



Accreditation & Recognition



Update on Iraq



Medical Education

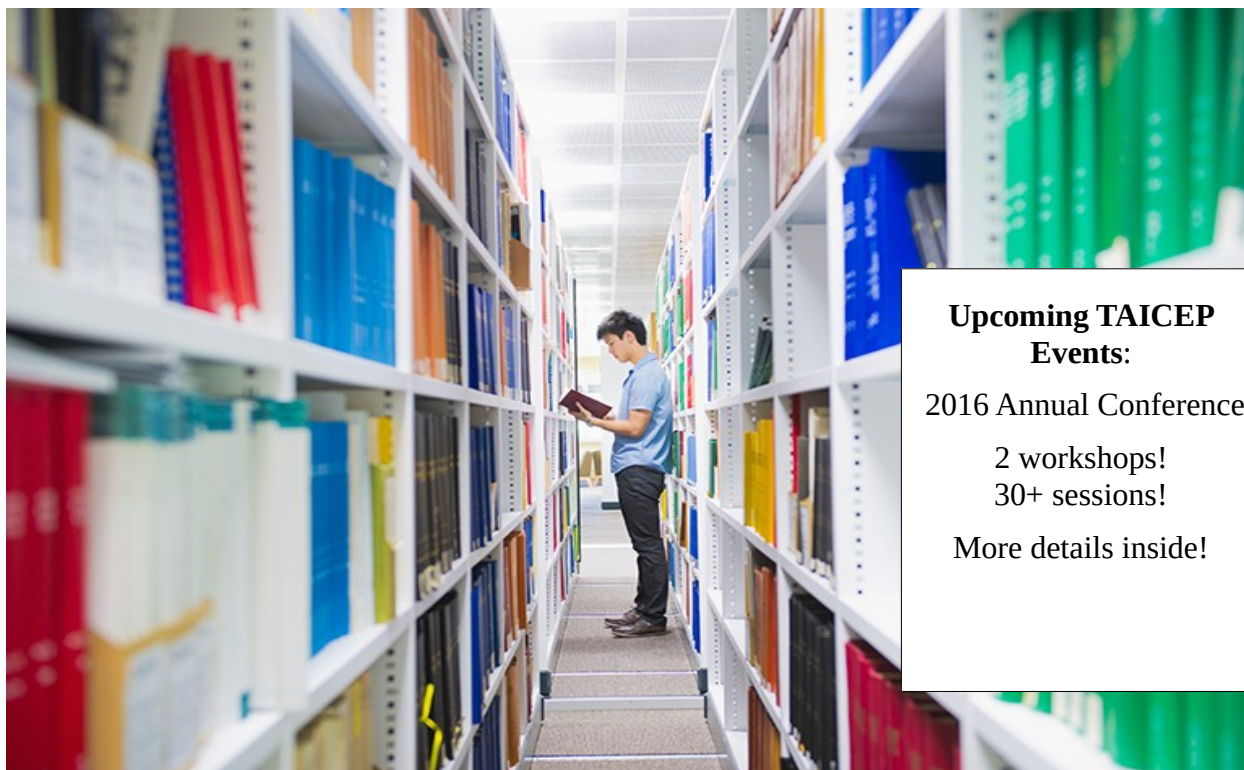


BTEC Qualifications

TAICEP TALK

July 2016

Volume 2, Number 3



Upcoming TAICEP Events:

2016 Annual Conference

2 workshops!

30+ sessions!

More details inside!

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President's Welcome

Dear TAICEP Members,

I'm delighted to welcome you to the July 2016 edition of *TAICEP Talk*, TAICEP's quarterly newsletter for our profession.

In this edition, you will find rich resource articles on accreditation and qualifications, including an overview of accreditation by Ken Warren, an article on accreditation of medical schools in the Caribbean by Lorna Parkins, and an article focused on BTEC qualifications by Rebecca Spanos. This issue also includes resources on documentation, including document forensics by Olivia Dodson, an update on document verification in Iraq by Charles Hoehnen, and an article on Chinese internal high school transcripts by Katerina Roskina. This issue is also rounded out by articles on the Baha'i Institute of Higher Education by William Bellin and Nancy Katz, and a piece on high school graduation of international student athletes by Garrett Seelinger.

Our next edition of the newsletter will focus on our upcoming conference, *The Art and Science of Credential Evaluation*, which will be held September 26-28 in Chicago. We are looking forward to seeing many of you at our next conference, and on behalf of the board and committee chairs, I want to extend our gratitude to many TAICEP members who have contributed to building an outstanding program with the professional development and conference committees – over 30 sessions focused on credential evaluation! I can't decide if I'm more excited by the fact that half of last year's conference attendees registered by the early bird deadline, or that almost 80 new faces have already registered to attend a TAICEP conference for the first time this year!!

If you haven't registered yet, please do so without delay at www.taicep.org – the pre-conference workshop on evaluating international credentials in 10 steps is almost sold out! (The workshop on evaluating refugee qualifications has already sold out!) If you've already registered -- thank you! -- please help to spread the word by inviting colleagues in other institutions to join you.

We hope you will find the resources in this edition of the newsletter useful, and we look forward to seeing many of you in Chicago for TAICEP's second annual conference!

Natasha Sawh
TAICEP President

Committee Updates

Updates from your 2016 TAICEP Conference Planning Committee

Registration Still Available

The 2016 TAICEP Annual Conference is quickly approaching. This year's conference will take place Monday, September 26 through Wednesday, September 28th, 2016 in Chicago, Illinois. While our Early Registration deadline has passed, space is still available. We encourage you to register as soon as space is limited. To register for the 2016 Annual Conference, please visit our website by clicking [here](#).

Unfortunately, due to high demand, our initial block of rooms at the DoubleTree have been exhausted. Now that our early registration deadline has passed, rooms are currently available at the DoubleTree at a rate of \$259.00 per night. For more hotels options, please visit our website by clicking [here](#).

If you haven't already, please take a moment to visit our [website](#), where we've recently published a list of upcoming sessions. In the coming weeks, we'll be posting the final schedule, so please make sure to check back. The Professional Development and Training Committee has selected a variety of topics that will aid and support the important work being done on a daily basis by credential evaluation professionals around the globe, and the range of topics this year is impressive. Many thanks to your feedback and guidance from years past.

We've currently sold out for one of our pre-conference workshops, but space is still available for *Evaluating International Credentials in 10 Steps*, so be sure to sign up.

To our Conference Sponsors – THANK YOU!!

I want to take this opportunity to specifically thank our conference sponsors. I would encourage you to take a moment to review the list of confirmed sponsors for this year's TAICEP annual conference on our [website](#). The success of any association is due in no small part to the sponsors who support their mission and goals. We certainly could not offer our members the exceptional conference experience we have in store for this year without their support. THANK YOU!!

If you have any questions about your sponsorship, or are interested in contributing, please email our Conference Planning Committee at taicepconference@gmail.com.

Want to be a TAICEP volunteer?

One of the best ways to get involved at the upcoming Annual Conference is to volunteer. Whether you're new to TAICEP or you've been around for awhile, as a volunteer led

organization, your commitment will go a long way to ensure a smooth, welcoming, and well functioning conference for all. To those of you who expressed an interest in being a volunteer at registration, THANK YOU! There are multiple volunteer opportunities! We will be reaching out in the coming weeks to gauge your interest in supporting our efforts in the following ways:

- Registration desk
- Handing-out material
- Introducing workshop/session speakers
- Welcome chaperon in the Gleacher Center
- Chaperon between DoubleTree Hilton Hotel and Gleacher Center

If you have not previously indicated an interest in being a volunteer, please consider the impact your small but meaningful commitment will have on our ability to create a memorable, impactful, and hopefully enjoyable 2016 conference. If you would like to be considered for any of the above opportunities, please email us at taicepconference@gmail.com.

Exploring Chicago

The Conference Planning Committee is currently putting together a list of opportunities for conference participants to network and connect with one another and to explore all that beautiful downtown Chicago has to offer. We've already compiled a fairly extensive list of activities, attractions, and must experience Chicago pizza options on our website: <http://www.taicep.org/taiceporgwp/2016-annual-conference/why-attend/wonderful-chicago/>. In the coming weeks, and certainly in time for the next *TAICEP Talk* Newsletter publication, we'll have a list of specific activities for you to consider including an option to view Chicago from a different perspective while on a Chicago Architecture Foundation River Cruise, or to soak up information and culture by visiting one of Chicago's many museums and/or attractions such as Navy Pier. Please make sure to pay close attention to your email and the next TAICEP Newsletter for more information. If you have any questions in the meantime, please feel free to email us at taicepconference@gmail.com.



Understanding the Process of Accreditation and Institutional Recognition

This introductory article brings together a number of ideas about the validation of institutions and programs around the world. My plan is to introduce accreditation and recognition (A&R) structures in select countries through a series of articles. The goal is to outline how institutions become recognized or accredited, who are the responsible parties involved in A&R, describe the quality assurance mechanisms in a given country, and provide other salient information to help credential evaluators compare international systems of A&R with their own. The series begins with an overview of how institutions are accredited the United States; programmatic accreditation may be covered in a future article.

A reasonable place to begin this discussion is by defining the terms ‘accreditation’ and ‘recognition’.

Accreditation: A system of quality control carried out by bodies which may or may not be independent of the national government. Accreditation is a voluntary process. Following an assessment procedure involving self-evaluation and peer review, recommendations for improvement are made, and accreditation (i.e. a stamp of approval) is granted or denied.

Recognition: An official status granted to an institution (and/or the qualifications it awards) by national legislation.

The way in which institutions become accredited or recognized will be different depending on the country and circumstance, but they have similar goals: to grant official status to an institution and/or degree program indicating that the qualifications awarded warrant acceptance for academic and professional purposes in the home country, according to the standards for quality assurance determined by responsible authorities. It should also be mentioned that a key aspect of A&R is that institutions that are accredited or recognized agree in principle to accept the qualifications awarded, and study completed, at similarly accredited or recognized institutions to be the equivalent of the qualifications they themselves award.

Sometimes other terms are used in an institutional or programmatic context which are similar to A&R, though they may not mean that an institution or program is actually accredited or recognized. Evaluators will encounter terms such as ‘approved’, ‘affiliated’, ‘chartered’, ‘licensed’, ‘listed’, ‘registered’, etc. as part of their research. Care should be taken not to mistake these terms as an indicator that an institution is recognized. For example, in many countries, private institutions must be ‘licensed’ to operate or be ‘registered’ with a national educational authority before they can open their doors to students.

The authority to accredit or recognize institutions differs depending on the country in question and the purpose of A&R. In some countries, the recognition of institutions is given through national legislation or a ministerial body, such as a Ministry of Education or Ministry of Health. In the United Kingdom for example, institutions are recognized via a Royal or

Parliamentary Charter. In the United States, the accreditation of institutions and programs is done via approved national accrediting bodies, such as a regional accreditation agency or a faith-based accrediting body.

Accreditation of institutions or programs may sometimes be done through approved accreditation or recognizing authorities that are located in other countries. In some instances, a single approved body may be responsible for a sector of education for a consortium of countries – CAAM-HP which accredits medical education in the Caribbean, is an example of this.

Similar to accreditation is a system of degree validation, in which a recognized institution in one country takes on the responsibility of awarding a recognized qualifications on behalf of an unrecognized institution located in another country. This can be a somewhat controversial practice and has been the subject of much discussion in our profession.

Finally, in many countries of the world, the accreditation and recognition of institutions may be dealt with by national authorities responsible for a particular sector or level of education. It is common to encounter recognition of secondary, vocational/technical, and higher education institutions handled by different ministries within one country. Other types of A&R also exist, and my hope is to cover those most commonly encountered through the end of the series.

Accreditation in the United States

In the United States, most post-secondary educational institutions are accredited by private, non-profit, non-governmental organizations – the most common being the regional accrediting bodies. There are seven accrediting commissions operating in six geographical regions. There are also ‘national accreditors’ which may be faith-based, private career, or distance education. Programmatic accreditors cover institutions and programs in a particular field such as Audiology, Business, Construction education, or Nursing education.

Secondary-level institutions are approved, licensed, and sometimes accredited by the states in which they operate. They may also be accredited by a regional accrediting agency; each of the regional accrediting bodies has one or more commissions which deal with the accreditation of secondary schools.

There are approximately 80 recognized or ‘approved’ institutional and programmatic accrediting bodies in the US. These bodies accredit institutions and programs in 50 states and some 95 countries, making the US system of accreditation probably the most complex in the world.

The US government usually requires that higher education institutions be accredited by an approved accreditor. Approved accrediting bodies are recognized by either the Council of Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), a non-governmental organization, or the US Department of Education (DOE) – sometimes both. These two organizations approve accrediting bodies to ensure that there is a reliable authority overseeing the quality of the

institutions they accredit. CHEA and the DOE also provide data and resources that assist recognized accrediting bodies in their work. They do not, however, accredit individual institutions.

Aside from CHEA and the DOE, the role of government in the accreditation of higher education institutions is rather limited. The US government does not directly oversee higher education institutions except in the case of military or naval academies. Neither CHEA nor the DOE play a role in the accrediting activities taken on by US accreditors who accredit institutions outside of the US. Information on how accreditors are approved by the US Department of Education can be found here: <http://www.ed.gov/accreditation>; information on how accreditors are approved by CHEA can be found here: http://www.chea.org/pdf/Recognition_Policy-June_28_2010-FINAL.pdf

There exists a “triad” of participants in US accreditation. State governments license an institution to award a degree and provide a minimum level of consumer protection; the federal government makes student loans available to those who attend accredited schools; and accrediting agencies monitor institutional quality via peer review. Although states may initially grant a license to an institution, they will require that the institution follow through with an accepted accreditation process before state funds will be made available to the institution or its students.

What follows are brief descriptions of how different US accrediting bodies handle the process of accreditation. These descriptions are not exhaustive; each agency provides full descriptions of their process, and in many cases, the process is the same.

What is the process of accreditation?

The process of accreditation involves a self-review, self-regulation, and external reviews. Institutions that seek accreditation must abide by a rigorous set of evaluation criteria, and standards that relate to all aspects of the institutions’ life and mission; these requirements are common to all US accrediting bodies. Accreditation is also an expensive and lengthy process.

Preliminary self-evaluations give an institution the opportunity to review their institution in terms of its effectiveness and its infrastructure. Important criteria such as compliance with local, state, and federal regulations are examined, and student outcomes, graduation rates, learning resources, and the financial health of the institution are all taken into consideration. Programs offered at accredited institutions must also meet an accepted level of quality set by the accrediting body. Accredited institutions and the programs they offer are also subject to regular periodic review via accreditation audits. Ongoing quality assurance reviews are common to all US accrediting bodies; newly accredited institutions are typically reviewed at the end of a 5 year period; established accredited institutions must be reevaluated at least once every 10 years. The cycle of review and reevaluation varies depending on the practices of the accrediting body.

Regional academic accreditation is by far the most comprehensive type of accreditation encountered in the US in terms of the number and scope of institutions accredited. About

3000 secondary and higher education US institutions are regionally accredited. Regional accrediting bodies oversee the quality of a diverse group of institutions: research universities, community colleges, and special purpose institutions. They accredit both private and public institutions.

Each regional accrediting body is overseen by a professional staff, but the real work of accrediting is carried out by commissioners and teams of peer volunteers. Each commission has at least one member of the public filling a commissioner's role. Peer volunteers are drawn from among the member institutions of the regional accrediting body. They bring to their teams experience and expertise from all areas and levels within educational institutions – administration, faculty, leadership, student services, etc.

Although there may be variations in the way regional accrediting bodies accredit institutions, the usual first step in the accreditation process is an application for candidacy which is completed by the institution. Prospective candidates must meet all of the requirements for affiliation with the accreditor, prior to application. After a review of the application by the accrediting body, designation as a candidate for accreditation is given, and then the candidacy itself. Candidacy represents a pre-accreditation status which in most cases is completed within 5 years. During the application process, documents related to the institution's charter and mission, its programs, students, facilities, etc. are submitted for review to the accrediting body. A site visit follows by staff of the accreditor.

Some regional accrediting bodies also accredit 'free standing institutions' abroad, which are different from US domestic institutions that operate a branch or campus outside the US. In some cases, the accrediting authority may apply additional standards to which the institution must comply, such as instruction and competence in English, significant numbers of Americans in the administration, or the offering of US-style degree programs.

Overview of Select Accrediting Bodies

The Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) is one of two national accrediting bodies that are recognized by both CHEA and the DOE. It is the largest national accrediting body for degree-granting institutions in occupational, professional, and technical fields. While the process of self-review and examination may have similarities to the process followed for prospective regionally accredited institutions, there are some notable differences to the process. For example, there is no 'candidacy' phase in the ACICS accrediting process. Institutions applying for ACICS accreditation complete a self-review to determine if they meet the requirements for application; ACICS provides preparation training for prospective members; self-examination reports are filed; and site visits take place. A report is then prepared by ACICS to which institutions are given the opportunity to respond. An Intermediate Review Committee compiles all of the reports and documentation and makes a recommendation to the Council commissioners. The Council takes action on the recommendation, and then approves, defers accreditation with conditions, or denies membership. The process of ACICS accreditation takes approximately 9 to 18 months to complete, and is dependent on the institution's ability to meet the standards for membership.

The Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC) is the second national accrediting body that is recognized by both CHEA and DOE. The Commission accredits post-secondary institutions that deliver instruction primarily through distance education, including institutions offering non-degree programs up through professional doctorates.

Institutions eligible for accreditation through DEAC must have the majority of their programs delivered via distance education. They must be financially sound, have been in operation for a minimum of two years, be fully licensed to operate in the jurisdiction in which they are located, and be in compliance with all state and federal laws. Because many of the programs they offer are in licensable professions, the institution must also be familiar with all special accreditation requirements for their graduates in relation to licensure examinations in the professions.

The application process for DEAC accreditation includes a self-examination report which is reviewed by a DEAC-appointed evaluator who prepares a “Readiness Assessment”. This assessment determines the eligibility of the applicant and whether the institution will move on to the site visit component of the application. Institutions are either deemed ready, or not. Those that are deemed not ready are given two additional opportunities to become ‘deemed ready’ to continue with the accreditation process. Institutions that are deemed ready undergo a comprehensive curricular review completed by expert commissioned consultants in program subject areas. An on-site evaluation is completed by DEAC, and applicant institutions are given the opportunity to address any areas in which they fall short of the DEAC requirements. A final report is completed, and the Commission takes action to accredit or defer accreditation for the institution.

The accreditation of private, post-secondary education institutions that offer degree and non-degree programs in occupational, technical, trade, and vocational fields is also done by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC), which is an accrediting body approved by the DOE only. Some institutions that offer distance education can also be accredited by ACCSC. Schools that are primarily avocational or that have a majority of general education programs are not eligible to be accredited by ACCSC. Similar to the ACICS process, applicants for ACCSC accreditation must attend a workshop covering the accreditation process. As part of the self-review, the primary objectives of the institution is examined, whether the institution can demonstrate that it has a graduate from the longest program they offer, if the institution is financially stable, etc. ACCSC requires that their members offer at least one program that is 300 clock hours in duration or longer.

Finally, there are four faith-based accrediting organizations in the US; all are approved by both CHEA and the DOE. They are: Association for Biblical Higher Education Commission on Accreditation, Association of Advanced Rabbinical and Talmudic Schools Accreditation Commission, Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, and the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools Accreditation Commission. The focus of the institutions accredited under these bodies is on providing programs to serve the particular ministerial and professional needs of religious institutions. Many faith-based accredited institutions also hold academic regional accreditation.

A solid understanding of the process of accreditation and recognition is key to developing a credential evaluation methodology and the practice of applied comparative education. The complexity of US accreditation makes it one of the most challenging issues faced by credential evaluators outside of the United States. US evaluators as well need to understand what is involved in accrediting a US institution when they state equivalencies to a non-US institutions. How does one decide if regional academic accreditation is the same as, or similar to, Ministry of Education recognition? Can US national accreditation be considered to be on par with regional academic accreditation? The answer to these questions is more likely to be found in the types of institutions that each authority accredits, rather than the authority itself.

Resources:

US Department of Education Database of Accredited Post secondary Institutions and Programs: <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/>

The Council for Higher Education and Accreditation: <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/> and http://www.chea.org/pdf/2016-2017_Directory_of_CHEA_Recognized_Organizations.pdf

New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education: <https://cihe.neasc.org/standards-policies/standards-accreditation/standards-effective-july-1-2016>

Distance Education Accrediting Commission: www.deac.org

Accredit Council for Independent Colleges and Schools: www.acics.org

Association for Biblical Higher Education: <https://www.abhe.org/accreditation/>

Kenneth Warren, Educational Perspectives

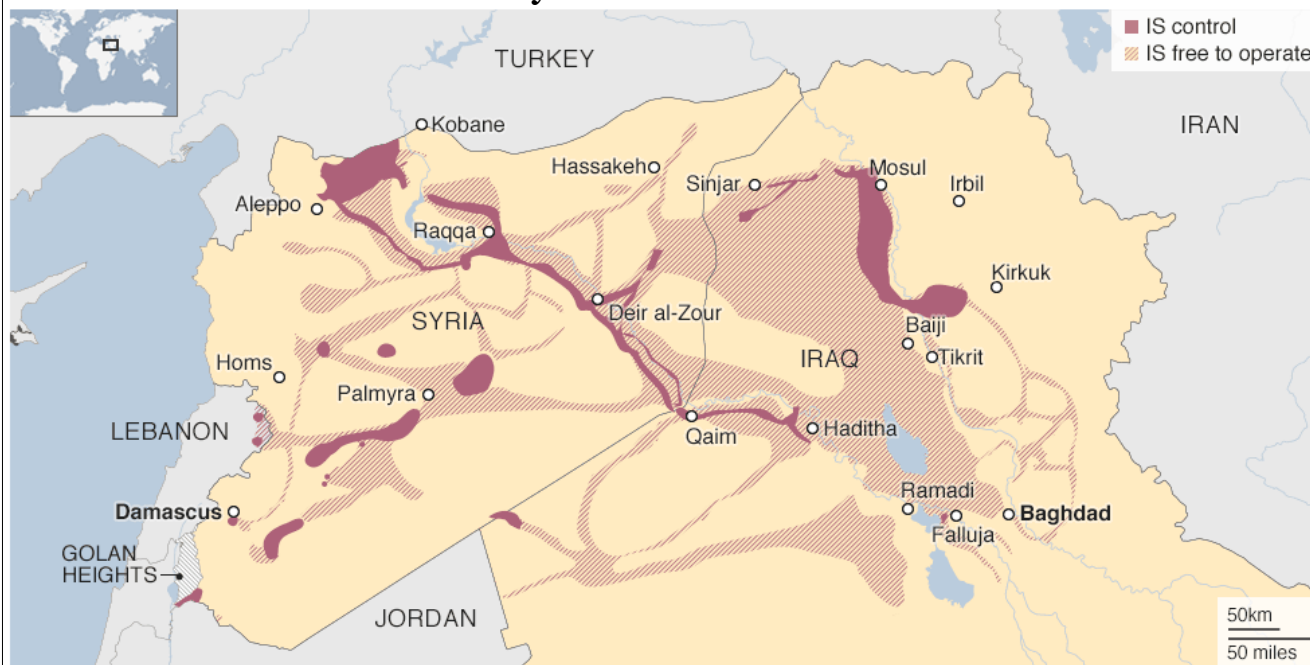
Update on Iraq

Continuing Violence Creates Challenges for Evaluators

On June 30th 2016, the following headlines were published within twelve hours of each other regarding the conflict in Iraq: [Airstrikes hit convoys carrying ISIS militants out of Falluja](#), [U.S. officials say](#); [Britain orders 250 more troops to Iraq to battle Islamic State](#); [Iraq Crisis: 3.6 million children now at risk from increasing violence](#); [U.S. to provide \\$2.7 billion credit for Iraq](#); [Turkey hits PKK targets in northern Iraq, SE Turkey](#). This all before the most recent and most deadly bombing in years, an ISIS terror plot which killed over 250 Iraqis in a Shiite neighborhood on Monday, July 4th.

The accumulation of events and the continued instability in the region has created a fractured and stressed educational landscape. Closed universities, movement restrictions, religious persecution, sectarian violence, and examinations taken under duress are among the obstacles for people hoping to use their education to facilitate safe international passage, as their opportunities are denied through the conflict at home.

Islamic State controlled territory



Source: Institute for the Study of War (25 May 2016)

BBC

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27838034>

Events in Iraq create challenges for credential evaluators. The escalating war between the Islamic state and both national and international forces have left educators, students, and administrators in a difficult situation when it comes to institutional contacts and reliable library information online. This is worsened by the ideological intolerance of IS to the civil institutions which support education and educators, and their eagerness to hold Iraq's cultural heritage hostage.

At Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE), we find that in the areas of Iraq outside IS control, credential holders can obtain reissued documents from their school. There are often mitigating factors, like interrupted mail service, but we have had success in a most cases where additional documentation has been required. This is also true of contacting institutions to verify the authenticity of documents. Although many Iraq universities, colleges, and institutes maintain online graduation databases, the scope of those resources and the inconsistency with which the websites are updated and maintained means verification is still sometimes necessary – and may be necessary depending on the documents you get anyway. Evaluators should not resist making inquiries of institutions in Iraq. However, do note that in places like Mosul and Kirkuk, direct IS control or operations makes it difficult or impossible. Even in universities that have been liberated, like Anbar and Tikrit, significantly rebuilding is required. In these cases, contacting the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research may be a useful alternative. Some students have been able to complete university exams at other schools after fleeing IS occupied territory.

[Violence denies millions of children across Iraq access to education](#)

"The impact of conflict, violence, and displacement in Iraq is nothing short of devastating," reports Peter Hawkins the UNICEF representative in Iraq, from an October 2015 press release. Almost a million children have been displaced, including 70% who've already missed a full year. At the secondary preparatory levels, this means we can expect continuing challenges and unforeseen repercussions on educational status, examination scheduling, and long-term document availability.

The Iraqi Cultural Office in Washing D.C. is another resources which might be useful for obtaining verification of document authenticity.

[Iraqi Cultural Office](#), 1638 R ST NW, Suite 220, Washington DC 20009.

Recognition of Institutions in Kurdistan Region

[KRG MOHESR, Public Universities](#)

[Iraq MOHESR, Public Universities \(in Arabic\)](#)

[Kurdistan Democratic Party](#)

KRG is a federated region in northern Iraq. The KRG is independent and has autonomous control of educational institutions in the region. This includes private universities that the KRG Ministry of Higher Education has permitted to operate. However, some ambivalence exists between recognition through the KRG ministry versus the central ministry in Baghdad. For example, the list on the central Ministry's website has public universities listed, including regional technical education without the names of specific schools. On the KRG MOHESR list, some individual universities are listed as "polytechniques", like Duhok Polytechnic University (www.dpu.ac).

Based on our understanding of the Kurdistan Regional Governments authority and independence, at ECE we consider all the institutions listed on the KRG MOHESR website (public and private) to be recognized. This is an area of interest that we should monitor for further developments and/or changes to the status of the Kurdistan Region's higher education institutions.

Technical Education Developments

[Foundation of Technical Education](#)

The Foundation of Technical Education (FTE) controls and oversees technical education, which historically was taught at technical institutes and colleges throughout the country. However, recent reforms in technical education include consolidation of these institutions under the administration of several universities: Middle Technical University, North Technical University, South Technical University, and Middle Euphrates University.

Purportedly, they will oversee all the technical institutes and colleges that were under FTE oversight. ECE has reviewed some documents from some of the new technical universities. However, at the time of this writing, the FTE website remains up, and the graduation lists by traditional college/institution division are still available. If you're navigating from the home page, and this is true of any institution in Iraq for which you might be checking graduation lists, look for a link for graduates (الخريجين). In the case of the FTE, this link will take you to the beginning of a link tree for the colleges and institutions, which are further subdivided into the specific named school: [Graduates for FTE institutions](#).

The documents should name one of the new universities, such as Middle Technical University, and also list the name of the college/institute where the study took place. As referred to above, the Iraqi central MOHESR has a list of technical education that is recognized by region in the KRG.

Charles Hoehnen, Educational Credential Evaluators

Medical Accreditation in the Caribbean

Introduction

The Caribbean region encompasses that area between the United States and Canada to the north, Colombia and Venezuela to the south, and Central America to the west. To the east is the Atlantic and Africa, a major player in our historical past. Historically, the English-speaking territories are linked to Britain, but due to geographic proximity, are influenced greatly by events in North America. Culturally, the Caribbean is a cultural and ethnic melting pot of Europeans, Africans, East Indians and indigenous people.

Background to the development of medical education and medical education accreditation in the Caribbean

Medical education in the Anglophone Caribbean began with thirty three (33) students in 1948 at the foundation of the University College of the West Indies (UCWI), at the Mona Campus in Jamaica. The UCWI was then a constituent part of the University of London and remained so until 1962 when it sought independence from London. What became the University of the West Indies (UWI) was constituted and founded by a Royal Charter as a full degree-granting University, The University of the West Indies, (UWI) in that year.

Over time, the University has expanded with the establishment of two other full campuses in Trinidad and Barbados which also offer the full five-year medical education programme; since 1997, clinical training has been offered in the Bahamas in order to cope with the increased intake of students. Students sit a common final examination with the examiners moving across the campuses to ensure uniformity of standards.

From its inception and even after full university status was achieved in 1962, the medical education programme of the UWI was accredited by the General Medical Council (GMC) of the UK. Graduates were able to register freely in the UK and other Commonwealth countries. This practice continued over the years, as various changes took place in medical education at the University of the West Indies (UWI). However, the GMC discontinued the practice of accrediting all overseas institutions in 2001 as a result of the UK's accession to the European Union.

Over the last thirty years, there has been significant change and growth in medical education in the Caribbean region. In 1969, the University of Suriname established its medical school, and in 1985, the University of Guyana also established its medical school. Prior to the establishment of the Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Education in Medicine and Other Health Professions (CAAM-HP), this medical school had not undergone an accreditation exercise.

In addition to the traditional schools, there has been an influx of for-profit off-shore medical schools of varying size and reputed quality aimed primarily at students from the United States. The first of these schools, St George's University School of Medicine, was established on the island of Grenada in 1977, and over the years has been evaluated by a number of state agencies in the US and by the CAAM-HP.

The next to be established in 1978 was Ross University School of Medicine on the island of Dominica. Over the years, this medical school has been accredited by the Dominica Medical Board and more recently by the CAAM-HP.

According to the International Medical Education Directory (IMED), there are over 30 such schools in the English speaking Caribbean today. Researchers from the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER), in an overview of the world's medical schools, reported in 2007 that Caribbean region has a higher density of medical schools per capita than any other region of the world, with 1.42 medical schools per 1 million inhabitants. In contrast, Western Europe has 0.60 and North America has 0.50 medical schools per 1 million inhabitants.

The region therefore has three different types of medical schools: the regional university (UWI), national universities (University of Guyana and the University of Suriname), and the off-shore, for-profit schools.



Issues

Against the background of the foregoing developments, issues of quality, scale of operation, student populations, and oversight mechanisms have become of increasing importance in the Caribbean and elsewhere. Some of these issues are:

- The tendency on the part of persons external to the region to lump together Caribbean medical schools with no distinction being made regarding the length of time of operation, missions, admission requirements, variability in training programmes, and the performance of students.
- Lack of sufficient resources for clinical training where these schools are established.
- Accreditation is voluntary hence some schools in the region have never undergone a formal accreditation process by an external review body.
- Establishment of for-profit medical schools aimed primarily at international students is encouraged due to the institutions' potential contribution to the islands' economic development and provision of scholarships to local students.
- In some countries, the initial granting of a charter is the only requirement for operation.

In the face of these developments, some countries have taken steps to establish national quality assurance systems but face challenges such as the following:

- Quality assurance is a highly specialised area requiring expertise and professional human capacity for the conception and organisation of a system. Quality assurance systems rely on external reviewers and advanced academic capacity for the external review of tertiary institutions and programmes, a competence not always readily available in small states.
- Difficulty in providing independent external reviewers, given the closeness of small states in general and particularly in the same professional field.
- Some countries have one system for all types of higher education whereas others use evaluation based on a combination of general higher education criteria and profession-specific criteria.

Establishment of The Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Education in Medicine and Other Health Professions (CAAM-HP)

In response to these developments and the regional thrust to ensure quality education and training in the context of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Single Market and Economy (CSME), a regional accreditation system was established as one means of providing the assurance of quality that generates confidence in the stakeholders. Thus, the Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Education in Medicine and Other Health Professions (CAAM-HP) was launched under the aegis of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in July 2004 to accredit the education programmes of medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, nursing, and other health professions in CARICOM member states.

CARICOM is a political and economic affiliation of 15 member countries and all have signed the Agreement Establishing the CAAM-HP: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. The Agreement has the legal force of an international treaty thus binding the signatories to its provisions. The CAAM-HP is funded by CARICOM member countries.



An Act to give effect to the agreement establishing the CAAM-HP headquarters in Jamaica was passed in the Senate on July 21, 2006 and is now in effect. This Act may be cited as The Caribbean Accreditation Authority (Medicine and other Health Professions) Act 2006. Other member countries have passed similar legislation giving effect to the Agreement.

The work of the CAAM-HP is carried out by a small Secretariat.

Membership of the CAAM-HP

Membership of the Authority is multidisciplinary, comprising representatives from the universities in the region, medical students, civil society, professional associations, and external professionals with expertise and knowledge in medical education accreditation.

Objectives

The objectives of the CAAM-HP are as follows:

- To achieve and maintain standards of excellence in programmes of education in medicine and other health professions;
- To establish an efficient system of regulation in relation to the standards and quality of such programmes of education;
- To secure international recognition of the programmes of education in medicine and other health professions;
- To maintain the confidence of the peoples of the region in the quality of medical and other health professions training offered in the region.

Accreditation System

The CAAM-HP functions on a clear, authoritative mandate, independent of governments and education providers, is transparent and uses predefined profession-specific standards; in addition, it uses external reviewers and procedures based on self-evaluation and site visits and review of the written report from the site visit which forms the basis of the determination of a programme's accreditation status. CAAM-HP's accreditation standards and processes follow closely those of the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME).

The accreditation standards address the following areas:

- The Institutional Setting
- The Students
- Education Programmes
- The Faculty
- Educational Resources
- Internship
- Continuing Professional Education

Development of these standards took into account the circumstances within the region as well as the standards of international health professions accrediting agencies. They are written to assure governments, students, and the public that graduates of medical schools in CARICOM countries have attained educational standards that allow them to adapt to practice anywhere in the world. However, when seeking to practise in CARICOM countries, graduate doctors must also meet the standards for independent practice in these countries. These are reflected in the standards for Internship and meeting the equivalent levels of knowledge and clinical competencies determined by the regional registration body, the Caribbean Association of Medical Councils (CAMC).

The CAAM-HP has the authority, after due deliberation, to determine the status of accreditation and any requirements for follow-up progress reports or site visits on the basis of the survey team's final written report. The final decision is communicated in writing to the institution along with the final report, to the Secretary-General of CARICOM and is published on the CAAM-HP web site. The report may be disclosed by the school at its discretion and schools may appeal the decision.

To date, the CAAM-HP has conducted several site visits to medical schools throughout the Caribbean, and this includes schools in non-CARICOM member countries such as Aruba and Curacao. In addition proposals for the establishment for new, for-profit schools have been evaluated.

In keeping with its remit, the CAAM-HP has established relations with regional and international regulatory agencies such as the World Federation of Medical Education (WFME), the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG), the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB), the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) among others.

Applications for comparability determination to the US Department of Education's National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA) on behalf of the governments of Antigua & Barbuda, Jamaica, and Grenada have been successful. This means that US students wishing to attend a medical school in these territories may apply for Direct Loans to help cover educational expenses.

In addition, the CAAM-HP was the first accrediting agency to have achieved international recognition in preparation for the 2023 policy which will require that medical graduates applying for ECFMG certification must have graduated from an appropriately accredited programme.

Concluding Comments

The medical schools which have voluntarily undergone the CAAM-HP accreditation process have reported that the task of compiling information and carrying out a critical comparative analysis has been very useful. The highly structured nature of the processes necessitates a very detailed review of all aspects of the functioning of the medical schools exceeding that which accompanies internal reviews. The importance of regular accreditation for quality assurance and the maintenance of international standing have been acknowledged by the schools.

Yet, despite the success, challenges remain. For example, the reluctance on the part of the Nursing schools to be accredited by the CAAM-HP remain a challenge, especially in the face of the upgrade of former diploma-level programmes to full degree status which requires a more rigorous evaluation. However, the CAAM-HP is of the view that the development and implementation of this oversight body is a step forward in improving the quality of medical education in the Caribbean.

Lorna Parkins, Executive Director
Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Education in Medicine and other Health Professions

The Baha'i Institute of Higher Education

It is hard to imagine another instance in which one religious minority has faced the level of discrimination in such a directed and concentrated way as has the members of the Baha'i faith in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Over the last 30 years, much has been written about Iran's Baha'i community. Recently, there have been a number of documentaries released highlighting the nature of duress the Baha'is have faced over the years, ranging from the incarceration of followers to the forced closure of its university and the denial of equal access to educational opportunities.



Since government forces raided and shuttered the physical university that once housed the Baha'i Institute of Higher Education (BIHE), young Baha'is have been denied access to higher education. Their only opportunity to attain higher degrees has been through online and remotely offered programs. These classes are taught via email and rotating websites known only to students and faculty. More than 50,000 students have earned degrees through BIHE.

The international community has been reluctant to accept degrees offered by BIHE in this distance format because the institute is not recognized by the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology (MSRT) in Iran, the official accrediting body for higher education in Iran, and there has been no specific way to ascertain the veracity of documents. For international educational credential evaluators, lack of recognition and the inability to verify the authenticity of documents represent an insurmountable wall for recommending credit or recognizing a degree equivalent.

In most instances where the accreditation body within a country does not recognize an institution to provide degrees, there is an official report and a path forward to remedy deficiencies so the institute may in the future attempt to earn degree-granting status. What has MSRT identified as problematic with BIHE, and can BIHE ever gain MSRT recognition? The government in Iran has made it clear that BIHE simply cannot operate in the country. Several years ago, police raided the homes of suspected BIHE faculty and students in Tehran. Seven of those detained were sentenced to prison terms and are currently serving time.

The primary objection to BIHE and the Baha'i religion stems from the Qur'an verse (33:40) that describes Muhammad as the last prophet. Baha'is are the followers of Baha'u'llah and the Bab ('Gate') both of whom lived and died in the 19th century. For most Muslim clerics, any religion appearing after Muhammad is heresy and cannot be permitted. The persecution of Iran's Baha'is may be more severe for an additional reason. The founder was Iranian; the religion's home is Iran. It is a feasibly untenable religion in the current manifestation of Iran, and its followers cannot be granted approvals to establish higher education institutions.

As evaluators, do we have a role in addressing the trials and tribulations of BIHE and Baha'i students? Is there an exception for recommending credit for BIHE, knowing that the MSRT will never under any circumstance recognize BIHE as a degree-granting institution?

References:

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Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. 13 July 2016.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/AsiaRegion/Pages/IRIndex.aspx>

The Baha'i Institute of Higher Education. Welcome to BIHE. <http://www.bihe.org/>

Closed Doors. Bahá'í World News Service. 13 July 2016. <http://news.bahai.org/human-rights/iran/education/bihe>

Education Under Fire. <http://www.educationunderfire.com/>

William Bellin, Educational Credential Evaluators, with Nancy Katz, Evaluation Service

High School Graduation Confusion for International Student-Athletes

Recruiting internationally can seem like a goldmine of talented and ambitious prospective student-athletes or a minefield of potential pitfalls. Either can be true for both athletics and admissions departmental staff. Collegiate staff may be divided at times on the subject of student-athletes, whether international or not. A difference in professional purpose is bound to separate priorities at times, but if the right people have a little extra knowledge about a student's background and the right resources, international student-athletes can find the right path to U.S. higher education, benefiting everyone.

One of the first sources of confusion for international students is the high school graduation requirement, and for good reason. For students in a British-style education system, there might be upper secondary school requirements for university entrance that they did not complete because they enrolled in vocational secondary school education that allowed them to continue their athletic development. If a student earns a diverse set of credentials along a track that is not intended to lead to university education, the opportunity to earn a BA in Sports Management while still training and competing in their sport might be a wonderful surprise. It would be difficult, near impossible, to estimate how many students do not realize that their academic achievements could meet university entrance requirements in the U.S. They may have earned multiple credentials that are comparable to a U.S. high school diploma but still believe they would not be admitted.

Without the pomp and ceremony, high school graduation outside the U.S. does not have the grandiose quality that Americans associate with the transition from high school to higher education. A wide variety of options for secondary school tracks contributes to a greater separation between academics and athletics. The emphasis placed on combining athletics with education differentiates U.S. education from other systems. For many prospective student-athletes, the concept of a "student-athlete" is completely unfamiliar to them, and the intensive lifestyle of combining a full-time academic course load with regular training and collegiate competition is likely to be the biggest surprise.

Although it is difficult to track the international student-athlete experience throughout their collegiate career, it is clear that initially, many of them are well served by the option to attend a community college and then transfer to a four-year institution after two years of full-time education and competition. This route to their degree can help bridge the gap for students who are surprised to find that reaching the end of mandatory education in their home country is not comparable to a U.S. high school diploma.

The various institutional staff and faculty, recruiters, coaches, and students will all be best served by international student-athletes finding their way to an academic context that is manageable for their specific situation and has the support they need to succeed. This evaluation can be greatly aided by accurate credential evaluations. Simply put, the best credential evaluations will contribute to the both the student and institution's success.

Garrett Seelinger, National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics

Are Chinese Internal High School Transcripts Enough?

It is no secret that internal high school grades are frequently inflated on transcripts issued in China. We hear about it in conference sessions, we read reports and statistics about it, and we talk about it among ourselves as admissions professionals. But is it affecting how we evaluate credentials for freshman admission? Should it? Are there alternative sources of information that can help us gauge a student's level of academic proficiency in specific subject areas?

Most institutions still rely on those internal transcripts. Why? It is consistent with what we require from students from many other countries. It is quick. It is somewhat straightforward. Internal transcripts are – in a perfect world – the best gauge of a student's performance throughout their high school years, since they provide a semester-by-semester breakdown. We also use them because many Chinese high school students who decide to apply to overseas universities do not take the *Gaokao* (College Entrance Examinations), so that option is not available.

Now, what about *Huikao* (Graduation Examination) or *Xueye Shuiping Ceshi* (Academic Proficiency Test)? Are those helpful? My answer to that is a resounding YES. The results of an externally administered examination may not have the capacity to reflect the history of a student's academic achievements, but they are reliable in a wholly different sense: result inflation is not likely to be a factor. At the same time, the *Huikao* and *Xueye Shuiping Ceshi* are now considered by Chinese universities alongside *Gaokao* (College Entrance Examination) during the admissions process, so it only makes sense for us to do the same.



Verification Report of China Higher Education Qualification Certificate



Verification Report of China Higher Education Student's Academic Transcript



Verification Report of China National College Entrance Examination Scores



Verification Report of China Secondary Education Qualification Certificate



Verification Report of China Secondary Education Student's Academic Transcript



Verification Report of China High School Academic Proficiency Test (Huikao) Results

(Samples from China Higher Education Student Information and Career Center)

So, could we (and should we) do away with internal transcripts in favor of *Huikao* and *Xueye Shuiping Ceshi* results during the admissions process? I do not believe so. One reason is that there are slight variations between provinces and municipalities in the number of subjects assessed. Those subjects do not include arts, music, PE, and sometimes technology as well, plus possibly other subjects which are part of the high school curriculum. Using *Huikao* and *Xueye Shuiping Ceshi* results to calculate high school units for each subject area is not possible, either, while internal high school transcripts give us a better idea as to the relative weighting of the subjects.

So what do you do if you are working with prospective freshmen from China? What do you ask for? I would strongly recommend using internal transcripts to convert and calculate US equivalents of high school units completed in each subject area, and perform a preliminary grade conversion and GPA calculation, and then turn to *Huikao* and *Xueye Shuiping Ceshi* results – if available – to get a more complete picture of the student's academic abilities at the time of graduation. If this level of scrutiny is not feasible in your office, I would reserve asking for *Huikao* and *Xueye Shuiping Ceshi* results for students whose GPAs and other metrics are otherwise equal to decide who is a better candidate.

Using *Huikao* and *Xueye Shuiping Ceshi* is more complex, and does require more time, more documentation, and more expertise, but it would ideally enable us to admit students who are better prepared to succeed in our specific academic environments. Isn't it what this is all about?

Katerina Roskina, China Credential Services

Document Forensics

With academic fraud so rampant, and with colleges and universities competing for foreign applicants, it is more important than ever that we are vigilant in our screening of documents that come across our desks. One of the first steps to verifying the documents submitted by a student is to do preliminary document forensics.

What is document forensics? In simple terms, it is subjecting a document to visual and tactile examination.

My secret method for remembering everything when examining a document is P.A.L.S.:

PA - Physical Attributes,
L - Logistics
S - Security features.

P.A.L.S.

You should think of this as a guided starting point on verifying a credential. Just as the presence of these features is not a clear sign the document is authentic, the absence of these features is not a clear sign they are fraudulent. You should always seek to verify the documents with the issuing institution. I hope you will find this guide helpful in the (never-ending) quest for verifying documents.

Physical Attributes. We need to feel the physical documents.

- *Does the paper feel thicker than the usual copy paper?* Unfortunately, there is no standard paper that is used. Usually, official transcripts and degree certificates are on thicker paper, usually with security features. Color copies usually make the paper slick, like a magazine.
- *Is the paper the correct size?* Most countries will use A4 paper, with the exception being North America (US, Canada and Mexico). A4 paper is 8.3×11.7, or approximately 1/2 inch longer than letter paper.
- *Is the logo pixelated or crisp?* Regardless of how high quality the original picture is, copies are going to degrade in quality. If you look at the logo under magnification, if it appears "fuzzy" or off, this should be a red flag.
- *Are the borders printed or imbedded?* Many official papers have a border on it before the applicant's credential is printed. If the border appears printed, it should be a red flag.

Logistics. For all of the technological advances in fraud, a surprising amount of people get caught by the little details.

- *Do the dates make sense for the level of education?* When you compare the dates on the application, the applicant's age should match the average age for that country and for that level of education. A 13-year old most likely did not graduate high school.
- *Do the documents match samples?* Please note, it is common in some countries for formatting to vary by individual colleges or faculties within a university.
- *Do the grades match the indigenous GPA and the standard of grades?* If a marksheet from India shows grades averaging in the 40's, the award of a degree classification of "First Class" makes no sense. Note that you will want to check how the institution calculates the final grade/degree classification. Some universities include only the final two years of study or only classes in the major when determining the grade average or degree classification.
- *Are the documents stamped?* Most official documents will be stamped by the appropriate authority, with the most common at the university level being the Registrar. Pay careful attention to the stamps, though, as many notary stamps are similar to the stamps used by university officials.
- *Did the country exist?* This is where a good research skills or a good knowledge of world history will come in handy. Many countries did not exist in their present form/name 30 years ago. For example, a credential from Eritrea dated 1982 should set off a red flag for you.

Security features. In some cases, the issuing institutions have taken some safeguards to make altering or forging of their documents more difficult.

- *Watermarks.* If you hold the documents up to the light, you would see a pattern only visible when lit from behind.
- *Microprinting.* Small type on the document that appears as dotted lines when photocopied.
- *VOID technology.* The word "VOID" appears prominently across the face of the document when photocopied.
- *Bar codes / QR codes.* Some credentials will have a bar code or QR Code that can be scanned for verification of the documents. Many of these will require you to download an application from the institution or Ministry.
- *UV Sensitive Fibers.* Some documents will have threads in them that are only visible under UV lighting.

Olivea Dodson, Transcript Research

An Introduction to Pearson BTEC Qualifications

About Pearson

BTEC qualifications are from Pearson, the world's leading learning company. From Kindergarten to High School through to professional certification, Pearson qualification curriculum materials, multimedia learning tools, and testing programmes help to educate millions of people worldwide.

About BTEC

Chosen by over 2.5 million learners globally each year, BTECs are career-based qualifications designed to give students the real world, practical skills they need to move on to Higher Education or go straight into employment.

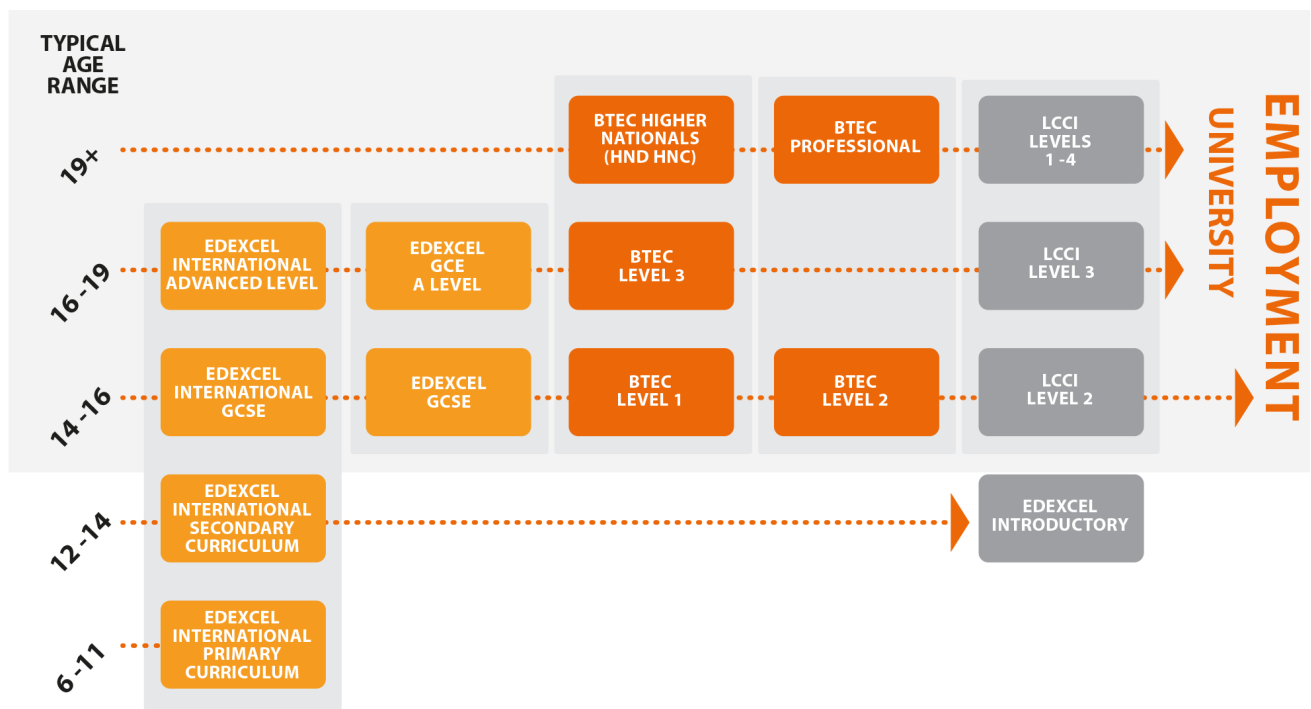
Classroom-style teaching combined with project tasks and work-related activities help to develop students' employability skills that can include teamwork, creative thinking, and presentation expertise.

Developed in consultation with industry, BTECs are available in a range of sectors, levels and sizes, to take students as far as they want to go.



BTEC levels

BTECs are available from Level 1 through to Level 7. Students have the opportunity to study through all levels, with each level building on the last to attain a progression pathway into employment or further education, such as University study.



Alternatively, students can combine BTECs with other academic or technical qualifications, such as Edexcel A levels or LCCI programmes, to create their own unique path, as the diagram below illustrates.

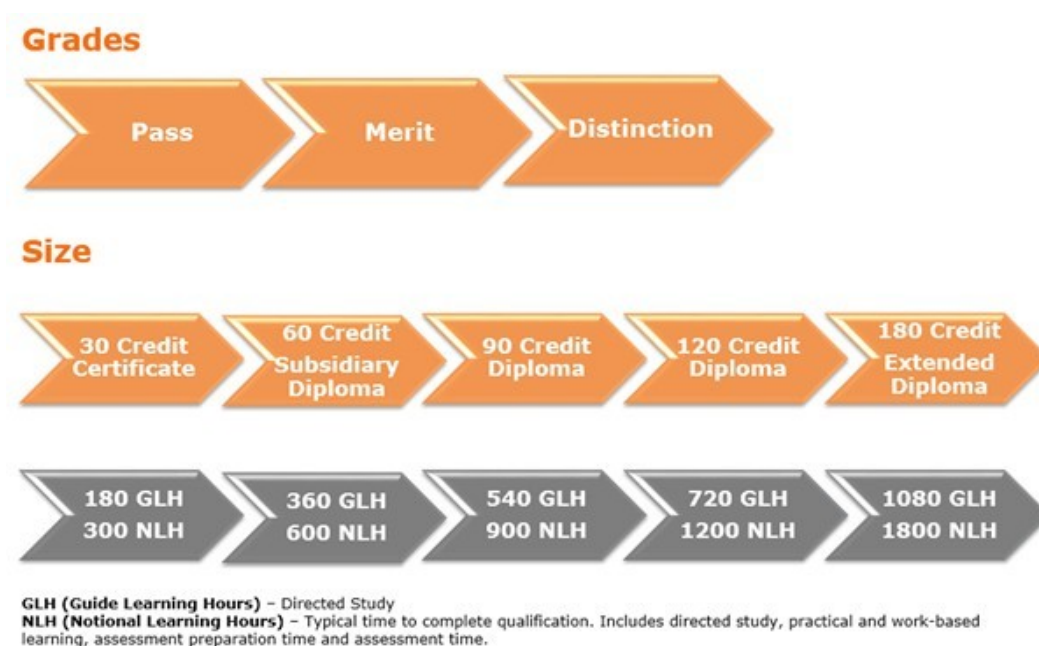
<p>BTEC Level 1</p> <p>Suitable for students aged 14+ who are interested in a work related course, BTEC Level 1 qualifications are designed to provide a broad introduction to a technical sector.</p> <p>They provide excellent preparation for BTEC Level 2 and form a solid foundation for further technical and academic study.</p>	<p>BTEC Level 2 (Firsts)</p> <p>These qualifications are designed for 14-16 year olds who wish to explore a work-related technical qualification or specific industry area. They can be offered alongside national qualifications or academic programmes to offer students a blended learning solution tailored to their needs and aspirations.</p> <p>BTEC students can go onto further study at Level 3, such as BTEC Level 3 National, Edexcel GCE A level, and International Advanced Level qualifications. Alternatively they can continue with their main national study programme.</p>	<p>BTEC Level 3 (Nationals)</p> <p>Aimed at students aged 16-18 years old, BTEC Level 3 Nationals are specialist qualifications that give students the knowledge, understanding, and skills that they need to enter higher education or employment. They are ideal for those who have a clear view of their future career.</p> <p>Valued by universities and employers around the world, BTEC Level 3 Nationals enable seamless progression to degree-level programmes or into employment, usually as part of a career development programme (i.e. apprenticeship).</p>
<p>BTEC Level 4 (Higher National Certificate)</p> <p>The BTEC Higher National Certificate (HNC) is a tertiary qualification at level 4 equivalent to the first year of a University degree. It can be studied full-time over one year or part-time over two years, and are suitable for students aged 19+.</p> <p>Students who achieve their HNC can progress to higher education, often directly into the 2nd year of a university degree programme. They can also move into a Higher National Diploma (HND) Level 5 course, which offers a greater level of specialisation in their chosen sector.</p> <p>Additionally, HNCs provide opportunities for career progression & professional development for those already in employment.</p>	<p>BTEC Level 5 (Higher National Diploma)</p> <p>The BTEC Higher National Diploma (HND) is a tertiary qualification at level 5 that, following the HNC, is equivalent to the second year of a University degree. They are usually taught on a full-time basis over two years, or over one year as a top-up from a HNC.</p> <p>They offer the opportunity to build formal work placements or part-time employment experience into the programmes. These programmes are designed for students aged 19+.</p> <p>HNDs provide access to higher education, often directly into the 3rd year of a university degree programme. They are also a robust platform for progression to, or within employment, or as a starting point for study toward professional body recognition.</p>	<p>BTEC Professional Qualifications Levels 4-7</p> <p>BTEC Professional Qualifications are designed to give learners the knowledge, understanding, and skills that they need to prepare for employment, as well as provide career development opportunities for those already in work.</p> <p>BTEC Professional Qualifications are available to learners at Levels 4 to 7, including more mature learners who want to build on their work experience or progress in their careers and are available in a wide range of sectors.</p> <p>They also focus on techniques and attributes to improve professional practice and support career progression.</p>

BTEC structure

Each BTEC qualification is made up of core units, which provide a broad introduction to the sector, and help students gain the essential knowledge of the subject area, and specialist units, which build expertise in specific areas relevant to students' needs.

This course structure means that every BTEC student gains both a deep understanding of specialist sector knowledge and the freedom to tailor their studies around their areas of interest.

BTEC grading and sizes



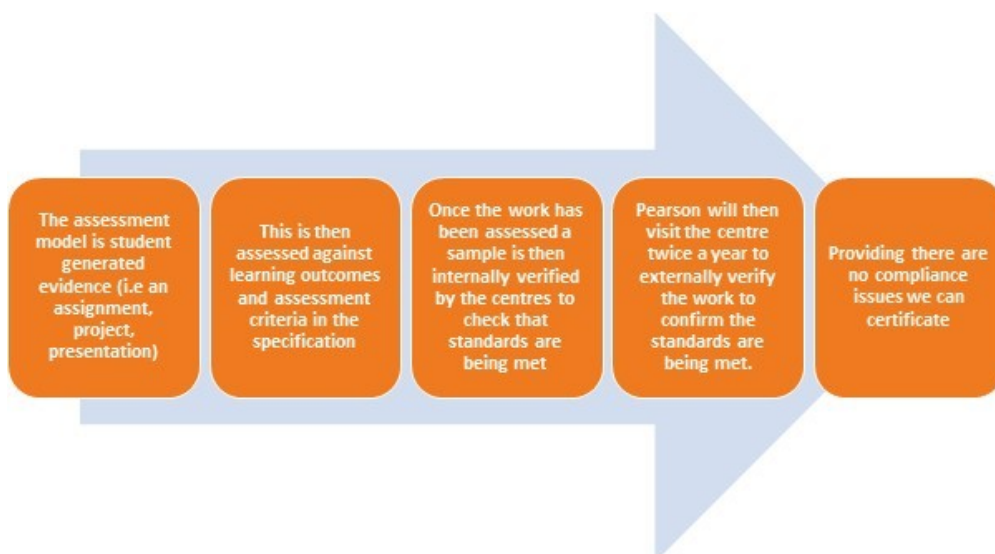
BTEC Level 3 (Nationals) equivalency to US GPA scores

BTEC Level 3 Nationals are University entry level qualifications. The diagram below has been provided to show how BTEC Level 3 National grades map across to the American High School Curriculum grading structure.

BTEC		UNITED STATES	
Distinction*	(D*)	A+	4.00
Distinction	(D)	A	4.00
Merit	(M)	B	3.00
Pass	(P)	C	2.00
Ungraded	(U)	F	0.00

BTEC assessment

Students are assessed through the innovative BTEC assignment process (outlined below), which reflects real industry challenges.



BTEC credit exemptions

The International Education Research Foundation (IERF) produced recommendations on BTEC equivalency to US degree-level programmes in 2013. Students with BTEC Level 3 Nationals and BTEC HND qualifications can be entitled to the following credit exemptions from US degree-level programmes:

BTEC Level 3 Nationals (Subsidiary Diploma Size) = One A level subject pass Equivalent to 6 credits in Business or 1 credit for each of the 6 modules listed, since all equally weighted. Pass = C, Merit = B	BTEC Level 5 HND Typically studied 2 years' full-time (18-24 months). Equivalent of up to 60 semester credits. Modules have values of 6 or 1, so approximately 4 credits and ½ credit, respectively.
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BTEC quality assurance

Quality assurance is the process that ensures all BTECs are assessed to the same high standard, all around the world. As the majority of BTEC assessment is completed in centre, this process means that everyone involved is supported in assessing to the high standard BTEC is internationally recognised for.

Our rigorous quality assurance process gives us the opportunity to identify and provide the right level of support for centres delivering BTEC. It safeguards certification and also allows us to recognise and support good practice.

We have over 6000 Assessment Associates (AAs) to monitor quality, write content and offer support. All have experience of working with BTECs and have subject knowledge relating to their field of experience. We regularly train our AAs to confirm they are competent to undertake work.

In addition, we consult with industry and educators on an ongoing basis to ensure all BTECs meet the needs and standards of today's business community. The diagram below outlines the BTEC quality assurance process.



Key facts:

- In 2015, 1 in 4 students who got into university in the UK did so with a BTEC (UCAS report – *Progression Pathways Jan 2016*)
- Over 150 Higher Education Institutions offering degree courses accept BTECs
- Almost 79% of BTEC students go on to receive a First or Second class degree (*The outcomes associated with the BTEC route of degree level acquisition*, London Economics 2013)
- 90% of BTEC students are employed full time after graduating (*The outcomes associated with the BTEC route of degree level acquisition*, London Economics 2013)
- 74% of businesses prefer recruits to hold a mix of academic and vocational qualifications or value them equally (Inspiring Growth: Pearson/Skills CBI Skills survey 2015)

- A range of international employers actively recruit BTEC students including: Vodafone, Goldman Sachs, Accenture, Deloitte, KPMG, PWC, BAE Systems, Shell, and Mandarin Oriental The Hotel Group.
- Learners who hold BTEC qualifications have high rates of progression between learning levels compared to other types of vocational qualification (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills – October 2015).

For more information on BTEC qualifications, please visit our [website](#) or contact:

Rebecca Spanos
Progression and Recognition Manager
Email: Rebecca.spanos@pearson.com
Phone: +44(0)7734 778 290

Katie Meehan, Pearson

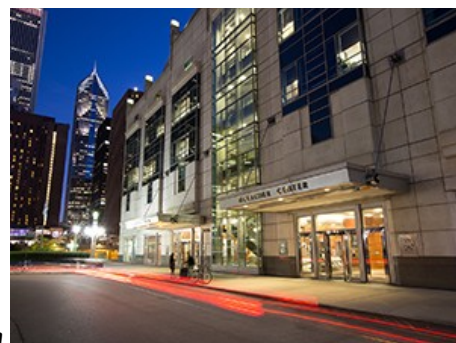
2016 Annual Conference

From the 2016 Conference Planning Team

TAICEP has been hard at work on making arrangements for the 2016 Annual Conference!

Conference dates:
9/26/16 – 9/28/16

The University of Chicago Gleacher Center
450 North Cityfront Plaza Drive
Chicago, IL 60611



The committee is looking forward to seeing you in Chicago!
As a reminder, TAICEP's 2016 Annual Conference will be taking place in Chicago, Illinois from September 26-28, 2016, and will be located at the University of Chicago Gleacher Center, 250 North Cityfront Plaza Drive, Chicago, IL 60611.
Brief conference details:

September 26, 2016

TAICEP will host pre-conference workshops from 1p-5p at the Gleacher Center
TAICEP will host a reception from 6:30p-8:30p.

September 27 and 28, 2016

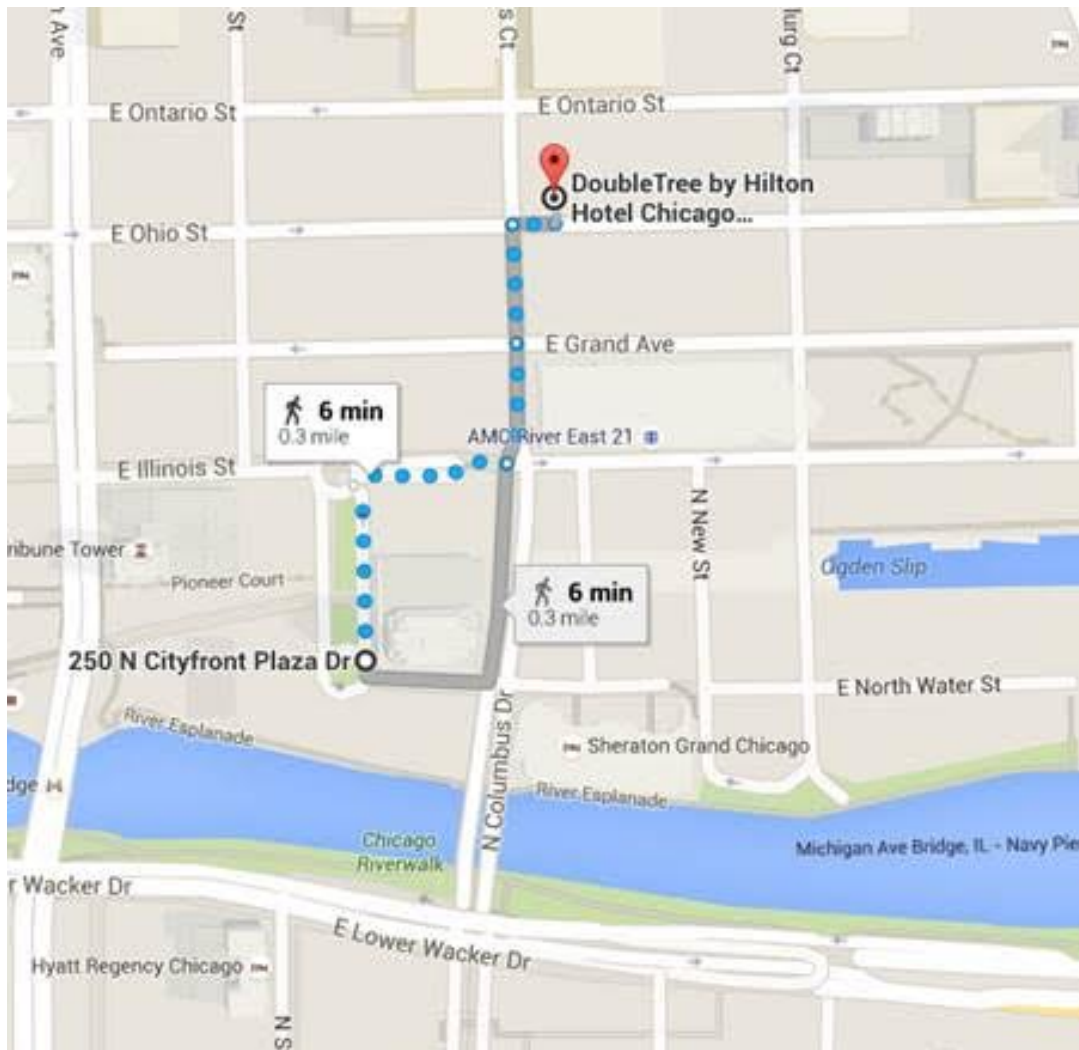
TAICEP will provide breakfast and lunch at the Gleacher Center.
TAICEP will host all breakout sessions/workshops at the Gleacher Center.

We have already published a great deal of information about the upcoming conference on our website, but I wanted to highlight a few important developments:

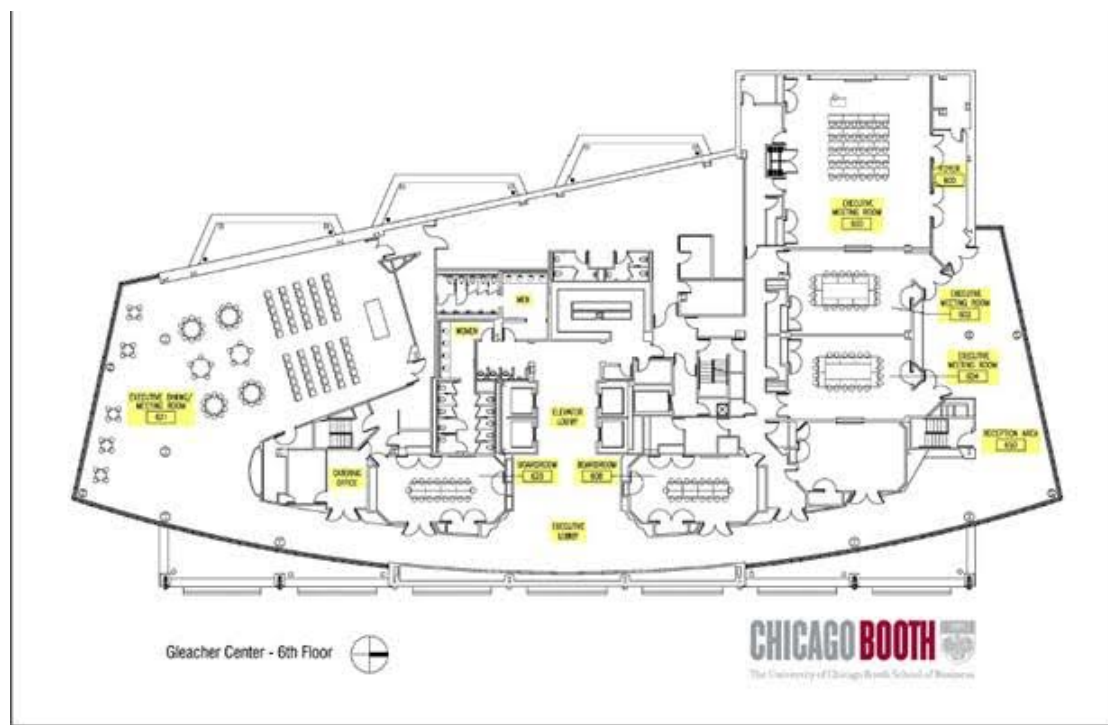
Due to high demand, our initial block of rooms at the [DoubleTree – Magnificent Mile](#) has been exhausted. Staff at the hotel were extremely flexible and accommodated our multiple requests for additional space. Now that the early registration deadline has passed, rooms are currently available through the [DoubleTree – Magnificent Mile](#) at a rate of \$259.00 per night. While we would love to see you join us at the hotel, you may be able to find lower rates at nearby facilities and/or via Airbnb in and around downtown Chicago.

For more information on nearby opportunities, please visit our [website](#).

The DoubleTree Magnificent Mile is a short 6 minute walk from the University of Chicago Gleacher Center (please see map below).



The TAICEP 2016 Conference Planning committee is excited for the opportunity to have space available for exhibitors. The University of Chicago Gleacher Center offers the perfect venue to promote your projects and services, to share information vital to the field of international credential evaluation, and to network with colleagues and peers. Exhibitors will be located within the Executive Lobby just outside the Executive Dining/Meeting Room 621, which will serve as our “home base” throughout the conference (please see map below). Exhibitors will be able to set-up prior to the official opening of the conference on September 27, and are perfectly situated to maximize exposure to TAICEP conference participants.



Any questions regarding exhibiting at the 2016 conference should be directed to the Conference Planning Committee at taicepconference@gmail.com.

Pre-Conference Workshops

We are excited to announce the availability of two concurrent pre-conference workshops on the afternoon of September 26. Workshops will take place from approximately 1:00pm-5:00pm at the University of Chicago Gleacher Center, leaving plenty of time for members to prepare for the official TAICEP 2016 Conference Reception at The DoubleTree-Magnificent Mile, which begins at 6:30pm later that evening. Work is ongoing to finalize our conference schedule overall, including our pre-conference workshops. You can visit the [Pre-Conference Workshops](#) section of our website for more details about our remaining pre-conference workshop: *Evaluating International Credentials in 10 Steps*, which is almost sold out.

Sessions

TAICEP's second annual conference is THE place to be for credential evaluators from all over the world to learn new skills, get up to date on the latest information, and of course, exchange and discuss ideas with colleagues in the same field.

Here is the current list of sessions (subject to change):

- Methodology for Credentials Evaluation: The Big Picture, Grade Scales and Determining Legitimacy
- TEN!!!! Changes in Indian University Grading
- International Student-Athlete Documents for Eligibility
- Evaluating American Credentials: Issues and Challenges
- International Credential Evaluation – Let's Start from the Beginning
- The Transfer Credit/PLAR Boundary
- A Comprehensive Guide to A Level and GCSE Changes in the UK and Globally
- Chinese Degrees and Certificates: Then and Now
- Education System in Iraq
- People On the Move Need Recognition On the Move
- Exploring Education in the Southern Cone: Argentina, Chile and Uruguay
- From Argentina to Zimbabwe: A New Evaluator's Guide to Credential Evaluation
- Getting Comfortable with the F Word: Eliminating the Stigma and Embracing the Meaning
- Issues in Ukrainian Credential Evaluation: Overview, Recognition, and Fraud
- CHINATOWN! A Toolkit
- Credentials Evaluation Jeopardy
- Chinese Primary and Lower Secondary Credential Evaluation: Challenges, Best Practices, Resources
- Understanding Chinese Credentials
- Evaluating Credentials with a Global Mindset: The Discussion Continue
- In-House vs Out-sourcing Evaluations
- Certification of Credential Evaluators-What are the Options?
- The Baha'i Institute of Higher Education (BIHE) – To Recognize or Not to Recognize?
- Increasing Pre-Arrival Support for Internationally Educated Professionals in a Culture of Openness and Transparency
- Demystifying Technical and Vocational Education: A Thorough Look at BTEC and University Progression
- The Twilight Zone of Evaluation: A Journey Into a Wondrous Land Whose Boundaries Are that of Recognition. Your Next Stop, the Twilight Zone!
- Medical Education In the Caribbean: Accreditation and Quality Issues
- How Confident Are We to Assess Credentials From Syria?
- Introduction to the Russian Secondary Educational System
- Hands-On Documentation Features
- International Credential Evaluation in Higher Education Institutions
- Looking West: Building a Higher Education Area in Central Asia
- Credential Evaluation: Differences In Perspectives of Evaluation Agencies and Educational Institutions
- A Unique Virtual Admissions Organization – How Swedish Universities Decided to Cooperate
- Evaluating Three-year European University Degrees: Pre- and Post-Bologna

Be sure to check our [Sessions](#) page on the TAICEP website for more information about the sessions descriptions, presenters, and more. Also, next month, we will provide a special pre-conference edition of the *TAICEP Talk Newsletter* to give you even more information, including more detailed descriptions and a tentative schedule!

For general questions or concerns about the upcoming TAICEP 2016 Annual conference, please email taicepconference@gmail.com. Wendy Loat, a member of the 2016 Conference Planning committee, has agreed to respond to your inquiries.

Add to Your Library

At least 70 new resources have been added to our online verification database since the previous edition of *TAICEP Talk*, and we are adding new material every month. TAICEP members have access to our Resources for Members area which includes our fabulous and exciting new database of Verification Sources for Educational Documents. It's available online at <http://www.taicep.org/taiceporgwp/professional-development/resources/reference-materials/verification-sources-for-educational-documents/>



Here are just a sample of some the latest editions to our online database, which includes email addresses and/or websites for national exam boards, professional qualification providers, higher education institutions, and Ministries of Education:

Australia: Swinburne University: <https://www.swinburne.edu.au/student-administration/verification/>

Chile: Ministry of Education (verify an MOE-validated certificate):

<http://certificados.mineduc.cl/certificados-web/mvc/validar/ingresarCodigo#>

India: North Maharashtra University: <http://nmu.ac.in/en-us/studentcorner/examination/onlinedegreeverification.aspx>

Lebanon: Lebanese University Faculty of Law: http://droit2.ul.edu.lb/results_exam.php

Scotland: University of the West of Scotland: registrypaisley@uws.ac.uk

South Africa: Cape Peninsula University of Technology examination results:

<http://www.cput.ac.za/dev/studentcentre-no-cas/exams/>

Sweden: Stockholm University: <https://minastudier.su.se/checkCertificate/index>

Venezuela: Universidad Monteavila: <http://uma.terna.net/ComprobarConstancia.php>

Vietnam: Vietnam National University HCM - University of Economics and Law:

<http://myuel.uel.edu.vn/Default.aspx?ModuleId=237b4db1-2d22-4865-8381-3229ad814afd>

Yemen: General Secondary Education Exam Results: contact@results.edu.ye

If you'd like to include additional resources that we haven't already discovered, please email our editor at peggy@transcriptresearch.com, and we'll thank you in an upcoming edition!

Notes from the Field

We also like to share neat things we find in our daily work that we think would be useful or helpful to other international credential education specialists. Send your neat findings to peggy@transcriptresearch.com, and we'll mention you in an upcoming edition.



From around the web:

Turkish Education in Turmoil: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/19/turkey-sacks-15000-education-workers-in-purge>

New School System in Nepal: <http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-06-17/slc-results-out-new-school-system-in.html>

Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics:
<http://www.banbeis.gov.bd/ebook.php>

University Reform in Uganda: <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20160603095608368>

Proposed Termination of ACICS Accrediting Body in US:
<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/06/16/education-department-recommends-eliminating-national-accreditor-many-profit-colleges>

Bhutan Accreditation Council Accredits New Institutions:
<http://www.kuenselonline.com/tertiary-education-institutions-accredited/>

Transnational Education in the UK: <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20160701203753735>

Saudi Student Enrollments Decline:
<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/07/18/saudi-student-numbers-fall-many-campuses#.V41ZImn9A91.twitter>

Journals, Newsletters, and Other Publications:

Higher Education in Russia and Beyond: <https://herb.hse.ru/en/>

International Higher Education: <http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ihe>

Evaluating Foreign Educational Credentials, Revised. NAFSA, 2016.

<http://www.nafsa.org/wcm/Product?prodid=588&catId=7>

Making Sense of MOOCs: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002451/245122E.pdf>

Groningen Declaration Network Newsletter: <http://gdn.uma.es/>

Thanks to Ken Warren at Educational Perspectives!

Be sure to follow us on Twitter and Linked In for even more exciting resources!



Are you interested in joining the TAICEP Newsletter Team?
Do you want to write for TAICEP Talk?
Contact peggy@transcriptresearch.com

