

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

Mexico Country Profile

Partner organization: [U.S.-Mexico Commission for Educational and Cultural Exchange \(COMEXUS\)](#)

Eligible program dates: From January to June 2020

Language requirement: Spanish proficiency required

Host institution: COMEXUS places nominated Fulbright DA fellows in host institutions based on the scope and goals of fellows' inquiry projects.

Dependent Information: An allowance of \$2,000 per eligible dependent will be provided as part of the Fulbright DA grant.

Country Overview

Mexico is a country in the southern portion of North America. Covering almost 2,000,000 square kilometers (770,000 sq. mi), the nation is the fifth largest country in the Americas by total area and the 13th largest independent state in the world. With an estimated population of over 129 million people, Mexico is the tenth most populous country and the most populous Spanish-speaking country in the world, while being the second most populous nation in Latin America after Brazil. Mexico is a federation comprising 32 states. Mexico City is the capital city and its most populous city.



Mexico has rich cultural history and diversity and abundant natural resources. Mexico has the 11th largest economy in the world. The country has strong macroeconomic institutions and it is open to trade and private investment. Mexican authorities have implemented stable and sustainable monetary and fiscal policies, which have made the Mexican peso the most highly traded emerging market currency. Currently it is the world's 15th largest exporter due to the strengthening of its productive capacities, diversifying away from raw materials such as oil, and deepening its production complexity on manufactured products that are integrated into regional and global value chains.



Educational System Overview

The Mexican educational system can be characterized by a high degree of centralization. Since 1921, the Ministry of Public Education ([Secretaría de Educación Pública](#) - SEP) has overseen the country's public education system which now includes nearly 36 million students. Through 32 state departments of education, SEP provides educational services including the setting of national standards, curriculum, and textbook selection and their distribution to the majority of the 257,000 schools in the country.

While numbers vary from state to state, completion of upper secondary and tertiary education has doubled over the past five decades among 25-34 year-olds, to 42% and 20.2% respectively. This trend is expected to continue. In 2002, an educational reform made pre-primary enrollment compulsory beginning in 2009. Since then, pre-primary enrollment has increased to 99% of four-year-olds which represents a nearly 30% increase since 2005. This is one of [highest enrollment rates](#) of all OECD countries. Increasing enrollment extends to the lower secondary level as nearly 100% of 5-14 year-olds are also enrolled in school. In addition to increasing enrollment, results in both reading and math on the OECD's PISA evaluation have been steadily improving, as well.

Many challenges remain including graduation rates, quality assurance, and undertrained and under-resourced teachers. Mexico is taking measures to address these and other challenges. For example, a national program to introduce and strengthen English language instruction in all primary schools in order to prepare students to meet new global challenges was launched in 2010 ([PNIEB](#)). Moreover, the current administration has included education as part of a larger structural reform effort. Among other changes, this reform creates a national teacher evaluation scheme in order to transform the hiring and promotion of teachers. Controversial in any country, the teacher unions organized demonstrations in protest of these most recent changes.

This administration continues to focus on education in Mexico. Indeed, the recognition of the need for general university preparation, including language instruction at the pre-tertiary level, in order to bolster enrollment, expansion and internationalization of Mexican higher education has been a major theme of the recently announced [United-States-Mexico Bilateral Forum on Higher Education, Innovation, and Research](#), in addition to the role Mexican students and institutions will play in the [100,000 Strong in the Americas Initiative](#).

With significant cultural, economic, political, social, geographic, and historical ties with the United States, now more than ever Mexico provides an important environment in which to undertake educational research.



Possible topics of interest to U.S. educators:

- Technology use in under-resourced areas (Mexico's Telesecundaria program has a long history of using technology to reach students in rural areas)
- Service learning (there is a burgeoning civil society in Mexico City and the southern region)
- Inclusive education for students with diverse learning needs as well as linguistic and cultural backgrounds
- Teaching English to young learners
- Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) especially in science education
- Spanish as a second language
- Post-secondary educational and career counseling
- Promotion of sports and healthy food in schools
- Understanding of Mexican culture in order to increase community involvement in student education
- Improving completion rates
- Integrating ICT use into classrooms and increasing technological literacy

