

Online Guide to

Educational Systems



Around the World—Hong Kong



NAFSA

Association of
International Educators

Submitted by Eric S. Feedar
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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.

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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.

HONG KONG

YEARS OF EDUCATION →

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

CREDENTIALS OR DOCUMENTATION

Secondary

- A Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE)¹: awarded upon completion of six years of primary education and five years of secondary education to students who take the examination
- B Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE)¹: students who have completed two years of secondary education beyond credential A are eligible to take this examination

Postsecondary

- C Intermediate or Foundation Certificate²: several weeks to one year of study beyond credential **A**
- D Advanced Certificate²: several weeks to one year of study beyond credential **A**
- E Higher Certificate: one to two semesters of study beyond credential **B**
- F Diploma²: one year of study beyond credential **B**
- G Advanced Diploma²: one to two years of study beyond credential **B**
- H Higher Diploma: two years of study beyond credential **B** or three years of study beyond credential **A**
- I Associate Degree: two years of study beyond credential **B** or three years of study beyond credential **A**
- J Bachelor's degree³: three years of study beyond credential **B**; awarded in Arts, Business, Education, Engineering, Laws, Pharmacy, Science, Social Science
- K Graduate Certificate: several weeks to one year of study beyond credential **J**
- L Graduate Diploma: one year of study beyond credential **J**
- M Bachelor of Nursing: four years of study beyond credential **B**
- N Postgraduate Certificate: several weeks to one year of study beyond credential **J**

- O Postgraduate Diploma: one semester to two years of study beyond credential **J**
- P Master's degree: one to two years of study beyond credential **J**
- Q Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB): five years of study beyond credential **B**
- R Master of Philosophy: two years of study beyond credential **P**
- S Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.): two to four years of study beyond credential **P** or one to two years of study beyond credential **R**

¹Beginning in 2012, credentials **A** and **B** will be replaced by the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) which will be awarded upon completion of six years of primary education followed by six years of secondary education.

²A “professional” version of this credential may be awarded by a tertiary institution in partnership with a professional association or business. These credentials are usually pursued on a part-time basis, and relevant experience is often considered in admissions decisions.

³Beginning in 2012, bachelor's degrees will be of four years duration, and admission will be based on the HKDSE.

GRADING INFORMATION

Secondary

- Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) and Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE): Six passing grades – A (highest) to F (lowest) — are used. Since 2007, Chinese Language and English Language are graded on a 5 (highest) to 1 (lowest) scale. For both scales, failing grades are designated as U (unclassified).

Postsecondary

- Grading scales and patterns vary by university, by faculty within a university, and by level of study. Transcripts issued by the universities provide grading scale information.
- Bachelor's degrees may be awarded with a classification that implies the quality of the student's records: First Class; Second Class, Upper; Second Class, Lower; and Third Class.
- Bachelor's degrees may be termed “honours” or “ordinary” degrees. These distinctions refer to depth of study in a particular discipline rather than program duration or quality of the student's records.

POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION RECOGNITION BODY

Education Bureau. 15/F, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.
Tel: (852) 2891 0088, Fax: (852) 2893 0858, www.edb.gov.hk

Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ).
23/F, Cambridge House, Taikoo Place, 979 King's Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong. Tel: (852)
3658 0000, Fax: (852) 2845 9910, www.hkcaa.edu.hk

RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

International Association of Universities Online Database -
www.unesco.org/iau/onlinedatabases/index.html

Australian Education International, Country Education Profiles –
www.aei.gov.au/AEI/CEP/Default.htm

Hong Kong Education Bureau - www.edb.gov.hk

Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) -
www.hkcaa.edu.hk

Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority- www.hkeaa.edu.hk

Submitted by
Eric S. Feedar
Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc.
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