

Online Guide to

# Educational Systems



Around the World—Sri Lanka



**NAFSA**

Association of  
International Educators

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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

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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.

# SRI LANKA

## YEARS OF EDUCATION

1 → 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24  
A | B | C | D | D | G | H | I | J | K  
E | F

## CREDENTIALS OR DOCUMENTATION

### Secondary

- A *Primary School* : represents completion of 5 years of primary education
- B *Junior Secondary School*: represents completion of 9 years of primary and junior secondary education
- C *Senior Secondary School GCE ordinary level ( "O" Level) Certificate*: represents completion of 11 years of primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary school education; leads to collegiate GCE Advanced Level (A Level) Certificate credentials **A, B, C**
- D *Collegiate GCE 'A' Level*: represents 2 years of collegiate preparation education based on credential **C**; leads to credentials **G, H, I**. Gives access to undergraduate education
- E *Diploma from Technical Colleges*: represents 2 years of post senior secondary school education based on credential **C**; leads to vocational diploma and employment.
- F *Teacher Certification Diploma*: represents 3 years of post senior secondary school education based on credential **C**; leads to Teacher Certification

### Postsecondary

- G *Bachelor's Degree (General)*: 3 year upper secondary program (Bachelor of Science, Arts, Bachelor of Commerce, Bachelor of Business Administration, Bachelor of Laws (LL B) based on credential **D**; gives access to Post Bachelor degrees at the university level
- H *Bachelor's Degree (Special)*: 4 year upper secondary program (Bachelor of Engineering, Bachelor of Nursing, Bachelor of Pharmacy, Bachelor of Dentistry BSc, BA etc.) based on credential **D**; gives access to Post Bachelor degrees at the university level.
- I *Master's Degree*: 2 years post bachelor's degree based on credential **G and H**; gives access to Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy degrees
- J *Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (Professional Baccalaureate)*: 5 ½ years of program based on credential **D**; gives access to Doctor of Medicine and Post Graduate Certificates in Medicine
- K *Master of Philosophy*: 1 year graduate level program based on credential **H**; gives access to Doctor of Philosophy degree
- L *Bachelor of Architecture*: 5 year undergraduate program of study leading to Bachelor's degree based on credential **D**; gives access to Master's degree
- M *Doctor of Philosophy*: 3 to 5 years of research leading to Thesis or Dissertation in a specific field of study based on credential **I**

## GRADING SCALE

### Secondary Schools

GC.E. O/L			G.C.E.A/L			U.S. GRADE COMPARISON
Range	Grade	symbol	Range	Grade	symbol	
100-75	Distinction	A	100-75	Distinction	A	A
74-65	Very Good Pass	B	74-65	Very Good Pass	B	B
64-50	Credit Pass	C	64-50	Credit Pass	C	C
49-35	Ordinary Pass	S	49-35	Ordinary Pass	S	C
34-00	Weak ( failure)	W	34-00	Weak ( failure)	F	

### Secondary and Postsecondary

<u>Marks</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>US Grade Comparison</u>
75 -100	<i>Distinction</i>	A +
60 – 74%	<i>First Class/Division</i>	A
50 – 59%	<i>Second Class/Division</i>	B
35 – 49%	<i>Pass</i>	C

There are also grading scales that range from A to F as well as 10 points to 0 points.

## POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION RECOGNITION BODY

Ministry of Higher Education Government of Sri Lanka  
UGC (University Grants Commission)

## RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Leo Sweeney and Valerie Woolston: The Admission and Academic Placement of Students from South Asia: Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, A Workshop Project Report, AACRAO/NAFSA Washington DC, 1986  
Foreign Educational Credentials Required, AACRAO, 2003  
Ministry of Education – Government of Sri Lanka: [www.moe.gov.lk/](http://www.moe.gov.lk/)  
Ministry of Higher Education- Government of Sri Lanka: [www.mohe.gov.lk](http://www.mohe.gov.lk)  
University Grants Commission- Government of Sri Lanka: [www.ugc.lk](http://www.ugc.lk)

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