



AICE Newsletter

November 2016

Message from the Editor:

Greetings from everyone at AICE.

Many of us are returning from Regional NAFSA conferences at this time of the year. These events provide excellent opportunities to network, market services, and train our peers and learn new information in the field of international education. As AICE members, we continue the exchange of knowledge in the Credentials Discussion Forum each month. This month, I'd like to take an opportunity to share something interesting I learned while attending the Region II conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Furthermore, in the spirit of sharing, I welcome the readers to contact me with their submissions of articles and editorials to this newsletter.

While in Santa Fe, I co-presented a conference session about online tools for credential evaluation, including a thorough discussion on the different methods of online credential verification. This process is far from uniform, and only certain countries and institutions provide this service. Therefore, I was impressed to learn from my co-presenter that Bulgaria provides one of the most comprehensive online verification databases that is free and accessible to the public. The Bulgarian Ministry of Education, Youth, and Science maintains a register of primary, secondary, vocational and university credentials awarded to Bulgarian students after January 2007. This service was created in response to Turkish allegations that many Bulgarian students possessed fake credentials. Turkey, due to its geographic proximity, is a popular destination for Bulgarian students seeking educational opportunities abroad. By developing this database, the Ministry effectively solved any trust issues with admitting Bulgarian students.

Online verification systems are diverse. Some provide comprehensive information about results, graduation dates, and, as is the case with Bulgaria, scanned versions of the actual documents. Others only confirm the names of graduates. Nevertheless, these tools are immensely valuable to credential evaluators, admissions officers, and credential holders themselves. Therefore, awareness and utilization of such tools becomes an important part of the credential evaluation profession.

Sincerely,
Aleks Morawski
Director of Evaluation Services
Foreign Credits Inc.

AICE 2017 Symposium:

Preparation is under way for the next annual AICE symposium, which will take place April 5 - 6 in Minneapolis, MN following AACRAO's annual meeting.

Program & Schedule for the AICE 2017 Symposium:

April 5, 2017 Welcome Reception 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM Mission American Kitchen & Bar

April 6, 2017 Symposium 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM Millennium Hotel Minneapolis

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 first module – Bologna-patterned Three-year Degrees:

Module 1.

Bologna-patterned Three-year Degrees

The Bologna process of 1999 reformed higher education in much of Western Europe. Before the reforms, most countries' higher education systems (with some notable exceptions) were structured to include a long-cycle first university degree which granted access to doctoral programs. The reforms mandated the development of a 3+2 structure, consisting of a three-year first degree, typically referred to as a Bachelor, and a two-year graduate level degree, typically referred to as a Master.

The European three-year Bachelor degree brings about several challenges. Fundamentally, it does not meet the number of years required (four) to be equivalent to a US Bachelor's degree. However, many European countries have or had thirteen-year or longer secondary school programs, which, it can be argued, makes up the difference. Furthermore, graduates of the European three-year Bachelor are often equally advanced in their field of study as their US counterparts because most curricula place a greater emphasis on subjects within the major.

Credential evaluators consider a US bachelor's degree to consist of four years of study. As such, Bologna bachelor's degrees do not meet the minimum standard and are typically evaluated as three years of undergraduate study. Autonomous universities are not held to this mandate. Some admit holders of Bologna bachelor's degrees directly to graduate programs. Others require completion of a bridge program. Others still deny admission to anyone not holding the minimum of a four-year degree.



In this session, the panel will address the issues of secondary preparation, specialization, academic rigor and employment opportunities within the context of three-year Bologna degrees. This discussion will provide guidance to graduate admissions officers and attempt to establish the standards for graduate admissions in the United States.

TOPICS

- Bologna Process overview and historical context (introduction)
 - *Include admission requirements and components of a Bologna bachelor's degree*
- Does the 13+ of secondary education make up the deficit between US Bachelor's degree and Bologna Bachelors?
 - *Not all European secondary programs are 13+ years, and increasingly they are transitioning to 12 years. Theoretically, all graduates from secondary school in any Bologna signatory secondary program are eligible for admission.*
- There is a greater focus on the major subject in Bologna bachelors.
 - *Does this equal to the fourth year of study in the major subject of a US Bachelor's degree?*
- European students generally claim to be stronger academically in their field of specialization than their American counterparts.
 - *Does this make up for the shorter duration of Bologna bachelor's?*
- The perception of a three-year Bologna bachelor's degree is lower than the previous 5-year first degree in the employment market, leading most students to pursue Master's degrees for similar employment opportunities.
 - *Does this have any effect on academic evaluation in the US?*

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 Millennium 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 jasmin@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® Credentials Discussion Forum in October 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.



Cameroon – CAPIEMP Examination

Certificat d'Aptitudes Pedagogiques d'Instituteur de l'Enseignement Maternel et Primaire (Certificate of Pedagogical Skills for Teachers of Primare and Early Childhood Education) is a post-secondary, non-higher

education credential earned one year after the Baccalaureat examination or A-levels, or 2-3 years after O-levels in Cameroon. (Cameroon uses a British-based system for the Anglophone population, and a French-based system for the Francophone). Evaluators agree that this certificate is equivalent to one year of undergraduate coursework. If a student submits both A-level examinations and a CAPIEMP examination, university administrators recommend two years of credit, but at the freshman level.

~Sonya Brauchle

Israel – Yeshiva Gedola Lubavitch College in London, England (1995 & 1996), Bet David Kiryat Gat in Israel (1997), Heichal Menachem (in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia) and received the Graduate Certificate in Rabbinical Studies after one year of study. (2000-2001)



Heichal Menachem which was registered with the Australia authority in 2011 but the registration was discontinued in 2013. The other 2 schools can not be found. The BAC in UK listed Yeshiva Gedola on their website. Recognition of academic institutions is reserved for strictly academic institutions. However, a program at a non-academic (religious) institution can become attached to a university and be considered recognized. Thus, rabbinical schools can be considered accredited if they have an academic connection. Evaluators pointed out that while religious institutions do not have the equivalent of traditional regional academic accreditation, it is possible to produce evaluation reports recommending an equivalence to academic coursework at Orthodox-based institutions in the US, for programs from institutions which fall outside of the scope of national or regional accreditation defined by CHEA, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

~Barbara Glave



Australia/Vietnam Pathway Program Evaluation

Questions arise as schools located in one country develop pathway programs in another country to prepare students to be admitted to their institution. In the case of Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology

(RMIT), the pathway program in Vietnam combines English language training with core courses from the Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Business programs. The advice from credential evaluators is that no credit should be awarded for such coursework without confirmation that it applies to the degree program, is delivered by university faculty, and is listed on regular university transcripts.

~ Kisha Cranston

Egypt - Ain Shams University

At Ain Shams, depending on the year and faculty, the layout and grading scale formatting used may be different. There is no university-wide adopted format in that sense, and the Faculty of Commerce for ex. would also typically use a different format in some cases with grades written out in words instead of abbreviations et al. In fact, the Faculty of Engineering at Ain Shams now offers a 'credit hours program' which does in fact mimic a U.S. style GPA system with letter grades/percentage scale (most likely this will be the only offering moving forward at some point). Under the credit hours system, students must complete 180 total credits and maintain a GPA of 2.00 or higher (C average, basically). English placement testing is required for incoming freshmen for admission to the Faculty of Engineering at Ain Shams Univ since that's the language of instruction in the program (similar to Faculties of Medicine/Pharmacy across major public institutions in Egypt).

- Hany Arafat

~Kisha Cranston



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”*** Stay tuned for more information!

Conferences and Presentations

UK NARIC Annual Conference, London, UK

“University Credit for Secondary School Coursework in North America” – November 22, 2016

Presenter: Aleks Morawski, Foreign Credits Inc.

AIRC Conference, Miami, FL

ACEI (Academic Credentials Evaluation Institute) - Exhibiting
November 30 - December 3, 2016

NAFSA Region XII, Palm Springs, CA

“Syria: Education in Crisis and Providing Pathways for Refugees” - November 3, 2016 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Presenters: Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert, President & CEO ACEI, and Zepur Solakian, President CGACC

NAFSA Bi-Regional (III and VII) Conference, New Orleans, LA

▪ “Benchmark Credentials for Undergraduate Admissions” – November 7, 2016

Presenters: Beth Cotter (Foreign Credential Evaluations, Inc.), Drew Feder (Credential Consultants, Inc.), Barbara Glave (SDR Educational), Carolyn Christie (Foreign Credential Evaluations, Inc.)

▪ “The Credential Dr. Is In!” – November 8, 2016

Presenters: Hany Arafat (SDR Educational), Beth Cotter (Foreign Credential Evaluations, Inc.), Drew Feder (Credential Consultants, Inc.), Barbara Glave (SDR Educational)

▪ “International Transfer Credit Evaluation,” – November 9, 2016

Presenter: Beth Cotter (Foreign Credential Evaluations, Inc.)

Blogs

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

[Visit Blog!](#)

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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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