The intellectual achievements of the Egyptian people have been praised for thousands of years. In modern times, education, accomplishments, and productivity are still highly valued. The Egyptian government has recognized that the geographic and political circumstances have changed and that education must include exposure to international concepts. With a population of more than 70 million people and a per capita income of less than $4,000 (US) per year, it has become progressively more difficult for Egypt to compete in the world economy. The reduction in financial support from the Egyptian government has affected public education, and alternate educational choices are becoming more prevalent. Especially in rural areas, new large primary, intermediate, and secondary schools are being financed by religious sources. For the wealthy segment of the population, private secular schools have been started. Thus, Egyptian education has been caught in the dichotomy between the movement to globalization and concerns about national identity, coupled with reduced government support for public education.

An important avenue for incorporating education abroad with preparation of Egyptian orthodontic faculty is the Channel Program. The Channel scholarship program was established in the 1970s to allow young Egyptian researchers and teachers, including dentists, to conduct their PhD research abroad under the joint supervision of their Egyptian university professors and a professor at a foreign university. These scholars complete their coursework in Egypt and do not register for a degree at the foreign university. Consequently, nearly all of the scholars return to Egypt and take positions in their field of study. While many who return are frustrated by bureaucratic and poorly equipped laboratories, they nonetheless provide new knowledge and energy to the Egyptian universities. Recently, the traditional PhD grants were eliminated entirely because the bright young Egyptians were not returning to Egypt after completing their Western educations in Europe or the United States. Maintaining a stock of well-educated young professionals is very important to Egypt’s future.

Dental education is a 5-year BDS program after high school with a requirement for 1-year post-BDS training that may consist of employment at a hospital, university, government, or public health facility or school. Subsequent licensing is automatic. Nearly all dentists are employed in private practices; even those working in government service and universities also have a private practice. In 1997, there were 35 dentists per 100,000 people. By law, only orthodontic specialists should perform orthodontic treatment, but the specialists hired general dentists who then took classes and now incorporate orthodontic treatment in their practices. Orthodontic treatment performed by general dentists is a controversial issue in Egypt.

Two types of advanced educational programs exist in Egypt for the production of orthodontic specialists, namely a 2-year Master’s Degree of...
Dental Sciences in Orthodontics (MDSc Orthod) and the Doctoral Degree of Dental Sciences in Orthodontics (DDSc Orthod). The majority of orthodontic programs exist in government-supported universities such as Cairo University, Alexandria University, Al-Azhar University, Mansoura University, Tanta University, Suez-Canal University, Ain Shams University, and El Menya University, but recently 3 private programs opened in Cairo. The programs at Cairo and Alexandria universities are conducted in English and admit international students.

The Egyptian Orthodontic Society has about 300 members who meet annually and publish the Egyptian Orthodontic Journal. A typical orthodontic practice has 2 or 3 dental chairs, employs 1 dental nurse, focuses on children and teenagers, and imports orthodontic supplies primarily from Germany, United States, and Italy. The orthodontist does not delegate patient treatment. The overall treatment fee is generally less than $1,000 (US).