

Online Guide to

# Educational Systems



Around the World—Japan



**NAFSA**

Association of  
International Educators

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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 Web site:  
[http://www.nafsa.org/knowledge\\_community\\_network.sec/recruitment\\_admissions/admissions\\_and\\_credential/forums](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

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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.

# JAPAN

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## YEARS OF EDUCATION →

1→6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	14 ½	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
			A			B		C	D*	F		H	L		M	N	O		
								D		G		I							
								E				J							
												K							

## CREDENTIALS OR DOCUMENTATION

### Secondary

- A 卒業証書 *Sotsugyo shosho* (Graduation Certificate): awarded upon completion of 中学校 *Chugakko* (Lower secondary school) and represents completion of compulsory education
- B 卒業証書 *Sotsugyo shosho* (Graduation Certificate): awarded upon completion of 高等学校 *Kotogakko* (Upper secondary school); requires credential **A** or equivalent for admission<sup>1</sup>

### Postsecondary

- C 短期大学士 *Tankidaigakushi*<sup>2</sup>/準学士 *Jun-gakushi* (Associate Degree) : awarded upon completion of two or three years of 短期大学 *Tankidaigaku* (Junior College) ; requires credential **B** or equivalent for admission<sup>3</sup>
- D 準学士 *Jun-gakushi* (Associate Degree) : awarded upon completion of five (five and a half\*) years of 高等専門学校 *Kotosenmongakko* (College of Technology) ; requires credential **B** or equivalent for admission<sup>4</sup>  
D\* Mercantile marine studies program is five and a half years
- E 専門士 *Senmonshi* (Diploma)<sup>5</sup>: awarded upon completion of at least two years of particular specialized courses of 専門学校 *Senmongakko* (Professional Training College) ; requires credential **B** or equivalent for admission
- F 学士 *Gakushi* (Bachelor's Degree): awarded upon completion of four years of 大学 *Daigaku* (University) ; requires credential **B** or equivalent for admission<sup>6</sup>
- G 高度専門士 *Koudo-senmonshi* (Advanced Diploma)<sup>7</sup>: awarded upon completion of at least four years of particular specialized courses of 専門学校 *Senmongakko* (Professional Training College); requires credential **B** or equivalent for admission
- H 学士 *Gakushi* (Bachelor's Degree): awarded upon completion of six years of 大学 *Daigaku* (University) in the fields of Dentistry, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and

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<sup>1</sup> Entrance examination is required for admission.

<sup>2</sup> Degree called 短期大学士 *Tankidaigakushi* was introduced in 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Entrance examination is required for admission.

<sup>4</sup> Entrance examination is required for admission.

<sup>5</sup> 専門士 *Senmonshi* title was introduced in 1994.

<sup>6</sup> Entrance examination is required for admission.

<sup>7</sup> 高度専門士 *Koudo-senmonshi* title was introduced in 2005.

- Pharmacy<sup>8</sup>; requires credential **B** or equivalent for admission<sup>9</sup>
- I 修士 *Shushi* (Master's Degree): awarded upon completion of two years of graduate studies at 大学 *Daigaku* (University) ; requires credential **F** or equivalent for admission. In some cases, credential **G** may be accepted for admission<sup>10</sup>
- J 修士 (専門職) *Shuushi (Senmonshoku)* (Professional Master): awarded upon completion of two years of graduate studies at 専門職大学院 *Senmonshokudaigakuin* (Professional Graduate School) ; requires credential **F** or equivalent for admission. In some cases, credential **G** may be accepted for admission<sup>11</sup>
- K 教職修士 (専門職) *Kyoushokushuushi (Senmonshoku)* (Master of Education) : awarded upon completion of two years of graduate studies at 教職大学院 *Kyoushokudaigakuin* (Graduate School of Education) ; requires credential **F** or equivalent for admission<sup>12</sup>
- L 法務博士 (専門職) *Houmuhakushi (Senmonshoku)* (Juris Doctor): awarded upon completion of three years of graduate studies at 法科大学院 *Houkadaigakuin* (Law School) ; requires credential **F** or equivalent for admission<sup>13</sup>
- M 博士 *Hakushi* (Doctor's Degree): awarded upon completion of five years of graduate studies at 大学 *Daigaku* (University); requires credential **F** or equivalent for admission<sup>14</sup>
- N 博士 *Hakushi* (Doctor's Degree): awarded upon completion of four years of 大学 *Daigaku* (University) in the field of Pharmacy<sup>15</sup>; requires Bachelor of Pharmacy or equivalent for admission<sup>16</sup>
- O 博士 *Hakushi* (Doctor's Degree): awarded upon completion of five years of 大学 *Daigaku* (University) in the fields of Dentistry, Medicine, and Veterinary Medicine; requires **H** or equivalent for admission<sup>17</sup>

## GRADING INFORMATION

### All Levels of Education

<u>Japanese</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	
秀	90-100	Excellent	A	S
優	80-89	Good	B	A
良	70-79	Average or Fair	C	B
可	60-69	Pass/Satisfactory	D	C
不可	0-59	Unsatisfactory/Fail	F	F
<u>Japanese</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	

<sup>8</sup> Six-year pharmacy education was introduced in Japan in 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Entrance examination is required for admission.

<sup>10</sup> Entrance examination is required for admission.

<sup>11</sup> Entrance examination is required for admission.

<sup>12</sup> Entrance examination is required for admission.

<sup>13</sup> Entrance examination is required for admission.

<sup>14</sup> Entrance examination is required for admission.

<sup>15</sup> Six-year pharmacy education was introduced in Japan in 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Entrance examination is required for admission.

<sup>17</sup> Entrance examination is required for admission.

優	80-100	Excellent	A	A
良	70-79	Good	B	B
可	60-69	Pass/Satisfactory	C	C
不可	0-59	Unsatisfactory/Fail	D	F

- Some subjects, such as optional courses and physical education courses, are graded on a pass (合格) or fail (不合格) basis.

## POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION RECOGNITION BODY

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)  
 3-2-2 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8959, Japan  
 Tel : +81-3-5253-4111  
<http://www.mext.go.jp/english/>

## RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Japan University Accreditation Association  
 2-7-13, Ichigaya Sadohara-cho, Sinjuku-ku, Tokyo, 162-0842, Japan  
 Tel: +81-3-5228-3883 Fax: +81-3-5228-2323  
<http://www.juaa.or.jp/>

Institute of National Colleges of Technology  
 701-2 Higashiasakawacho, Hachioji-city, Tokyo, 193-0834, Japan  
 Tel: +81-42-662-3120 Fax: +81-42-662-3131  
<http://www.kosen-k.go.jp/english/index.html>

IAU/UNESCO Information Centre on Higher Education  
 World Higher Education Database <http://www.unesco.org/iau/onlinedatabases/index.html>

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