



AICE Newsletter

January 2017

Message from the Editor:

Greetings from everyone at AICE.

The year 2017 brings a fresh start to the calendar year. In the world of professional credential evaluation, this is also a time for reflection on policies and procedures, and an opportunity to make changes. With this in mind, I would like to challenge the reader with thinking about equivalency statements for non-standard credentials earned at recognized academic institutions.

When discussing education systems, it is easy to identify patterns of secondary and tertiary education based on standard benchmark credentials, such as those which mark completion of secondary school, first undergraduate and graduate degrees. We refer to these as high school diplomas, bachelor's and master's degrees, respectively, in the United States. However, there are many legitimate, credit-bearing programs that do not fit into this framework. Professional degrees, such as those designed to train doctors, lawyers, educators, among others, are some examples, but these programs always have prescribed admission requirements, and can be quantified in years of full time study.

Certificate programs are more nebulous. At various levels, they provide legitimate, credit-bearing instruction, from academically recognized institutions, but in programs not designed to lead to a full degree. At other times, they can be purely vocational in nature. Some of the first questions I ask when evaluating such programs is whether or not there was an academic admission requirement, and if I can ascertain that the coursework in the program is recognized by other recognized academic institutions. Assuming these questions are answered affirmatively, the

next challenge is determining the appropriate US equivalence. The simple approach is a quantification of time or academic credit. However, US institutions offer many certificate and diploma-type programs, usually designed to deliver training in a specific field or discipline. There are no rules governing such certificates, however, and their scope and content is dependent on the issuing institution. Can we use these as US equivalencies?

The challenge, therefore, is to think of non-standard equivalencies you may have used, or non-standard programs offered at your institution, and share your thoughts with the AICE community. I welcome your comments at the monthly AICE Credential Forum for endorsed members and affiliates, as well as your letters and missives, which can be published in future issues of the AICE Standard.

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 third module – Beyond South Asia and Bologna: Three-year degrees from Australia, South Africa and Israel

Module 3.

Beyond South Asia and Bologna: Three-year degrees from Australia, South Africa and Israel ...



Three-year bachelor degrees in Australia and South Africa are modeled after the UK educational system. Australian Bachelor's (pass or ordinary) degrees require three years of full-time study or the part-time equivalent. These qualifications include Bachelor of Arts, Science and Commerce, i.e., BA, BSc. and BCom; Bachelor of Applied Science (BAppSc) and Bachelor of Business Administration (BBusAdmin). In Australia, four-year Bachelor's degrees exist in professional fields like Engineering, Education, Law, etc. An Honours degree usually follows an (Ordinary) three-year Bachelor's degree. It comprises one year of study in an area of specialization. Students are typically selected to pursue the honours degree based on academic achievement. The three-year Bachelor's degree is often accepted for access to higher education degrees. An Honours Degree is normally required for access to higher research degrees.

A major part of the history of education in South Africa has to do with apartheid which was first established in 1949. Apartheid became dismantled between 1990 and 1993 and the years since have allowed for all racial groups to play "catch-up" with education. Admission into Bachelor's degree programs is traditionally based on completion of year 12 (standard 10). Students sit for the Senior Certificate Examination (an external examination) as they approach the end of standard 10. The results of these examinations will determine whether one may be admitted into a Bachelor's degree program. In South Africa Bachelor's degrees require three years of full-time study or the part-time equivalent. These qualifications include Bachelor of Arts, Science and Commerce, i.e., BA, BSc. and BCom and the Bachelor of Social Science (BSocSc) degrees. Four to six-year bachelor degrees exist in professional fields like engineering, law, architecture and medicine. An Honours degree usually follows a three-year Bachelor's degree.

It comprises one year of study in an area of specialization. Students are selected to pursue the Honours degree based on academic achievement.

In Israel, admission to higher education requires the Matriculation Certificate (Teudat Bagrut) and the Psychometric Exam, which bears resemblance to the SAT in the USA. Historically, only universities could offer Bachelor's level programs, but that option has long since been extended to colleges. Bachelor's Degree programs in Israel are typically three years in length. Exceptions to this are Bachelor's Degrees in Nursing, Pharmacy, Education and Engineering, which are four years in length and medical and dental degrees which take six years. Degrees are heavily focused on the major field of study, often with little time remaining for electives in unrelated subjects. However, pursuit of double majors is quite common. In contrast to three-year degrees in Europe and South Asia, Israeli three-year Bachelor's Degrees are widely recognized as equivalent to four-year bachelor's degrees in the US. One reason for this assessment is the level of study required to earn the *Bagrut* certificate at the end of High School. The *Bagrut* can be considered to be on the level of the UK's A-Level exams. Undergraduate transfer credit is awarded in the US for *Bagrut* exams in academic subjects completed at the level of 3 or higher (on a scale of 1 to 6). As such, students entering Israeli universities can be considered to have already completed one year of undergraduate level study, covering the typical general education requirements of US universities. In addition, academic requirements in Israel tend to be rigorous. Students are typically older than their peers abroad on account of mandatory military service and the common practice of taking time off to work or travel prior to matriculation. In addition, the number of courses taken per year is generally higher than at US institutions and summers are often spent preparing for exams or writing term papers.

TOPICS

Beyond South Asia and Bologna: Three-year degrees from Australia, South Africa and Israel ...

AUSTRALIA

- Graduates from 3-year Bachelor's degrees are often admitted into Master's programs in Australian universities. This is almost universal for non-research based Master's programs.
 - *Should the same practice be true for US institutions with non-research based Master's programs?*
- What are the employment implications for graduates of Australian 3-year Bachelor's programs in Australia and in the USA?
 - *Australian Bachelor's degrees vary in duration depending on the area of study.*
 - *Are the graduates of 3-year Bachelor's degrees (Arts, Commerce, etc.) prepared to enter the workforce or should these degrees be considered preparatory for the additional training (either an Honours degree or a Master's degree)?*

SOUTH AFRICA

- Since admission to Bachelor's degree programs is based on successful passing of external examinations, better prepared students are admitted.
 - *Would this external examination serve as an extra level of college preparation (such as A-levels in the UK) or as a compensation for uneven level of secondary education in secondary schools (such as CXC exams in the Caribbean)?*
 - *Are graduates of 3-year Bachelor's programs accepted into Master's programs by South African universities?*
 - *What are employment implications for graduates of South African 3-year Bachelor's degrees in South Africa and in the USA?*

ISRAEL

- Should the grades on *Bagrut* exams be taken into account when deciding on whether these exams should be equivalent to college-level academic work?
 - *Should 3-year Bachelor's degrees from Israel be treated differently from 3-year degrees from other countries? Why or why not?*
 - *What are employment implications for graduates of Israeli 3-year Bachelor's programs in Israel and in the USA?*

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
www.alice-eval.org

AICE® Forum Highlights

This section includes highlights from the monthly AICE® Forum in December 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.

AICE Credential Forum - December 15, 2016



DENMARK – Copenhagen University Grade Conversion

AICE Endorsed member's grade conversion scale is higher than that posted by Danish American Fulbright, as well as some other evaluation services. Grade conversion from this institution does vary, most likely dependent on initial conversion to ECTS and then to the US scale, or direct (indigenous to US) conversion. AICE members concurred that direct conversion is more appropriate, and cited Drew Feder and Aleks Morawski's presentation on the topic of grade conversion and the GRADE Database methodology at the 2016 AICE Phoenix Symposium. Slides for the presentation are available [here](#).

~Sonya Brauchle, Foreign Credits (AICE Endorsed Member)

SOUTH KOREA – Korean GED

Fulbright says that some high - achieving students at the best high schools leave high school to take the Korean GED as not to lower their final rank in their competitive high schools



(<http://www.fulbright.or.kr/en/usec/educationkorea.php>).

However, some Korean students say that if one does do this, they still have to take the Suneung. I've also heard that with the Korean GED, they may simply get into a lower-tier school in Korea. AICE Affiliate's shared the following information from their Korean students:

Korea high school equivalency test is actually called Gum Jung Gosi. This is only available for those who did not complete high school education. After taking Gum Jung Gosi, the government will issue a certificate to confirm that they have completed the high school equivalent. Those who take Gum Jung Gosi must take Suneung also, if they wish to go to a college. Suneung is like SAT (in a very generalized statement). 90 % of high school graduates will take Suneung to show additional edge for college admission. High school graduates with high GPAs can apply for a college without Suneung. Specialized colleges (special foreign languages, technical, etc) require specialized tests and Suneung. But students choose to take Suneung.

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

~Yuriko Bassett, Azusa Pacific University (AICE Affiliate)



SURINAME – Technology University of the Americas (Unrecognized)

AICE Endorsed member SDR received a request for evaluations from students of this institution, disclosing that it is licensed by the government, but not fully accredited.

~Hany Arafat, SDR (AICE Endorsed Member)

AICE Credential Forum - January 19, 2017

ISRAEL – Credit for Religious Institutions

AICE Affiliate asks if transfer credit should be awarded/recommended for Orthodox-based programs which appear to be study abroad programs for non-Israelis. Based on a discussion among Endorsed Members and Affiliates, consensus was reached that apart from formal academic recognition in Israel, no alternative forms of recognition can be applied, unless an autonomous US institution determines that the coursework aligns with their own academic coursework, and grants credit on a case-by-case basis.



~Kisha Cranston, University of Kansas (AICE Affiliate Member)



IRAN – High School Diploma equivalency without Pre-University Year (Pre-1990)

Can U.S. higher education institutions accept the Diplome / the Certificate of Completion of Secondary Study after Grade 11 as proof of high school graduation in absence of the Pre-

University Completion Certificate, which is awarded after an additional year of study? The Certificate of Completion of Secondary Education may be sufficient for limited enrollment into some vocational post-secondary programs in Iran. Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert prepared a historical overview of secondary education in Iran, and consensus was reached that the Certificate of Completion of Secondary Education may, in fact, be sufficient to demonstrate completion of secondary education, for the purpose of enrollment in open-door institutions in the United States.

~Hany Arafat, SDR (AICE Endorsed Member)

Historic Overview of Primary and Lower & Upper Secondary:

Pre-1979 Islamic Revolution

5 years primary (grades 1-5)

3 years middle school/guidance cycle (grades 6, 7, 8)

4 years upper secondary (grades 9, 10, 11, 12)

Post-1979 Islamic Revolution (through 1995)

5 years primary (grades 1-5)

3 years middle school/guidance cycle (grades 6, 7, 8)

4 years upper secondary (grades 9, 10, 11, 12)

1996 – 2013

5 years primary (grades 1-5)

3 years middle school/guidance cycle (grades 6, 7, 8)

3 years upper secondary (grades 9, 10, 11)

1 year pre-university (year 12)

2014 to present NEW

6 years primary (grades 1-6)

3 years lower secondary cycle (grades 7, 8, 9)

3 years upper secondary cycle (grades 10, 11, 12)

1 year pre-university (13th year)

~Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert, ACEI (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 years theme is ***“Setting the Standard for Graduate Admissions: Three-year degrees and other admissions dilemmas”***

Register Now!

Conferences and Presentations

Foreign Credits Inc. will be exhibiting at the Wisconsin Association of International Educators annual conference in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, March 9-10, and the Michigan Association of International Educators annual conference, Lansing, Michigan, March 22-24

“Undergraduate Benchmarks in International Credentials Evaluation” AACRAO Annual Conference, April 4, 2017, 3:45 PM – 4:45 PM, Minneapolis, Minnesota (Beth Cotter, Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert)

“International Graduate Admissions - Examining the Requirements for International Degrees” NAFSA Annual Conference, June 2, 2017, 10:00 AM – 11:15 AM, Los Angeles, CA. (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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