

Online Guide to

# Educational Systems



Around the World—Republic of Ireland



**NAFSA**

Association of  
International Educators

Submitted by Kathleen Trayte Freeman

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

Susan Whipple, Editor

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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: <http://www.nafsa.org/aceforums>. For information on how to subscribe to the network, please visit [www.nafsa.org/networksubscribe](http://www.nafsa.org/networksubscribe).

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

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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.

# REPUBLIC OF 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	B		C	F	G	H	I	O	O	S	a	a	b			
				D	E		N	K	Q	S	X							
								L	T	T	Y							
								M	W	Z								
								N	Y									

## CREDENTIALS OR DOCUMENTATION

### Secondary

- A Intermediate Certificate: awarded after passing an external examination following completion of lower secondary school; last awarded in 1991
- B Junior Certificate (*Teastas Sóisearach*): awarded after passing an external examination following completion of lower secondary school (Junior Cycle); awarded 1992 to present
- C Leaving Certificate (*Teastas Shinsearach*) Applied: 2 years of study following credential **A** or **B**; awarded after passing an external examination following completion of upper secondary school (Senior Cycle); does not lead to any post-secondary study
- D Leaving Certificate (*Teastas Shinsearach*) Vocational: 2 years of study following credential **A** or **B**; awarded after passing 5 subjects on an external examination following completion of upper secondary school (Senior Cycle); leads to post-secondary vocational study and may lead to university study; awarded 1989 to present
- E Leaving Certificate (*Ardteistiméireacht*): 2 years of study following credential **A** or **B**; awarded after passing 6 subjects on an external examination following completion of upper secondary school (Senior Cycle); leads to university study; formerly known as the Senior Certificate

*Note: Students often take a year off between completion of the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle. This Transition Year (Idirbhliain) is compulsory or optional, depending on the school. This can explain gaps in education and may affect the chart above.*

### Postsecondary

- F Foundation Certificate: 1 year of part-time study following credential **E**
- G National Certificate: 2 years of study at an institute of technology (regional technical college) following credential **D** or **E**; last awarded in June 2006
- H Higher Certificate: 2 years of study at an institute of technology (regional technical college) following credential **D** or **E**
- I National Diploma: 3 years of study at an institute of technology (regional technical college) following credential **D** or **E**, or 1 year of study following credential **G**; last awarded in June 2006
- J Diploma in Theology: 3 years of study following credential **E**
- K Bachelor's (Ordinary): 3 years of study following credentials **D** or **E**
- L Bachelor's (Special): 3 years of study at the National University of Ireland following credentials **D** or **E**
- M Bachelor of Education: 3 years of study following credentials **D** or **E**

- N Bachelor's degree: 2-3 years of study at a an institute of technology (regional technical college) following credential **G**
- O Bachelor's degree: 1-2 years of study at a an institute of technology (regional technical college) following credential **I**
- P Bachelor's (Honours) / Bachelor of Science in Nursing/ Bachelor of Engineering/ Bachelor of Science in Pharmacology (B.Sc. Pharm): 4 years of study following credential **E**
- Q Bachelor of Laws (LLB): 4 years of study following credential **E**
- R Bachelor of Dental Science (BDentSci/BDS): 5 years of study following credential **E**
- S Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery/Bachelor of Obstetrics (MB/BCh/BAO): 5-6 years of study following credential **E**
- T Postgraduate Diploma: 1 year of study following credentials **K, L, M, N, O, or P**
- U Higher Diploma: 1-2 years of study following bachelor's degree in same or similar field of study
- V Master of Business Administration (MBA): 1 year of study following credentials **P, Q, R, S, T, or U**
- W Master of Laws (LLM): 1 year of study following credential **Q**
- X Master of Arts / Master of Science / Master of Education (MEd.): 2 years of study following credential **P**
- Y Bachelor of Laws (LLB): 2-3 years of study following credentials **K, L, M, N, O, P**
- Z Doctor in Medicine (MD): 1 year of study following credential **S**
- a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.): 3 years of study following credentials **P, Q, T, U, V, W, or X**
- b Doctor of Science (DSc.) / Doctor of Literature (D.Litt.): 4 years of study following credentials **P, W, or Y**
- c Doctor of Laws (LLD): 5 years of study following credentials **P or Q**

## GRADING SCALES

### Secondary

<u>Letter</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
A1	90-100%
A2	85-89%
B1	80-84%
B2	75-79%
B3	70-74%
C1	65-69%
C2	60-64%
C3	55-59%
D1	50-54%
D2	45-49%
D3	40-44%
E	25-39%
F	0-24%

## Postsecondary

*National Certificate and National Diploma*

<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Description</u>
70-100%	Distinction
60-69%	Merit
40-59%	Pass
0-39%	Fail

*All other postsecondary programs*

### Grade

First Class Honours  
Second Class Honours Upper  
Second Class Honours Lower  
Third Class Honours  
Pass  
Failure

## POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION RECOGNITION BODY

Higher Education Authority: <http://www.heai.ie>

Department of Education and Science: <http://www.irlgov.ie/educ>

## RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Print

Feagles, Shelley. *A Guide to Educational Systems Around the World*. Washington, DC: NAFSA, 1999

International Education Research Foundation. *The New Country Index Volume 1*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2004.

Turner, Solveig and Antoinette Frederick. *Education in Ireland: Admission and Placement of Irish Graduates*. Boston: Center for Educational Documentation, 1994.

### On-line

Central Applications Office: <http://www.cao.ie/>

Conference of Heads of Irish Universities: <http://www.chiu.ie>

European National Information Centre and National Academic Recognition Information Centre (ENIC-NARIC). *Gateway to Recognition of Academic and Professional Qualifications*: <http://www.enic-naric.net/index.aspx?c=Ireland>

“Eurybase: The Information Database on Education Systems in Europe: Organisation of the Education System in Ireland: 2009/2010.” *EURYDICE*. Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, 2010: [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase\\_full\\_reports/IE\\_EN.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/IE_EN.pdf)

Higher Education Authority: <http://www.heai.ie>

Higher Education and Training Awards Council: <http://www.hetac.ie>

Law Society of Ireland: <http://www.lawsociety.ie/>

National Framework of Qualifications: <http://www.nfq.ie/nfq/en/>

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland: <http://www.nqai.ie/>

Royal College of Physicians of Ireland: <http://www.rcpi.ie/pages/home.aspx>

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