

Cyprus

Demographics for Cyprus

Population:	780,133 (July 2005 est.)
GDP (by PPP method):	US\$20.25 billion
Currency (inc code):	Greek Cypriot area: Cypriot Pound (CYP)
Language(s):	Greek, Turkish, English
Internet country code:	.cy

Primary and secondary education

First compulsory level

The first compulsory level comprises the primary school (Demotiko), typically from the age of six to 12 (normally preceded by one or two years in a state or private nursery school or kindergarten), and lower secondary school (Gymnasio), typically from the age of 12 to 15. Pupils may attend state (free) or private schools.

Upper secondary level

The upper secondary level lasts for three years. Students may choose to follow the general cycle (lykeio) or the technical and vocational cycle (techniki scholi).

The Ministry of Education and Culture exercises control of education in Cyprus, setting the broad curricula policies.

General cycle (lykeio). Students are taught a common core of subjects in their first year at Lykeio, pursuing a mix of compulsory and optional subjects in the final two years. Optional subjects enable students to engage in basic or in-depth study of a particular subject, or to explore for the first time a subject in which they have a specific interest. Marks gained in the final Apolytirion

(baccalaureat) – and in some cases entrance examinations – determine entry to institutions of higher education.

Technical and vocational cycle (techniki scholi). Students opt for either the technical or vocational cycle, with the technical cycle placing greater emphasis on theoretical subjects such as mathematics and physics, while the vocational cycle focuses more on workshop practice.

In the first year of the technical and vocational cycles, students choose from one of 13 branches – such as mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, civil engineering and architecture, chemistry or woodwork and furniture production. In the second and third years, students pursue one of a number of specializations offered within each of the aforementioned branches.

Tertiary/higher education

The tertiary level comprises 26 institutions of higher education, as well as the University of Cyprus.

Of these institutions, 19 are private colleges, all established before 1992. A number of these colleges are affiliated with universities abroad (mostly in the UK), allowing students to begin their studies in certain fields – such as business administration or engineering – in Cyprus before transferring credits to continue and complete their studies at a partner institution abroad.

Private colleges offer courses in a range of subjects, including business administration, secretarial studies, electrical, mechanical and civil engineering, wireless communications, hotel and catering, banking, accountancy and computer programming.

A total of seven public colleges operate under the aegis of government ministries/semi-government organizations: the Higher Technical Institute, the Higher Hotel Institute and the Mediterranean Institute of Management (Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance); the Cyprus Forestry College (Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources); the School of Nursing (Ministry of Health); the Cyprus Police Academy (Ministry of Justice and Public Order) and the Tourist Guides School (Cyprus Tourism Organization).

The University of Cyprus – the country's only university – was established in 1989 and comprises five faculties and 17 departments: the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (Departments of Education, Foreign Languages and Literatures, Social and Political Sciences, and Turkish Studies); the Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences (Departments of Chemistry, Computer Science, Mathematics and Statistics, and Physics); the Faculty of Economics and Management (Departments of Economics, and Public and Business Administration); the Faculty of Letters (Departments of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Classics and Philosophy, and History and Archaeology), and the Faculty of Engineering (Departments of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Architecture, Electrical and Computer Engineering, and Mechanical and Production Engineering).

University-level first stage: bachelor

A bachelor's degree (Ptychio), offered by the University of Cyprus and public or private colleges, requires four years of college-level coursework. Programmes of two/three years' duration lead to the award of a certificate. The University of Cyprus, as well as most of the private tertiary educational institutions – such as the Americanos College, the Cyprus College, the Cyprus International Institute of Management (CIIM), Intercollege, the Frederic Institute of Technology, and The Philips College – operate a credit system, with 120-130 credits required for graduation.

University-level second stage: master

One or two-year postgraduate programs are offered by a very small number of institutions, leading to a postgraduate degree. The University of Cyprus offers a two-year master's degree in all its fields except Turkish Studies, whilst CIIM offers a one or two-year postgraduate program in Business Administration (MBA) and Public Sector Management (MPSM). Cyprus College and Intercollege offer a two-year MBA.

University-level third stage: doctorate

The University of Cyprus offers a doctorate (PhD) in some fields, typically after a further three years' study.

Admission/application requirements

Admission is determined by marks achieved in the final Apolytirion (baccalaureat), completed at the end of secondary school, or an entrance examination – mandatory by the University of Cyprus.

Accreditation structure and authority

A law regulating the establishment, control and operation of tertiary educational institutions in Cyprus was enacted in 1987, requiring all such private institutions to be registered with the Ministry of Education and Culture. However, registration does not imply the recognition of degrees offered, which requires a separate application to the Accreditation Council, responsible for accrediting degrees offered by private institutions of tertiary education. (Further information on accredited programs may be found at www.nrcg.dl.mlsi.gov.cy/eng/institutions.htm.)

Management education

Located in the eastern Mediterranean at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa, Cyprus is a center of international business, finance and shipping. In addition to local companies, some 1,000 international enterprises use Cyprus as a base from which to serve the wider region and beyond. This core of concentrated business activity has helped to focus attention on business and

management education, with most local institutions of higher education offering courses in business administration and management, attracting both home and overseas students. After completing a one or two-year certificate program, students may be eligible to continue their studies for a bachelor's degree.

The studies for the bachelor's degree in business and/or management usually last four years. Some institutions offer business/management programs with a concentration in HR, marketing, banking and finance, for instance.

A number of institutions also offer one or two-year postgraduate (MBA) programs in management, as well as part-time and executive MBAs for working professionals. Some MBA programs that lead to general management degrees, offer specializations in functional areas, such as finance, marketing, human resources management, international business and strategy. Some business schools also offer non-degree executive education programs for business leaders and mid-level managers, as well as tailor-made in-company programs.

Only a few institutions offer doctoral programs in management – notably the University of Cyprus offers a doctorate program in Finance and the Cyprus International Institute of Management is in the process of launching a Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA). A master's degree is normally required. Doctoral students take preparatory courses and pass comprehensive examinations before they enter the independent research phase, which can take two-three years. A successful defense of the dissertation before a committee of examiners results in the award of the doctorate (PhD or DBA).

Although a relatively new entrant on the world education map, Cyprus is rapidly gaining a reputation for its management programs, particularly those specializing in services management and shipping.

Cycle times

The academic year usually begins toward the end of September and continues up to December 23 (first semester – fall). January 10-30, is considered the examination period as well as the end of the fall semester.

Classes (second semester – spring) resume in the second week of February and continue up to the first week of May, when the examination period begins. The spring semester finishes at the end of May. Some private colleges offer brief summer courses that take up the months of June and July but these are usually limited, elective courses.

Students

Business and administration ranked first on the list of most popular fields of study in the academic year 2002/2003, with 12.3 percent. Of some 6,000 undergraduate students in this field, more than 90 percent attended programs

offered by private tertiary educational institutions, whilst about 43 percent represented students studying in Cyprus on temporary visas. Preference for business and administration ranked higher among men than women, with about 57 percent and 43 percent respectively. In the same academic year, figures show a sharp decline at the postgraduate level, to about 800 students, whilst doctorate students in the business and administration field were only 18.

MBA accreditation

The Cyprus International Institute of Management (CIIM) is the only management school in Cyprus whose postgraduate programs – Master in Business Administration (MBA) and Master in Public Sector Management (MPSM) – have been awarded international accreditation by the London-based Association of MBAs (AMBA).

SEKAP, the local accreditation authorities of the Ministry of Education and Culture, accredit institutions that offer business and management, as well as other degree programs – both at the bachelor’s and master’s level. Recognition may be sought by the Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications (ΚΥΣΑΤΣ).

Initial local accreditation is valid for a period of four years, whilst re-accreditation is extended for a further period of ten years.

Intercollege and the Cyprus College are both members of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), whilst CIIM is part of the AACSB as well as of the efm family:

- Estimated number of institutions with bachelor’s degree programs in business/management: 10 (plus those that offer certificates and diplomas without a degree).
- Estimated number of institutions with master’s degree programs in business/management: 5.
- Number of institutions with doctoral programs in business/management: 1.

Issues facing business schools

Business schools in Cyprus face several issues, some analogous to those of other European business schools and others unique to Cyprus. Among them are resource constraints, market size limitations, image and intensifying competition. Of course, the degree to which these problems are being experienced by different schools varies according to their mission, legal status, size and reputation. The response of each school varies correspondingly.

Market-size limitations

Cyprus, being a small country of just under one million people, has a very small domestic market, despite the fact that, in per capita terms, the demand for

education is comparable to the USA, if not higher. The small market precludes the economies of scale and scope that are enjoyed by business schools in larger countries. Competition for students and faculty is intense among local business schools, especially those that are for profit. Non-profit business schools with international accreditation have broken out of the limits of the local market by recruiting both students and faculty internationally. An innovative educational model, the modular MBA, has made possible the engagement of world-class faculty from leading business schools. State institutions, on the other hand, have a secure local market but face a language barrier in international recruitment, at least as it concerns undergraduate programs. Cyprus' recent accession to the European Union has, in effect, mitigated these market limitations, but it has also created new sources of competition from other European business schools that have established branches in Cyprus, often in partnership with local institutions.

Resource constraints

While state institutions are relatively well-endowed by the state, with infrastructure and annual budget appropriations, non-state institutions are left to fend for themselves. For-profit business schools form part of colleges or soon-to-be private universities which raise capital from shareholders, charge tuition fees and operate very much like any other business. Non-profit business schools depend on both tuition fees and donations to cover their operating costs, which tend to be higher than other institutions because they compete internationally for faculty and students. Donations are critical but very limited because Cyprus, like much of Europe, has little tradition in educational philanthropy. While the state has an expressed preference for non-profit institutions in tertiary education, there are no state grants or other incentives to promote such institutions, except tax deductibility for private donations.

Lack of strong academic image

Cyprus, as a newcomer in the educational enterprise, lacks a strong academic image by comparison to countries such as the USA and the UK, despite some world-class institutions. Cyprus is better known for its world-class tourist resorts and its large merchant fleet than for its universities and business schools. This is a limiting factor in a field like management where established brand names dominate. Nevertheless, Cyprus, located at the crossroads of three continents, has regional location advantages and international expertise in fields such as family business, shipping, tourism and services management.

Moreover, with the emergence of quality institutions, there is the growing reputation of Cyprus as an educational center in countries such as Russia, China, Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

International rules set by larger players

Cyprus institutions, in general, and business schools, in particular, are constrained in their efforts to compete internationally by the need to meet scale and structure requirements (such as a minimum number of resident faculty), set by much larger institutions in much larger countries with vast resources, in order to be ranked or accredited internationally. Standardized assessment systems may preclude innovative educational and business models necessitated by differences in scale, structure, resources and markets.

Intensifying competition

With the opening of the Cyprus market and the dramatic growth in the number of business schools and MBA programs in Europe, Cyprus business schools are feeling increasing pressure from other European (and some US) schools that seek to establish a foothold in the local market. While the growing competition is having positive effects on quality, the difference in resource endowment creates an unlevel playing field. The response ranges from partnerships to the search for niche markets.

Professor Theodore Panayotou
Cyprus Institute of Management

Sources

www.enostos.net/education/index_cy.htm

www.euroeducation.net/profl/cypco.htm

www.moc.gov.cy/daae/ps-evaluated.html

www.moec.gov.cy/primary%20Education%20Text%20GR.htm

www.moec.gov.cy/daae/ucy.html

www.mof.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf

www.nrcg.dl.mlsi.gov.cy/eng/edusystem.htm

