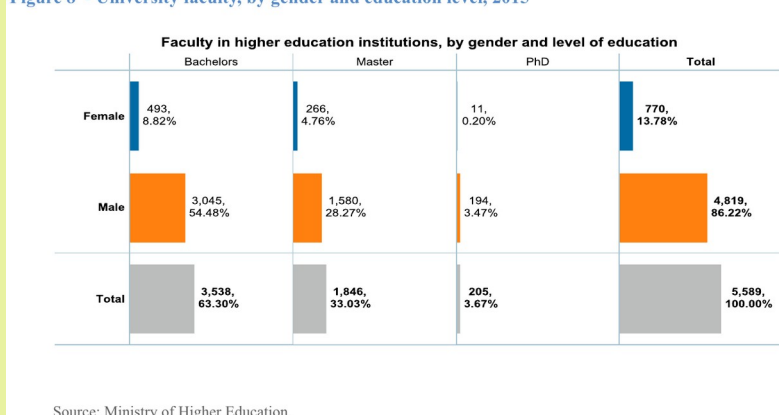


Figure 8 - University faculty, by gender and education level, 2015



Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE)
<http://www.mohe.gov.af/da>

UNESCO – World Data on Education: Afghanistan
http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Islamic_Republic_of_Afghanistan.pdf

International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, UNEVOC
<https://unevoc.unesco.org/go.php>

Kabul Medical University
<http://www.kmu.edu.af/>

number of students that are registered at primary, secondary and tertiary education has also increased. During Hamid Karzai's era (ruled 2001-14) according to the report which was published by the Afghanistan Ministry of Education in 2012, 10.5 million students studied in 16,600 schools and training centers. %38 of them consisted of female students. Likewise, 770,000 seniors studied in 30,000 literacy courses. %62 percent of them were also women. In 2016 there were about 30 state universities and about 100 private universities and colleges in Afghanistan.

After The Taliban took over Kabul, Afghanistan is the only Muslim country that prohibits girls from being educated. The Taliban announces on September 2021 that women can attend universities with gender-segregated entrances and classrooms, but they can only be taught by professors of the same sex or old men. Other restrictions included the wearing of hijabs as part of a compulsory dress code. On March 2022 girls' secondary schools were supposed to reopen, but the Taliban rescinded the directive and tens of thousands of teenagers were shut out and ordered to stay home. On December 2022 armed guards stop hundreds of young women from entering university campuses, a day after a terse release from the minister for higher education announces an order "suspending the education of females until further notice".

Education system:

(sources: CIMEA, ENIC/NARIC, NOKUT)

Ministry of Education has the responsibility of general education and vocational education. General education comprises primary school, lower secondary school and higher secondary school. Education is compulsory for children aged 6-14.

Primary and Secondary Education

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Grades 1 to 6 (starting age 6-8 and is compulsory)

LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Grades 7 to 9 (starting age 13-15 and is compulsory)

HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL / UPPER SECONDARY

Grades 9 to 12 (starting age 16-9) 12th grade Graduation Certificate. The certificate is issued in three languages: Pashtu, Dari and English.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MOLSAMD) is responsible for short-term courses of non-formal and informal TVET, and the Ministry of Education (MoE) is responsible for the formal TVET. Technical and Vocational training is provided by technical and vocational schools where students are taught skills needed to perform a certain job. Programs last for 2-5 years and comprise following fields of studies:

- Agriculture
- Business Education
- Construction and Engineering
- Fine Arts
- Special and Inclusive Education Sectors

The education will eventually lead to a Diploma (2-3 years) or Associate Degree (4-5 years) respectively.

Higher Education

Tertiary education is provided both by public and private higher education institutions.

Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) has the responsibility for the tertiary education. There are different types of higher education institutions in Afghanistan universities, polytechnics, institutes and higher teachers' colleges. Afghanistan has 25 public university and 140 private institutes (recognized by MoHE).

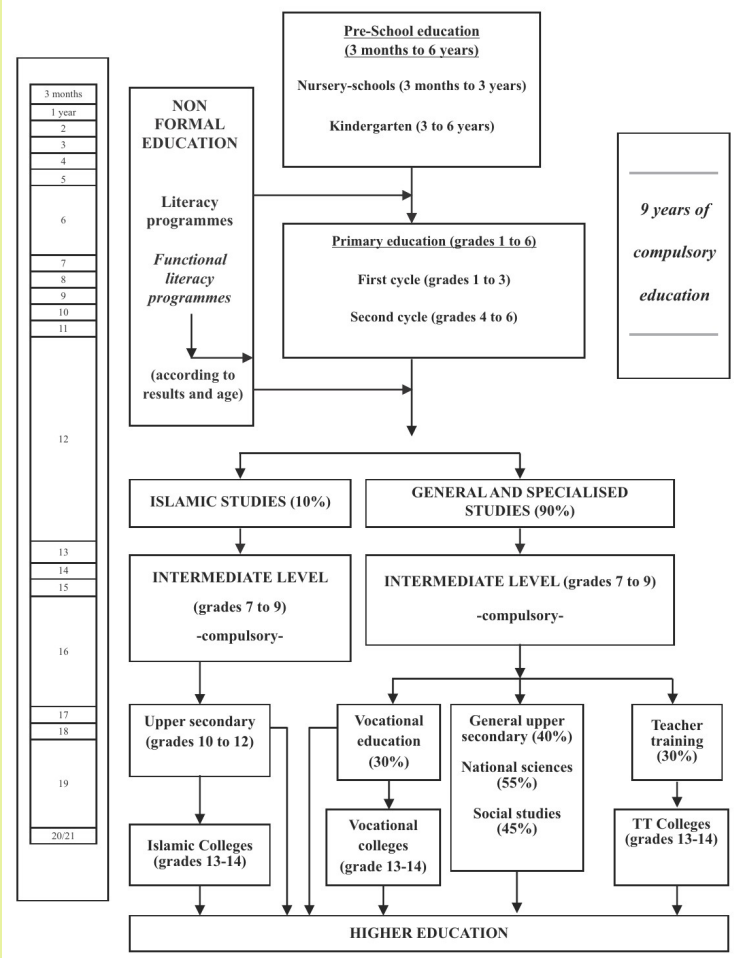
ADMISSION CRITERIA TO BACHELOR'S DEGREES

Completion of 12th grade and passing the competitive Kankour exam – Kankour (national entrance exam).

ADMISSION CRITERIA TO MASTER'S DEGREES

Completion of a bachelor's degree with passing grade of at least 65%. In addition, one also has to have completed a foreign language course as part of the bachelor's degree.

– The Structure of the Education System in Afghanistan



TYPES OF QUALIFICATIONS

Bachelor's Degrees

- Bachelor of Arts: 4 years
- Bachelor of Science: 4 years
- Bachelor of Engineering: 5 years
- Bachelor of Pharmacy: 5 years

Degrees in Veterinary Medicine: 5 years

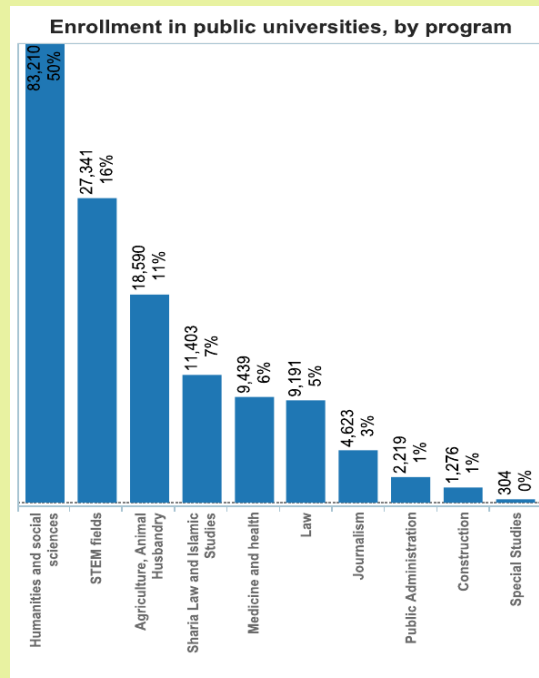
Degrees in Medicine: 7 years (include one year of pre-medical and one year of internship).

Institutions tend to issue educational documents in English as well as in Dari and Pashtu. Minimum amount of credits for a 4-year bachelor's degree is 136 credits. Credits per semester do not surpass 21 credits.

Master's Degrees

There is a limited amount of master's degrees being offered in Afghanistan. Those who have the financial means complete their master's degrees abroad. Master's degrees have a nominal length of study of 2 years and include a thesis. Thesis is an independent research work of 100-150 pages. Graduation requirements for Master Degrees are an average passing grade of 65% for all subjects and defence of the thesis.

Higher education institutions in Afghanistan do not offer Ph. D-programs.



GRADING SYSTEM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

- A = 90–100%
- B = 80–89%
- C = 70–79%
- D = 55–69%

Bachelor's degree consists of the following:

- Basic subjects: 30%
- Specialized subjects: 50%
- Optional subjects: 12%
- Diploma project: 08%

Education chart

