

Online Guide to

Educational Systems



Around the World—Republic of Bulgaria



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.

REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

YEARS OF EDUCATION →

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
		$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$
A	A	A	B	B	B	B	(B)	D	D	(D)	F	F	G	G	G								
		(C)	C	C	C	C	(C)	D	D	(D)													
							(D)	D	D	(D)													
							(E)	E	E	E	(E)												
							(F)	(F)	(F)	(F)	F	F	G	G	G								
											(G)	G	G	G	G								

CREDENTIALS OR DOCUMENTATION

Secondary

- A Свидетелство за основно образование [Svidetelstvo za osnovno obrazovanie] (Basic Education Certificate)** Single structure education in the Republic of Bulgaria is called basic education: *osnovno obrazovanie*. It consists of two stages: primary – from grade 1 to grade 4 including, and lower secondary – from grade 5 to grade 8 including. After the successful completion of grade 8, pupils receive a basic education certificate, which gives them the right to continue their education, or take up vocational training or exercise professions requiring completed basic education.
- B Диплома за средно образование [Diploma za sredno obrazovanie] (Diploma of Completed Secondary Education)** In the Republic of Bulgaria the upper secondary level of education is carried out at a single stage (upper secondary/high school education), lasting 4 or 5 years and leading to completion of secondary education. Secondary education is acquired on completion of the 12th (13th) grade and successfully taking state matriculation exams. It is certified with a diploma of completed secondary education, which is final and entitles the holder to continue his/her education or vocational training.
- C Диплома за средно образование [Diploma za sredno obrazovanie] (Diploma of Completed Secondary Education) and Свидетелство за професионална квалификация [Svidetelstvo za profesionalna kvalifikacia] (Certificate of Professional Qualification)** Complete upper secondary vocational education is provided by vocational upper secondary schools – they admit pupils with completed basic education (9th – 12th/13th grade) and or after completed seventh grade (8th – 13th grade). Vocational upper secondary schools provide vocational education through the acquisition of second degree of vocational qualification with duration of four years or of third degree of vocational qualification with duration of five or six years.
- D Свидетелство за професионална квалификация: специалист в различни области [Svidetelstvo za profesionalna kvalifikacia: spetsialist v razlichni oblasti] (Certificate of Professional Qualification: Specialist in Different Fields) Non-University Higher Education:** Colleges, which are generally incorporated into the structure of universities, offer relatively short, vocationally oriented programs (usually 3 years in length) leading to the award of qualification degrees Specialist in ... Holders of this qualification are eligible for bachelor-level studies or for entry into the labor market.

Postsecondary

- E Бакалавър [Bakalavar] (Bachelor)** Four-to-five years of study is required at this level leading to the educational degree **Bakalavar** (bachelor's degree). Requires credential **B**, **C** or **D** for admission.
- F Магистър [Magistar] (Master)** The second level of higher education requires one-to-two years of additional study after the bachelor's degree, and leads to the educational degree **Magistar** (master's degree). Requires credential **E** for admission. The new *magistar* is currently offered in parallel with the traditional, integrated master's-level degree known as the **Diploma za Visshe Obrazovanie** (diploma of higher education). Both qualifications possess the same academic value. There are still some long, integrated master's programs of five-to-six years in subject areas such as architecture, law, pharmacy and medicine. Require credential **B**, **C** or **D** for admission.
- G Доктор [Doktor] (Doctor, често е PhD)** The third level requires a minimum of three years of study after the master's or four years year of study after the bachelor's, and leads to the educational and scientific degree "doctor" **Doktor** (doctoral degree). Requires credential **E** or **F** for admission.

University Higher Education: Higher schools issue a diploma for completed degree of higher education, a European diploma supplement as well as a certificate for professional qualification and some other important documents. Diplomas are acknowledged by the state when education conforms to the Higher Education Act and the state requirements. A European diploma supplement is issued on request by the student.

Process of Implementation of the Diploma Supplement: The Diploma Supplement is defined as an official document in the higher education system of Bulgaria and follows the model developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES. It is introduced in the Ordinance for the state requirements for the contents of the basic documents, issued by the higher schools. Prom. SG. 75/27 August 2004, amend. SG. 10/ 6 February 2009. Full text of the ordinance in Bulgarian- in the site of the Ministry of education and science:

http://www.mon.bg/opencms/export/sites/mon/left_menu/documents/process/nrdb_04_dok_vuz.pdf

GRADING SCALES

Secondary

All academic courses receive grades of 2-6 according to the following standards:

- 6 (A) – отличен [otlichen] (Excellent) (91.5 -100%)
5 (B) – много добър [mnogo dobur] (Very Good) (80.5 - 91.4%)
4 (C) – добър [dobur] (Good) (70.5 - 80.4%)
3 (D) – среден [sreden] (Sufficient) (59.5 - 70.4%)
2 (F) – слаб [slab] (Poor) (0 - 59.4%)
6.0 (US 4.0) is the highest possible GPA
Pass/fail level: 3.5
Lowest on scale: 2

To convert GPA from the Bulgarian 6.0 system to the U.S. 4.0 system, subtract two points from the Bulgarian system. For example, a 6.0 in the Bulgarian system is a 4.0 in the U.S. system.

As a matter of policy, the Bulgarian education institutions do not rank or rate their students.

The Bulgarian counselors and teachers do their best to distinguish applicants in recommendations, and you should not hesitate to contact them if you have questions.

Postsecondary

The forms of evaluation and assessment procedures are determined by the respective institution's regulations. How exactly this is to be carried out, is specified in their curricula and syllabi. A basic form of assessment of knowledge in the higher schools is the written exam. A numerical grading system is used:

6 – отличен [*otlichen*] (excellent);

5 – много добър [*mnogo dobur*] (very good);

4 – добър [*dobur*] (good);

3 – [среден] *sreden* (sufficient);

2 – слаб [*slab*] (poor).

A successfully passed examination is considered an exam taken with at least Fair (3).

Higher schools may introduce through their own regulations further systems for assessment of their students' achievements but they should provide comparability of results.

ECTS (European Credit Transfer System)

The Law on Higher Education foresees the implementation of the modular structure of the curricula and of credits for the evaluation of study periods, although it does not explicitly require the implementation of ECTS (European Credit Transfer System). In Bulgaria, ECTS mainly facilitates academic harmonization and student mobility and functions less as a tool for assessment. The 2003 draft of the Higher Education Act foresees the adoption of ECTS by all higher education institutions.

Although the ECTS grading scale is not used in Bulgaria, some institutions provide equivalencies with the Bulgarian scale for mobility purposes. The Bulgarian equivalency differs slightly from institution to institution. The table below displays grade equivalencies suggested by Plovdiv University.

ECTS Grade	Bulgarian Grade	Percentage of Successful Students Normally Obtaining the Grade	Definition
A	6	10 - Excellent	outstanding performance, with only minor errors
B	5	20 - Very Good	above the average standard, with some errors
C	4.50	30 - Good	generally sound work, with a number of notable errors
D	4	30 - Satisfactory	fair, with significant shortcomings
E	3	10 - Sufficient	performance meets the minimal criteria
FX	2	Fail	extra work required before the credit can be awarded
F	2	Fail	considerable further work is required

Source: Plovdiv University

POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION RECOGNITION BODY

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Science

Web site in Bulgarian: <http://www.mon.bg/news-home/>

Responsible for the certification of all national qualifications destined for external evaluation by foreign institutions.

NACID (National Center for Information and Documentation)

Web site in English: <http://mail.nacid.bg/newdesign/en/index.php>

Deals with recognition of foreign credentials in Bulgaria. Provides information on recognition of professional qualifications.

NEAA (The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency) at the Council of Ministers

Web site in English: <http://www.neaa.government.bg/en>

Evaluates universities and colleges and accredits their programs.

RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Print

Academic Degrees and Academic Ranks Act - 1972. Regulates the academic degrees and ranks, the conditions and order for their granting and how they are to be revoked with the aim to cooperate for the development of science and for the practical application of its Eurybase achievements – Bulgaria (2006/07) - www.eurydice.org The Regulations on the Implementation of the Act operates together with it. The Act regulates the structure of the Supreme Testimonial Commission as an independent body with the Council of Ministers.

Decree 125 by the Council of Ministers of 2002 for the ratification of the Classifier of the Fields of Higher Education and the Vocational Paths. Determines nine areas of higher education and more than 60 professional directions. The Classifier has been developed in compliance with the structure of ISCED 97 and presents the opportunity for gathering, processing and comparing of information on an international level.

The Higher Education Act – 1995 /latest amendments 2010 / - *State Newsletter*, N 12 (December 12, 1995). Regulates the structure, functions, management and funding of the higher education in the Republic of Bulgaria.

Ordinance on the state requirements for the acquisition of higher education and educational qualification degrees (Bachelor, Master and Specialist) /Decree by the Council of Ministers №162 from 2002. The aim of the ordinance is to determine standards for the conducting of education in the programs of Bachelor, Master and Specialist educational qualification degrees. It determines the goals and tasks of the respective qualification degrees, the teaching duration, the ratio between lectures and practical preparation of students, the conditions to sit for state exams.

Regulations on the Activity of the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency /Decree by the Council of Ministers 106 of 2000/ Regulates the structure, activity, management, funding, and the organization of the activities of the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency; the Regulations specify the organization of the evaluation and accreditation processes, in relation to which criteria sheets for the conducting of the procedures have been developed.

On-line

Accredited Higher Educational Institutions

Web site in English: www.neaa.government.bg/en/institutions?content=1238166566573223624

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Science

Web site in Bulgarian: www.mon.bg/news-home/

The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency

Web site in English: www.neaa.government.bg/en

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