



World guide to higher education

A comparative survey of
systems, degrees and
qualifications



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and qualifications*

Third edition

UNESCO Publishing

The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

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Preface

Encouraging the international exchange of persons is a function of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) which is enshrined in its Constitution. Since 1947 the Secretariat has collected information and carried out studies on the mobility of students, graduates and professionals, as well as on various kinds of assistance available to those wishing to study or carry out research abroad.

The first two editions of the *World Guide to Higher Education* were part of a series entitled 'Studies on the Evaluation of Qualifications at the Higher Education Level', which included nine titles published between 1969 and 1981. These books, together with six regional conventions on the recognition of studies and diplomas in higher education and the Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education, are intended to contribute to a comparative overview of higher-education systems worldwide and to help analyse and codify the methods used in evaluating foreign qualifications by government or education authorities. Since 1948 UNESCO has also published *Study Abroad*, now in its twenty-ninth edition, which gives information about higher-education courses which admit foreign students, scholarships, financial assistance and general facts for those seeking to study in one of the 134 countries covered by the book.

The aim of these activities is to facilitate both mobility and understanding through the improved circulation of information. The conventions, although they constitute legal commitments on the part of the 110 states which have ratified one or more of them, are not mainly designed to be coercive instruments: rather, they constitute frameworks, statements of intent, upon which bilateral agreements and other specific arrangements can be worked out. They suggest general criteria for the recognition of qualifications and outline ways in which these general criteria can be translated into decisions related to specific cases.

The first draft of the present volume of the *World Guide*, as was the case for the two previous editions (published in 1976 and 1982), was prepared for UNESCO by the International Association of Universities (IAU). Particular thanks go to the Head of the IAU/UNESCO Information Centre on Higher Education, Claudine Langlois, who was responsible for compiling and editing the manuscript, assisted by Monique Colard-Rouland and Christina Keyes.

In most cases, the individual country chapters are based on material received from the national government and academic authorities. In some cases, chapters have, of necessity, been compiled from documentation existing in the IAU/UNESCO Information Centre on Higher Education. Any book of this nature is partially out of date by the time it actually appears. The background work of collecting material for this volume was carried out twice, during late 1989 and 1990 by the IAU and during late 1992 and 1993 by UNESCO. Some 70 of the 161 entries constituting this edition were updated and revised during the second stage, or are entirely new.

The entries concerning countries from the regions of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, the Arab States and Latin America and the Caribbean were revised and edited by Dimitri Beridze of the Division of Higher Education at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

The entries concerning countries from the Europe Region were thoroughly checked and revised by the UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES) in Bucharest, with the help, in most cases, of its liaison officers in each country. UNESCO would like to thank Leland Barrows, Marilena Filip and Mariana Patru for their contribution and also Sally McGrath, who provided considerable voluntary assistance to CEPES for this project.

The lengthy preparation period for the third edition of the *Guide* derives from the fact that it coincided with one of the periods of greatest political change in the world and particularly in Europe since the Second World War. Many of these changes have only now begun to have an impact on systems of higher education, and reforms are still being conceived and implemented all over the world. The broad outlines of the higher-education systems as presented herein are accurate, and as a reference work the book should adequately serve the purpose for which it is intended. UNESCO and the IAU are indeed grateful to all those authorities which co-operated by responding to requests for material.

The *World Guide to Higher Education* is intended to provide professionals whose job it is to evaluate higher-education qualifications with an overview of systems all over the world, presented in a comparable manner for each country and in each case with indications as to how to obtain more details on an individual system. It is also intended for policy-makers, researchers, comparative-education specialists, students and teachers.

The presentation of national systems is intended to be neutral and restricted to facts, and must not be interpreted as expressing the views of UNESCO or of the IAU. Similarly, the designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the volume do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

A note on terminology

Much of the discussion regarding equivalences is bedevilled by semantics. For this reason, special care has been taken regarding the language employed in this book. So far as possible, a 'neutral' form of English, in which the key criterion is comprehensibility, has been used to designate institutions, qualifications and courses. For example, whereas the British speak of a 'college of education' but Americans refer to a 'teachers' college' or a 'normal school', in this book the term 'teacher-training institution', which is self-explanatory, has in most cases been employed.

Wherever possible, terms that might lend themselves to ambiguity have been avoided. Thus the term 'school' (as in 'school of social science', for example) has been used as little as possible and a circumlocution employed. Likewise, the use of the word 'professional' gives rise to confusion, particularly when translating from the Romance languages. The procedure adopted here has been to use 'professional' when a high level of occupational training is implied (e.g. in medicine and engineering), and to use 'vocational'—and, on occasion, 'technical'—for lower levels of training. Moreover, the word 'technical' is now used in many countries not only to apply to the industrial techniques, but also to commercial and business arts, and even to preparation for tertiary occupations. It is realized that the use of these different terms has sometimes involved making value judgements that are arbitrary. Furthermore, the term 'professional qualification' has been used in the rather restricted sense of an award granted at the end of professional training, although its use does not imply that the award necessarily confers the right to exercise the profession for which it was granted. In certain cases, such as in the entries for a number of South American countries, the more exact denomination of 'professional title' has been deliberately employed.

The word 'qualification' has been used as a generic term to designate any kind of degree, diploma, title or certificate whatsoever awarded as the result of a course of education or training.

Wherever possible, a distinction has been made between the words 'thesis' and 'dissertation', although current usage of these in English is itself very unclear. In general the term 'thesis' has been employed to designate a written exercise of a fairly substantial nature prepared for a doctoral degree and 'dissertation' for a lesser qualification than a doctorate.

Words and expressions used in their common or generic meaning are printed in the text in normal type. However, they are printed in italics when a specific meaning is attached to them in a particular system of higher education and they figure in the glossary for that system.

Acronyms and abbreviations

AACRAO	American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (Washington, D.C., United States)
AArU	Association of Arab Universities (Amman, Jordan)
AAU	Association of African Universities (Accra-North, Ghana)
ACE	American Council on Education (Washington, D.C., United States)
ACU	Association of Commonwealth Universities (London, United Kingdom)
ADB	Asian Development Bank (Manila, Philippines)
AICARDES	Association of Arab Research Institutes and Centres for Economic and Social Development (Tunis, Tunisia)
AIU	Association of Indian Universities (New Delhi, India)
AIU	(Association Internationale des Universités): see IAU
AMIDEAST	America-Mideast Educational and Training Services (Washington, D.C., United States)
ANDES	Association Nationale des Docteurs ès Sciences (Paris, France)
ANUIES	Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Institutos de Enseñanza Superior (Mexico City, Mexico)
ASAIHL	Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning (Bangkok, Thailand)
AUCC	Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (Ottawa, Canada)
AUPELF	Association des Universités Partiellement ou Entièrement de Langue Française (Montreal, Canada)
BIE	See IBE
BREDA	UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa —Bureau Régional de l'UNESCO pour l'Éducation en Afrique (Dakar, Senegal)
BWF	Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung (Vienna, Austria)
CAO	Central Applications Office (Galway, Ireland)
CEEB	College Entrance Examination Board (New York, United States)

CEFI	Comité d'Études sur les Formations d'Ingénieurs (Paris, France)
CEPES	UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education (Bucharest, Romania)
CICESE	Centro de Investigación Científica y de Educación Superior de Ensenada (Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico)
CIMEA	Centro d'Informazione sulla Mobilità e le Equivalenze Accademiche (Rome, Italy)
CLACSO	Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (Buenos Aires, Argentina)
CNOUS	Centre National des Œuvres Universitaires et Scolaires (Paris, France)
CNU	Consejo Nacional de Universidades (Caracas, Venezuela)
CNUEP	Consejo Nacional de Universidades y Escuelas Politécnicas (Quito, Ecuador)
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa (Dakar, Senegal)
CONACYT	Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (Mexico City, Mexico)
CONES	Consejo Nacional de Educación Superior (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic)
COPQ	Council on Overseas Professional Qualifications (Canberra, Australia)
CRESALC	UNESCO Regional Centre for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (Caracas, Venezuela)
CRUB	Conselho de Reitores das Universidades Brasileiras (Brasília, DF, Brazil)
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst—German Academic Exchange Service (Bonn, Germany)
ERASMUS	European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (Brussels, Belgium)
ESAURP	Eastern and Southern African Universities Research Programme (Dar-es-Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania)
FEANI	European Federation of National Associations of Engineers—Fédération Européenne d'Associations Nationales d'Ingénieurs (Paris, France)
HEA	Higher Education Authority (Dublin, Ireland)
HEC	Higher Education Council (Bilkent-Ankara, Turkey)
IAU	International Association of Universities—Association Internationale des Universités (AIU) (Paris, France)
IBE	International Bureau of Education—Bureau International d'Éducation (BIE) (Geneva, Switzerland)

IBO	International Baccalaureate Office (Geneva, Switzerland)
ICFES	Instituto Colombiano para el Fomento de la Educación Superior (Bogotá, Colombia)
IDP	International Development Program of Australian Universities and Colleges (Canberra, Australia)
IFCU	International Federation of Catholic Universities (Paris, France)
IIE	Institute of International Education (New York, United States)
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning (Paris, France)
ILO	International Labour Organisation (Geneva, Switzerland)
KCUE	Korean Council for University Education (Seoul, Republic of Korea)
NAFSA	National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (Washington, D.C., United States)
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centre
NBUC	See UHÁ
NCEA	National Council for Educational Awards (Dublin, Ireland)
NUC	National Universities Commission (Lagos, Nigeria)
NUFFIC	Netherlands Organisation for International Co-operation in Higher Education (The Hague, Netherlands)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Paris, France)
ONISEP	Office National d'Information sur les Enseignements et les Professions (Paris, France)
OPES	Oficina de Planificación de la Educación Superior (San José, Costa Rica)
OPSU	Oficina de Planificación del Sector Universitario (Caracas, Venezuela)
OSYM	Student Selection and Placement Centre (Bilkent-Ankara, Turkey)
PCAS	Polytechnics Central Admissions System (Cheltenham, United Kingdom)
PROAP	UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, Thailand)
RIHE	Research Institute for Higher Education (Hiroshima, Japan)
UCCA	Universities Central Council on Admissions (Cheltenham, United Kingdom)
UDUAL	Unión de Universidades de América Latina (Mexico City, Mexico)

UGC	University Grants Commission (Islamabad, Pakistan)
UHÄ	Universitets- och Högskoleämbetet—National Swedish Board of Universities and Colleges (NBUC) (Stockholm, Sweden)
UNAM	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Mexico City, Mexico)
WHO	World Health Organization (Geneva, Switzerland)
WRK	Westdeutschen Rektorenkonferenz (Bonn, Germany)

Introduction

The *World Guide to Higher Education* found wide recognition in the international higher-education community, a clear indication that it responded to a very real need. The time has therefore come to publish a new, fully revised and substantially enlarged edition intended to serve better the same unchanged purpose. As was the case for the previous edition, the approach to its compilation has been practical rather than scholarly. The *World Guide's* primary object is to present in concise and comparable form basic information about national systems of higher education and about the academic and professional qualifications being awarded in each country.

No attempt is made to establish 'equivalences' or to propose ready-made solutions to related problems of mobility between different countries or between professions. To do so might be more misleading than helpful. It is hoped, however, that the user will find the volume of service as a tool when evaluating degrees and diplomas awarded in different countries and when assessing acquired competences.

Much has been written on the subject of what was until recently called the problem of 'equivalences' and, at times, it seemed that the purpose was to present it as one so complicated as to defy solution. Indeed, it long remained unsolved or at best solved only in particular cases. This has constituted a serious barrier to academic mobility and to exchanges between universities in different countries or has served as an alibi for attitudes of protectionism and isolationism. Consequently, society has time and again been prevented from deriving the full benefit of valuable human resources. Moreover, in a century during which many thousands of men and women have left their homes and countries—often being obliged to do so in tragic circumstances—personal hardship and humiliation have been the lot of those who have found that their hard-won 'foreign' qualifications are not recognized or, at best, accepted only after long delays.

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS: A NEW APPROACH

There has, however, been a considerable change in the situation since the Second World War. It is not necessary here to refer in detail to the appearance of many new sovereign states and the foundation of new

universities. Nor is it necessary to evoke again the 'explosions' both in student enrolments and in knowledge and technology—and the accompanying progress made in the democratization of higher education, the change in attitudes to the right to education and the development of international exchanges, not least in the field of higher education. All these factors have resulted in universities, and post-secondary education in general, finding themselves in a state of effervescence and spectacular quantitative expansion. All these factors were bound to have an effect on the status of qualifications and their international 'convertibility'

Dynamic developments of this kind would also inevitably affect the nature of academic qualifications themselves. For centuries, a university degree or diploma constituted a well-defined 'asset'. It represented the acquisition of a body of knowledge and an ability to use it intelligently in the exercise of certain functions within society. But this conception has been undermined, partly because the knowledge which constituted the 'asset' has tended to become outdated and to rapidly lose its value and partly because, as a corollary, the functions which it served have themselves changed, both in method and in content. Consequently, a university qualification is no longer an acquisition that will serve the holder for the rest of his or her life. Instead, it must be seen as a potential to be used to assimilate new knowledge and to participate in, or at least to adapt to, the process of innovation. Instead of being an end point, it should constitute a starting-point, oriented towards the future rather than the past. UNESCO has done much to encourage this new approach and has embodied it in the various regional conventions on the mutual recognition of studies, degrees and diplomas which have been drawn up on its initiative and most recently in the Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education adopted by the General Conference at its twenty-seventh session in November 1993.

It is consistent with this trend that consideration should be given not only to an individual's qualifications but also to the experience they may have gained outside their formal educational work, their achievements, publications, etc. The move in this direction has been strongly encouraged by UNESCO and in the recommendation as well as the regional conventions reference is made to the desirability of taking account of such factors, in addition to academic qualifications, when assessing a person's ability to engage in particular activities.

There is a third important element which has helped to modify attitudes towards academic qualifications. This is the development of international exchanges in all fields. In a world in which everything is moving more and more rapidly—merchandise, capital, equipment, information and labour—the barrier of the non-recognition of qualifications (often a consequence of lack of knowledge of them) is an anomaly blocking the movement of teachers, research workers and students, the very groups which have traditionally moved more freely than many others. Science knows no frontiers, yet the men and women of science and those who seek the advancement of knowledge are painfully aware of them. It is strange that this should be so. Motor cars are exported but the qualifications of those who design them may not be recognized in the importing countries. It remains quite conceivable that a Nobel Prize winner may find it impossible to practise medicine in

another country, not for political reasons, but simply because his or her qualifications are not regarded as valid. In a world which attaches growing importance to the value of mobility, situations of this kind are increasingly perceived as verging on the absurd.

This absurdity is perhaps rooted in the ambiguity attached to the function of a degree or diploma, particularly in static societies. In principle, it testifies to the possession of knowledge and to the aptitude to acquire new knowledge. Yet, at the same time, it constitutes a means of access to certain functions in society and is thus endowed with a negotiable value. Many people quite rightly regard it as a factor of upward social mobility which helps to correct and even offset inequalities attributable to the accident of birth or of financial status. But it is also a factor of social rigidity and immobility in so far as it defines, guarantees and encompasses certain socio-professional monopolies. It may be compared to a door which opens and thus gives access—but also one which closes and protects a domain from outside interference.

At the international level, the number of problems is even greater, not least because of the interplay of conflicting national interests. This explains why the efforts to re-establish the mobility of scholars, such as once existed in the world of Islam and in medieval Europe, have long remained sporadic and unsuccessful.

STAGES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

In more recent times, however, three factors—the advancement of knowledge itself, the development of education and the development of international exchanges—have helped to change attitudes with regard to the nature and conception of qualifications. This opens up new possibilities for action and UNESCO has identified them. In particular, it has taken an initiative which has led to the drawing up of a number of regional conventions on the mutual recognition of degrees and diplomas. First, the word ‘equivalence’ is not always applicable and has often been replaced by or combined with the term ‘mutual recognition’. This, instead of postulating the rigorous identity of curricula or of knowledge sanctioned by degrees and diplomas, recognizes that the training of the mind can be served by different areas of knowledge. While respecting the place of individuals, these conventions set the question of recognition in the context of the global perspectives of national and regional societies, their cultural and economic development and the optimum use of educational facilities and human resources. Their aim is not only to facilitate the access of foreigners to higher education or to the professions, but also to facilitate the reinsertion in the national context of those who have studied abroad—a matter of great importance in the world today.

Finally, and perhaps this is the most important point of all, these conventions lend a new dynamism to the notion of academic qualifications (or of partial studies) by regarding them not as end points but as springboards for future work. Thus they embody the notion of a ‘stage of training’ which is considered to be represented by the sum total of theoretical and practical studies, personal experience and

achievements. These together constitute the level of maturity and competence needed (in the case of the pursuit of studies) to embark on the following stage and, for the exercise of a profession, justify the assuming of responsibilities and duties at a given stage. Thus, whereas the notion of 'level' implies that what is measured is static, that of 'stage' immediately suggests a continuous progression.

In organizing and presenting the country sections in this book, the first concern has therefore been to ascertain whether the notion of 'stages' of training is already accepted and can thus be used in describing the systems, not as they might become but as they are at present. The question, therefore, is twofold: (a) are the stages identifiable and (b) is there sufficient articulation between the stages in different countries for valid conclusions to be drawn and for a system of mutual recognition to be based on them?

The first can be answered affirmatively. This would not have been the case a few years ago. In German-speaking countries, for example, there was traditionally only one 'degree' in many fields of study—the doctorate—and students were left to organize their own programme of study. They passed through a number of stages but they did so at their own pace and not in conformity with a prescribed course. Today, all systems tend to be more highly structured.

At first sight there is no such simple answer to the second question with regard to the comparability of the articulation of stages in different countries. In some systems, such as that in France, higher education is explicitly divided into three cycles; others tend to be binary in nature—undergraduate and graduate (or postgraduate). The latter is true of the Anglo-Saxon countries and of most countries which derive their own systems from them.

A closer examination, however, reveals that many systems are, in fact, implicitly if not explicitly tertiary in nature—even if there are no explicit stages or corresponding qualifications. Similarly, undergraduate medical studies, which in many countries appear to constitute a six- or seven-year continuum, are often divided into pre-clinical (more theoretical) and clinical studies. In Germany and Austria the *Vordiplom* (or *Vorprüfung*) does not constitute a final qualification but it does mark a point in the course leading to the degree. In the Anglo-Saxon systems, the pattern (although with exceptions) is that of a triple progression from BA/BSc to MA/MSc to PhD.

Although it would be unwise to pursue this approach in order, arbitrarily, to seek to cast all systems in the same mould, most do appear to reveal a pattern of higher education divided into three phases. The first phase, which may or may not lead to the award of a particular qualification, may be described as one of training in the fundamental disciplines of one field of study (or activity). The second is one of greater specialization in one or several fundamental or applied disciplines, usually allied to an introduction to research and the analysis of complex problems. The third and final phase is that devoted to advanced study and original research, which may be carried out individually or in a team.

This, of course, is only a theoretical model and it must, in any case, be corrected for short post-secondary courses which lead directly to active employment. Here, the first phase is itself final in nature and

therefore lays greater emphasis on practical work. Even so, it is highly desirable that it should not constitute a dead-end but permit, under certain conditions, access to the next stage of education. This is already the case in some countries. In the German *Gesamthochschulen*, for example, the first stage is common to all students, whether they intend to follow long or short courses. It is the second stage which is shorter for some and longer for others.

Finally, it should be mentioned that, in some countries, the third stage may be longer, due to the existence of a 'second' doctorate (*Habilitation* in Germany, *doktor nauk* in the Russian Federation). This qualification is primarily designed for those wishing to be appointed to senior academic posts.

THE PRESENT VOLUME

The purpose of the above observations is simply to outline the broad framework which has served for the presentation of the contents of this new edition of the *World Guide*. It is addressed to those in universities and government departments and to others who are responsible for the recognition of academic qualifications or who may be interested in the various systems of higher education throughout the world. It is hoped that it will facilitate the task of those who serve on the regional and national bodies charged with the important responsibility of applying the Conventions signed under the auspices of UNESCO, and with stimulating the mobility of individuals, thus promoting their personal development and that of the countries between which they form the living links.

Today, knowledge changes and becomes outdated so rapidly that the exact content of previous training is less important than its scientific quality and its methods. Good higher education must, therefore, have a certain polyvalent element and prepare the mind to embark on new paths of study and research.

The present volume, obviously, does not attempt to pass judgement and does not, of itself, provide a basis for evaluation. Its compilation would not have been undertaken, however, had a knowledge of the patterns of higher education in different countries not been indispensable for taking decisions in matters concerned with the recognition of studies, degrees and diplomas. The information here presented has, in most cases, been furnished by the competent authorities in the countries concerned. It has been collated in part by UNESCO and in part by the IAU/UNESCO Information Centre on Higher Education and efforts have been made to present it in a form which corresponds, as far as possible, to the stages of education and training outlined above and which describes the terminology of each system. An attempt has been made to present the information clearly and in comparable form although, in certain cases, this has meant simplifying some long and complex texts. It is hoped, in this way, that the country sections will help to indicate paths through the systems of higher education and through the main disciplines and fields of study, although the way in which these are divided and organized varies from one country to another.

Similarly, for ease of reference, the descriptive texts are accompanied by tables which recapitulate the periods of study leading to the award of the various degrees and diplomas. These should be used with caution since their apparent simplicity may overemphasize the significance of the length of courses as one of the criteria for assessing the value of a qualification. Important as it may be, it can also be misleading if it is the only factor to be taken into account, and the standing of qualifications cannot therefore be measured or compared simply by using a ruler. Those who use this volume will certainly be aware that tables of this kind constitute a tool which can only be of value if used with caution.

It should be added that the present edition has been extended to include twenty-two new countries and that special efforts have been made to provide more structured information on teacher training at all levels, on non-formal and non-university-level post-secondary studies as well as on the academic year, the grading systems used by higher-education institutions and, more importantly, the entry requirements and recognition of degrees and diplomas for foreign students.

Note

Information on bodies and institutions dealing with or providing information on the recognition of studies, degrees and diplomas is provided at the end of the majority of entries. More detailed information can be found in the *World Directory of National Information Centres for Academic Recognition and Mobility* published by UNESCO in 1994 (UNESCO doc. ED-94/WS/29).

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