

Online Guide to

Educational Systems



Around the World—Sierra Leone



NAFSA

Association of
International Educators

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

Susan Whipple, Editor

May 2011

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.

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

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.

SIERRA LEONE

YEARS OF EDUCATION →

1→5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
			$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$
			A		B		C	D	E	G	J	K	L	O	O	O			
							E	E	F	H	K	L	M	M					
								F	G	I	L	M	N	P→					
									H	J	M	N	O						
									I	K									

CREDENTIALS OR DOCUMENTATION

Secondary

- A Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE): Administered by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC); signifies the completion of lower secondary education
- B School Certificate/General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level) Examination: Awarded up to the late 1990s; administered by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC); those with more than six subject passes in one sitting were awarded the School Certificate whereas those with less than six subject passes in one sitting received the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level)
- C West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE): Awarded since 2000; administered by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC); requires credential **A** for admission
- D General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level) Examination: Awarded up to the later 1990s; administered by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC); required credential **B** for admission

Postsecondary

- E Certificate: Offered at technical colleges and higher education institutions; signifies one or two years of study in fields ranging from allied health professions to agriculture; requires a minimum of two subject passes on credential **B** or **C** for admission
- F Diploma/Ordinary Diploma/ Ordinary National Diploma: Offered at higher education institutions in fields ranging from education to environmental sciences; signifies two years of study; requires a minimum of three subject passes on credential **B** or **C** for admission
- G Higher Diploma/Higher National Diploma: Offered at higher education institutions in fields ranging from technology to health sciences; signifies three years of study; requires a minimum of four subject passes on credential **B** or **C** for admission; holders of credential **F** may be placed in year two of the program

- H** Teacher's Certificate: Offered at teacher training colleges; signifies three years of study; leads to eligibility to teach at the primary level in Sierra Leone; requires a minimum of three subject passes on credential **B** or **C** for admission
- I** Higher Teacher's Certificate: Offered at teacher training colleges; signifies three years of study; leads to eligibility to teach at the lower secondary level in Sierra Leone; requires a minimum of four subject passes on credential **B** or **C** for admission
- J** Bachelor of Arts/Science/Bachelor of... (General): Offered at higher education institutions; signifies four years of study; requires a minimum of five subject passes on credential **B** or **C** for admission; holders of credential **D** or **I** may be placed in year two of the program
- K** Bachelor of Arts/Science/Bachelor of... (Honours): Offered at higher education institutions; signifies four to five years of study; requires a minimum of five subject passes on credential **B** or **C** for admission; holders of credential **D** or **I** may be placed in year two of the program
- L** Postgraduate Diploma: Offered at higher education institutions in fields ranging from education to public administration and management; signifies one year of study; requires credential **J** or **K** for admission
- M** Master of Arts/Science/Master of...: Offered at higher education institutions; signifies one to two years of study; requires credential **J** or **K** for admission
- N** Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB): Offered at the University of Sierra Leone; signifies six years of study; requires credential **B** or **C** for admission
- O** Master of Philosophy (MPhil): Offered at higher education institutions; signifies two years of study; typically requires credential **M** for admission although some programs may admit students based on credential **J** or **K**
- P** Doctor of Philosophy: Offered at higher education institutions; signifies a minimum of three years of study; requires credential **M** for admission

GRADING SCALES

Secondary

West African Senior School

Certificate Examination

- A1 Excellent
- B2 Very Good
- B3 Good
- C4 Credit
- C5 Credit
- C6 Credit
- D7 Pass
- D8 Pass
- F9 Fail

Postsecondary

Fourah Bay College

University of Sierra Leone

A	70	-	100%
B+	60	-	69%
B	50	-	59%
C+	45	-	49%
C	40	-	44%
D	35	-	39%
E	30	-	34%
F	0	-	29%

Njala University

5	A	Excellent
4	B	Good
3	C	Fair
2	D	Barely Passed
1	E	Failing Grade
0	F	Complete Failure

POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION RECOGNITION BODY

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
New England
Freetown
Sierra Leone

RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Print

Damtew, Teferra, and Philip G. Altbach, eds. *African Higher Education: An International Reference Handbook*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003.

International Association of Universities. *Guide to Higher Education in Africa*. 5th ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR). *Sierra Leone: A Comparative Study*. Canberra, Australia: Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Technology, 1993.

Sahasrabudhe, Ujjaini. "Sierra Leone." *The New Country Index: Volume II*. Culver City: International Education Research Foundation, 2011.

Online

Education in Sierra Leone: Present Challenges, Future Opportunities. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2007: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1099079877269/547664-1099508849130/39166_Edu_Sierra_Leone.pdf

Fourah Bay College: <http://fbcusl.net>

International Network for Higher Education in Africa: <http://www.bc.edu/research/cihe/inhea.html>

Njala University: www.njalauniversity.net

Sierra Leone Education Sector Plan. Freetown: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2007: http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Sierra%20Leone/Sierra_Leone_ESP.pdf

University of Sierra Leone: www.tusol.org

West African Examinations Council Sierra Leone: <http://waecsierra-leone.org>

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