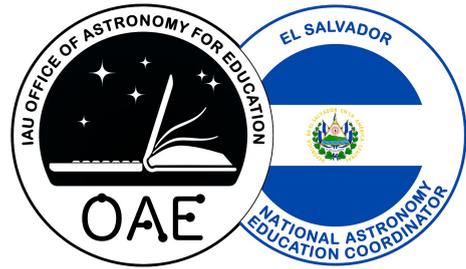


Astronomy Education in El Salvador



This overview is part of the project "Astronomy Education Worldwide" of the International Astronomical Union's Office of Astronomy for Education.

More information: <https://astro4edu.org/worldwide>

Structure of education: Kindergarten Education is three years of study. Some children may have had one year of nursery. There then follows six years of primary education. Basic education covers nine grades divided into three cycles of three years each. High school is compulsory for 2 years, but if the student wants to study technical subjects offered by their school, they need one year more. In the last 10 years, some private schools offered a high school that included subjects from the first year of university. In the last year of high school, students take a mandatory testing Natural Sciences, Mathematics, Social Sciences and language to be able to graduate from high school. Not all schools offer all three levels. It is usually in the urban areas where there are three. In rural areas, it is common to only find the first. All twelve years of education at public (state) schools are free of charge. There are also private (independent) schools, which charge fees. The number of students in private schools represent approximately 17% of the student population. Most schools are Spanish language but some schools have bilingual education. Here are also a good number of religious schools that can be Catholic or evangelical Christian schools. Secondary education offers training in two modalities, general (two years of study during the daytime) and vocational (three years). Special education has the objective to contribute to raising the level and quality of life of people with special educational needs due to limitations or outstanding aptitude.

Education facilities: In El Salvador our schools have typical class sizes under 40 or 50 pupils with practical subjects like science, art and technical subjects having the same class sizes. Some small schools only have a few pupils per school year with teachers teaching groups from multiple years together. Only 25% of schools have access to good internet connections. In some places it is not possible to have access to water or electricity. The students need to walk a long distance from their home to school.

Governance and organisation: The government of El Salvador through the Ministry of Education manages all schools. The last reform to the curriculum was in 1995.

Teacher Training: To train as a teacher, you need a 3-year university degree, to be able to work with kindergarten, basic education and secondary education. To become a university professor, you must study a 5-year degree or engineering degree. Currently it is no longer possible to hire an "empirical" professor, but must have university studies according to the level at which they will work. In addition to the previous teaching staff, a pedagogical training course is included for university graduates with a title other than that of professor, graduate, master or doctor of education who are practicing or wanting to teach at different educational levels.

Astronomy in the curriculum: In primary and secondary education, there are no specialized courses in astronomy. Since 2013, in the first and second cycle teacher training courses it is possible to find astronomy topics. Astronomy-related topics that often appear in educational programs are about the Sun, Moon, stars, and solar system. The Sun, Moon and planets appear in the kindergarten curriculum (ages 4-6). Sometimes the teacher could assign subjects of study to students about constellations, and space exploration. In the secondary education programs, they do not have astronomy subjects.

Astronomy education outside the classroom: El Salvador has an association of astronomy fans that for many years has carried out outreach activities for the public and on some occasions with schools. The University of El Salvador has also taught astronomy courses for the general public and university students. Don Bosco University has also offered didactic activities in astronomy for teachers and has promoted astronomical observations and conferences for students and collaborators. It has supported the creation of an astronomy association at the university and before the pandemic it received students from kindergarten to university level to carry out workshops in astronomy.

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