Educational System Update for Cuba: Reflections on Development and Internationalization

Martha Van Devender and Aleks Morawski
Educational System Update for Cuba: Reflections on Development & Internationalization

Martha Van Devender
Education Credential Evaluators (ECE)

Aleks Morawski
Scholaro, Inc.

Image: Martha Van Devender
Learning Objectives

The educational system of Cuba is in a constant state of reform and improvement. Join participants from the 2018 American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) Cuba Project to look at some of the key features of the current system, with an emphasis on how to facilitate student and faculty exchange with Cuba.

• Understand the current situation of students and educators in Cuba in an era of gradual internationalization in the context of the current educational system

• Identify strategies on effectively working with Cuban credentials and Cuban students

• Address additional challenges for the further development of the Cuban education system from the perspective of Cuban faculty, students, and US researchers

• Hear a credential evaluator’s perspective from a boots-on-the-ground research trip, including insights, challenges, and observations
AACRAO International Research Agenda

Build Institution-Based Expertise & Create Opportunities to Teach
- Winter Institute
- Summer Institute
- Regional Trainings
- Online Courses

Create Opportunities to Publish
- C&U Journal
- SEM Q
- Monographs, Textbooks, & White Papers

Create Support for Research
- Gloria Nathanson Grant
- AACRAO Research Grant
- Baden-Württemberg Seminar
- Cuba Project

Image: AACRAO
The AACRAO Cuba Project

Image: Christie Culp
What was this all about?

Starting in Fall 2017, AACRAO recruited a research team to visit Cuba, including site visits to several Cuban HEIs.

Goals:
• Update AACRAO EDGE profile on Cuba
• Produce a publication on the Cuban educational system
• Present on our findings
• Promote educational exchange
AACRAO International Comparative Education: The Cuba Project

https://www.aacrao.org/signature-initiatives/cuba

February 17-25, 2018

Havana and Matanzas

- Christopher Adams, Indiana University
- Tanya Delgado, Academic Evaluation Services
- Garrett Seelinger, NAIA/InCred
- Janine Pacheco, University of New Mexico
- Aleks Morawski, Scholaro/AICE
- Christie Culp, Loyola Marymount University
- Akniet Rysbek Kyzy, Stanford University
- Patrick Leahy, Michigan State University
- Mark Reid, University of Miami, retired
- Martha Van Devender, ECE/TAICEP
- Robert Watkins, University of Texas at Austin
- Melanie Gottlieb, Deputy Director, AACRAO

Returned in March 2019. To Havana and Santa Clara.
Introducing Cuba
Country Overview

• Gained independence in 1902
  • in 1898 from Spain, then 1902 from US
• Population: 11,147,407 (July 2017 estimate)
• Largest island in the Caribbean
• Official Language: Spanish
• Capital: Havana
• Administrative Divisions: 15 provinces and 1 special municipality (Isla de la Juventud)
• President: Miguel Díaz-Canel
• Constitution of 2019 continues to ensure education for all.

Sources: CIA World Factbook, Wikipedia
The Educational System

Compulsory Education: through 9th grade (from primary through lower secondary, ages six through fifteen)

Language of Instruction: Spanish


*Ministerio de Educación Superior* (Ministry of Higher Education) - [https://www.mes.gob.cu/](https://www.mes.gob.cu/)

Education is highly centralized.

Curriculum and policy decision-making happens centrally in government ministries. The system is influenced by Spanish, U.S., and Soviet educational systems.
Educational Ladder for Cuba

Educational Ladder for Cuba: Secondary

Ministry of Education
http://www.mined.gob.cu/
Upper Secondary
Pre-University Education (I)

Institutos Preuniversitarios - IPU (Pre-University Institutes): Urban & Rural

- 3 years of academic preparation (10-12)
- Requires: Secundaria Básica
- Leads to: Bachiller
- **Pathways**: further education at universities or higher polytechnic institutes; employment

Institutos Preuniversitarios Vocacionales de Ciencias Exactas - IPVCE (Pre-University Vocational Institutes for Pure Sciences)

- 3 years of specialized academic preparation (10-12)
- Requires: Secundaria Básica
- Leads to: Bachiller
- **Pathways**: further education at universities or higher polytechnic institutes; employment
Upper Secondary
Pre-University Education (II)

Institutos Preuniversitarios – IPU (Pre-University Institutes): Specially Focused Institutes

- Sports-centered IPU with the National Institute for Sports, Physical Education, & Recreation
- Camilo Cienfuegos Vocational Schools
- MININT Pre-university Vocational Institute “Hermanos Martínez Tamayo”
- **Pathways**: further education in specialized universities; specialized employment
Upper Secondary Teacher Education (I)

Escuelas Pedagógicas (Pedagogical Schools)

- 4-5 years of teacher training
- Requires: Secundaria Básica
- Leads to: Maestro de Educación Primaria, Educación Especial, Preescolar, or Inglés de Educación Primaria
- **Pathways**: further education; non-university teaching employment
Upper Secondary Teacher Education (II)

4 years of technical teacher training,
Tracks offered: Electrical, Construction, Computer Science, Agriculture, Economics, Service Industry, & Light Industry & Craftsmanship,
Requires: Secundaria Básica,
Leads to: Docente de la Enseñanza Técnica Profesional,
Pathways: further education or non-university teaching employment.
Upper Secondary
Vocational and Adult Education (I)

Institutos Politécnicos (Polytechnic Institutes)

- 3-4 years of technical/vocational preparation
- Requires: Secundaria Básica
- Leads to: Técnico, Técnico de Nivel Medio, Maestro, or Perito
- Pathways: further education in higher polytechnic institutes; employment

Facultad de Obrera y Campesina (Faculty for Workers and Farmers)

- 2-3 years of adult technical/vocational preparation
- Requires: Secundaria Obrera y Campesina (Grade 9)
- Leads to: Facultad Obrera y Campesina
- Pathways: employment; further technical education
Upper Secondary
Vocational and Adult Education (II)

Escuelas de Idiomas (Language Schools) for Workers

• 2-year curriculum in foreign languages including English, Russian, French, & German
• Foreign language written/conversational skills (generally for applied/commercial purposes)
• Does not seem to require or award any secondary credential and does not lead to any further education
Documentation & Evaluation

"LEER ES UNA FORMA DE CRECER..."

José Martí
Título de Bachiller

Se confiere a:

Por haber culminado y aprobado los estudios correspondientes al Nivel Medio Superior de la Educación Preuniversitaria, en el curso escolar 2014-2015.

Y para que conste a todos los efectos, se expide el presente en el municipio Playa.

La Habana a los 7 días del mes de Mayo del año 2015

Director (a) del centro

Director (a) Provincial de Educación

Secretario (a) Docente

Registrado al tomo 97 folio 16 número del Registro de Títulos y Diplomas de la Dirección Provincial de Educación

Registrado al tomo 5 folio 2 número del Registro de Matrícula y Graduados del centro

Documents: ECE

Bachiller
Upper Secondary Grades:
Certificado de Estudios Terminados

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARACULTURAS</th>
<th>99</th>
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<th>97,5</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Matemática</td>
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<td>95,9</td>
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<td>Física</td>
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<tr>
<td>Química</td>
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<td>Español - Literatura</td>
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<td>94,5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historia</td>
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<td>93,5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inglés</td>
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<td>Cultura Política</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informática</td>
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<td>Educación Física</td>
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<td>90,5</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Image: Martha Van Devender

Document: ECE
### Upper Secondary Grades

**Plan de Estudios**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asignatura</th>
<th>Periodos de instrucción por año</th>
<th>10º</th>
<th>11º</th>
<th>Diversificado (12º)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Área de ciencias exactas:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Matemática</td>
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<tr>
<td>Física</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informática</td>
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<td>69</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Área de ciencias naturales:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biología</td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>115</td>
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<tr>
<td>Química</td>
<td></td>
<td>96</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geografía:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>92</td>
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<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Área de humanidades:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lengua y literatura española</td>
<td></td>
<td>230</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historia</td>
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<td>126</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultura política</td>
<td></td>
<td>58</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Idioma extranjero (inglés)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>92</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educación física</td>
<td></td>
<td>92</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrucción militar elemental de preparación para la defensa</td>
<td></td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.265</td>
<td>1.288</td>
<td>444</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total periodos por año</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.393</td>
<td>1.416</td>
<td>590</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


[Chart](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf versions/Cuba.pdf)
## Grading Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Other Numbers</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Suggested U.S. Equivalence</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desaprobado</td>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>fail, may try again</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspenso</td>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most commonly used scale for secondary documentation.
Educational Ladder for Cuba

Educational Ladder: Post-Secondary

# First Degrees

**Técnico Superior** (Higher Technician)

- 2-3 years
- Requires: *Bachiller*
- Applied in nature
- Now leads to advanced standing in other post-secondary programs!
- **Suggested equivalence**: Associate’s degree? *What do you think?*

**Licenciatura** (Licentiate/Bachelor)

- 4-5 years
- Requires: *Bachiller*
- **Suggested equivalence**: Bachelor’s degree
Grado (Undergraduate Education)

**Ingeniero (Engineer) / Arquitecto (Architect)**

- 5 years
- Requires: *Bachiller*
- **Suggested equivalence**: Bachelor’s degree

**Doctor en Medicina Veterinaria, Estomatologia, or Medicina (Doctor in Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry, or Medicine)**

- Vet Med & Dentistry 5 years, Medicine 6 years
- Requires: *Bachiller*
- First professional degrees
- **Suggested equivalence**: Completion of study in a professional health sciences program, other options?
Posgrado (Graduate Education)

Maestría (Master) / Máster (Master)

• 1-3 years
• Requires grado (first degree)
• Suggested equivalence: Master’s degree

Especialista (Specialist)

• Duration varies
• Often seen in health sciences
• May not have grade reports
• Suggested equivalence: Graduate study, Master’s degree?
Doctorado (Graduate Education)

Doctor en Ciencias (Doctor in Sciences)

- 3-4 years
- Requires completion of undergraduate education, at least
- **Suggested equivalence**: Doctorate degree

Doctor en Ciencias Pedagógicas (Doctor in Pedagogical Sciences), other new types of applied doctorado

- 3-4 years
- **Suggested equivalence**: Doctorate degree
Documentation & Evaluation

“LEER ES UNA FORMA DE CRECER...”

José Martí
Universidad de Matanzas
Licenciado

What would this be equivalent to in your country?

Could they get licensed as a professional? What kind?
Universidad de Matanzas

El Rector de la Universidad de Matanzas “Camilo Cienfuegos”

en uso de las facultades que le están conferidas a sus poderes
del Consejo de la Facultad, expide el presente título de:
Ingeniero Industrial

a favor de:

Ingeniero

What is the US equivalence for this credential?

Documentation: ECE
What similarities do you see between these documents? Differences?
Grade report for Engineering program at Camagüey
Where is the weighting?

Credit reconstruction is a reality for Cuban evaluation.

Grade reports do not include hours.

You may want to ask for them.

You may be able to find some information online.

You need to be flexible. National curricula just updated.
Plan of Studies

• Reported in hours
• Represents national curricula with a portion of the study unique to the student
  • Percentage of unique study depends on era
  • May even be listed just as Elective
• Considered the third essential educational document in Cuba
• Recently upgraded to curricula “E” for undergraduate programs

• Do you ask for a plan of studies? If so, does it have to be official?

• Is it essential for an accurate evaluation?

• Are you going to talk about this when you get back to the office?
Doctor en Estomatologia (Doctor in Dentistry)

- 5 years of study
- National curriculum
  - Ministry of Higher Education then
  - Ministry of Public Health now
- Allows graduates to practice or go on to further dental studies
- Program includes 1-1.5 years of clinical practice
- Reissued transcripts come from UCMH
Máster (Master)

Certificado que según consta en los archivos de esta institución.

Cursó y aprobo las actividades correspondientes a la maestría en educación y que relaciona a contiguo:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asignatura</th>
<th>Calificación</th>
<th>Créditos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introducción a la Educación</td>
<td>Excelente</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Áreas de la Educación Latino-Americana</td>
<td>Excelente</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Administración y Funcionamiento de la Institución Educativa</td>
<td>Excelente</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Pedagogía, Dirección y Educación</td>
<td>Excelente</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Prácticas, Atención al Aprendiz</td>
<td>Excelente</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Pedagogía General</td>
<td>Excelente</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Pedagogía de la Investigación</td>
<td>Excelente</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Pedagogía de la Construcción</td>
<td>Excelente</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Desarrollo de la Formación y Gestión de la Educación</td>
<td>Excelente</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Enseñanza de la Formación y la Gestión de la Educación</td>
<td>Excelente</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Reglas de Trabajo</td>
<td>Excelente</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Enseñanza Educativa</td>
<td>Excelente</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Pedagogía de la Educación Postgrado</td>
<td>Excelente</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Enseñanza de la Formación</td>
<td>Excelente</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Matemática en el Proceso Educativo</td>
<td>Excelente</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Reglas de Trabajo</td>
<td>Excelente</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total de Créditos: 10

Para los fines y fines que al iniciar el proceso de contiguo se estén la presente, coinciden a sus indicaciones, en el año del, de la firma cuba.

[Signature]
[Signature]

La Rectora de la Universidad de Ciencias Pedagógicas
"Enrique José Varona"

En uso de las facultades que le están conferidas expide el presente título de
MÁSTER EN EDUCACIÓN

a favor de:

en atención a que el mismo ha satisfecho los requisitos correspondientes al
programa de estudios establecido.

En testimonio de lo cual y para que surta todos los efectos legales procedentes,
autoriza y suscribe este título en la Habana a los 19 días de
noviembre de 2012.

[Signature]

Refrendado por el Director de Postgrado del Ministerio de Educación Superior de Cuba e inscrito en el libro de registro de títulos de Maestros de este organismo.

[Signature]

Director de Educación de Postgrado
[Registros]
Especialista (Specialist)

• This example might be closer to a residency than an academic degree program.
  • Try to get additional information beyond the degree itself
  • May not require academic coursework, so grades may not be available
• Some fields lead to advanced standing in other graduate programs, even doctoral ones.
• This example was awarded the year the medical science institutes were upgraded to universities.
**Doctor**

- Highest academic degree awarded
- Can include research & dissertation, coursework, or clinical practice
- National focus on increasing number of doctors produced annually
- Tier with most flexible curricula
- Degrees awarded by national commission on behalf of university
## Grading Scales

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Most commonly used scales for post-secondary documentation.
How to Evaluate

When evaluating Cuban education, you need to **reconstruct the raw Cuban hours** and then convert the hours or credits to your system.

We have found that the coursework is highly variable and any approach where we give each course the same weight is inaccurate.

In the case of the engineering program from Camagüey, we ended up **dividing by 20**.

**Example: Engineering**

- **Introduction to Programming**
  - 3.25 credits, grade of A

- **English Language I**
  - 1.5 credits, grade of A

- **Mathematics I**
  - 4.75 credits, grade of C

- **Linear Algebra**
  - 3.25 credits, grade of A

- **Object Oriented Design & Programming**
  - 4 credits, grade of A
Sources of Legalized Documents

Consultoría Jurídica Internacional
http://www.cji.co.cu

Bufete de Servicios Especializados
http://www.onbc.cu/bes

Additional Resources


How do you get Cuban documentation?
Stamps & Seals

New format since 2016
What documents do you need?

• Certified transcript
• Diploma – copy or original
• Plan of studies or syllabus
• Translations
• All certified or only some certified
• Some version of the above

Much of this is determined by institutional policy. But we recommend you honor the Cuban national legalization requirements for the transcripts.
Resources

• EcuRed- Ministerio de Educación Superior
  • http://www.ecured.cu/Ministerio_de_Educacion_Superior#Universidades_y_Centros_de_Investigacion_CUBA
• UNIVERSIA Educación Superior en Iberomérica – Cuba 2016
• Ministerio de Educación (Ministry of Education)
  • http://www.mined.gob.cu/
• Ministerio de Educación Superior (Ministry of Higher Education)
  • https://www.mes.gob.cu/

• Portal CubaEduca
  • http://www.cubaeduca.cu/
• OEI Sistemas Educativos Nacionales
  • https://www.oei.es/historico/quipu/cuba/
  • https://www.oei.es/historico/homologaciones/cuba.pdf
• UNESCO World Data on Education: 7th edition, 2010-2011

Paid resources (including books)
• AACRAO EDGE, UK NARIC International Comparisons, NAFSA Online Guides, Australia Country Education Profiles (also have print volume from 1993 under NOOSR series), IERF New Country Index Vol. II (2011)
Internationalization & Cuba

• Cuban universities are eager for international exchange, for both students and faculty.
• Cuba is fully-engaged with global education networks, particularly through UNESCO and regional partners.
• Challenges exist with current U.S. policy towards Cuba.
• Cuban institutions worry about losing talent when students go abroad for degree programs. Exchange is preferred.
Cuban Medical Internationalism

- Since the 1959 Revolution, with socialized health system
- Two fold approach
  - Send Cuban medical personnel abroad
  - Bring medical students & patients to Cuba
- Medical workers are Cuba’s most important export commodity.
- Humanitarian aid & disaster relief
- Priority of educational system

Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina (ELAM)
Strategies for Engaging

- Personal connections are best
  - See if your faculty have any colleagues in Cuba
  - Outreach to local Cuban community
- Try to approach smaller regional universities
  - Everyone wants to go to the University of Havana, but other institutions may be more accommodating
- Interest in virtual collaboration
  - Faculty are available by email or online and want to collaborate on research and publications
  - Internet access is still a problem
- Is it easier to go there?
  - Can be difficult (monetarily & logistically) for Cubans to travel to U.S.
  - Educational visas are still available for Americans to travel there.
- Conferences in Cuba are a great option
- Keep in mind that student lodging/accommodations in Cuba will not meet U.S. standards
- Reach out! Cubans are quite friendly
Please complete this session evaluation NOW!

Or FAVORITE now and EVALUATE later!
Contact Us!

Martha Van Devender
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