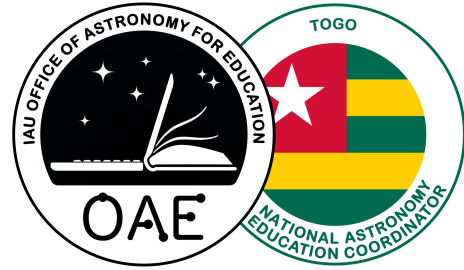


Astronomy Education in Togo



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: Togolese education is at three or even four levels: kindergarten, primary, lower and upper secondary and university level. In the Togolese education system (public (state) and private), children start kindergarten from the age of 3. The child spends 3 years in kindergarten before entering primary school at the age of 6. The primary course lasts 6 years where the pupil obtains the CEPD (Certificate d'Etude du Premier Degré) before entering the first cycle of secondary school. The latter lasts 4 years and is sanctioned by a BEPC (Brevet d'Etude du Premier Cycle). After the BEPC, the pupil begins the second cycle of secondary school (High school) which lasts 3 years and is sanctioned by the Baccalaureate second part (BAC 2). It is only after the BAC 2 that one begins the university cycle which lasts 7 to 8 years to obtain a doctorate.

Note that at the end of the second year of the second cycle, the student takes a pre-baccalaureate examination called the first part baccalaureate (BAC 1). There are also private schools that adopt the French system where the student follows the French curriculum. There are also conventional private schools (Catholic, Protestant, Muslim etc.) which follow the same program as state schools. The official language of instruction is French.

Education facilities: The average number of students in public (state) school classes in Togo is 70 students. In private schools the average can be 30 or even 50. The majority of Togolese students do not have access to the internet except for a few who are in the capital Lomé. For public school students, there is no public transport to school, so they often walk for miles to reach the school. Only a few private schools have means of transport for the pupils. Most school buildings, especially public ones, are not in good condition. Especially in the most remote areas.

Governance and organisation: The central government runs all public schools. and is responsible for the curriculum for all schools who adopted the Togolese curriculum. The exceptions are schools who adopted the French curriculum.

Teacher Training: In Togo, there is a training center for primary teachers called ENI (Ecole Normale des Instituteurs) and one other for secondary teachers (for both cycles) called ENS (Ecole Normale Supérieur) established by the state. Most often it is after a national competition that the teachers are selected who will undergo the training before being deployed in the field. But sometimes, they are deployed directly in the field without going through these training centers and undergo training in the field. As for university teachers, there is no formal training for them in Togo. Private schools recruit teachers directly without going through a competitive examination.

Astronomy in the curriculum: In Togo, there is not a specific program for astronomy at all levels of education. In primary school, from elementary first year (3rd year of study), students study the

rotation and revolution of the Earth in Geography. At the secondary level, the concepts of astronomy are divided between Geography, Physics and Geology, where we tackle subjects such as: the phases of the Moon, the eclipse of the moon and the sun, rotation, revolution, life on Earth etc. Sometimes even the teachers themselves do not know they are talking about Astronomy and the students do not know that they are being taught notions of Astronomy. At the higher level, the notions of astronomy appear in Geology where they talk about the planets of the solar system, the galaxies, the life and death of stars, life on Earth, the Big Bang etc.

Astronomy education outside the classroom: At the moment there are no planetariums or observatories in Togo. Only the Association “Science Géologique pour un Développement Durable” (SG2D), an association of young geologists and environmentalists from Togo, carries out extracurricular activities to raise awareness and educate both students, teachers and the general public in Togo on the importance of Astronomy. From time to time it organizes sky observation sessions either with the naked eye or with telescopes. Recently an association purely dedicated to the promotion and popularization of astronomy in Togo was created. This is the Togolese Association of Astronomy.

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