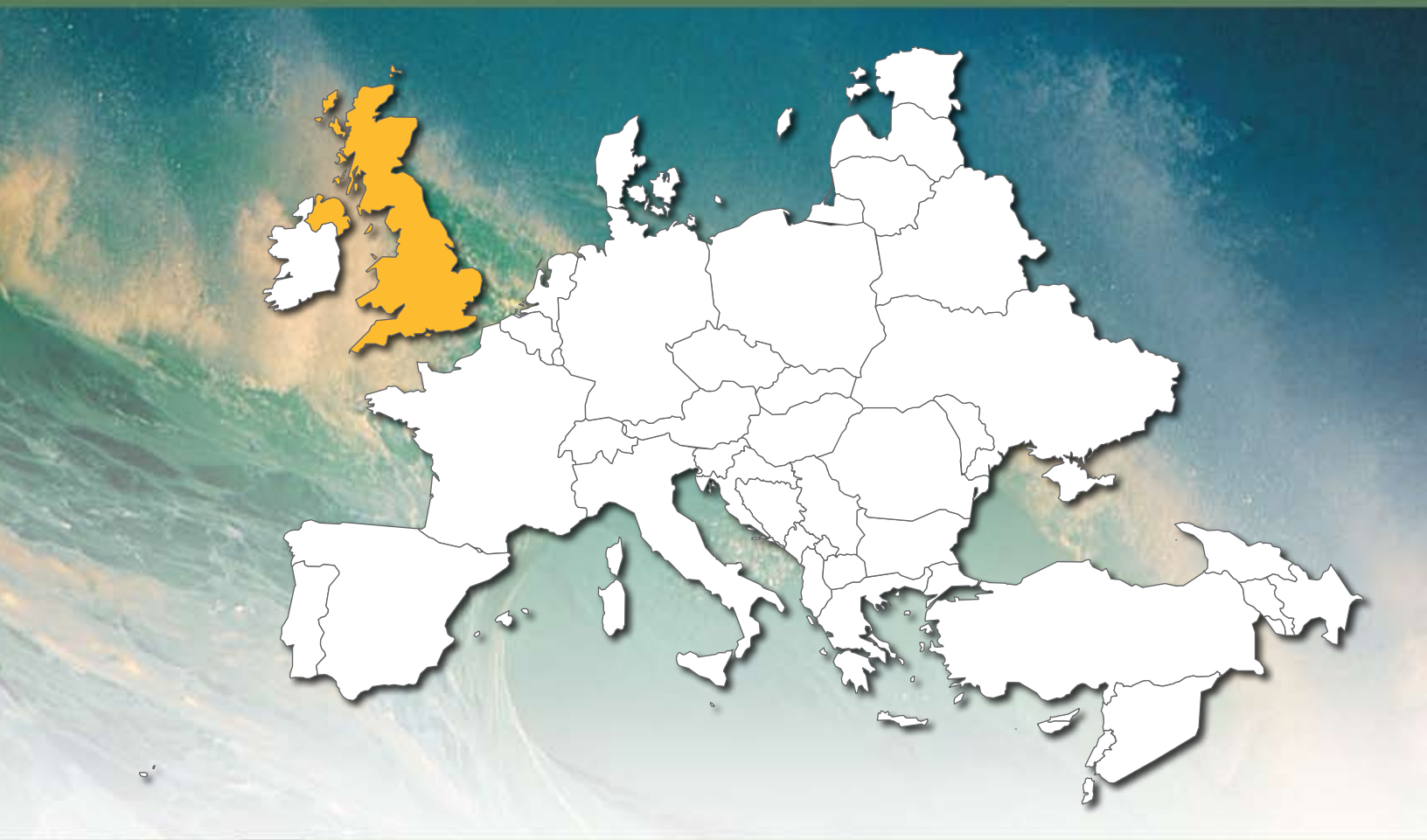


Online Guide to

Educational Systems



Around the World—Great Britain



NAFSA

Association of
International Educators

Submitted by Rachel Ragan
December 2008

About NAFSA

NAFSA: Association of International Educators promotes the exchange of students and scholars to and from the United States. The association sets standards of good practice and provides professional education and training that strengthen institutional programs and services related to international education and exchange. NAFSA provides a forum for discussion of issues and a network for sharing information as it seeks to increase awareness of and support for international education in higher education, in government, and in the community.

In 1948, NAFSA pioneered the concept of providing professional services for postsecondary exchange students. Early efforts to enhance living and learning environments for exchange students have blossomed into today's active association of accomplished professionals whose numbers continue to grow worldwide.

Notice of Liability

The information in these documents is distributed on an "As is" basis, without warranty. While every precaution has been taken in the preparation of each document, neither the submitter(s) nor NAFSA shall have any liability to any persons nor entity with respect to any loss or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by the information contained in any of these documents. Please note that while NAFSA periodically verified the Web site links included in these e-Publications, NAFSA cannot guarantee that every link will be current at the time of download.

Acceptable Use Guidelines

Electronic resources are provided for the benefit of the international education community. However, commercial use, systematic or excessive downloading, or electronic redistribution of these publications are all expressly prohibited.

© 2009 NAFSA: Association of International Educators. All rights reserved.

Instructions for Using the *Online Guide to Educational Systems Around the World*

Susan Whipple, Editor

December 2008

These documents are updates to those in the 1999 publication *A Guide to Educational Systems Around the World* (which was an update to *The Handbook on the Placement of Foreign Graduate Students*, published in 1990 and colloquially known as the "Graduate Handbook.")

It is important to note that these documents do not replace either of the earlier publications, which should be used for credentials issued prior to 1999, the period those publications cover.

Readers familiar with the original version of *A Guide to Educational Systems Around the World* will note that these updates use the same format:

1. Each of these publications provides lists of credentials and other data that can be used both for undergraduate and graduate admissions.
2. "Advice for admissions officers" is intentionally not provided. We have attempted to avoid all types of subjective interpretation, relying instead on objective data. Users of these updates should use the information provided in conjunction with other resources to determine their own placement recommendations and possibility of transfer credit. Questions about credentials can be posted on the Admission and Credential Evaluation discussion forum on the Recruitment, Admissions, and Preparation Knowledge Community Web site:
http://www.nafsa.org/knowledge_community_network.sec/recruitment_admissions/admissions_and_credential/forums.

Please note that these updates should be supplemented by additional written materials that describe complete foreign educational systems, including data on specific institutions, and by professional training in the theory and practice of credential evaluation. Many of these resources are available from NAFSA, either as printed publications or on-line. The need for institution support for budgetary resources and training for undergraduate and graduate admissions personnel remains important, regardless of the increased availability of resources on the Web.

These publications were compiled by many authors using a standardized template and style. Although minor variations among entries do occur, the basic guidelines are explained as follows:

Educational Ladder

1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2
1 - 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
A B B

The year or half-year at which a credential is awarded is the point at which the corresponding credential letter is placed. In the example above, credential A is awarded after the 9th year of education. Note that the corresponding letter is placed directly below the number 9.

All *normal* possibilities of the total number of years of education that a credential might require are indicated on the ladder. This occurs for credential B, in which the credential can be awarded after either 12 or 13 total years of education. An explanation is provided in the description of the credential whenever a letter appears on the ladder more than once. There are a few cases when this multiple-listing style was not used; in these cases, there are explanatory comments.

An arrow (→) is used after a credential letter in cases where no maximum length of study for a particular program is specified, or where the study time is open-ended. For example, a doctor of philosophy degree program may require a minimum of three years of enrollment. The corresponding credential letter with an arrow will appear under the minimum number of total years of education required to earn the Ph.D.

Explanations About Documents

Credentials are divided into two categories: secondary and postsecondary. The decision to include the credential under one or the other category is not a subjective one—a credential is determined to be either secondary or postsecondary according to its designation by the country of origin, regardless of how individual institutions might perceive the level (and recommend transfer credit).

Numerical endnotes, placed directly after the complete list of credentials, are used when a lengthy explanation about a credential is necessary.

Foreign Terms and Words

Foreign terms are used whenever possible, and are translated literally, in most cases. Literal translations are used to avoid subjectivity. We have attempted to be consistent with translations across languages, though readers may notice some differences between countries because of preferences indicated by the submitters. Credential evaluators and admissions personnel should always rely on official foreign language documents, using translations only as guides.

Grading Information

Only the most common grading scales used in each country are listed. Evaluators understand that variations in grading are common and that one should always consult the grading information that may be provided on official transcripts. Rather than making grade equivalency statements, the submitter(s) of the update provided information regarding grading practices within the countries.

GREAT BRITAIN: ENGLAND, WALES, NORTHERN IRELAND

YEARS OF EDUCATION

1-6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
					A	F	H	N	P	S	S	V		W	W			
					B	G	I	O	Q	a	T	b						
					C		J		R		U	c						
					D		K				V							
					E		L											
							M											

CREDENTIALS

Secondary

- A** General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)
- B** Applied General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)
- C** General Certificate of Education, Ordinary level (O level) [replaced by GCSE in 1988]
- D** Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC) Introductory Certificate and Diploma
- E** Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC) First Certificate and Diploma
- F** General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) [phased out between 2005-2007]
- G** General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced Subsidiary level - (AS level) [admission normally based on credential **A**; the GCE AS level is the first half of credential **H**]
- H** General Certificate of Education Advanced (A2) level and Advanced level (A level) [Note: The GCE (A2) level is the second half of the Advanced level examination]
- I** Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) [phased out in 2004]
- J** General Certificate of Education Advanced Level in Applied Subjects (GCE in Applied Subjects)
- K** Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC) National Award [comparable to one GCE Advanced level examination in the current scheme]
- L** Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC) National Certificate [comparable to two GCE Advanced level examinations in the current scheme; admission normally based on Credential **A**]
- M** Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC) National Diploma [comparable to three GCE Advanced level examinations in the current scheme; admission normally based on credential **A**]

Postsecondary

- N** Certificate of Higher Education [One year, full-time program; admission normally based on credential **H**]
- O** Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC) Higher National Certificate [Two-year, part-time program; admission normally based on credential **H, L, or M**]
- P** Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC) Higher National Diploma [Two-year, full-time, three-year, part-time program; admission normally based on credential **H, L, or M**]
- Q** Foundation Degree [Introduced in 2001; Two-year program; admission requirements vary]
- R** Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) [Two-year program; admission based on credential **H**]
- S** Bachelor degree [Bachelor of Arts; Bachelor of Science; Bachelor of Engineering; Bachelor of Laws; Bachelor of Education – Three to four year program of study; admission traditionally based on credential **H**]
- T** Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) [One year program; admission based on credential **S**]

- U** Postgraduate Diploma [One year program; admission based on credential **S**]
- V** Master degree [Master of Arts; Master of Science; Master of Engineering; Master of Philosophy; Master of Literature; Master of Research; Master of Laws; Master of Business Administration - One to two year program; admission based on Second Class Honours Bachelor degree (credential **S**) [Note: University of Cambridge and Oxford Master of Arts degrees are honorary degrees and do not represent completion of academic study.]
- W** Doctor of Philosophy (Dphil; PhD) [Typically three year program; admission traditionally based on credential **V**]
- a** Bachelor of Nursing and Bachelor of Physiotherapy [Three-year program of study; admission based on credential **H**]
- b** Bachelor of Dental Surgery [Five-year program; admission based on credential **H**]
- c** Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery [Five-year program; admission based on credential **H**]

GRADING SCALES

GCSE *

A
B
C
D
E
N or O

*General Certificate of Secondary Education

GCE Advanced Level

A
B
C
D
F
G
UG

BTEC Awards

BTEC

Distinction
Merit
Pass
Fail

Undergraduate Degree

U.K.

60-100 %
50-59 %
40-49 %
Below 40 %

Degree Classification Scheme (Undergraduate Degrees)

U.K.

First Class Honours [1:1]
Second Class Upper Division [2:1]
Second Class Lower Division [2:2]
Third Class
Pass

Postgraduate Degrees

U.K.

70-100 %
60-69
50-59

Distinction
Merit
Pass
Fail

(Note: Check program information carefully as this scheme may not apply to all postgraduate programs.)

Resources and Web Sites

Higashi, Sylvia, et al. *Educational System of the United Kingdom*. AACRAO, 1991.
Skinner, Maureen. *Educational System of the United Kingdom*. AACRAO, 2006.
Kogan Page. *British Qualifications: A Complete Guide to Educational, Technical, Professional, and Academic Qualifications in Britain*. London: Kogan Page, 2007-2008.

Internet References

Directgov - <http://www.direct.gov.uk>
DfES (Department for Children, Schools and Families) - <http://www.dfes.gov.uk>
QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) - <http://www.qca.org.uk>
Edexcel - <http://www.edexcel.org.uk>
AQA - <http://www.aqa.org.uk>
OCR - <http://www.ocr.org.uk>
UK NARIC - <http://www.naric.org.uk/>

Submitted by
Rachel Ragan
Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc
December 2008