

# Indonesia's higher education systems

## An AIC Briefing Note

*Skills Futures Fellow Professor Caroline Chan gives an overview of Indonesia's higher education system, covering the types of institutions, types of ownership, the ministries and agencies in charge of accreditation and regulation for each level and area of education, and the national qualifications framework.*

*This is the first in a series of Briefing Notes aimed at introducing Australian education providers to various elements of the Indonesian higher education industry.*

### Scale of higher education demand

Indonesia's demand for higher education is growing. Market research firm Euromonitor predicts revenue from the Indonesian education industry to grow by 10.3 percent annually to reach US\$118 billion (AUD \$170 billion) by 2025.

Enrolment in higher education has increased from 5.2 million people in 2010 to 8 million in 2018. This figure is expected to double by 2024, demonstrating the third fastest growth rate in the world after India and China.

Indonesia's higher education system produces around 250,000 graduates per year through its 4,600 plus higher education institutions and over 26,000 fields of education, or subject areas. The scale of the sector, however, makes regulating the quality of courses a major challenge.

### One system, two streams

Indonesia's higher education system contains two main streams – the national system and what's known as the religious system.

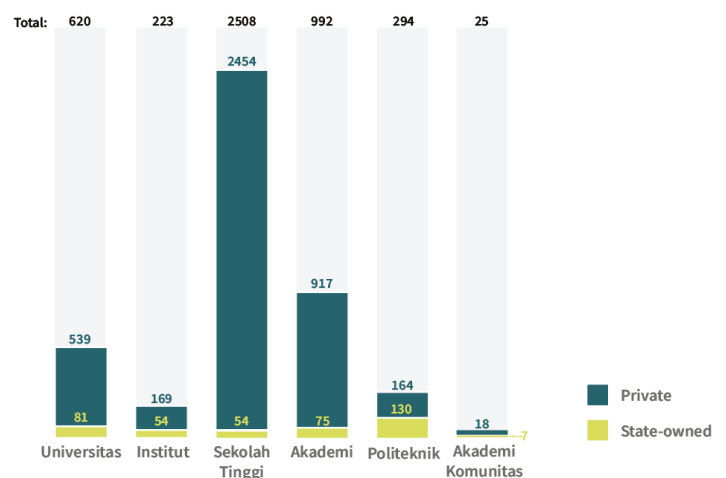
The first comprises most state and private higher education centres and is regulated by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud, or MoEC). The second is regulated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) and includes higher education centres owned and operated by faith-based organisations, including state-run organisations, with curriculums that focus on theology and other specifically religious study areas. Many religious institutions, however, such as many run by Muhammadiyah and the Catholic Church, stay part of the national system, under Kemendikbud, and teach the state curriculum. Higher education centres (across both systems) are divided into five categories: universities (universitas), institutes (institut), tertiary colleges (sekolah tinggi), polytechnics (politeknik) and academies (akademi). The last two exist only in the national system.

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All higher education institutions, depending on their licenses, can confer degrees from bachelor level up to doctoral level, however masters and doctoral degrees from polytechnics are referred to 'applied' degrees ('S2/S3 terapan').

(Note: a small sixth category is 'community academies', or akademi komunitas, which are training centres established by local community that offer D1 and D2 level certificates only.)

**Figure 1: Number and types of higher education institutions, across national (most state and private institutions) and religious systems. (Source: [Ristekdikti, July 2018](#))**



## Governance and higher education

Indonesia's education and training sector, from preschool to PhDs, is now regulated (post October 2019) mainly by Kemendikbud, but some parts by other ministries too, with implementing powers sitting across national, provincial and local authorities. For state-run institutions, the national government leads on tertiary education, provincial authorities lead on senior schooling and local authorities lead on preschool, primary school and post-school training centres. Accreditation at all levels is managed by the national government through Kemendikbud.

Key stakeholders include:

- **Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC, [Kemendikbud](#))** - responsible for research, policy and oversight, as of October 2019, for most higher education institutions, and has long been responsible for most other non-religious education institutions including preschool, primary school (years 1 to 6), junior secondary (years 7 to 9) and senior and vocational secondary (years 9 to 12) schooling.
- **Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA)** - operates a parallel system from preschool through to tertiary level that educates approximately 20 per cent of all students. As mentioned previously, some religious institutions manage their schools and universities not as schools of theology under MoRA but as regular schools under Kemendikbud.
- **Ministry of Manpower (MoM)** - responsible for some post-school training activities.
- Other ministries - operate their own post-school vocational education centres. Accreditation at these centres is overseen by Kemendikbud.

- Non-government sector - is very active in owning and managing education institutions from preschool to tertiary level, though all institutions are regulated by one of the above ministries.

Note: Until October 2019, the **Ministry of Research Technology and Higher Education (Ristekdikti)** was responsible for research, policy and oversight for all (non-theological) higher education but this has now been rolled into Kemendikbud's responsibilities.

## Quality assurance framework

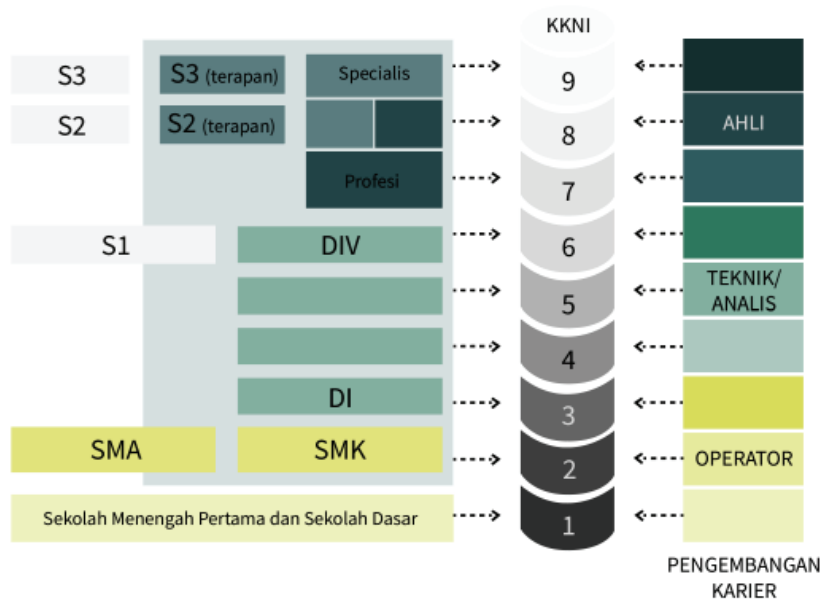
The Indonesian National Quality Framework, known as Kerangka Kualifikasi Nasional Indonesia (KKNI), is used to assess individuals' knowledge, competencies and skills against the required outcomes and achievements for the course they are completing.

The framework can also be used to indicate qualification requirements for a job. Employers can require applicants to have knowledge, competencies or skills either precisely matching or equivalent to KKNI indicators – whether demonstrated through education and training or work experience (as part of workplace competencies recognition).

KKNI consists of nine qualification levels (see Figure 2), the first being completion of primary and junior secondary school. (This differs from the Australian Quality Framework, or AQF, which starts at post-school vocational training, with a Certificate 1. A Briefing Note looking at AQF is coming soon.)

Based on KKNI, following a compulsory primary and secondary education, graduates can continue their study, and

**Figure 2: The Indonesian National Qualifications Framework - *Kerangka Kualifikasi Nasional Indonesia (KKNI)***



Top: *terapan* = applied

Bottom: SMP and SD, junior secondary school and primary school

Far right: *Pengembangan karier* = career development (operator, technician/analyst, expert)

earn a diploma (available levels 1 to 4 – roughly equivalent to Australian certificates and diplomas) or a sarjana (S1, S2 or S3 – roughly equivalent to a bachelor, masters or PhD, respectively). Normally, D1 to D4 are offered as part of polytechnic education and S1 to S3 as part of a university education. While many polytechnic institutions can offer up to S3 (applied), in reality, only universities have the accreditation to offer doctoral, or S3, programs.

### Higher education providers

There are four types of university in Indonesia, based on ownership and how they are managed:

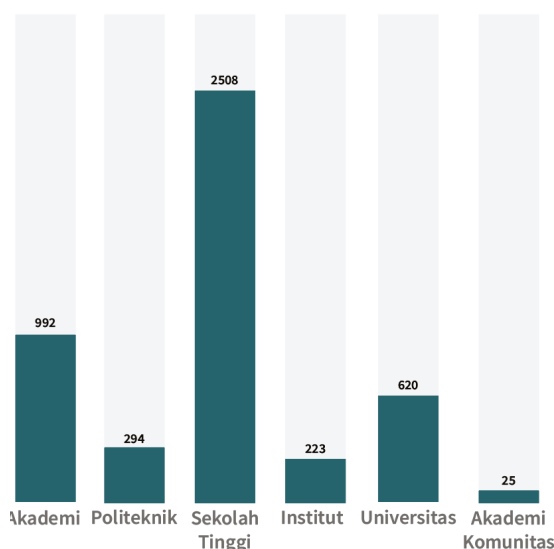
1. **State universities** (perguruan tinggi negeri, PTN) - Sometimes called public or state-owned universities, these account for about 10 per cent of the universities in Indonesia. Examples: Universitas Indonesia (UI) and Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB).
2. **Private universities** (perguruan tinggi swasta, PTS)

- These are privately owned and managed, often through not-for-profit foundations. Examples: BINUS University and Universitas Pelita Harapan.

3. **Religious universities** (perguruan tinggi agama, PTA) - These are managed by religious councils. Examples: Universitas Islam Negeri and Institut Agama Islam Negeri.

4. **Ministry-based universities** (perguruan tinggi kedinasan, PTK) - These are managed by particular ministries and often aim to develop graduates relevant for that particular ministry. Examples: Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri (or Institute for Governance of Home Affairs) and Sekolah Tinggi Energi dan Mineral (STEM or Akamigas) run by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources. Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri (or Institute for Governance of Home Affairs) and Sekolah Tinggi Energi dan Mineral (STEM or Akamigas) run by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources.

**Figure 3. Number of higher education providers in Indonesia (accredited and unaccredited) by type, 2019.**  
(Source: [Forlap Ristekdikti](#))



### Higher education certification and accreditation

All higher education providers must be accredited by the National Higher Education Accreditation Agency (BAN-PT, Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi), an agency under the administration of Kemendikbud (previously Ristekdikti).

Established in 1994, BAN-PT is an independent agency that evaluates and oversees accreditation for fields of education (aka subject areas, or program studi) and for higher education institutions.

Each requires accreditation approval as a new institution or field of education. For existing institutions and fields of education, the scores achieved when reassessed for accreditation every five years determine the accreditation status of the institution or the field of education for the next five years. Status levels are A, B, C and D (D meaning not accredited).

### Professional accreditation

BAN-PT also coordinates 'professional accreditation' bodies. This is an emerging area in Indonesia, being developed for most fields. For instance, in health, there is the Indonesian Accreditation Agency for Higher Education in Health (LAM-PTKes or IAAHEH).

Professional industry associations are the main driving force behind the establishment of professional accreditation bodies and are conducting independent accreditation to ensure graduate competencies in relevant fields.

The (BNSP, Badan Nasional Sertifikasi Profesi) is an independent government body that authorises and approves professional certification of workers, ensuring the competency of Indonesia's workforce.

National Work Competency Standards (SKKNI, Standar Kompetensi Kerja Nasional) are designed to provide

nationally consistent recognition of outcomes achieved in post-compulsory education. It offers flexibility to suit various purposes of education and training and to promote life-long learning.

### Accreditation issues and challenges

A large number of higher education institutions and fields of education with disparate curriculums and varying quality makes the accreditation process a challenging exercise, with lots of resources and time needed to ensure that standards are being maintained. Some points to note:

- Internal quality assurance needs significant improvement. Nurturing and support from both the government

and the more-established higher education institutions will help here;

- The establishment of independent professional accreditation associations by professional societies is still in an early stage, and these bodies will require a lot of government support, intervention and monitoring.

Institutions with part foreign ownership, and foreign education businesses looking to enter Indonesia, should be reassured by the tightening regulations and quality controls around higher education in Indonesia. The sector is growing in reliability and transparency nearly as fast as it is growing in size.

**Table 2: Number of accredited universities by ownership and accreditation level**

	Accreditation status			
	A	B	C	Total
State higher education institutions (Perguruan tinggi negeri, PTN)	43	47	3	93
Private higher education institutions (Perguruan tinggi swasta, PTS)	39	684	955	1684
State religious higher education institutions (Perguruan tinggi agama, PTA)	7	48	19	74
Private religious higher education institutions (Perguruan tinggi agama swasta, PTAS)	0	35	313	352
Ministry-based higher education institutions (Perguruan tinggi kedinasan lain, PTKL)	7	67	4	78
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>881</b>	<b>1294</b>	<b>2281</b>

**Table 3: Number of accredited higher education institutions by type**

	Accreditation status			
	A	B	C	Total
University (universitas)	74	260	124	458
Institute (institut)	5	75	47	127
College (sekolah tinggi)	5	351	791	1154
Academy (akademi)	4	98	267	371
Polytechnic (politeknik)	7	93	55	156
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>1284</b>	<b>2266</b>

*Not appearing here is status 'D' - unaccredited*



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