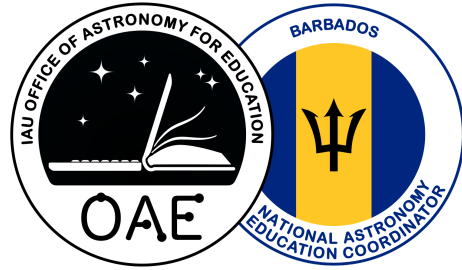


Astronomy Education in Barbados



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: The Government of Barbados pays the cost of education of Barbadian students at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. There are 68 Government primary schools, 4 special schools, 12 nursery schools and 21 secondary schools. Nursery schools admit students from 3 1/2 years. Most government primary schools are co-educational.

Primary education begins at age 4 and continues until age 11, when students sit the Barbados Secondary School Entrance Examination (BSSEE) and transition to secondary school. There are no school fees at public primary schools.

Secondary education is provided for children ages 11 to 18 years. At age 16, students write the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) examinations Caribbean Secondary Entrance Certificate (CSEC)-the equivalent of GCE O-Levels. At about age 18, those students who continue at school can sit the CXC-Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Certificate (A-Level). Most Government secondary schools are co-educational. There are small book fees at all secondary schools since textbooks are subsidized.

Tertiary education is provided by the Government of Barbados at the following institutions:

Erdiston Teachers' College: This College, opened in 1948, is co-educational and provides training for non-graduate and graduate teachers.

Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic: This Polytechnic provides day and night courses and programmes in fields such as electrical, building and engineering trades, commerce, agriculture and garments.

Barbados Community College: The Barbados Community College provides a range of programmes in academic, vocational and technical areas and offers a number of Associate Degree programmes. Divisions of the college include: fine arts, liberal arts, science, technology, health sciences and hospitality studies.

There are also several private schools. 16 at the nursery level, 27 primary, 10 secondary and 5 special. School fees are required at the private schools.

Barbados is also home to one of the campuses of the University of the West Indies, the Cave Hill Campus. The University offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, diplomas and certificates in areas such as the humanities, science and technology, law, agriculture, medicine, engineering and computer science.

Education facilities: The schools operated by the Government meet a similar high standard provided the necessary facilities for conduct of classes across all disciplines including science and computer laboratories, athletics facilities, internet access and other spaces to accommodate extra-curricular activities. Class sizes are on average between 25–30 students. Transportation of students is provided free of cost by the government operated bus transport system.

Governance and organisation: The Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training, is responsible for the curriculum and operates the vast majority of the schools in Barbados. While there are a few private schools, they all generally follow the same curriculum.

Teacher Training: Teacher Training Erdiston Teachers' Training College Conducts training and certification of teachers in the island. The institution also provides continuing education to teachers after they start teaching.

Astronomy in the curriculum: Astronomy isn't taught as a separate subject in school but rather is referenced in physics science courses. Concepts Related to astronomy are first introduced at the primary school level but there's no set level at which certain basic topics are introduced. Earth as a planet are typically introduced from as early as age 7 under topics related to the weather, the water cycle and sources of light and energy. Topics related to gravity are introduced at age 10-11. Topics more closely tied to astronomy are introduced in secondary school, around age 14-16, under an integrated science curriculum where topics like Earth as a member of the solar system, the planets, space exploration, galaxies and celestial phenomena such as eclipses are taught.

Astronomy education outside the classroom: The Barbados Astronomical Society Inc. operates the Harry Bayley Observatory and through its outreach events at the facility, the Society hosts the public, schools and youth groups for educational sessions. These youth groups also include the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides who must satisfy requirements in the knowledge of astronomy to earn related badges.

**The International Astronomical Union's National Astronomy Education Coordinator (NAEC)
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For specific information about astronomy education in Barbados or on this document please contact the Office of Astronomy for Education (oea@astro4edu.org).