

Online Guide to

Educational Systems



Around the World—Panama



NAFSA

Association of
International Educators

Submitted by Freda Clement-Willis
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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.

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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.

PANAMA

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				E		E		H		H		J		M		M		N		N		N		N		N	→
								C								F						I		K													
								D								G						J		L													
																						L		M													

CREDENTIALS OR DOCUMENTATION

Secondary

- A *Certificado de Educación Secundaria o Educación Básica General* (Certificate of Secondary Education or General Basic Education): awarded after completion of the three-year *educación pre-media* (pre-middle basic education)
- B *Bachiller¹ Agropecuario* (Agricultural High School Graduate), *Bachiller Industrial* (Industrial High School Graduate) and *Bachiller Tecnológico* (Technological High School Graduate): technical education lasting two to three years²
- C *Bachiller* (High School Graduate)... options in *ciencias* (sciences) and/or *letras* (arts), and *comercial* (commercial): academic education lasting three years²
- D *Maestro de Enseñanza Primaria* (Elementary School Teacher--formerly *Certificado de Maestro Normal*/Certificate of Primary Teacher): teacher training program lasting three years²

Postsecondary

- E *Técnico* (Technician), *Secretaria Ejecutivo* (Executive Secretary), *Diploma de Enferma* (Diploma of Nurse): two to three years of study
- F *Profesor en Educación Pre-escolar / Educación Primaria* (Teacher of Elementary / Primary Education): three-year program
- G *Profesor en Matemática* (Mathematics Teacher): three-year program
- H *Licenciado/Licenciatura* (Licentiate): four-to-five-year programs
- I *Doctor de Cirugía Dental* (Doctor of Dental Surgeon): five-year program
- J *Profesor de Educación* (Education Teacher): one-year programs based on credential **H**
- K *Doctor en Medicina* (Doctor in Medicine): six-year program
- L *Postgrado* (Postgraduate): usually one year program based on credential **H**
- M *Maestría* (Master): one to two-year programs based on credential **L** or **H** (or equivalent)
- N *Doctor³* (Doctoral degree): Three or more year programs including a thesis; admission usually based on credential **M**

¹ *Bachiller* is translated as High School Graduate

² Secondary education begins after completion of six years of *educación primaria* (elementary education). *Educación Premedia* (Pre-Middle Education) consists of the first three years of general basic education. *Educación Media* (Middle Secondary Education) consists of two years (rarely) or three years (usually) of specialized secondary education.

³ This degree is awarded; however, there are few recipients.

GRADING SCALE

Secondary

<u>Numeric</u>	<u>Description</u>
5	Highest Grade
4	
3	Minimum Pass
2	
1	Lowest Grade

Higher Education:

<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Translation</u>
91-100	<i>Sobresaliente</i>	Outstanding, Excellent
81-90	<i>Bueno</i>	Good
71-80	<i>Regular/Normal</i>	Average
61-70	<i>Minimo de Promoción</i>	Minimum Pass
0-60	<i>Fracasado/Fracaso</i>	Failure

POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION RECOGNITION BODY

Ministerio de Educación: P.O. Box 0816-04049, Panama.
Physical Address: Villa Cárdenas, Ancón, Panamá, República de Panamá
Telephone: (507) 511-4400 / 515-7300
Fax: (507) 515-7362 for the Office of General Education
E-mail address: meduca@meduca.gob.pa
<http://www.meduca.gob.pa/institucion.html>
<http://www.meduca.gob.pa/03centroseducativos/index.html>
<http://www.meduca.gob.pa/files/diredocentes/listadoUreconocidas.pdf>

RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Aldrich-Langen, Caroline and Kathleen Sellw, eds. 1987. *The Admission and Placement of Students from Central America: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama*. Annapolis Junction, MD: PIER
- Feagles, Shelley M., Editor, 1999. *A Guide to Educational Systems Around the World*. NAFSA: Association of International Educators, Washington, D.C.
- Foreign Educational Credentials Required for Consideration of Admission to Universities And Colleges in the United States. 1994. Washington, D.C.: AACRAO
- Marcus, Jane E. *Central America Update: An Update of the 1987 PIER Workshop Report on the Systems and Institutions of Higher Education in Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama*. Washington, D.C. 1996.
- World Higher Education Data Base 2009*, International Association of Universities, UNESCO Information Centre on Higher Education, TRACE International Higher Education Network.

Internet Sources

Asociación de Universidades Privadas de Panamá –AUPPA-(Association of Private Universities of Panama):

Address: Vía España, Calle Elvira Méndez, Edificio, Interseco Piso No. 3

Telephone: (507) 265-0641, Fax: (507) 265-0638

E-mail: auppa@auppa.org.pa

<http://www.auppa.org.pa/UniversidadesMiembro.html>

Consejo de Rectores de Panamá (Council of Rectors of Panama):

Albrook, Ancón, Edificio NO. 868

Telephone: (507) 315-1601 /315-0959

E-mail: consejo@cwpanama.net, rectores@cwpanama.net

www.pa/consejo

Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos Para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura (Organization of Iberoamerican States for Education, Science and Culture):

<http://www.oei.es/quipu/index.html>

<http://www.oei.es/quipu/panama/09.pdf>

<http://www.oei.es/quipu/panama/10.pdf>

Red Académica y de Investigación Nacional de la Universidad Tecnológica de Panamá (Academic and National Research Network of the Technological University of Panama):

<http://www.pa/secciones/educacion/index.php>

UNESCO-World Academic Database: <http://www.unesco.org/en/education>

<http://portal.unesco.org/geography/en/ev.php->

[URL_ID=2508&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/geography/en/ev.php-URL_ID=2508&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

<http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php->

[URL_ID=40305&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=40305&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

Submitted by

Freda Clement-Willis

Josef Silny & Associates, Inc.

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