

Online Guide to

# Educational Systems



Around the World—South Pacific



**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: <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.

## **SOUTH PACIFIC** including Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu

### **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  |  | G  |  | J  |  | M  |  | Q  |  | S  |  | V  |  | Y  |  | b  |  | c  |  | f  |  | g→ |  | h  |  | h→ |  |    |
|     |  |   |  |   |  |   |  | C  |  | I  |  | K  |  | N  |  | R  |  | U  |  | W  |  | Z  |  | d  |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |
|     |  |   |  |   |  |   |  | D  |  |    |  | L  |  | O  |  | S  |  | X  |  | a  |  | e  |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |
|     |  |   |  |   |  |   |  | E  |  |    |  | M  |  | P  |  | T  |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |
|     |  |   |  |   |  |   |  | F  |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |

### **CREDENTIALS OR DOCUMENTATION**

#### **Secondary**

- A Year 8 Certificate from Samoa
- B Solomon Islands Form III Leaver's Certificate
- C Kiribati Junior School Certificate
- D Cook Islands Certificate
- E Tonga Higher Leaving Certificate; last awarded in 1987
- F Vanuatu Year 10 Leaving Certificate
- G Solomon Islands School Certificate (Form V)
- I Tonga School Certificate; first awarded in 1987
- J Kiribati National Certificate
- K Samoa School Certificate (formerly known as Western Samoa School Certificate until 1997)
- L Diploma from Marshall Islands
- M Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate (PSSC): awarded after 12 years of education in Kiribati, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu; awarded after 13 years of education in Samoa
- N South Pacific Form Seven Certificate (SPFSC): some subjects taken at the end of Form 6 (Year 12); first awarded in 2004

#### **Postsecondary**

- O National University of Samoa Foundation Certificate (formerly known as University Preparatory Year Certificate): 1 year of study requiring credential **M** for admission
- P University of the South Pacific Certificate in Foundation Studies: 1 year of study requiring credential **M** for admission
- Q Certificate from the University of the South Pacific: .5 – 1 years of study requiring credential **P** for admission
- R Associate of Arts / Associate of Science from the College of the Marshall Islands: 2 years of study requiring credential **L** for admission
- S Diploma from the University of the South Pacific: 1 – 1.5 years of study requiring credential **O** for admission
- T Certificate/Certificate in Education from the National University of Samoa: 1 year of study requiring credential **O** for admission
- U Associate of Science in Nursing: 2.5 years of study requiring credential **L** for admission
- V Diploma from Solomon Islands College of Higher Education: 2 years of study requiring **P** for admission
- W Diploma from Solomon Islands College of Higher Education: 6 semesters of study requiring credential **M** for admission

- X Diploma in Arts/Diploma of Education/Diploma in Nursing/Diploma in Computing from National University of Samoa: 2 years of study requiring credential **O** for admission
- Y Advanced Diploma of Nursing (Midwifery) from Solomon Islands College of Higher Education: 1 year of study requiring credential **W** for admission
- Z Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Education/Bachelor of Nursing from National University of Samoa: 3 years of study requiring credential **M** for admission
- a Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Commerce / Bachelor of Education / Bachelor of Engineering Technology / Bachelor of Laws (LLB) / Bachelor of Science from the University of the South Pacific: 3 years of study requiring credential **N** for admission
- b Postgraduate Certificate from the University of the South Pacific: completion of 3 courses requiring credential **a** for admission
- c Graduate Diploma in Teaching Secondary from Solomon Islands College of Higher Education: 1 year of study requiring credentials **Z** or **a** for admission
- d Graduate Certificate from the University of the South Pacific: 2 years of part-time study requiring credential **a** in the same field of study for admission
- e Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing from the National University of Samoa: 1 year of study requiring credential **Z** for admission
- f Postgraduate Diploma from the University of the South Pacific: 2 years of study requiring credential **a** for admission
- g Master's degree from the University of the South Pacific: requirements vary (2-3 courses plus a thesis, thesis only, coursework only) requiring credential **f** in the same field of study for admission
- h Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) from the University of the South Pacific: 3-5 years of study plus dissertation requiring credentials **a** or **g** for admission

## GRADING SCALES

### Secondary

#### *South Pacific Form 7 Examination*

| <u>Letter</u> | <u>Percentage</u> |
|---------------|-------------------|
| A+            | 80 – 100%         |
| A             | 66 – 79%          |
| B             | 56 – 65%          |
| C             | 45 – 55%          |
| D             | 30 – 44%          |
| F             | 0 – 29%           |

#### *Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate*

| <u>Grade</u> | <u>Description</u>                   |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1            | Excellent standard of achievement    |
| 2            | Very high standard of achievement    |
| 3            | High standard of achievement         |
| 4            | Good standard of achievement         |
| 5            | Satisfactory standard of achievement |
| 6            | Adequate                             |
| 7            | Some achievement                     |
| 8            | Lower level of achievement           |
| 9            | Little level of achievement          |

## Postsecondary

### *National University of Samoa*

| Number  | Letter | Description                                     |
|---------|--------|---|
| 90-100  | A1     | Pass with distinction                           |
| 85 – 89 | A2     | Pass with distinction                           |
| 80 – 84 | A3     | Pass with distinction                           |
| 75 – 79 | B1     | Pass with credit                                |
| 70 – 74 | B2     | Pass with credit                                |
| 65 – 69 | B3     | Pass with credit                                |
| 60 – 64 | C1     | Pass  |
| 55 – 59 | C3     | Pass  |
| 45 – 54 | D      | Fail  |
| 0 – 44  | E      | Fail  |
|         | Ex     | Fail – did not sit for examinations             |
|         | D(U)   | Fail – did not fulfill assessment requirements  |
|         | R      | Restricted pass                                 |
|         | S      | Satisfactory performance in clinical practice   |
|         | U      | Unsatisfactory performance in clinical practice |
|         | W      | Withdrawn (without failure)                     |
|         | CCR    | Cross credit                                    |

### *University of the South Pacific*

#### Passing Grades

|      |   |
|------|---|
| A+   | Pass with distinction   |
| A    | Pass with distinction   |
| B+   | Pass with credit  |
| B    | Pass with credit  |
| C+   | Pass  |
| C    | Pass  |
| R    | Restricted Pass   |
| Aeg  | Aegrotat Pass – requested by a student when s/he is prevented from sitting for a final examination through no fault of her/his own (such as illness or injury)                |
| Comp | Compassionate Pass – requested by a student when s/he is prevented from sitting for a final examination through no fault of her/his own (such as illness or injury of family) |
| Pas  | Pass or competent   |
| M    | Marginal  |
| S    | Satisfactory  |

#### Provisional Grades

|    |             |
|----|-------------|
| I  | Incomplete  |
| IP | In progress |

#### Failing Grades

|      |   |
|------|---|
| D    | Work below the standard required for a pass                                       |
| E    | Very weak performance or failure to complete to the satisfaction of the examiner  |
| X    | When used together with a fail grade indicates student did not sit for final exam |
| NC   | Not completed   |
| NV   | Null and Void: awarded for dishonest practice                                     |
| U    | Unsatisfactory  |
| Fail | Not competent   |

## POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION RECOGNITION BODY

Marshall Islands: Ministry of Education: <http://www.rmimoe.net/>

Solomon Islands: Ministry of Education and Training

Samoa: Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture of Samoa: <http://www.mesc.gov.ws/>

Tonga: Ministry of Education, Women Affairs and Culture: <http://www.tongaeducation.gov.to/>

## RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Print

Carpenter, Kenneth D. *Pacific Islands: Niue, Tonga, Kiribati, Fiji, Papua New Guinea. A Country Guide Series Report from the AACRAO-AID Project.* Washington, DC: AACRAO, 1996.

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

### On-line

College of the Marshall Islands: <http://www.cmi.edu/>

Cook Islands: Ministry of Education: <http://www.education.gov.ck/>

National University of Samoa: <http://www.nus.edu.ws/>

Secretariat of Pacific Board of Educational Assessment (SPBEA) – member countries: Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu  
<http://www.spbea.org.fj/>

Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (founded in 1984 with merger of Solomon Islands Teachers College, Public Administration Training School, Ranadi Marine Training School, Honiara Nursing Training School, and Honiara Technical Institute; School of Tourism and Hospitality, and School of Humanities, Science and Media added in 2008)  
<http://www.siche.edu.sb/>

University of the South Pacific (main campus on Fiji; other campuses on Samoa, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue, Tonga, Vanuatu, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Nauru)  
<http://www.usp.ac.fj/>

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