

2020-2021 Fulbright Distinguished Awards in Teaching Research Program for U.S. Teachers (Fulbright DA)

Brazil Country Profile

Partner organization: [Fulbright Commission in Brazil](#)

Language requirement: Must have proficiency in either Portuguese language or Spanish language.

Eligible program dates: Early August through early to mid-December, or February through June. Fellows arriving in February can join the in-country arrival orientation with Fulbright U.S. Students.

Host institution: The Fulbright Commission in Brazil will place scholars in universities that will assist them in developing their research and deepening their knowledge in the selected topic.

Dependent Information: An allowance of \$2,000 per eligible dependent will be provided as part of the Fulbright DA grant. Because scholars can be placed at universities where limitations for family housing, schooling and/or child-care may exist, it is not advisable for young dependents to accompany grantees for the full grant term.

Country Overview

Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world, and it is similar in size to the continental United States. It is also the largest country in South America and the largest Portuguese speaking country in world, with around 209 million people and 85% of them living in the Southeast region of the country. The most important economic sectors are agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and the services. Despite the achievements in poverty reduction over the last decades, inequality remains at high levels in one of largest democracies in the world. After achieving universal coverage in primary education, Brazil is now struggling to improve the quality and outcomes of the system, especially at the lower and upper secondary levels.



Educational System Overview

The Brazilian Constitution (1988) states that education is the right of all and the duty of the Union and of the family. Education is offered at public tuition-free institutions through the cooperation between Union, states, and municipalities. It can also be offered by either for-profit or nonprofit private entities. Public officials in charge of providing the compulsory education levels are liable for any flaws in the system because access to these education levels is considered a subjective public right.



Education in Brazil has two levels: basic education, which includes early childhood education, primary education, and secondary education; and higher education (Chart 1).

Chart 1 – Structure of the Brazilian Education System

Level	Step		Duration	Age group
Higher Education	Higher Education		Variable	Above 18 years old
Basic Education	Secondary Education		3 years	15 – 17 years old
	Primary Education		9 years	6 – 14 years old
	Early Childhood Education	Preschool	2 years	4 – 5 years
		Child care	3 years	0 – 3 years

These education levels can be offered in many modalities depending on specific demands and needs, e.g. special education, professional education, distance education, youth and adult education, indigenous school education, specific ethnic-racial and rural education. The diagram in Chart 2 presents how education levels, steps and modalities can be articulated.

Chart 2 – Education Modalities

Levels	Steps		Modalities
Higher Education	Higher Education	Postgraduation	EaD EJA Professional Education Indigenous School Education Special Education Rural Education
		Graduation	
Basic Education	Secondary School		
	Primary Education		
	Early Childhood Education	Preschool	
		Child Care	

The majority of children, youth and adults enrolled in basic education attend public schools; the opposite occurs in higher education. The responsibilities in offering basic education are formally distributed among the federate entities. Municipalities must provide early childhood education (ages 0 – 5) and primary education (ages 6 – 14); the latter is shared in variable levels in some states. States must provide secondary education (ages 15 – 17). The Union has a redistributive and supplementary role regarding all steps in basic education striving to promote equity of educational opportunities countrywide. The Union must secure a minimum standard of quality of education, through technical and financial assistance to the states and the municipalities. Therefore, the Union is responsible for formulating national guidelines and redistributing funds.



Among the changes that took place in the country in the last decade, two key legal milestones must be highlighted. First, the inception of the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and for the Enhancement of Education Professionals – FUNDEB, that has been contributing significantly to increase earmarked funds to basic education. Second, the increase of the number of years in mandatory schooling for every individual from ages 7 to 14 to ages 4 to 17 was gradually implemented until 2016.

Key Educational Themes in Brazil

Though the country has made substantial progress, still there are several challenges that must be overcome to improve the quality of school education. Some of them are listed here below:

- Continuing efforts to improve access and support to early childhood education and care, while supporting school completion among students who might be at risk.
- Further improving access to quality upper secondary education and initial vocational education and training while ensuring the quality of public and private tertiary institutions.
- Continuing efforts to develop quality in teaching and school leadership.
- Ensuring that key stakeholders, such as school leaders and teachers, have the capacity to use evaluation and assessment results to improve student outcomes.
- Ensuring alignment and co-ordination between the different levels of government and stakeholders to deliver quality education.
- Continuing investment in education and ensuring schools are equally and efficiently funded across all education levels.

To learn more about the Brazilian educational system, please visit the following websites:

- Ministry of Education: www.mec.gov.br;
- National Institute for Educational Studies and Research: portal.inep.gov.br/web/guest/about-inep

Possible topics of interest to U.S. educators

Agribusiness, the cocoa or the soybeans industry, Latin American history, specific health related-issues, and the Brazilian Common Core Curriculum.

