



AICE Newsletter

December 2016

Message from the Editor:

Greetings from everyone at AICE.

In trying political times, it is difficult to write an editorial about non-controversial topics. The US presidential election is still very much on the minds of international educators, and most definitely the mainstream media. Meanwhile in Europe, the speculation about the repercussions of Brexit continue to funnel very similar discourse. It is prudent to be concerned about the profession we commit ourselves to. However, I choose a cautiously optimistic outlook, knowing that international education is not a trend but a reality in today's global marketplace. International educators and students alike have faced challenges in the past, and many of us weathered the ebbs and flows of the industry. In this spirit, we can continue to overcome whatever challenges lie ahead.

I have recently returned from the 2016 UK NARIC conference in London. This year's theme was "Global connections, new directions" which I found very appropriate given the current climate of international education in the United Kingdom. Despite the undercurrent of concern for the implications of Brexit on the international education market, there was an underlying optimism, fueled by recognition of new collaborations, particularly in China and Middle East / North Africa regions. Furthermore, I found it refreshing to observe international educators in the UK exhibit the same enthusiasm for their profession as we do. It was a pleasure presenting a workshop on the nuances of US secondary education, finding that the United States system of secondary education is no less complex to foreigners than the British-based secondary and intermediate examination-based systems. In summary, I find there is much to gain from interaction and collaboration

with colleagues abroad, for, while sharing the same values and interests, they bring a wealth of expertise to the table.

I would like to wish all readers a wonderful Holiday Season and a Happy New Year on behalf of AICE. We look forward to continuing to set the standard for international credential evaluation and comparative education research.

Sincerely,

Aleks Morawski

Editor, Chair Research Publication

Association of International Credential Evaluators

AICE 2017 Symposium:

The 2017 AICE symposium will take place April 5 – 6 in Minneapolis, MN following AACRAO's annual meeting. The Planning Committee is busy preparing an engaging program of panel discussions focusing on Setting the Standard for Graduate Admissions – Three-year degrees and other admissions dilemmas.

In this issue, we are pleased to share the details of the second module – Three-year Bachelor's Degree: South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka)

Module 2.

Three-Year Bachelor's Degree: South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka)



The three-year degree debate from countries in South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka) is one that continues to persist given the steady number of international students seeking graduate degrees at U.S. institutions of higher education. As the second largest exporter of international students to the U.S. after China and its leading source from South Asia, India's three-year bachelor's degree is of particular interest.

India's three-year Bachelor's degree in arts and sciences has been typically a three-year program patterned after the British system. Attempts were recently made by some Indian universities to champion the idea of expanding the three-year program by another year to include a research component and additional courses at the advanced level, particularly in the sciences. These institutions viewed this move as essential if India intends to be competitive globally, especially in scientific research and development.

This push toward expanding the three-year into a four-year degree was met with strong resistance from the University Grants Commission (UGC), India's higher education regulatory and funding body. The conflict between some key public universities and the UGC concerning the four-year bachelor's degree came to a head in September 2014. The UGC ordered those institutions that had either embarked on offering the four-year bachelor's degree or were already offering them, to abandon the program and revert to the standard three-year programs or lose their funding altogether.

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On the other hand, Pakistan, India's neighbor, is taking steps to adopting the four-year bachelor's degree, and reforming its two- and three-year degree programs. Some universities in Sri Lanka, India's other neighbor, are beginning to offer a four-year bachelor's degree.

The proponents of India's four-year bachelor's degree, like their counterparts in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, see the additional year as a more holistic approach to teaching and learning, allowing for broad-based training in the humanities and sciences. The abrupt dismissal of the four-year program by the UGC is seen by many of the educators and the institutions in India as shortsighted and lacking any serious academic discussion that is supported by convincing facts and arguments. Many foresee that the UGC's resistance toward the four-year degree will only push students away from studying sciences, pursuing careers in sciences and stymieing India's chances in scientific innovation.

While educators in India grapple with the weaknesses and global competitiveness of their three-year Bachelor degree as compared to the four-year Bachelor, a cursory search of graduate admissions requirements of U.S. institutions of higher education shows variations in the acceptance of the Indian three-year degree. The three-year Indian bachelor's degree appears to be viewed by some universities as sufficient preparation for admission to graduate school while regarded as insufficient by others. There are U.S. graduate schools and credential evaluation services that consider the three-year Indian degrees from select universities as equivalent to the U.S. bachelor's degree, while others recommend three years of undergraduate credit equivalence.

TOPICS

Three-Year Bachelor's Degree: South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka)

Indian Institution Ranking

Some U.S. institutions and credential evaluation services are considering three-year bachelor degrees as U.S. equivalent based on the ranking of the institution in India.

- *Does the rank of the Indian institution in the country's education hierarchy play a factor in the eligibility of a three-year bachelor's degree holder for graduate admission?*
- *Who determines the ranking of universities in India? And, what are the criteria to determine the ranking of institutions? How is quality control enforced?*

U.S. Perspective on Indian Degrees

Some U.S. institutions and credential evaluators, recognize the three-year Bachelor's degree from India as sufficient preparation for admission to graduate studies.

- *Is the General Education course component of U.S. bachelor degree programs applied to the three-year bachelor degrees from India (given its absence from the Indian bachelor's degree and the argument from some Indian universities supporting its inclusion as part of a "more holistic approach to teaching and learning")?*
- *Is focus to be placed on the Major-specific coursework of the three-year bachelor degree?*
- *Why are the Indian three-year bachelor's degrees assessed based on institution ranking and degree classification, when the same is not true of three-year degrees from other countries?*

Indian Universities Perspective on their 3-year degree

Some institutions of higher education in India (as cited above) have argued on the limitations of the three-year degree and in favor of expanding the degree to four years.

- *If the three-year bachelor degree is seen by some institutions in India as inadequate preparation for graduate school, should this be the deciding factor in determining graduate admission eligibility at U.S. institutions?*
- *Is the UGC's order for universities to revert back to 3yr programs primarily a funding issue?*
- *Are the 3-year Bachelor degrees treated differently than the 4-year degree holders in India? Is the quality of the 3-year Bachelor considered to be less than the 4-year Bachelor degrees in India?*
- *Are holders of 3-year Indian Bachelor degrees at a disadvantage in the employment market compared to holders of 4-year Bachelor degrees?*

Three-year bachelor degree classification

Some U.S. institutions and credential evaluation services are considering three-year bachelor degrees as U.S. equivalent based on the classification of the degree. For example, a three-year bachelor degree First Class with Distinction/Division I is required for admission to some graduate schools.

- *Is the classification of the three-year degree conferred considered a criterion for admission to graduate school?*

AICE® Needs You:

Dear Friend,

The Association of International Credential Evaluators (AICE), a non-profit professional association of international credential evaluators from private credentialing services and U.S. academic institutions, will hold our second annual Symposium on April 5-6 at the Hilton Hotel in Minneapolis, MN.

We're currently looking for sponsors for the 2017 Symposium. Can we count on your support?

The theme for the 2017 Symposium is "Setting the Standard for Graduate Admissions: Three-year degrees and other admissions challenges." Our 2016 Phoenix Symposium attracted more than 30 high-level decision makers from academic institutions, non-profit education associations and private credential evaluation services from around the country. We anticipate the attendance will double for the 2017 Symposium.

We hope we can count on you to sponsor an event at the AICE 2017 Symposium. Please consider a sponsorship donation from the options listed in the attached Sponsorship Form. As a sponsor, your donation will be recognized at our event in several ways to help increase brand visibility and make a lasting impression. Your name will be placed on all materials and banners that publicize the event, including our website, and you will be recognized verbally at the event itself. If you wish to include any merchandise in addition to your sponsorship, it will be displayed at the Symposium for the attendees.

We hope that we can count on you to help support our cause. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at info@alice-eval.org.

Thanks in advance for your consideration!

Sincerely
Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert
President & Treasurer
Association of International Credential Evaluators
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AICE® Forum Highlights

This section includes highlights from the monthly AICE® Forum in November 2016. Although this is meant to serve as a synopsis of the discussion, additional details can be obtained by contacting the Members listed by each topic.



AUSTRALIA – TAFE Certificate IV

AICE received an inquiry regarding possible transfer credit for a TAFE Certificate IV from Australia. However, based on internationaleducation.gov - free online profile on Australia from the Australian Government, a TAFE Certificate IV is considered a secondary credential because the minimum admission requirement is grade 10. Based on that information, we would consider it equivalent to a US High School Diploma.

~Mario Caruso, International Evaluation Services, LLC (AICE Endorsed Member)

~Aleks Morawski, Foreign Credits (AICE Endorsed Member)

UNITED KINGDOM – City & Guilds of London Institute



Applicant contacted Beth's office with the following query: "I am interested to determine the equivalency of my engineering credentials between here in the UK and USA. In the UK we have a scale called NVQ which goes from 1 (basic entry level job) to 8 (PhD). I have been rated 6. I understand that in the USA Engineering is covered by P.Eng legislation in each of the states but I have heard of some cases where UK Chartered Engineer can obtain P.Eng without to FE exams. Please advise?"

In general, within the British system of education, the City and Guilds Graduateship designation, which this applicant has, is eligible for acceptance to graduate school. Therefore, AICE considers the C&G Graduateship designation would likewise be considered equivalent to a Bachelor's degree here in the U.S. (Note: when ABET in the U.S. stopped evaluating engineering degrees several years ago, NCEES (www.ncees.org) took over. NCEES does write credential evaluations, and the state boards now refer applicants for licensure to NCEES.)

~Beth Cotter, Foreign Credential Evaluations (AICE Endorsed Member)



CHINA – Verification of High School Documents

Yuriko Bassett discussed the trend of alternative secondary school curricula from China, based on the example of a non-governmentally recognized religious secondary school using the home schooling curriculum.

~Yuriko Bassett, Azusa Pacific University (AICE Affiliate Member)

GRADE CONVERSION

A university representative proposed the methodology of GPA calculation by calculating an indigenous grade average and converting the final result to the US A-F scale. They are now required to prepare a numerical GPA on a 4.0 scale, to the closest tenth of a point. Drew Feder (Credential Consultants) and Kyle Meltzer (Foreign Credits) posited methodologies of grade conversion and GPA calculation where each individual grade is converted to the US equivalent, and a mathematical average is calculated factoring the weighting of each course. Drew shared the methodology description from the [GRADE database](#), as well as his [presentation](#) from a NAFSA regional conference.



~Drew Feder, Credential Consultants (AICE Affiliate Member), Kyle Meltzer, Foreign Credits (AICE Endorsed Member)

Publications

- AACRAO has a new publication: [The AACRAO International Guide: A Resource for International Education Professionals](#). Beth Cotter and Jasmin Saidi contributed to this publication (section on Diploma Mills and Outsourcing International Credential Evaluations with a Historic Perspective). You may order this publication online or by post.
- A number of AICE members are contributing authors for the [NAFSA Online Guide on Education Systems Around the World](#), including the following members:

Alan Saidi – Republic of Korea

Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert – Hong Kong, Iran, Senegal, United Kingdom

Professional Development and Events

It's not too early to start thinking about the **2017 AICE Symposium, April 5-6, 2017 in Minneapolis, MN**. This year's theme is **"Setting the Standard for Graduate Admissions: Three-year degrees and other admissions dilemmas"**

Register Now!

Conferences and Presentations

NAFSA Annual Conference

"International Graduate Admissions - Examining the Requirements for International Degrees"

June 2, 2017, 10:00 AM – 11:15 AM, Los Angeles, CA.

Presenters: Drew Feder, Aleks Morawski, Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert

Blogs

ACEI hosts **"Academic Exchange,"** a blog on education-related topics:

Visit Blog!

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Academic Credentials Evaluation Institute

MEMBERSHIP

Interested in becoming a member of AICE? Please visit our website at www.aice-eval.org and learn about our membership categories and contact us at info@aice-eval.org with any questions you may have.

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