

# Understanding International Graduate Admissions

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# Topics for Discussion

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Key Concepts and Terms

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# General Concepts

International Applicants are different

- May have unique document requirements before evaluation
- May require additional test requirements before admission
- May also have immigration requirements upon admission
- May also have credit requirements upon enrollment



# Key Terms

## Official Documents

- May be unable to get additional “original” documents – national policies, time period, institutional closings, lost documents, etc.
- Ask for “official” documents, not originals
- Maintain and publish country-specific requirements
- Very uncommon for non-English-speaking countries to send original, sealed envelopes



# Key Terms

## Undergraduate

- In the US, “undergraduate” refers to a first degree, referred to as a Bachelor degree
- In other countries, the first degree level is considered “graduate” level because they must have graduated from upper secondary education for admission



# Key Terms

## Graduate

- In the US, graduate programs require a first degree
- In many other countries, “graduate” refers to post-secondary graduation, while “post-graduate” refers to those academic programs that require a Bachelor for admission



# Key Terms

## Translation

- Translations should be a literal, word-for-word translation from another language into English
- They should not be interpretive and should not attempt to convert credits or grades
- Official translations are done by the institution or legal translator in the country of study
- Acceptable translations are done by a member of the American Translator's Association



# Key Terms

## Translation, Continued

- The more you have to rely on the translation, the more important it is to require high-quality translations
- Learn to recognize the characters in other alphabets for common terms
- Free Resource: *Index of Educational Terms*, International Education Research Foundation





# Key Terms

## Evaluation

- Formal comparison of educational credentials from one educational system to another
- Allows recipient to compare applicants from a variety of educational systems in a similar framework
- Typically covers recognition, credit and grade conversions, equivalency, and more



# Key Terms

## Benchmark Credential

- Refers to a point of transition from one level of education to the next
- US examples: high school diploma, Bachelor degree, Masters degree



# Key Terms

## Placement Recommendations

- Suggestions for equivalency of a particular credential; not mandates
- National Council on the Evaluation of Foreign Educational Credentials (AACRAO, NAFSA, ACE, CGS, IIE, and AACCC) defunct
- Typically refers to a credential's placement within its own educational framework
- May identify how it could be used within its own country's system



# Key Terms

## Grades

- In the US, transcripts include subject names and grades, which are a qualitative assessment of student Performance
- This may be awarded in terms of a percentage, number on a scale, letter grades, or other measures
- These types of quantifiable measurements of grades are common throughout the world



# Key Terms

- Qualitative assessment might be different:
  - Earned marks out of maximum possible marks
  - Excellent, very good, good, pass, fail
  - Degree classification
  - 12/20, 45/60, etc.
  - Scale of 1-5, 1-10, 7-1, or any number of others
- Grades that are similar to US but different:
  - AA, BA, BB, CB, CC, etc.
  - 5.0 scale instead of 4.0 scale
  - Percentage scale using larger portion of scale



# Key Terms

## Transcripts

- In the US, academic records showing courses and grades are usually called transcripts
- Elsewhere, academic records may be referred to as: statement of marks, marks sheet, addendum to diploma, *releve de notes*, statement of results, *certificado de estudios*, academic extract, study book, etc.
- Transcript may have no meaning or may mean an enrollment record (no subjects & grades)



# Key Terms

## Grading Scale

- In US, grade ranges are defined on a scale for measuring success on a continuum
- Other terminology used to identify scale:
  - Grading scheme / Marking scheme
  - Assessment scheme / Evaluation scheme
  - Classification / Division of degree
  - Minimum pass / Passing standard
  - Progression rules / Assessment regulations
  - Academic Regulations / Rules of promotion



# Key Terms

## Degree Plan

- Useful to determine upper division or percentage of program completion (transfer)
- Alternate names in other systems:
  - Study plan
  - Syllabus
  - Academic calendar (common in Canada)
  - *Plan de estudios*
  - Catalog
  - Degree Regulations
  - Program Structure / Curriculum





# Key Terms

## Accreditation

- In the US, a mechanism for validating the quality of an institution or program
- May refer to institutional accreditation or program accreditation
- In US, types of accreditation: regional, national, or professional/programmatic



# Key Terms

## Recognition

- Method of determining an educational institution's validity outside the US
- Conferred by governmental agency:
  - Ministry of (Higher) Education
  - University Grants Commission
  - Secretary of Education
  - Specialized studies may be done by non-education branches: military, health, nursing, dental, etc.



# Key Terms

## Bologna Process

- Europe-wide educational structure of 3 cycles:
  - First Cycle (usually, bachelor) is 3-4 years
  - Second Cycle (usually, masters) is 2-1 years
  - Total of first and second is 5 years
  - Third Cycle is Doctoral degree
- Goal: increase transparency and mobility for students: English diploma supplement with subjects, credits, grades, and system outline



# Key Terms

## Credit Systems

- In the US, a credit hour is the quantifying unit of measure with fixed correlation between class time and outside preparation (studying, papers); 30 semester credits = 1 year Full Time
- Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS): 120 CATS credits = 1 year FT
- European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS): 60 ECTS credits = 1 year FT



# Key Terms

## False Cognates

- Refers to words in other languages that appear to be the same as the word in English but have different meaning or use
- Example: *Bachiller(ato)* is often translated as “Bachelor” but might be high school graduation credential (Mexico), a post-secondary sub-degree level (Peru), OR a Bachelor degree (Honduras) , depending on the country



# Country-Specifics

## Mexico: *Cedula*

- Cedula – professional credential awarded upon graduation; can be verified online
- Proof of award of degree

www.cedulaprofesional.sep.gob.mx/cedula/indexAvanzada.action

SEP SECRETARÍA DE EDUCACIÓN PÚBLICA

REGISTRO NACIONAL DE PROFESIONISTAS

Consejos para una mejor búsqueda | Preguntas frecuentes | Video de ayuda | Contacto

Fecha de actualización de la información: 23 de julio de 2013

### CRITERIOS DE BÚSQUEDA

\* Número de Cédula:  Acepto

\* Los campos señalados con asterisco son obligatorios

[Búsqueda detallada](#)

### DETALLE DEL REGISTRO

Número de Cédula: 5112022

Nombre: JESSICA MARCELA DUARTE DUARTE

Género: MUJER

Profesión: LICENCIATURA EN ADMINISTRACIÓN

Año de expedición: 2008

Institución: INSTITUTO TECNOLÓGICO DE CIUDAD JUÁREZ

Tipo: C1

Los datos que se reflejan son preliminares, en caso de requerir un documento "Antecedentes Profesionales" ante la Dirección General de Profesiones

### RESULTADOS DE LA BÚSQUEDA

Cédula	Nombre	Primer apellido	Segundo apellido
5112022	JESSICA MARCELA	DUARTE	DUARTE



# Country-Specifics

## Mexico: *Carta da Pasante*

- Student has completed the coursework for a degree but not other degree requirements (professional exam, community service, thesis, etc.) and degree has not been awarded
- In Mexico, may be eligible for employment at a lower level than degree-holder in the field
- Some institutions allow graduate admissions (4+ year programs), depending on the missing items; others will only admit as transfer



# Country-Specifics

## India: Marksheet

- Academic record in many South Asian countries
- Also known as statement of marks
- May be issued annually or semesterly
- Shows subjects examined, marks earned, and maximum possible marks
- Consolidated marksheets show only final, passing grades





# Country-Specifics

## India: College

- In India, can refer to upper secondary school or post-secondary institution, depending on the program and awarding body
- Affiliated college: Parent university is degree-granting authority, but affiliated colleges oversee the actual teaching
- Curriculum & syllabus determined by parent university & carried out at affiliated college



# Country-Specifics

India: 3+2

- Following upper secondary education (10+2 = 12 years of primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary), students may enter Bachelor degree programs of 2, 3, or 4 years' duration
- The ordinary/pass BA, BS, or BCom is typically 3 years presently and is referred to as 10+2+3
- After graduating from the Bachelor, students can enroll in a 2-year Masters, or a 3+2



# Country-Specifics

## India: Attested Copies

- Attestations are official copies of academic credentials, made when institutions only issue one “original” document or do not issue/mail documents directly to third parties
- Acceptable attestations from India may include: Registrar, Principal, Controller of Exams
- Also recommend EducationUSA or US India Education Foundation
- Notarized documents are not official



# Country-Specifics

## India: Paper Titles

- Some marksheets may list only subject codes rather than subject names
- Typically, the paper titles (subject exam names corresponding to the codes) are listed on the overleaf or may be identified in the syllabus
- With attested copies instead of originals, may have to request paper titles separately




# Country-Specifics

## India: Minimum Pass

- The minimum passing grade, often the sole indicator of the grading scheme on documents

## India: Conceded Pass

- The institution may allow students to pass a course even if they did not meet the minimum passing grade; may award “grace marks”
  - Often referred to as a conceded pass or compensated pass; similar to D grade in US
- 

# Country-Specifics

## India: Supplemental

- Supplemental exams refer to additional sittings (at a later date) for exams previously not passed due to failure or missing the exam
- Consolidated marksheets often list subjects in degree-plan order and only show final passing grades; typically don't identify supplementals
- Sometimes passing marks are carried forward if entire semester's marksheet is reissued (not just new results) but only some exams retaken



# Country-Specifics

United Kingdom: Degree classification

- Degree Classification indicates overall level of performance in countries using marking system
- First Class/First Division = A student overall, even if individual exams have lower marks
- Degree class may be determined on basis of specific time frame (final 2 years of program) or entire program or only for major field of study



# Country-Specifics

United Kingdom: Taught degree

- Graduate programs with lecture classes, coursework, papers, or exams
- Result in transcripts and grades

United Kingdom: Research degree

- Requires years of independent research and defense of thesis but no grades/transcripts
- Typically no grades or degree classification





# Country-Specifics

## France: Coefficients

- Method used on many Francophone credentials to identify weight of some subjects versus others
- Similar to concept of credits
- May be inferred when comparing max value
- 13/20 compared to 26/40 means that the second subject has twice the weight of the first, though they have the same grade outcome



# Country-Specifics

## France: *L-M-D* System

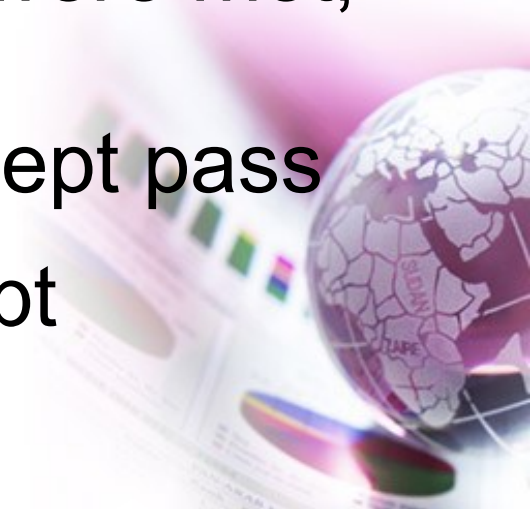
- France (and some of Francophone Africa) have modified the Bologna Accord terminology:
  - *Licence*: 1<sup>st</sup> stage; 3 years of undergrad study
  - *Mastere*: 2<sup>nd</sup> stage; 2 years of study
  - Doctorat: 3<sup>rd</sup> stage: at least 2 additional years
- *Maitirise* is a separate credential representing 4 total years of undergrad study (usually *Licence* + 1-year *Maitrise*, or 2-year *DEUG* + 1-year *Licence* + 1-year *Maitrise*)



# Country-Specifics

Russia: Credit / Pass Зачет

- Common grade for Russian credentials
- Only 5 exams are graded on 1-5 scale each semester; remaining subjects are Pass/Fail
- Use pass/fail for electives, no final exam, etc.
- Credit/Pass means all requirements were met, but no way to know where student's performance fell on 5-point scale except pass
- NOT like pass/fail in US; no D concept



# Country-Specifics

## Russia: Attachment to the Diploma

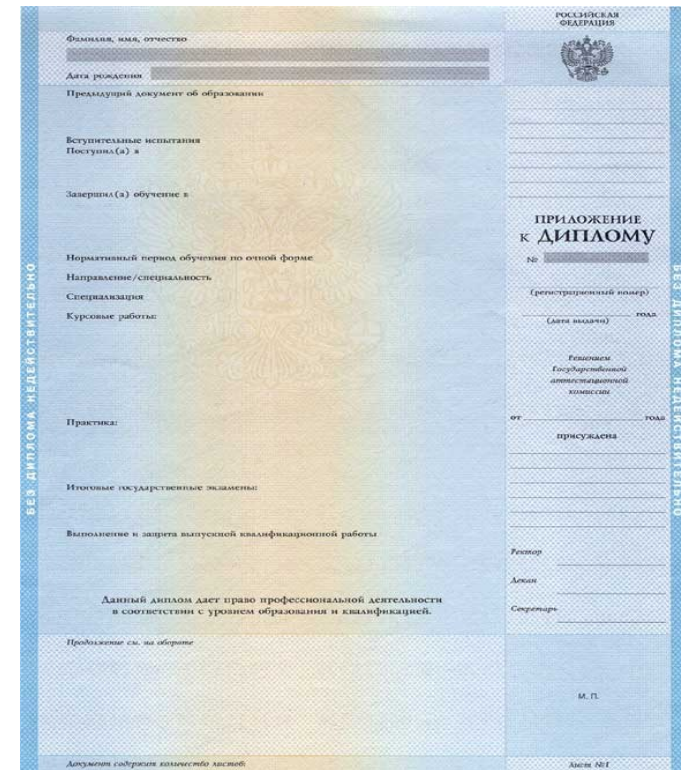
- Attachment to the Diploma is the transcript of academic record
- Does not show individual semesters, only total hours and final overall grade for each subject (whether it was taken for 1 semester or 10)



# Country-Specifics

## Russia: Security Features

- Russian documents have many security features to deter fraud:
  - Security paper
  - Copy protection
  - UV images
  - Standardized format
  - UV fibers embedded in paper
  - Printing dates linked to degree numbers



# Country-Specifics

## Nigeria: Direct Entry

- Student met minimum school leaving exam and post-upper-secondary credential (OND, HND, or professional qualification)
- Admitted to 200-level of 4-year Bachelor degree

## Nigeria: Concessional Entry

- Students who have only upper secondary school leaving certificate; admitted to year 1



# Evaluation Fundamentals

## Major Education Systems

- US: 6+6, leads to high school diploma; Ex: China, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan
- British: 6+5+2, leads to O levels & A levels (some moved to 12 year); Ex: Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Ghana, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Zimbabwe
- French: 6+7, leads to Bacc; Ex: Benin, Cameroon, Canada (Quebec), Morocco, Togo
- Russian: 4+5+2, leads to Cert of Sec Complete Gen Ed; Ex: Bulgaria, Poland, Ukraine, Uzbekistan



## Country Categorization Chart

	<b>U.S.</b>	<b>U.K.</b>	<b>France</b>	<b>Soviet</b>	<b>Other</b>
1	Argentina	Australia	Algeria	Albania	Austria
2	Bahrain	Bahamas	Angola	Armenia	Belgium
3	Botswana	Bangladesh	Benin	Azerbaijan	Central Amer.
4	Brazil	Canada	Burkina Faso	Belarus	Chile
5	China	Caribbean	Cameroon	Bulgaria	Cuba
6	Colombia	Ghana	Canada-Quebec	Czech Republic	Cyprus
7	Costa Rica	Hong Kong	Central Afr Rep	Estonia	Dom. Republic
8	Egypt	India	Chad	Former Yugo.	Denmark
9	Eritrea	Indonesia	Congo	Georgia	Ecuador
10	Ethiopia	Ireland	Cote d'Ivoire	Hungary	Finland
11	Iran	Kenya	Djibouti	Kazakhstan	Faroe Islands
12	Iraq	Lesotho	France	Kyrgyzstan	Germany
13	Israel	Liberia	French Guiana	Latvia	Greece
14	Japan	Macau	Gabon	Lithuania	Greenland
15	Jordan	Malawi	Guadeloupe	Moldova	Iceland
16	Korea	Malaysia	Guinea	Mongolia	Italy
17	Kuwait	Malta	Haiti	Poland	Mozambique
18	Liberia	Myanmar	Ivory Coast	Romania	Netherlands
19	Liby	Nepal	Lebanon	Russia	Nicaragua
20	Mexico	New Zealand	Madagascar	Slovakia	Norway
21	Oman	Nigeria	Mali	Slovenia	Peru
22	Philippines	Pakistan	Martinique	Tadzhikistan	Portugal
23	Qatar	Scotland	Morocco	Turkmenistan	Scandanavia
24	Saudi Arabia	Singapore	New Caledonia	Ukraine	Spain
25	Sierra Leone	South Africa	Niger	Uzbekistan	Sweden
26	South Korea	Sri Lanka	Reunion	Yugoslavia	Switzerland
27	Swaziland	Tanzania	Senegal		Turkey
28	Syria	Trinidad/Tobago	Togo		Uruguay
29	Taiwan	Uganda	Tunisia		Venezuela
30	Thailand	UK	Zaire		
31	UAE	Zambia			
32	US	Zimbabwe			
33	Vietnam				
34	Yemen				

Taken from "Secondary Education: Benchmarks for Freshman Admission"





# Evaluation Fundamentals

## General Rules for Credits

- One year of credit = one year of credit
- One year FT study = 30-32 semester credit hours
- 4 year bachelor = 120-128 (up to 140) hours
- Contact Hours:
  - 15 class hours → 1 semester hour
  - 45 class hours → 3 semester hours
  - 45 lab hours → 1 semester hour



# Evaluation Fundamentals

## 4 Types of Educational Credential Conversions

- Credit-Based Credentials: convert indigenous credits to comparable US credits
- Hours-Based Credentials: convert hours to US credits
- Marks-Based Credentials: relative weight of subject is based on maximum value of marks
- Subject-Based Credentials: relative weight of subject is based on number of subjects



# Evaluation Fundamentals

What training is required to evaluate?

- On-the-job training by senior evaluator
- NAFSA or AACRAO workshops, institutes, conferences, and meetings
- Private agency webinars (ECE, WES, etc.)
- On-site training (Transcript Research, WES, ECE, etc.)
- In-house documentation



# Evaluation Fundamentals

## Print/Physical Library

- AACRAO Publications:  
<http://www.aacrao.org/publications.aspx>
- Educational Credential Evaluators:  
<http://publications.ece.org/>
- International Education Research Foundation:  
[http://ierf.org/index.php/institutions/country\\_index/](http://ierf.org/index.php/institutions/country_index/)
- International Handbook of Universities:  
<http://www.iau-aiu.net/content/reference-publications>



# Evaluation Fundamentals

- Electronic Library – Databases
- AACRAO EDGE: <http://edge.aacrao.org>
- AEI-NOOSR: <https://www.aei.gov.au/CEP>
- Eurypedia from Eurydice:  
<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice>
- IAU Higher Education Systems:  
<http://www.iau-aiu.net/content/he-systems>
- IAU List of Universities:  
<http://www.iau-aiu.net/content/list-heis>



# Evaluation Fundamentals

- Electronic Library – Publications
- EducationUSA:  
<https://www.educationusa.info/secure/login.php>
- IQAS: <http://employment.alberta.ca/immigration/5218.html>
- NORRIC: <http://norric.org/files/education-systems>
- NUFFIC:  
<http://www.nuffic.nl/en/diploma-recognition/country-modules>
- Online Guide to Ed Systems around the World:  
<http://www.nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/default.aspx?id=10822>
- Researching Intl Ed Systems & Institutions:  
<http://www.transcriptresearch.com/Research.pdf>



# Evaluation Fundamentals

## Asking Questions Online

- AACRAO International Activities Mailing List:

<http://lists.aacrao.org/mailman/listinfo/internationalactivities>

- The Connection: <http://theconnection.ece.org/Home>

- EducationUSA Discussion Forum:

<https://www.educationusa.info/secure/login.php>

- Inter-L – International Education Networking:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/inter-l/>

- NAFSA Admissions & Credential Evaluation Network:

<http://www.nafsa.org/groups/forums.aspx?boardid=269404&groupid=16>

- Texas International Education Specialists:

[tex-intl-specialists@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:tex-intl-specialists@utlists.utexas.edu)



# More Training and Info

<http://transcriptresearch.com/institutions/>

- *Researching Educational Systems and Institutions*
- *Glossary of Foreign Transcript Evaluations*
- *Credentials Evaluation: Using the Internet*
- *Foreign Transcript Evaluations for Beginners*
- *Bogus Institutions and Accrediting Bodies*
- **And more**





# Thank you !

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