

Online Guide to

Educational Systems



Around the World—Mexico



NAFSA

Association of
International Educators

Submitted by Barbara B. Glave
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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.

MÉXICO

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		B		B				D		D		G		I		I		K		K		M		P		P		P		R		R		
						C								E		H		J		J		L		L		P		Q		R		R						
														F						K		M		N		Q												
														G						L		N		P														
																				M		O																

CREDENTIALS OR DOCUMENTATION

Primary-Secondary

- A** *Educación Primaria* (Primary Education): Certificate awarded upon completion of 6 years of elementary education; free and compulsory
- B** *Certificados / diplomas* (certificates and diplomas) for private vocational programs in artistic, commercial, secretarial, and technical fields, sometimes bearing the designation of Media Básica Terminal [terminal (i.e., not leading to further education) basic secondary]; credential **A** required for admission.
- C** *Educación Básica / Educación Media Básica / Educación Secundaria* (Lower-Secondary Education): Certificates awarded upon completion of 3 years of lower-secondary education; free and compulsory; credential **A** required for admission.
- D** *Educación Preparatoria* (Upper-Secondary University-Preparatory Education) / *Bachillerato General* (General Upper-Secondary Baccalaureate) completed at an *Escuela Preparatoria* (Upper-Secondary University-Preparatory School): 6 semesters of *Educación Media Superior* (Upper-Secondary Education) across most of Mexico and 4 semesters or 4 *tetra- / cuatrimestres* (four-month terms) in Nuevo León and other northeast states; may lead to undergraduate admission. Credential **C** required for admission. There is no official credential issued upon completion of upper-secondary although institutions may provide a diploma.
- E** *Bachillerato* (Upper-Secondary Baccalaureate): 6 semesters of *Educación Media Superior* (Upper-Secondary Education); requires credential **C** for admission; and may lead to undergraduate admission. *Bachillerato* is diversified and includes the *Bachillerato Tecnológico* (Technical Upper-Secondary Baccalaureate) and *Bachillerato Pedagógico* (Pedagogic Upper-Secondary Baccalaureate). The *Bachillerato Tecnológico* draws from such areas as health sciences (particularly nursing and clinical laboratory science), business administration, computing, engineering technology, and behavioral sciences (particularly social work). The education is usually a dual academic-vocational program leading to the *Bachillerato Tecnológico* with reference to an academic stream as well as a vocational occupation. The academic portion of the program will bear the nomenclature *en el área de ciencias* (in the area of sciences), such as *en el área de ciencias químico-biológicas* (in the area of bio-chemical sciences) or *en el área de ciencias económico-administrativas* (in the area of economic-administrative sciences); the vocational portion of the program will bear the nomenclature *en la carrera de* (in the field of), such as *en la carrera de contabilidad* (in the field of bookkeeping) or *en la carrera de laboratorista clínico* [in the field of clinical laboratory (assistant)], and / or the designation of *técnico* (technician), such as *en la carrera de técnico en suelos y fertilizantes* (in the field of soil and fertilizer technician). The *Bachillerato Tecnológico* portion of the program provides eligibility to seek

undergraduate admissions; because there is no official diploma, the transcript indicating completion of the program suffices. The *técnico* portion of the dual program is a workforce credential providing eligibility to seek employment in the designated field; completion of coursework leads to a *carta de pasante* (attestation of completion of study plan); upon satisfying the graduation requirements, the student is awarded a *título de técnico* (title as a technician) and qualifies for a *cédula* (diploma registration card). The *cédula* serves as occupational licensure at the technician level.

- F *Título de Enfermera* (Title of Nurse) / *Título de Enfermera General* (Title of General Nurse) / *Título de Enfermera Básica* (Title of Basic Nurse) / *Título de Técnico en Enfermería* (Title of Nursing Technician): 6 semesters of *Educación Media Superior* (Upper-Secondary Education); requires credential **C** for admission; and may lead to undergraduate admission.
- G *Título de Profesor / Maestro* (Title of Teacher) *de la Educación Preescolar* (of Preschool Education) / *de la Educación Primaria* (of Primary Education) / *de la Educación Física* (of Physical Education) usually offered at an *Escuela Normal* (Normal School); 3 years between 1945 and 1972 and 4 years between 1972 and 1987; phased out with Reform of 1984; required credential **C** for admission; led to a workforce credential and / or undergraduate admission to an *Escuela Normal Superior* (Higher Normal School).
- H *Nivelación Pedagógica* (Pedagogic Leveling): Short (one summer to one year) program providing teacher-training coursework prerequisites for bachillerato / preparatoria graduates (credentials **D** and **E**) seeking undergraduate admission to an *Escuela Normal Superior* (Higher Normal School). *Nivelación Pedagógica* coursework is therefore not tertiary.

Undergraduate

Carreras Profesionales Cortas (Short Professional Fields of Study): Two to three years beyond Credentials **D** and **E**.

- I *Título de Técnico Superior* (Title of Higher Technician) / *Título de Técnico Superior Universitario* / (Title of Higher University Technician): Specialized program at a technical school, such as a *Unidad de Estudios Técnicos Universitarios* (Unit for University Technical Studies) or *Escuela Preparatoria Técnica* (Technical Preparatory School), attached to a university-level institution; leads to workforce; *título* awarded and *cédula* issued.
- J *Título de Profesional Asociado* (Title of Associate Professional): modeled after community colleges, offered by *facultades* (academic departments / colleges / schools) at university-level institutions to those who complete the first cycle of a two-cycle *licenciatura* (licentiate); leads to further study in the same / similar *licenciatura* degree plan at the same institution; also leads to workforce; *título* awarded and *cédula* issued.

Full undergraduate degrees:

Notes:

1. The *Carta de pasante* is an attestation of completion of the degree plan and does not imply, much less establish, that the degree has been conferred.
2. Documents referring to *Generación* establish that the student has been a member of a certain class, such as *Generación de 1994-99* (Class of 1999) without regard to completion of coursework.

3. The *año escolar* (academic year) in Mexico is flexible; students may complete some undergraduate degrees in three years by studying year round in *tetramestres / cuatrimestres* (four-month terms).

- K** *Licenciatura* (Licentiate) / *Título de Licenciado* (Title of Licentiate): Three to five years beyond Credentials **D** and **E** or two to three years beyond Credential **J** if permitted; leads to professional practice and to graduate admission; *título* awarded and *cédula* issued.
- L** *Título Profesional* (Professional Title) such as *Título de Ingeniero* (Title of Engineer), *Título de Contador* (Title of Accountant), *Título de Arquitecto* (Title of Architect), or *Título de Químico Bacteriólogo Parasitólogo* [Title of Chemist, Bacteriologist, Parasitologist (i.e., Medical Technologist)]: Three to five years beyond Credentials **D** and **E** or two to three years beyond Credential **J** if permitted; leads to professional practice and to graduate admission; *título* awarded and *cédula* issued.
- M** *Título de Licenciado* (Title of Licentiate) for teachers, such as *Título de Licenciado en Pedagogía* (Title of Licentiate in Pedagogy) / *en Educación Preescolar* [Title of Licentiate in Preschool (Early Childhood) Education] / *en Educación Primaria* [of Primary (Elementary) Education] / *en Educación Física* (of Physical Education) / *en Educación Media* (of Secondary Education) / *en Telesecundaria* (in Televised Lower-Secondary), offered at an *Escuela Normal Superior* (Higher Normal School) or *Facultad de Pedagogía* (Academic Department / College / School of Education) at a university. Three to four years beyond Credentials **D**, **E**, and **G** in *cursos ordinarios* (regular academic degree programs); also five or six summers beyond Credential **G** in *cursos intensivos* (intensive summer programs for working teachers); leads to professional practice and to graduate admission; *título* awarded and *cédula* issued.
- N** *Carreras en ciencias de la salud* (Fields of study in health sciences) such as *Título de Dentista* (Title of Dentist) / *Título de Cirujano Dentista* (Title of Dental Surgeon), *Título de Médico* (Title of Physician) / *Título de Médico Cirujano* (Title of Physician-Surgeon), *Titulo de Médico Veterinario* (Title of Veterinarian) / *Titulo de Médico Veterinario y Zootecnista* (Title of Veterinarian and Animal Scientist): Four to five years beyond Credentials **D** and **E**; lead to professional practice and to graduate admission; *título* awarded and *cédula* issued.
- O** *Título de Licenciatura en Enfermería* (Title of Licentiate in Nursing): Four years beyond Credentials **E** and **F**; leads to professional practice and to graduate admission; *título* awarded and *cédula* issued.

Graduate

- P** *Título de Especialista* (Title of Specialist): One to two years beyond Credentials **K**, **L**, **M**, **N**, and **O**; one to five years beyond *Médico* (Physician) / *Médico Cirujano* (Physician-Surgeon) in Credential **N**; leads to professional practice; *título* awarded and *cédula* issued; may constitute part of a *maestría* (master's degree).
- Q** *Grado de Maestro / Maestría* (Master's Degree) / *Grado Académico de Maestro* (Academic Degree of Master's): Two years beyond Credentials **K**, **L**, **M**, **N**, and **O**; leads to employment and to admission to doctoral programs; *título* awarded and *cédula* issued.
- R** *Grado de Doctor / Doctorado* (Doctoral Degree) / *Grado Académico de Doctor* (Academic Degree of Doctor): Two to four years beyond Credential **Q**; leads to employment; *título* awarded and *cédula* issued.

GRADE SCALES

The grade scale below the undergraduate level is based on 0 (sometimes 5) to 10 points. Usually, 6 is the minimum passing grade, but infrequently it is 7. Suggested grade conversion scale:

9.0-10	Muy Bien / Very Good	=	A
8.0-8.9	Bien / Good	=	B
6.0-7.9	Regular / Average	=	C
0.0-5.9	No acreditada / Failing	=	F

The tertiary grade scale is based on 0 to 10 or 0 to 100 points. Both 6 / 60 and 7 / 70 are commonly used as the minimum passing grade. Possible grade conversion scales:

9.0-10	90-100	Muy Bien / Very Good	=	A
8.0-8.9	80-89	Bien / Good	=	B+
7.0-7.9	70-79	Regular / Average	=	B-
6.0-6.9	60-69	Suficiente / Sufficient	=	C
0.0-5.9	00-59	No acreditada / Failing	=	F

(Or use grade conversion suggested for elementary-secondary, above.)

9.0-10	90-100	Muy Bien / Very Good	=	A
8.0-8.9	80-89	Bien / Good	=	B
7.0-7.9	70-79	Suficiente / Sufficient	=	C
0.0-6.9	00-69	No acreditada / Failing	=	F

The grade scale at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (and institutions using the UNAM grade scale) is alphanumeric:

10	Muy Bien / Very Good	=	A
9			
8	Bien / Good	=	B
7			
6	Suficiente / Sufficient	=	C

Some institutions vary from the above or have changed their grade scales:

- Fundación Universidad de las Américas, Puebla: Until 1997, as Mexico City College, Mexico City, and as Universidad de las Américas, Mexico City and Puebla: letter grades of A to F. Since Fall, 1977: the grade scale is based on 10, with 7.5 as passing.
- Universidad de Guanajuato: Through December, 1996, the grade scale was based on 10 with 6.5 as passing. Since January, 1997, the grade scale is based on 10 with 7 as passing.
- Universidad Autónoma Chapingo: Based on 10 with 6.6 as passing.
- Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila: Until 1985-86, based on 10 with 6 as passing. Beginning with 1986-87, based on 100 with 70 as passing.
- A number of institutions such as ITESM have flipped between 10 with 7 as passing and 100 with 70 as passing, but the percentage is the same.

Grade annotations on transcripts may include:

Acreditada / AC (Passed)

Examen Ordinario / OR (Regularly-scheduled final exam)

Examen Extraordinario / EX or EE (First make-up final exam)

Examen a Título de Suficiencia / ETS (Second make up exam or challenge test)
Equivalencia / EQ (Equivalence)
No Acreditada / NA (Failed)
No Presentada / NP (Absent for final exam)
Revalidada / REV (Transferred)
Sin Derecho / SD (Forfeited right to take final exam by low average or poor attendance)

PRINCIPAL ENTITY FOR POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION:

Reconocimiento de Validez Oficial de Estudios (Recognition of Official Validity of Studies) is granted by such sources as the Secretaría de Educación Pública (Secretariat of Public Education, <http://www.sep.gob.mx/>), state secretariats of education, decreto presidencial (presidential decree), and Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (National Autonomous University of Mexico -- for program incorporation).

Some Mexican institutions of higher education hold regional accreditation in the United States through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (<http://www.sacscoc.org/>):

- Fundación Universidad de las Américas Puebla (relocated from Mexico City to Cholula, Puebla State, in late 1960's): Accredited in 1959 (as Mexico City College); reaffirmed in 2005; SACS Level V.
- Universidad de las Américas - A.C. (located in Mexico City): Accredited in 1991; reaffirmed in 2007; SACS Level V.
- Universidad de Monterrey: Accredited in 2001; reaffirmed in 2006; SACS Level III.
- Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (Sistema): Accredited in 1950; reaffirmed in 1998 and 2008; SACS Level VI.

RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Published

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

International Education Research Foundation. *The New Country Index, Volume One: Making Sense of Credentials*. Berkeley: 2004.

Villa, Kitty Maker. *México: A Study of the Educational System of México and a Guide to the Academic Placement of Students in Educational Institutions of the United States*. Washington, DC: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers – AACRAO , 1982.

On-line

AACRAO EDGE (Electronic Database for Global Education): Mexico, 2008 (requires subscription): aacraoedge.aacrao.org

Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior–ANUIES (National Association of Universities and Institutions of Higher Education):

<http://www.anuies.mx/> Note: ANUIES provides on-line undergraduate and graduate catalogs listing institutions and programs of study:

http://www.anuies.mx/servicios/c_licenciatura/index2.php

Bachillerato (upper-secondary) programs: <http://www.dgb.sep.gob.mx/>

Centro Nacional de Evaluación para la Educación Superior, A.C.–CENEVAL (National Evaluation Center for Higher Education): Non-profit / charitable, civil association which principally offers 2 testing types: *Exámenes Nacionales de Ingreso – EXANI* (National Entrance Examinations) and *Exámenes Generales para el Egreso de la Licenciatura –EGEL* (General Examinations for Licentiate Graduation): <http://www.ceneval.edu.mx/>

Consejo para la Acreditación de la Educación Superior–COPAES (Council for Accreditation of Higher Education): <http://www.copaes.org.mx/>

Consejo de Acreditación de la Enseñanza de la Ingeniería–CACAEI (Council for Accreditation of Engineering Instruction): <http://www.cacei.org/>

Comités Interinstitucionales para la Evaluación de la Educación Superior–CIEES (Inter-Institutional Committees for the Evaluation of Higher Education): <http://www.ciees.edu.mx/>

Subsecretaría de Educación Superior–SES (Assistant Secretariat for Higher Education): <http://ses4.sep.gob.mx/>. Note: See http://ses4.sep.gob.mx/wb/ses/ses_glosario for *Glosario de Términos y Abreviaturas* (Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations)

Sistemas Educativos Nacionales (National Educational Systems); Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos (Organization of Inter-American States): <http://www.oei.es/quipu/México/>

UNESCO World Higher Education Database: <http://www.unesco.org/iau/onlinedatabases/>

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