

Universal Periodic Review

(51st Session)

Contribution of UNESCO to Compilation of UN information

Oman

I. RATIFICATION OF UNESCO CONVENTIONS

<i>Title</i>	<i>Date of ratification, accession, acceptance, approval or succession</i>	<i>Declarations /reservations</i>	<i>Recognition of specific competences of treaty bodies</i>	<i>Reference to the rights within UNESCO's fields of competence</i>
Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)	Acceptance on 6 October 1981			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)	Ratification on 4 August 2005			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)	Ratification on 16 March 2007			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960	Not ratified	Reservation to this Convention shall not be permitted		Right to education

II. REVIEW OF LEGISLATIVE, REGULATORY AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND IMPLEMENTATION

A. RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Discrimination in education (UNESCO consultations)

1. Oman did not submit a report to the 10th and 11th consultations on the implementation of the Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination

in Education.

Constitution and main education law(s)

2. The [Constitution](#) of Oman does not explicitly guarantee the right to education, as it only guarantees that the State shall provide public education (article 13). It contains a principle of non-discrimination (article 17).
3. [The School Education Law of 2023](#) guarantees the right to obtain high quality education (article 43) and contains a principle of non-discrimination in education (article 42). The same act provides for nine years of compulsory primary and secondary education, starting at the age of 6 (articles 24 and 27). The [School Education Law of 2023](#) guarantees free education with no indication on the duration (article 14). Although this law guarantees the right to pre-primary education (article 22), it does not provide for free and compulsory pre-primary education.

Legal age of marriage

4. The [Personal Status Law No. 32 of 1997](#) sets the minimum age of marriage is 18 years old but judicial consent permits marriage below this age, with no absolute minimum age specified by law (articles 7 and 10). According to the [Joint CEDAW-CRC General Recommendation/Comment](#), child marriage, also referred to as early marriage, is any marriage where at least one of the parties is under 18 years of age.

Minimum age of employment

5. The [Labour Code of 2003](#) sets the minimum legal age for employment is 15 years old (article 75), which is not aligned with the end of compulsory education (17). According to ILO Convention 138 (Minimum age convention) “The minimum age [for admission to employment or work] shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, shall not be less than 15 years”. However, the minimum age can be lowered to 14 years under certain circumstances (article 4).

Enrolment rates

6. Most recent UIS available data for the enrollment rates is as follows:

	Pre-primary education (net) (2022)	Primary education (gross) (2022)	Secondary education (gross) (2022)	Tertiary education (gross) (2021)
Girls	35.90%	91.00%	91.20%	52.95%
Boys	36.12%	89.23%	92.72%	35.91%
Total	36.01%	90.10%	91.98%	43.84%

Investment in education

7. According to UIS data, in 2022, the government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP was 4.20%, and 14.18% of the total government expenditure.

Access to quality education for all

8. During the last cycle, Oman was recommended to further improve the accessibility and quality of education, including for those in vulnerable situations, for girls and for children with disabilities, and to address school dropout rates regardless of children’s abilities, social backgrounds, or gender (134.145, 134.148 and 134.151). [The Ministry of Education 2024 evaluation](#) highlights high enrolment and school completion rates, low repetition and dropout rates, and gender equality in education. Notably, there is parity in enrolment rates between girls and boys in primary and secondary education, reflecting the country's commitment to gender equality. Furthermore, the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA) conducted a [quality audit of the Oman Tourism College's General Foundation Programme](#), commending the college for its effective approach, which led to the recruitment and retention of Omani staff members beyond the required targets.

B. RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION AND RIGHT TO INFORMATION

Constitutional and Legislative framework

9. Freedom of expression, freedom of the press and freedom of information are guaranteed by the 1996 Basic Statute of the State of Oman and the new 2024 Media Law adopted by the Royal Decree 58/2024 of 10 November 2024 in its article 3.¹
10. Although Royal Decree 58/2024 repealed its predecessor (the 1984 Decree on Press and publications), it simultaneously incorporated many of the provisions from the previous legislation and even expanded upon them, granting the authorities greater control over and restriction of media activities. Among these provisions are penalties imposed on journalists and media professionals, including imprisonment and fines. The law also addresses the regulation of social media platforms. Royal Decree 58/2024 dedicates an entire chapter to penalties that includes ten distinct penalties² and grants judicial enforcement powers to Ministry of Information officials for the implementation of its provisions.³ The 2002 Telecommunications Regulatory Act allows the authorities to prosecute individuals for any message that “violates the public order and morals” with a maximum imprisonment sentence of one year.⁴

¹ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Oman_2011.pdf ; See article 3 of the 2024 Media law at:

[Royal Decree 58/2024 Issuing the Media Law – Decree](#)

² [Articles 50-59 of the new Media law](#)

³ See Article 49 of the new media law of 2024

⁴ <https://tra.gov.om/En/GeneratedPage.jsp?menu=18>

11. There is no Freedom of Information law in Oman.

Implementation of legislation

12. The Ministry of Media grants the licences for physical or legal persons wishing to engage in any media activities. The executive branch of the Government regulates the broadcasting sector. The Ministry of Transport and Communications steers the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority. The Authority is comprised of the Minister of Transport and Communications, who serves as Chairman, and at least three full-time members, who are appointed through Royal Decree upon the recommendation of the Council of Ministers.

Safety of Journalists

13. Since 2006, when systematic monitoring began, UNESCO recorded no killing of journalists in Oman, on its Observatory of Killed Journalists.⁵

C. THE RIGHT TO SHARE IN SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT AND ITS BENEFITS

14. The Constitution of Oman stipulates that education promotes the development of scientific thought and kindles the spirit of research (Article 13). There is, however, no explicit reference to the right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

15. Oman has acceded to the ICESCR, but it has not yet ratified its Optional Protocol.

16. Oman did not include in its Third Cycle National Report (2020) an explicit reference to the right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits, or inherent rights such as scientific freedom. No science-related Recommendations were made, nor were any Recommendations made in respect of the right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits or its inherent rights such as scientific freedom. However, as part of its reporting on the implementation of the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers for the first consultation covering the period from 2017 to 2021, Oman mentioned the establishment of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI), a significant institutional reform aimed at boosting the country's research capacity and scientific innovation as a source of economic diversification and sustainability. The creation of dedicated research centres like the Institute for Advanced Technology Integration (IATI) and initiatives such as the National Research Award reflect Oman's intention to build a knowledge-based economy. Emphasis has been placed on empowering a new generation of researchers, including women, who represent a growing share of the research and development workforce. Oman has not yet submitted its national report for the second consultation covering the period from 2021 to 2025.

⁵ Accessed on 15 May 2025.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. RIGHT TO EDUCATION

17. Oman should be encouraged to:
- i. Ratify the 1960 Convention against discrimination in education
 - ii. Consider enshrining the right to education within the Constitution.
 - iii. Introduce legislation to make pre-primary education free and compulsory for at least one year.
 - iv. Amend the legislation to ensure that the minimum age of marriage is 18 years old without exception.
 - v. Raise the minimum age of employment to at least 15 in accordance with international human rights law.
 - vi. Ensure the minimum age of employment is aligned with the end of compulsory education.
 - vii. Continue efforts to ensure the right to inclusive education for all, including for children with disabilities.
 - viii. Continue to ensure regular reporting to UIS on education data.
 - ix. Regularly submit comprehensive national reports for the periodic consultations on UNESCO's education-related standard-setting instruments, and notably on the Convention against Discrimination in Education.
 - x. Share with UNESCO any relevant information to update its country profile on UNESCO's [Observatory on the Right to Education](#) and [HerAtlas](#).

B. RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION AND RIGHT TO INFORMATION

18. The Government is recommended to introduce an access to information law that is in accordance with international standards.
19. The Government is recommended to decriminalize defamation and place it within civil defamation legislation that is in accordance with international standards.
20. The Government is encouraged to review existing legislation, including the new media law, to ensure it is in accordance with international human rights standards.
21. The Government is encouraged to review the system of supervision of broadcasting sector in order to ensure that this process is transparent and independent.

C. RIGHT TO FREELY PARTICIPATE IN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY (CULTURAL RIGHTS)

22. As a State Party to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), Oman is encouraged to fully implement the relevant provisions that promote access to and participation in cultural heritage and creative expressions and, as such, are conducive to implementing the right to take part in cultural life as defined in article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In doing so, Oman is encouraged to give due consideration to the participation of communities, practitioners, cultural actors and NGOs from civil society as well as vulnerable groups (minorities, migrants, refugees, young people and persons with disabilities), and to ensure that equal opportunities are given to women and girls to address gender disparities.

D. THE RIGHT TO SHARE IN SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT AND ITS BENEFITS

23. Oman is invited to continue its efforts to ensure the full and comprehensive implementation and monitoring of the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers in accordance with the relevant Decisions of UNESCO's Executive Board (216 EX/Decision 45 of May 2023). In that context, Oman is invited to engage with UNESCO's Program on the promotion of scientific freedom and the safety of scientists and support the related Call to Action in line with the Recommendation and decisions of UNESCO's General Conference (42 C/Resolution 26 of November 2023) and Executive Board (219 EX/Decision 30 of March 2024). The Call to Action underlines the need to protect science and scientific researchers, and to allow for a free and safe science ecosystem where there is trust in science and where scientific evidence informs decision making. UNESCO stands ready to support Oman in developing and nurturing its science ecosystem, and protecting its scientific researchers, including through the incorporation of appropriate legal and administrative measures in line with international law. Oman is invited to collaborate directly with UNESCO, through its Secretariat and specialised Sectors, for that purpose.
24. Against this background, Oman is invited to consider the following:
- i. Submit a national report to the 2nd consultation on the implementation of the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers in line with the Circular Letter by UNESCO's Director-General (CL/4448 of 28 November 2024) and the guidelines contained therein.
 - ii. Explore ways to strengthen the status of the right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits in its legal system, including in its Constitution and any other appropriate legal and policy frameworks.
 - iii. When implementing measures to guarantee the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the right to information, and the right to education, include within those measures the freedoms indispensable for scientific research, and

- access to scientific education at all levels.
- iv. Expand input on issues covered by UNESCO's Recommendation in its national report to the UPR – particularly providing information about the implementation of the right to science and scientific freedom, including the latter in its report addressing more broadly freedom of opinion and expression. This will allow further discussions thereon at the Human Rights Council and the formulation of specific recommendations.
 - v. Ratify the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR.