



**TRANSCRIPT EVALUATION  
GUIDELINES  
2020**

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## INTRODUCTION

ISEP is pleased to present the revised 2020 edition of the ISEP Transcript Evaluation Guidelines (TEG). We have compiled this guide regarding the academic systems of countries within the ISEP Membership Network to assist ISEP Coordinators and transcript evaluators when translating grades/marks and transfer credits of students who have done work abroad. The ISEP TEG may also help coordinators evaluate the transcripts of incoming international students on ISEP exchanges.

Please note that while ISEP has compiled this information by country, policies at institutions within each country may vary slightly. We have tried to indicate these distinctions between institutions when possible, but please be advised that there may be additional differences not noted in the guidelines presented here. Depending on the institution issuing the transcript, the transcripts themselves may include additional guidance in terms of grading explanations.

Many European member institutions use the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), which awards credit based on estimated student workload. Please see the section “European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)” at the beginning of this guide for more information about ECTS.

It is worth noting that institutions may have a different approach to grading than a student’s home university. For example, Spanish and French institutions are known for their strict grading standards. A student who consistently receives A’s at home may return from a French institution with marks of 16 and above, which are considered very high and not readily awarded by French professors.

While the ISEP TEG may serve as a helpful resource, it is ultimately up to each institution to decide how to transfer credits earned by students abroad. Please keep in mind that students studying at a university in a foreign country are coping with different methods of instruction, different types of assignments, and different standards of assessment. If they are taking regular academic classes taught in a foreign language, the challenge is even greater. Because of differences in grade expectations, credits and course numbering (when available), transcript evaluators should aim to be flexible whenever possible.

In offering these guidelines, ISEP welcomes any suggestions and comments you may have that will assist us in better serving our membership. We also ask that you acknowledge ISEP as the source of information if you distribute these guidelines to other staff members on your campus.

## THE TRANSCRIPT PROCESS

Many countries approach course registration and the recording and reporting of grades in different ways. In the United States, for example, registration and recording of recording of grades are centralized, and transcripts are usually issued at the end of every semester. In other countries, registration may be a less formal process, and/or decentralized to the individual faculties (schools) that make up the larger university. Transcripts for first semester students may also not be issued until the end of the academic year.

Transferring credits from one educational system to another is a complex process that requires the cooperation of the ISEP coordinators at the home and host institutions, the ISEP participant, and the ISEP Global Office.

1. The home institution ISEP coordinator:
  - Helps students appreciate differences between the educational systems at home and abroad
  - Assists students in selecting sites appropriate to their academic goals
  - Reminds students of their responsibilities for knowing and following procedures at their home and host institutions
  - Assists students in getting credit upon their return for work done abroad
2. The host institution ISEP coordinator:
  - Advises students in selecting courses that meet their needs (as defined in the Course Request List) within the context of the host academic system
  - Informs students of any special host institution procedures they must follow to receive a transcript
  - Ensures that a transcript is issued within the timeframe established in the Information for Confirmation
  - Sends the original transcript to the ISEP Global Office or notifies ISEP if the transcript is being withheld. Please note: Transcripts should NOT be issued directly to students or their home coordinators without prior ISEP approval
  - Assists students in completing any host institution enrollment form that may be required by their home university.

*The transcript should include the following:*

- Name and official seal of host institution or signature of university staff member
- Year of student attendance
- Course title or type of class
- Duration of course (i.e. semester, year)
- Hours of class (either per week or total) or credit unit
- Grade
- Explanation of credit units or grading system

3. ISEP Participant:

*Before Departure*

- Familiarizes themselves with the host institution's academic system
- Reads and understands any notes regarding transcripts included in the Program Information section of their ISEP Acceptance Package
- Gains approval from their home institution for courses to be taken abroad, including courses added or dropped throughout the semester/year

### *While Abroad*

- Knows the names of their host institution professors and how to contact them
  - Identifies themselves to professors early in the semester, explaining that they are an international student on an ISEP program
  - Verifies that they are attending the correct section(s) of the course and are on the professor's class list
  - Stays through the end of the program abroad, making sure all work is completed and that they sit for all final exams
    - There is no guarantee of credit if a student leaves before the end of the semester and final exam period
    - If a student makes special arrangements with a professor for an exam (i.e. substituting a written paper for the final exam) they should obtain the agreement in writing from the professor, give a copy to the host ISEP coordinator, and bring a copy home
  - Hands in final papers at the correct location and to the correct person
  - Makes copies of any papers before handing them in
  - Completes any school requirements for obtaining a transcript such as a "transcript request form"
  - Brings back course descriptions, syllabi, reading lists, notebooks and all assignments completed for a class (anything that can help clarify the course content and workload in a question regarding credit arises)
  - Completes any host institution enrollment form required by their home or host institution
4. ISEP Global Office:
- Forwards the transcript to the home ISEP coordinator as soon as possible and keeps an unofficial digital copy on file
  - Runs regular checks of transcripts received and requests outstanding transcripts from institutions
  - Provides information about academic systems and suggestions for the conversion of grades

## EUROPEAN CREDIT TRANSFER SYSTEM (ECTS)

The European Credit Transfer System has been developed as part of the intra-European exchange system to allow European students to transfer credits taken in another European country to their home university. Many transcripts from European member institutions list ECTS grades and credits in addition to or in place of local grades and credits.

ISEP recommends using the local grade if available when converting credits using the country information provided in this guide. ECTS grades rank students on a statistical basis in comparison with other students with passing grades. Because of this, ECTS grades may be lower than the actual grade “earned.”

European students are usually expected to earn 30 ECTS per semester and 60 ECTS per academic year. Unlike educational systems that measure classroom hours for credit, the ECTS considers the total student “workload” per class or degree program. “Workload” as defined by the ECTS includes the expected amount of time needed for students to achieve the designated learning outcomes through all aspects of the course. ECTS credits include more than just contact hours with professors; they account not only for lectures and seminars, but also projects, practical work, self-study and examinations.

Another notable aspect of many European institutions in the weighting of credits for courses depending on the degree program a given student is following. A course may bear more ECTS credits if it constitutes an integral part of the degree program that one student is pursuing, whereas another student taking it as an elective may receive fewer ECTS credits for the same course. Because international students do not belong to a particular degree program, it may be difficult for them to obtain the “full” semester requirement of 30 ECTS.

ISEP encourages coordinators to be flexible whenever possible to account for the difficulties inherent in completing a program in a different country and language. Many international students studying in Europe may find a course load of 30 ECTS credits to be too demanding depending on their fields of study and language ability. When contact hours are provided (in addition to the ECTS) and would result in a favorable conversion for a student, ISEP encourages the coordinator to use them. While home institutions also ultimately set the minimum number of credits their students must enroll in abroad, there may also be instances where it is advisable to allow students to enroll in less than 30 ECTS credits for the semester.

U.S. institutions in particular should consider the many structural differences of credit policy, which vary even between European institutions when determining credit equivalencies. U.S. students are often expected to maintain 15 credit hours per semester to be on track for timely graduation – this has given rise to the policy of converting each ECTS credit to U.S. credits on a 2:1 ration. Thus, many universities have implemented the policy of converting each ECTS credit to 0.5 U.S. credit hours or 26-28 hours of effective work (total classroom contact hours plus time spent outside of class on course assignments and research). ISEP recognizes that this is becoming a widespread formula in the U.S. because of its ease of conversion. However, the practice of dividing ECTS credits by two to convert to U.S. credits is not a panacea for all credit transfer situations.

ISEP strongly recommends that home ISEP coordinators advise participants about how ECTS credits translate and approximately how many ECTS credits students are expected to obtain during their time abroad. For more information on the ECTS please visit

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/repository/education/tools/docs/ects-guide\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/tools/docs/ects-guide_en.pdf)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Whom do I contact with questions about transcripts?

Please direct all transcript-related inquiries to Alexa Stechschulte ([astechschulte@isep.org](mailto:astechschulte@isep.org) or 703-504-9980), the Program Assistant who oversees transcript processing at the ISEP Global Office. She will answer your inquiries or follow up with the host institution if more information is necessary.

2. When will my student receive his/her transcript?

Check the transcript section of the student's Acceptance Package for details about when the school expects to send their transcripts to ISEP. Please note that this date is when the transcript will be issued, and the host institution will also need time to mail the transcript to ISEP Global. Additionally, some schools require students to complete "transcript request forms" or to turn in other papers before a transcript will be sent. These requirements will be listed on the Acceptance Package and failure to comply with these requirements may cause delay in receiving the transcript. Students who are studying abroad in their final semester should pay particular attention to the Acceptance Package before accepting their program, as transcripts from some schools may be released late, thereby delaying their graduation plans.

3. How do I transfer the grade/credit from a host country's transcript?

These guidelines are intended to be a helpful resource in transferring work done abroad back to a student's home institution. Some schools will choose to work with a third-party service that evaluates transcripts for them, while others may have their own internal guidelines. Because courses and grades will rarely match between a home and host institution, ISEP asks that coordinators be flexible when possible. If you have a specific question that is not answered here, please feel free to contact ISEP Global, who can then forward your question along to the host institution for a response.

4. My student's transcript is in the host language. Will it be translated by the host university or ISEP?

Unless the university courses are taught in English, the transcripts will be provided in the host language. Host institutions are neither asked nor required to translate the transcripts. ISEP does not offer a translating option. We suggest having a professor familiar with the host language translate the transcript or, if nothing else, a translation agency can also be used.

5. One of the grades on my student's transcript is incorrect. How can we correct this?

Students should contact the professor of the course(s) in question and work these issues out directly. If the professor is not responsive, the student should contact the host ISEP coordinator directly, but ISEP will help facilitate communication between the two parties when needed.

6. How can a student receive additional transcripts (for graduate school, transferring students, etc.)?

ISEP students are provided with the first official copy of their transcript at no charge. Students who need additional official copies will need to request them from their host ISEP coordinator. These additional transcripts may be subject to an internal university processing fee. If students anticipate the

need for additional transcripts while abroad, they should speak with their host ISEP coordinator, as it is much easier to obtain extra copies while still on site.

The Program Assistant at ISEP Global can provide contact information for the host ISEP coordinator and can also confirm for the host coordinator when a transcript can be released directly to a student. If a student only requires an unofficial copy (sometimes requested by potential employers), ISEP can accommodate this request if a copy of the transcript is still available at ISEP Global. Please contact the Program Assistant if you would like an unofficial copy.

7. A student urgently needs a transcript. Can I send it to them directly?

ISEP policy requires that ALL transcripts be sent through ISEP Global and not directly to a student or the student's home institution. In rare cases in which the need is very urgent, please contact the Program Assistant. They will check to see that the student has no outstanding financial obligations to ISEP and may then be able to approve the request. The host institution will still be required to send an official copy of the transcript to ISEP Global in addition to sending one directly to the student.

8. A student attended an ISEP program in 1999. Can ISEP provide a copy of this transcript?

Unfortunately, no. ISEP keeps copies of all transcripts received for up to five years. Within the five-year period, ISEP is happy to provide additional unofficial copies. However, after five years, transcript copies are destroyed in accordance with ISEP policy. Requests for transcripts beyond that will need to be made to the host institution. Students who are considering the possibility of graduate school within a few years of their ISEP program may want to request additional transcripts sooner rather than later.

9. What is the purpose of the Host Institution Enrollment Form?

The Host Institution Enrollment Form is a form we encourage students to complete during their ISEP programs. Although completion of this form is not a program requirement for students, we encourage them all to complete it at both the beginning and end of their programs, in case they must provide proof of their enrollment/course completion at their home universities or for financial aid purposes. The host coordinator may also use this record to issue transcripts, or to cross-check issued transcripts for errors, so it is also a key resource for avoiding transcript discrepancies.

Part 1 of this form provides a space to list all courses the student is officially enrolled in at the host site. It should be completed on-site with the host coordinator and then sent back to the home coordinator (not to ISEP). In countries where registration is not a formal, centralized process, this may be the student's only written record of courses taken. At the end of the program, the student should complete Part 2 of the same form and have professors sign off for all courses completed at the host institution. A copy should be left for the host coordinator, and a copy carried back to the home university.

10. My student's transcript is on hold due to outstanding fees; how can the fees be paid?

If a student owes money to the host institution, please contact the host ISEP Coordinator for details on how to make a payment. If the student owes ISEP, please have the student log in to the ISEP Student Portal and pay the outstanding fees under the "Invoices and Payments" tab. Once the payment is processed, we will be able to release the transcript to the student. If you believe the hold is an error and payment has already been made, please contact Samantha Batchelor, ISEP Senior Accountant, at [sbatchelor@isep.org](mailto:sbatchelor@isep.org).



# ARGENTINA

## Higher Education

At the university level, the first one to two years are devoted to the study of basic subjects. The total program of study lasts five or six years and leads to a *licenciatura* or to a professional title. Some universities award a *bachillerato universitario* after four years. A master's degree is granted after two more years of study at certain universities. The *doctorado*, the highest degree, is usually awarded two to three years after the *licenciatura* upon submission of a thesis.

Courses are offered in a wide variety of fields of study. ISEP students enroll in classes in Spanish and/or English, depending on the institution. Some institutions also have courses designed specifically for international students. Students who wish to take courses in Spanish must in most cases have a B1 or B2 level of Spanish.

## Academic Calendar

The academic year is divided into two terms (semesters). Argentina's academic calendar is on the Southern Hemisphere schedule, with semester one classes usually beginning in early March and ending in mid-July, and semester two classes usually beginning in late-July/early-August and ending in December.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 4-6

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class:

Universidad Blas Pascal: 20-30

Universidad Católica de Córdoba: 20

Universidad de Palermo: 15

Universidad del Salvador: 20

Number of weeks per term:

Universidad Blas Pascal: 15

Universidad Católica de Córdoba: 15

Universidad de Palermo: 16

Universidad del Salvador: 14

## Grading

<u>Argentine Grade:</u>	<u>U.S. Equivalent</u>
10 ( <i>Sobresaliente</i> )	A
9 ( <i>Distinguido</i> )	A-
7-8 ( <i>Muy Bueno</i> )	B+
5-6 ( <i>Bueno</i> )	B-
4 ( <i>Aprobado</i> )	C
0-3 ( <i>Insuficiente/Reprobado</i> )	F

Lecturing is the principal method of instruction in Latin American universities, with one final exam or paper counting as the only grade in the class. Some professors will also give midterm exams or papers. In most Latin American countries, the grading philosophy is that the student starts at 0 (no knowledge of the subject) and must work to obtain a good grade. The student's grade rises as they acquire knowledge throughout the semester. As such, Latin American universities tend to be severe in their grading and a grade of *sobresaliente* (ten—the highest grade possible in Argentina) is rarely awarded. In most classes, the majority of students will receive either *aprobado* or *bueno* (from four to six).

## Credit Equivalent

To assist in determining the appropriate number of credits, transcripts from ISEP institutions in Argentina usually include the weekly contact hours, total contact hours per semester, and/or credits.

# AUSTRALIA

## Higher Education

Most Australian bachelor's degrees take three years to complete. Because Australian students complete their general education requirements in high school, they have already decided on a major when they begin university and start taking courses within their selected major immediately. Students who receive high grades may be invited to complete a fourth, or honors, year during which they work on a major research project or thesis. If Australian students decide to pursue a double degree, their bachelor's degree program may be extended to four or five years. Academic fields such as law, engineering, medicine and dentistry can take up to six years to complete. If a student then goes on to pursue a master's degree, it typically takes one to two years to complete, depending on the academic field chosen.

## Academic Calendar

The academic calendar year is based on the Southern Hemisphere calendar, with classes normally beginning in February or early March and ending with an examination period in June or July. The second semester typically begins in late July with an examination period in November. The academic year may be broken into semesters or trimesters, depending on the university.

## Grading

Grade scales vary at Australian universities and there is little, if any, grade inflation. The following is a general guideline for the most commonly used grading system and terminology

Australian Grade	U.S. equivalent
7 (high distinction, 100-80%)	A+
6 (distinction, 79-70%)	A
5 (credit, 69-60%)	B
4 (pass, 59-50%)	C
3 (conceded pass)	D
1 or 2 (Fail, below 50%)	F

Grades are usually offered as qualitative assessments and are recorded on transcripts as high distinction, distinction, credit, pass and fail. This system represents a mixture of the pass/fail system and a numerically graded system. Most institutions also provide a number to represent the qualitative descriptions, with high distinction reflected as an 80-100%, for example.

It is important to note that in Australia, instead of beginning with 100% in a course, students begin with 0% and earn points for correct answers. Therefore, earning 75% is actually a very good grade.

## Course Load and Credit Equivalency

Units (the equivalent of classes) are given credit points. These credit points are not equivalent to U.S. credits or ECTS and vary widely by institution. A normal course load for an Australian student is three to four units (classes) per semester. Many Australian universities provide an explanation of credits on the backs of their transcripts.

Current ISEP member universities commonly use several different systems of credits. One system awards 3 credits per course, meaning students can be expected to earn 12 credits per semester. A second system awards 1 credit per course, meaning students can be expected to earn 4 credits per semester. La Trobe offers 15 or 30 credit point courses, meaning students can be expected to earn 45-60 credits per semester. University of Technology Sydney offers 6 or 8 credit point courses for a total of 24 credits/semester by either taking four 6-credit courses or three 8-credit courses.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 3-4

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 12-20

Number of weeks per term: 12-14 in addition to exams

Because Australians start specializing in their majors early on, a unit (or course) with a seemingly low level or number may be equivalent content to a mid-level course in the United States.

# AUSTRIA

## Higher Education

The four ISEP universities in Austria offer bachelor's and master's programs. The first degree programs (3 to 4 years) lead to bachelor's degrees, while the second degree programs (1 to 2 years) lead to master's degrees. Unified, undivided long-term master's programs (5 to 6 years) are offered in some fields of study and ECTS credits allow diplomas and grades to be easily convertible.

Like many European institutions, Austrian institutions do not differentiate between 100, 200, and 300+ level courses. Students attend courses based on their progression in their field of study. Individual arrangements with professors must be made to ensure proper accreditation.

Students do not typically graduate upon completion of their bachelor's credits but instead go straight on to obtain their master's. Therefore, international students in their fourth year of studies with the appropriate amount of credits may be considered as "Graduate" students for ISEP exchange programs.

Transcripts from Austrian institutions are not automatically issued. Students will have to follow the steps outlined in their Acceptance Package and Country Handbook to obtain a transcript from the international office. Please note that ISEP cannot intervene on behalf of students who have not completed the process outlined by their host institution.

## Academic Calendar

Full Year: October – June/July

Semester 1: October – January/February

Semester 2: March – June/July

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 6-8

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 12-16

Number of weeks per term: 15

## Grading

Grade	Description	U.S. Grade Recommendation
1 = Sehr Gut	Excellent: outstanding performance	A
2 = Gut	Good: above the average standard but with some errors	A-/B+
3 = Befriedigend	Satisfactory: generally sound work with a few notable errors	B-
4 = Genügend	Sufficient: performance meets the minimum criteria	C
5 = Nicht Genügend	Unsatisfactory: substantial improvement necessary; requirement of further work	F

The equivalent to a U.S. "D" does not exist. An individual grade (note) is awarded for a class, thesis or part of a large exam. An overall grade (*Gesamtnote*) is awarded for multi-part exams.

## Credit Equivalent

A full workload for an international student is an average of 6 courses in a semester of 15 weeks, with 12 hours of lecture per week. Registrars are encouraged to look at contact hours to evaluate credit.

The system of credits in use (ECTS) is a cumulative calculation of credit points based on the workload of a student. It is a student-centered credit system to measure the workload required to achieve the objectives of a curriculum. One credit point corresponds to 25 hours of study performed by a student (including lectures, seminars, practice, homework, independent work, and assessment of learning outcomes). ECTS credits are allocated to course units and are awarded to students who successfully complete the course. Please see the section “European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)” at the beginning of this guide for more information.

Courses for the upcoming academic year may not be available until shortly before the year starts, so students and advisors are encouraged to use previous years’ catalogues as a basis for choosing courses. Students are also encouraged to be flexible in their requirements.

# BELGIUM

## Higher Education

Higher education is regulated and financed by the two main Belgian communities: the Flemish community and the French community. Most universities teach in either Flemish (Dutch) or French. Although Artevelde University College is a Flemish institution, its international programs are taught in English. Vesalius College was founded in conjunction with Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) and Boston College in the U.S. with English as its language of instruction. The instructional style at Vesalius College is also partially based on the U.S. higher education system.

In accordance with the Bologna Declaration, Artevelde University College and Vesalius College offer three-year European bachelor's degrees and calculate coursework in ECTS.

### Artevelde University College:

#### Academic Calendar

Full Year: September – June

Semester 1: September – January

Semester 2: February – June

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 6-10

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 12-18

Number of weeks per term: 16-18

#### Grading

18-20 (90-100%)

16-17 (80-89%)

14-15 (70-79%)

10-13 (50-69%)

0-9 (below 50%)

#### Credit Equivalent

Credits are issued in ECTS. One academic year corresponds to 60 ECTS. Please see the section “European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)” at the beginning of this guide for more information.

Many institutions use a formula to convert ECTS credits to the local credits of the home university. ISEP recommends that the home institution also consider the total number of hours in the classroom. It is ultimately the home institution that determines how credit will transfer.

## Vesalius College:

### **Academic Calendar**

Full Year: August – May

Semester 1: August – December

Semester 2: January – May

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 4-5

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 12-15

Number of weeks per term: 15

### **Grading**

<u>Vesalius Grade</u>	<u>U.S. Grade</u>
A (81-100%)	A/B+
B (69-80%)	B-/C+
C (58-68%)	C-/D+
D (50-57%)	D F
(below 50%)	F

### **Credit Equivalent**

Students at Vesalius College should register for at least 24 ECTS credits. A normal semester course load is 24-30 ECTS. Please see the section “European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)” at the beginning of this guide for more information about ECTS.

Many institutions use a formula to convert ECTS credits to the local credits of the home university. ISEP recommends that the home institution also consider the total number of hours in the classroom. It is ultimately the home institution that determines how credit will transfer.



# BOLIVIA

## Higher Education

In the first one to two years, students study basic subjects. The program of study lasts four to five years and leads to a *licenciatura*, or a professional title. The master's degree is granted after two more years of study in certain universities. The *doctorado*, the highest degree, usually requires two to three years of additional studies after the *licenciatura* and requires a submission of a thesis. Classes in Bolivia tend to be lecture-based with less open discussion or group work. Papers may be assigned during the semester, but term projects and final exams carry the most weight in assigning grades.

Most courses at the Universidad Privada Boliviana are taught in Spanish, with an increasing number of courses being offered in English. UPB has two campuses: one in capital city La Paz, and another in Cochabamba, a city in an Andean valley in central Bolivia.

## Academic Calendar

The Bolivian academic calendar is on the southern hemisphere schedule. The first semester is from the first week in February to June, and the second semester is from the first week in August to December.

## Course Load

Universidad Privada Boliviana has a modular system. There are four modules in a semester, and a module has 24 sessions of two hours every day (48 hours of instruction total). Students take two classes per module (usually one month).

International students should take two classes per module if no Spanish classes are needed, and a typical student will spend about 10 hours per course in class, or 20 class hours per week in total. A module has four weeks for three-credit courses and six weeks for four-credit courses. The number of hours of instruction per week and credits are listed on transcripts.

## Grading

<u>UPB Grade:</u>	<u>U.S. Equivalent</u>
<i>Excelente (A)</i>	90-100%
<i>Bueno (B)</i>	80%
<i>Regular (C)</i>	70%
<i>Deficiente (D)</i>	60%
<i>Malo (F)</i>	Below 59%

## Credit Equivalent

UPB works within the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), a credit system widely used wherein credits are assigned corresponding to the amount of workload necessary to complete the course, the quantity of contact hours, and difficulty of examinations. Please see the ECTS section at the beginning of these guidelines for more information. Credits are awarded when a course is successfully completed. Please mind that for any final exams students do not pass or attend they will not get credit points, though the course will appear on the transcript.

# BOTSWANA

## Higher Education

To qualify for undergraduate degree and diploma programs at the University of Botswana, students need a General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE), or the equivalent with a grade of C or better in English Language. The BGCSE is a three-year program that follows seven years of primary education and two years of junior secondary school. English is the official language in Botswana.

The academic programs at the University of Botswana are divided into faculties and departments. A student must complete four years of study for a bachelor's degree. The exceptions to this are professional programs such as medicine, law, and engineering, which often require additional years. Master's and MPhil degrees in most fields are done over two years (full time) and require course work and a thesis. Doctoral programs range in length from three to four years and require a thesis/dissertation. Botswana has many public and private non-degree colleges that offer three-year diplomas in various fields including education, health and information technology.

The usual course load for full-time students is five courses or 15 credits. Classes are a mixture of lecture and seminar, and students write term papers more than they take exams. University of Botswana uses the A-E grading scale.

## Academic Calendar

Similar to the North American calendar, the University of Botswana academic year is divided into two semesters. The first semester runs from August to December, and the second from January to May.

## Grading

Performance in a course is assessed on a percentage scale, a letter grade, and a 5-point scale. The grading system in Botswana is far more stringent than in the U.S. It is extremely difficult for a University of Botswana student to obtain an A.

## Course Load and Credit Equivalency

University of Botswana credits are equivalent to U.S. credits. Three hours of class work per week for 14 weeks is equal to three U.S. credits.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term:  
5-6

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 15-20

Number of weeks per term: 14

Botswana Grade	Grade Point	Equates to
100-80%	5.0	A
79.9-75%	4.5	B+
74.9-70%	4.0	B
69.9-60%	3.5	B-
64.9-60%	3.0	C+
59.9-55%	2.5	C
54.9-50%	2.0	C-
49.9-45%	1.5	D+
44.9-40%	1.0	D
39.9-35%	0.5	D-
34.9 or below	0.0	E

# BRAZIL

## Higher Education

All university students take a basic cycle of studies in either humanities or science. Following the basic cycle, students enter the professional cycle of undergraduate courses. Little time is allowed for electives in other fields, and diversified study is generally not encouraged.

## Academic Calendar

Brazil operates on the Southern Hemisphere. The academic year normally runs from February to November/December.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 7

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 16-20

Number of weeks per term: 18-19

## Grading

<u>Brazilian Grade</u>	<u>U.S. Equivalent</u>
9.0-10.0	A
7.0-8.9	B
5.0-6.9	C
3.0-4.9	D
0-2.9	F

Grading is fairly severe. Top grades are awarded to few students, and the failure rate in a given course can be high.

## Credit Equivalent

Transcripts from ISEP members in Brazil give the number of hours spent in class per week and semester which assists home universities in determining the number of credits for each class.

# BULGARIA

## Higher Education

Bulgaria has 43 universities and other institutions of higher education as well as 45 colleges and technical schools. (College refers to semi-higher-learning institutions for nursing, paramedical training, teaching, and technical education.) The Bulgarian educational system features the re-established private schools, which receive no financial support from the state budget. Most notable among these is the American University of Bulgaria in Blagoevgrad, which is an American liberal arts college with a strong business school.

The American University of Bulgaria is modeled after the American University system, so students can expect a similar model to that of the U.S. Classes will follow a MWF or TR schedule.

## Academic Calendar

Full Year: August - May

Semester 1: August - December

Semester 2: January - May

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 4-5

Students must be enrolled as full-time students (12 credit hours per semester).

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 15

Number of weeks per term: 15

## Grading

Please note that the American University in Bulgaria uses the American system of credits and grading along the 4.0 grading scale.

Designation	Grade and Points
Excellent	A = 4.00; A- = 3.67
Good	B+ = 3.33; B = 3.00; B- = 2.67
Satisfactory	C+ = 2.33; C = 2.00; C- = 1.67
Poor	D+ = 1.33; D = 1.00
Passed	P = degree credit, not included in GPA computation
Failure	F = 0.00 X = 0.00 U = 0.00

These scores will be calculated cumulatively at the end of every semester and at any other time when new grades are reported and form the student's GPA.

## Credit Equivalent

AUBG uses the U.S. system of credits and grading. One credit is equal to 1 U.S. credit or 2 ECTS. The system of credits in use (ECTS) is a cumulative calculation of credit points based on the workload of a student. It is a student-centered credit system to measure the workload required to achieve the objectives of a curriculum. One credit point corresponds to 26 hours of study performed by a student (including lectures, seminars, practice, homework, independent work, and assessment of learning outcomes). ECTS credits are allocated to course units and are awarded to students who successfully complete the course. Please see the section “European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)” at the beginning of this guide for more information.

# CANADA

## Higher Education

As Canada is officially a bilingual, multicultural country with two major cultural traditions, two systems of higher education have developed. One was originally patterned on the early French system with most institutions under the direction of Roman Catholic orders. In the other system, instruction is given in English and the institutions are controlled by a variety of groups: government, religious denominations, and private, non-denominational bodies. A small third group of institutions offers instruction in both French and English.

Under the Canadian Constitution the provinces are generally responsible for education. Provincial autonomy has resulted in the development of distinctive educational systems in each province. There are, however, certain similarities. The Canadian system of higher education is often a mix of the U.S. and British systems. The bachelor's degree from a Canadian university is usually awarded after three or four years of study, depending on the level of high school completed at time of admission. "Honours" bachelor's degrees, which are more specialized than the general "pass" degrees, require an additional year of study.

Professors present core material during class in the format of lectures or discussions and attendance is mandatory. All students should be present and punctual for class, as their attendance record may affect their final grade. and students are expected to take an active role in their own learning: this includes taking notes on the lecture material, joining in the discussion or asking questions during class, making appointments to meet with professors outside class if additional help is needed for any of the material, etc. Students' level of participation in class shows evidence they have done the outside reading or assignments and may therefore also affect the final grade.

## Academic Calendar

The Canadian academic calendar is on the northern hemisphere schedule. The fall term is from late August to December, and the winter term is from early January to May.

## Course Load

A full load for a typical Canadian student is five courses per term, although if exchange students wish to take only four courses per term, it is sometimes permitted.

Some Canadian courses are two terms long and therefore worth double the credit-weight of a semester course. Students may take a combination of one-term and two-term courses which balance out to five courses per term. Exchange students staying in Canada for only one semester are not eligible to enroll in the two-term courses.

## Grading

- A (100 – 80%)
- B (79 – 70%)
- C (69 – 60%)
- D (59 – 50%)
- F (49 – 40%)

If a Canadian letter grade is at the higher or lower end of its corresponding percentage range, it may be specified with a “+” or “-”; for example, a percentage of 80 – 84 % is probably considered an A-.

The Canadian education system is marked by progressive evaluation. That means that students’ final grade is not based solely on one major exam or paper at the end of the semester, but on an accumulation of grades for periodic (usually smaller) assignments given throughout the semester in combination with one or two larger assignments given halfway through the semester or at the very end. This system also allows students to track their own academic progress throughout the semester. However, students must complete all the assignments (not just the final exam) to achieve a high grade in the end. Students should consult their course syllabus, which the professor will provide on the first day of class, to determine what percentage each assignment is worth.

### **Credit Equivalent**

Each course generally equates to a three-credit course in the U.S. system. Meanwhile, European students will receive 24-30 ECTS for the four to five courses they take in Canada; depending on the home university, it is sometimes possible for visiting European students to receive 30 ECTS for taking four Canadian courses.

# CHILE

## Higher Education

Chile has one of the strongest higher education systems in South America. Universities provide the highest degree of learning in Chile, combining teaching, research and outreach activities to their diversified programs. There are 64 universities in Chile divided into “traditional” and “private.” Traditional universities include public and private universities with partial public funding. Students take a national test and apply in a centralized process for admission to these universities. All ISEP member universities in Chile are Traditional universities.

Undergraduate programs are 8 to 12 semesters in length, leading to a degree of licenciado or a professional title. Graduate programs include magister (master’s) and doctorado (Ph.D.) and require one to three years of further study and the submission of a thesis.

Lecturing is the principal method of instruction in Latin American universities. There is usually one final exam or paper counting as the only grade in the class, although some professors will also give midterm exams or papers.

## Academic Calendar

Universities operate on a semester basis. Chile is in the Southern Hemisphere; therefore, the first semester runs from March to July while the second semester is from July to December.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term:

Universidad Técnica Federico Santa María: 4-5

Universidad Católica del Norte: 3-5

Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso: 4-5

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class:

Universidad Técnica Federico Santa María: 15

Universidad Católica del Norte: 18-20

Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso: 20-22

Number of weeks per term:

Universidad Técnica Federico Santa María: 16

Universidad Católica del Norte: 17

Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso: 17

## Grades

<u>Chilean Grade</u>	<u>U.S. Equivalent</u>
6.9-7.0 ( <i>muy bueno</i> )	A
5.0-5.9 ( <i>bueno</i> )	B
4.0-4.9 ( <i>suficiente</i> )	C
0-3.9 ( <i>insuficiente</i> )	F

In many Latin American countries, the grading philosophy is that the student starts at 0 (has no knowledge of the subject) and needs to work hard to obtain a good grade. The student’s grade rises as he proves his gain of knowledge throughout the semester. As such, Latin American universities tend to be severe in their grading



and a grade of Muy Bueno (seven – the highest grade possible in Chile) is rarely awarded. In most classes, the majority of students will receive either suficiente or bueno (from four to six).

### **Credit Equivalent**

Credits are sometimes listed in Chile's transcripts. However, the transcripts also give the number of contact hours to assist with determining the appropriate number of credits. In addition, 15 in-class contact hours are equal to one credit at most U.S. institutions. Students should enroll in 225 hours of classes for 15 U.S. credits. To earn 12 U.S. credits students should enroll in 180 hours of class.

Transcripts from Universidad Católica del Norte, Antofagasta do not list course hours or credits. Please contact the ISEP Coordinator at UCN-Antofagasta to verify the correct number of hours/credits for each class.

# CHINA

## Higher Education

High school students must pass the National College Entrance Exam to be admitted into a university or college. Universities and colleges in China are divided into three categories by the entrance exam score range. Most current ISEP members in China enroll students among the highest score range. Higher education consists of four years in China.

Students must obtain the required credits, pass the graduation dissertation, and complete at least a half-year internship (in the final year) to obtain a bachelor's degree. For a master's and doctorate, more rigorous academic work is required, and students must get a certain number of academic papers published before graduation.

## Academic Calendar

There are two semesters per academic year. The fall semester is September to January of the following year. The Spring semester is February to June. Coursework is assessed by attendance, homework, a mid-term exam, class participation and a final exam. The final exam usually accounts for 60-70% of the grade.

Shanghai University academic calendar runs from September to May. The first semester is September – December and the second semester is March – May.

## Grading

Chinese Grade	U.S. Equivalent
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69 (pass)	D
Under 60	F

Shanghai University: the final exam accounts for 40-50% of the final grade.

## Credit Equivalent

The credit equals the number of teaching hours per week (usually between 12-18). For example, if the course is 2 teaching hours per week, it equals 2 credits. Class credits usually range from 2-4.

Shanghai University: each course is worth 5 ECTS credits, which most often converts into 3 U.S. credits.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 4-6 courses to be considered a full-time student

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 12-18

Number of weeks per term: 14-16

Shanghai University: 12 weeks

# COLOMBIA

## Higher Education

At the university level, the first one to two years are devoted to the study of basic subjects. The total program of study lasts four or five years and leads to a bachillerato universitario, licenciatura or a professional title. A master's degree and the title of Especialista is granted after two more years of study in certain universities. The doctorado, the highest degree, is usually awarded two to three years after the licenciatura, upon submission of a thesis.

Lecturing is the principal method of instruction in Latin American universities, with one final exam or paper counting as the only grade in the class. Some professors will also give midterm exams or papers.

## Academic Calendar

Colombia's academic calendar is on the southern hemisphere schedule, with the first semester usually beginning in February and the second semester beginning in July.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 5-6

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 15-20

Number of weeks per term: 16

## Grading

<u>Icesi Grade</u>	<u>U.S. Equivalent</u>
4.5-5.0	A (Excellent)
4.0-4.49	B (Very Good)
3.5-3.99	C (Satisfactory)
3.0-3.49	D (Sufficient)
0.0-2.9	F (Fail)

Student may fail the course with a grade of 0.5 if their absences exceed 20% of the total number of course hours for the semester.

## Credit Equivalent

The credit system in Colombia is established by the Ministry of Education. One credit is equal to 48 hours for 16 weeks. That means that in a week, one credit is equal to three hours per week: one hour for class and two hours for independent work and study completed by the student.

Courses at Icesi can have a total of two, three, or four credits. These depend on the weekly schedule, and the hours of independent work required out of class. The majority of classes are worth three credits.

# COSTA RICA

## Higher Education

The Costa Rican education system offers 12 years of pre-university preparation in primary and secondary school. Students enter university after passing an entrance exam, and they typically enroll directly into a specific carrera (field of study) to begin work on their Bachillerato (bachelor's degree). Students generally cannot enter university as "undeclared" or "undecided." Depending on the carrera, students may take from four to seven years to complete their undergraduate studies. Students can complete one more year of study and write a formal thesis to be awarded the Licenciatura. A master's degree program typically lasts two years. Costa Rica has five public universities located in the major cities and regional campuses throughout the country.

All students studying the same carrera are required to take certain classes each year within their department, following the plan of courses for their degree. As a result, students are grouped together in a cohort and see each other almost exclusively throughout the academic day. Some ISEP students have found that a good way to get to know local students is to take two or more classes within the same carrera and year. This is also recommended to avoid scheduling conflicts.

In addition to the required courses for the carrera, Costa Rican students may also enroll in a limited number of optativas (elective courses) within their academic department, or courses in a variety of disciplines in estudios generales (general education courses). Local students typically only take estudios generales courses during their first year of study at university, and ISEP students at UCR are limited to one estudios generales course per semester. Because Costa Rican students enter university directly into a specific field of study and spend very little time taking general education or elective courses, ISEP students may find that third and fourth year courses in their carrera assume a good deal of background knowledge and may be more difficult than what they are used to at their home universities.

Class time is usually divided between lectures and activities that are more student-centered. Professors will expect students to take notes on lectures and complete any assigned reading or homework. Student participation and discussion is usually encouraged, and professors may spend a large portion of the class asking students questions about the reading material or lecture content. Regular attendance to classes is expected and missing multiple classes without proper documentation may result in an automatic failing grade.

The Costa Rican academic system places a large emphasis on group work over individual assignments. Students will write papers, complete exams and create presentations all in small groups. While Costa Rican students are generally friendly and welcoming, ISEP students should also make an effort to introduce themselves and get to know their classmates during the first few classes. This will make finding a group to complete assignments with much easier.

## Academic Calendar

Costa Rica follows the Southern Hemisphere, with three trimesters per year.

Trimester 1: February to April/May

Trimester 2: May to August

Trimester 3: August to November/December.

The academic year runs from February to November.

## Course Load

ISEP students at Universidad de Costa Rica will take 12-18 credits during the semester, or four to six courses. ISEP students at EARTH University will take the number of courses assigned to their program.

## Grading

<u>Costa Rican Grade</u>	<u>U.S. Equivalent</u>
9-10 (90-100)	A
8 (80-89)	B
7 (70-79)	C
0-6 (0-69)	F

## Credit Equivalent

Each credit is equal to 15 contact hours. Courses generally grant three or four credits, although some may only grant one or two credits, depending on the required work outside of class and how often the course meets.

# CZECH REPUBLIC

## Higher Education

Education in the Czech Republic is compulsory from the age of 6 to 15. Students can continue by completing a 4-year secondary school (gymnasium), a 2 to 4-year vocational school, or apprenticeship training. After completing gymnasium or vocational school, students who wish to attend university must pass the *maturita* (school-leaving) exam.

There are private and public institutions of higher education. All higher education institutions provide accredited study programs that are assessed by the Accreditation Commission. Entrance requirements for Czech universities are quite strict and very competitive.

Applicants must successfully complete discipline-related entrance exams. Like many European institutions, Czech institutions do not differentiate between 100, 200, and 300+ level courses. Students attend courses based on their progression in their field of study. Individual arrangements with professors must be made to ensure proper accreditation.

In the Czech Republic, bachelor's degree programs typically last 3 years and lead to second degree (1 to 2 years) master's programs. Unified, undivided long-term master's programs (5 to 6 years) are offered in some fields of study and ECTS credits allow diplomas and grades to be easily convertible.

Students do not typically graduate upon completion of their bachelor's credits, but instead go straight on to obtain their master's. Therefore, international students in their fourth year of studies with the appropriate amount of credits may be considered as "Graduate" students for ISEP exchange programs.

## Academic Calendar

Full Year: September - May  
Semester 1: September - December  
Semester 2: February - May

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 4-6  
Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 10-20  
Number of weeks per term: 14-16

## Grading

Czech higher education institutions use a 4-point grading scale for courses with completion type „zk“ (zkouška – examination) or „kz“ (klasifikovaný zápočet – graded credit)

Grade designation	ECTS Grade	Value
Excellent	A	1
Very Good	B	1,5
Good	C	2
Satisfactory	D	2,5
Sufficient	E	3
Failed	F/X	4

For courses with completion type „k“ (kolokvium – colloquium) or „z“ (zápočet – credit), the following grades are used:

Grade designation	Grade	Recommended equivalent grade
Requirements fulfilled	Z	Pass or A
Requirements not fulfilled	N	Fail or F

### **Credit Equivalent**

The system of credits in use (ECTS) is a cumulative calculation of credit points based on the workload of a student. It is a student-centered credit system to measure the workload required to achieve the objectives of a curriculum. One credit point corresponds to 26 hours of study performed by a student (including lectures, seminars, practice, homework, independent work, and assessment of learning outcomes). ECTS credits are allocated to course units and are awarded to students who successfully complete the course. Please see the section “European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)” at the beginning of this guide for more information.

# DENMARK

## Higher Education

Denmark has a degree structure similar to the Anglo-American system with bachelor's, master's (*candidatus*), and Ph.D. degrees. All university study programs are research based, and degrees are awarded at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. A university course normally consists of a three-year bachelor's program, followed by a two-year course leading to a master's degree. Three years of supervised postgraduate studies after the master's degree lead to a Ph.D. degree.

### Aalborg University:

#### Academic Calendar

Full Year: September - June

Semester 1: September - January

Semester 2: February - June

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 6-7 (23-35 ECTS)

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 12-14

Number of weeks per term: 8-10, followed by supervised project work and exams

#### Grading

Aalborg uses the Danish 7-point system for grading.

Mark	Designation	Description	ECTS
12	Excellent	Excellent performance with no major weaknesses	A
10	Very Good	Very good performance with only minor weaknesses	B
7	Good	Good performance with some weaknesses	C
4	Fair	Fair performance with some major weaknesses	D
02	Adequate	Minimally acceptable performance	E
00	Inadequate	Does not meet minimum passing requirements	Fx
-3	Poor	Unacceptable performance	F

#### Credit Equivalent

The system of credits in use (ECTS) is a cumulative calculation of credit points based on the workload of a student. It is a student-centered credit system to measure the workload required to achieve the objectives of a curriculum. One credit point corresponds to 26 hours of study performed by a student (including lectures, seminars, practice, homework, independent work, and assessment of learning outcomes). ECTS credits are allocated to course units and are awarded to students who successfully complete the course. Please see the section "European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)" at the beginning of this guide for more information.



# ECUADOR

## Education System

There are three levels of higher education: associate degrees (awarded at technical schools much like U.S. community colleges), bachelor's degrees and Engineering degrees (from universities and polytechnic institutions), and graduate schools (universities and polytechnic institutions). Graduate schools offer three kinds of degrees: specialization, master's degrees and PhDs. Due to new academic reforms, the academic period has two regular semesters and one intensive semester, starting in February and finishing in December. The instructional strategies are also changing. Lectures are still a principal method of teaching at certain institutions, but in others, there are more active and significant ways for learning. In all cases, class attendance is mandatory.

## Academic Calendar

Universities in Ecuador work on a semester basis. The country operates on the Southern Hemisphere academic calendar. The academic calendar consists of one intensive term at the beginning of the calendar year and two ordinary semesters. The intensive term runs from mid-January to early April. The second semester runs from mid-April to early August and the third semester runs from early September to mid-December.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 5

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 17-18

Number of weeks per term: Regular semester – 17; Intensive term – 9 weeks

## Grades

<u>Ecuadorian Grades</u>	<u>U.S. Grades</u>
9.8-10	A
9.4-9.79	A-
9.2-9.39	B+
9.00-9.19	B
8.7-8.99	B-
8.5-8.69	C+
8.3-8.49	C
8.0-8.29	C-
7.8-7.99	D+
7.5-7.79	D
1.0-7.44	F

## Credit Equivalent

One credit in a classroom-based course is equal to 16 effective hours and at least 16 hours pertaining to the student's independent work. Courses may have a total of two, three or four credits, depending on their weekly schedule and hours necessary for individual work outside of class. However, it is common that courses have three credits, each one bearing a 48-hour workload throughout the semester.

# ESTONIA

## Higher Education

Higher education in Estonia is divided into two parallel sectors: applied higher education (diploma studies) and academic higher education (bachelor's, master's, and doctoral studies). In addition, Estonia has the following two types of higher educational institutions: a) public and private universities and b) public and private institutions of applied higher education.

The University of Tartu is one of six public universities in Estonia. About 50,000 students study at Estonian universities, and the principle language of instruction is Estonian. However, some courses are taught in Russian, German, or English. The universities are autonomous to the extent determined by the law of universities. This means that universities have the right to independently determine their academic and organizational structure, the content of teaching and research work, the course curricula, and the requirements for admission and graduation.

### University of Tartu:

#### Academic Calendar

Full Year: August - June

Semester 1: August - January

Semester 2: February - June

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 4-6

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 20

Number of weeks per term: 16

#### Grading

Estonian Grade (ECTS Scale)	U.S. equivalent
A - Excellent	A (91-100%) B+ (81-90%)
B - Very good	B (71-80%)
C - Good	C+ (61-70%)
D - Sufficient	C (51-60%)
E - Poor	F
FX - Fail F - Fail	F (0-50%)

#### Credit Equivalent

The system of credits in use (ECTS) is a cumulative calculation of credit points based on the workload of a student. It is a student-centered credit system to measure the workload required to achieve the objectives of a curriculum. One credit point corresponds to 26 hours of study performed by a student (including lectures, seminars, practice, homework, independent work, and assessment of learning outcomes). ECTS credits are allocated to course units and are awarded to students who successfully complete the course. Please see the section "European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)" at the beginning of this guide for more information.

# FIJI

## Higher Education

The educational system consists of six years of primary schooling, which is free but not obligatory. Private schools usually have religious affiliation. In many elementary schools, the first four years are taught in different languages including Fijian, Hindi, Chinese, Rotuman and English. At higher levels, English becomes the language of instruction.

After two years of junior secondary school and four years of secondary school, students may pursue their first-degree program. Candidates study for three years for a bachelor's degree of arts, commerce or sciences and one more year for the Graduate Certificate of Education. Most higher educational institutions in Fiji are technical institutes and teacher training colleges. University of the South Pacific is one of the three major universities in Fiji and one of the only major universities in the South Pacific.

## Academic Calendar

Fiji operates on the Southern Hemisphere calendar, so the academic year runs from February to November. The first semester is February – June/July and the second semester is July – November.

## Grading

Fijian Grade	U.S. equivalent
A	A
B	B
C	C
F	F

## Course Load and Credit Equivalency

Fiji does not assign a credit value to courses. In general, courses meet three to four hours per week. These are guidelines and actual amount may vary.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 3-4

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class:

Non-science, 1<sup>st</sup> year students – 16

Non-science 2<sup>nd</sup> year students – 12

Science 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students – 21

Number of weeks per term: 14

# FINLAND

## Higher Education

The Finnish higher education system consists of two complementary sectors: universities and polytechnics (universities of applied sciences). Universities conduct scientific research and then provide instruction and postgraduate education based on it. Polytechnics train professionals in response to labor market needs and conduct R&D, which supports instruction and promotes regional development.

The university sector currently enrolls roughly 160,000 students. There are 14 universities in Finland, and 7 of them take part in ISEP programs.

Currently there are 27 polytechnics. These institutions are mainly multidisciplinary and serve approximately 130,000 students.

Finnish universities award bachelor's degrees (*kandiclaattiin* Finnish, *kanc/ic/atin* Swedish), master's degrees (*maisteri/magister*), and doctoral degrees (*tohtori/doctor*). It is also possible to obtain a Licentiate's degree (*Qisensiaattiflicentiat*) prior to the Doctoral degree and is currently fairly common among students.

It takes a minimum of three years to complete a bachelor's degree and five years for a master's degree. Advanced degrees can be completed in two years for the licentiate or four years for the Doctoral. A thesis is required at each level.

## Academic Calendar

Note: the academic calendar will vary by institution

Full Year: August/September - May

Semester 1: August/September - December

Semester 2: January - May

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 6-8 (approx. 20-30 ECTS credits)

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 10-30

Number of weeks per term: 14-21

## Grading

Grades correspond to the ECTS system (see section on "European Credit Transfer System" at the beginning of this guide). Some courses are only graded as Pass/Fail.

ECTS grade	Finnish grade	Definition
A	5	Excellent - outstanding performance with only minor errors
B	4	Very good - above the average standard but with some errors
C	3	Good - generally sound work with a number of notable errors
D	2	Satisfactory - fair but with significant shortcomings
E	1	Sufficient - performance meets the minimum criteria
FX, F	0	Fail - some more work required before the credit can be awarded

## Credit Equivalent

All courses are measured in Finnish credits, and each one is equivalent to one ECTS credit. A full-time course load is 30 credits for a semester and 60 for an academic year. One Finnish credit equals 27-78 hours of work, and exchange students are required to complete 20-30 Finnish credits per semester.

Individual courses at Finnish universities may carry one to several credits. They may last the whole semester or often only for short periods during the semester. These shorter courses are usually intensive with lectures 2-3 times per week.

1 U.S. undergraduate credit = 2 Finnish credits (2 ECTS)

1 U.S. graduate credit = 2.5-3 Finnish credits (2.5-3 ECTS)

# FRANCE

## Higher Education

In order to be admitted into the university system, students must pass the baccalauréat, or as it is more commonly known, the bac. The bac is a national examination taken after the third year of high school. The universities in France offer academic, technical and professional degree programs in all disciplines, preparing students for careers in research and professional practice in every imaginable field. They offer dozens of different national diplomas.

The system of degrees awarded in French higher education reflects a common European architecture. The LMD system – for licence (bachelor), master and doctorate – is based on the number of semesters completed since leaving secondary school, and their equivalents in European credits under the ECTS:

Licence = six semesters = 180 ECTS (Baccalauréat + three years)

Master = 10 semesters = 300 ECTS (Baccalauréat + five years)

Doctorat = 16 semesters (Baccalauréat + eight years)

French students follow a highly structured curriculum specific to the degree they are pursuing from day one at the university. They do not take “liberal arts” or general education requirements before focusing on a major or area of study. At the end of each year, they must pass a set of required exams before they can move on to the next year’s program.

French university courses are of two basic types:

-Lecture courses are given in halls seating from 100 to 1,000 students. These are called cours magistraux (CM). The professor presents the subject; students take notes. Many professors prepare and distribute course outlines or lecture notes that help students prepare for exams.

-Study sections, known as travaux dirigés (TD), consist of small groups of students. In the seminar-style sections, students apply and deepen what the professor has presented in the lecture hall. Attendance is mandatory.

Because French students have very little choice with regard to the courses they take within their area of study, French universities often do not publish detailed course descriptions or course catalogues. Rather, a list of modules with an indication of the number of hours per week or the total number of class hours for the course and the corresponding ECTS credits is provided.

For example, you may see the following course description:

Initiation à l’histoire moderne (1h30 CM + 2h TD)/6 ECTS

This can be interpreted as follows:

Introduction to Modern History for six ECTS credits

1h30 CM = 1 hour 30 minutes per week of cours magistraux, or lecture

2 h TD = 2 hours per week of travaux dirigés, or study section

## Academic Calendar

In France the academic year runs on the Northern Hemisphere calendar. The year begins in September and ends in May/June. The exact start and end dates vary depending on the institution and the program.

## Course Load

French students attending university full-time take 30 ECTS per semester. ISEP students may not be expected to take as many credits, but it is recommended they maintain enrollment in at least 24 ECTS per semester. A student's course load depends on their home institution's policies for their outbound students. The number of classes per semester will vary depending on the number of credits granted per course. Depending on the degree field students may take fewer courses that grant a high number of ECTS, or several courses that carry fewer ECTS per course. It is also common for courses to be divided into "modules." For example, a literature course that is split into two modules of 3 ECTS each for a total 6 ECTS for the course.

## Grades

<u>French Grade</u>	<u>Suggested U.S. Equivalent</u>
14-20	A
12-13	B+/A-
10-11	B-/B
9-10	C-/C
Below 9	F

Generally, the highest grades awarded by French professors are 14 or 15. Grades of 9 or 10 are satisfactory. French students work to simply pass a course rather than to earn a high grade. French students need an overall average grade of 10 to pass the year. Grading varies greatly from subject to subject. For example, in mathematics a student may receive a 20/20 upon completing a problem correctly, whereas a 12/20 on a literature essay is a very good grade.

Generally, a 9 or above is a passing grade for ISEP students who take regular university courses with French students. However, international students are sometimes given a little more flexibility in this area and individual French institutions may have different expectations or recommendations. This scale is solely a recommendation; individual home institutions may decide to hold their students to the same standards as the French or be more lenient.

Re-take exam periods in July are available for students who fail their exams the first time. ISEP benefits generally do not cover these re-take periods, and it is not guaranteed that re-take exams can be completed remotely.

## Credit

France operates on the ECTS credit system. ECTS credits take into account the total student workload per class or degree program. Please see the section "European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)" at the beginning of this guide for more information.

ISEP students enrolled in Language and Culture programs in France are awarded university credit as opposed to ECTS. This is because a full-time student at the university would not be allowed to apply the credit earned for these courses towards their undergraduate degree (the European requirement to grant official ECTS). Students' transcripts may note the number of hours per course for the semester instead of the number of credits. Many U.S. universities divide the number of hours of instruction per course by the length of the program to arrive at the number of credit hours granted, although this is at the discretion of each home institution.

# GERMANY

## Higher Education

Students should be self-disciplined and budget study time throughout the semester. Talk to other students or professors if you have troubles knowing what the learning outcomes of a course are. Students attend courses based on their progression in their field of study. Individual arrangements with professors must be made to ensure proper accreditation. Assessment is based on oral and written reports in seminars for which the student receives a Schein, or certificate. (A grade can be requested.)

In Germany, bachelor's degree programs typically last 3 years, while second degree programs (1 to 2 years) lead to master's degrees. Unified, undivided long-term master's programs (5-6 years) are offered in some fields of study, and ECTS credits allow diplomas and grades to be easily convertible.

Transcripts are not automatically issued. Students will have to follow the steps outlined in their Acceptance Package and Country Handbook to obtain a transcript from the international office. Please note that ISEP cannot intervene on behalf of students who have not completed the process outlined by their host institution. Like many European institutions, German institutions do not differentiate between 100, 200, and 300+ level courses.

## Academic Calendar

Full Year: Mid-October - Mid-July

Semester 1: Mid-October - February

Semester 2: March - Mid-July

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 4-6

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 10-30

Number of weeks per term: 14-21

## Grading

Grade	Description	U.S. Grade Recommendation
1 -1.5 = Sehr Gut	Excellent: outstanding performance	A
1.6-2.5 = Gut	Good: above the average standard but with some errors	A-/B+
2.6-3.5 = Befriedigend	Satisfactory: generally sound work with a few notable errors	B-
3.6-4.9 = Ausreichend	Sufficient: performance meets the minimum criteria	C
5.0-6.0 = (Nicht ausreichend/Nicht bestanden)	Unsatisfactory: substantial improvement necessary; requirement of further work	F

Unbenotet = not graded

Bestanden = Passed

Teilgenommen = Regularly attended



For certain fields of study, it is typical for students to receive average to mediocre grades. Depending on the field, these grades may be considered good by German standards. Students receiving a 3.0 or above are generally regarded as having an A or B average in the U.S. equivalent. Any grade between 4.1-4.9 is still considered good academic standing.

## **Credit Equivalent**

A full workload for an international student is an average of 6 courses in a semester of 15 weeks, with 12 hours of lecture per week. Registrars are encouraged to look at contact hours to evaluate credit.

The system of credits in use (ECTS) is a cumulative calculation of credit points based on the workload of a student. It is a student-centered credit system to measure the workload required to achieve the objectives of a curriculum. One credit point corresponds to 26 hours of study performed by a student (including lectures, seminars, practice, homework, independent work, and assessment of learning outcomes). ECTS credits are allocated to course units and are awarded to students who successfully complete the course. Please see the section “European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)” at the beginning of this guide for more information.

Courses for the upcoming academic year may not be available until shortly before the year starts, so students and advisors are encouraged to use previous years’ catalogues as a basis for choosing courses. Students are also encouraged to be flexible in their requirements.

# GHANA

## Higher Education

The university of Ghana, founded in 1948, is the oldest and largest public university in Ghana. Most courses are offered in the lecture format. 100 and 200 level courses are for general requirements, 300 and 400 level courses are for students majoring in the subject.

## Academic Calendar

The university calendar consists of two 16-week semesters with a 6-week break in between. The ISEP program in Ghana includes one week of orientation at the beginning of each semester, followed by two semesters, each containing 13 teaching weeks, 1 week for revision and 2 weeks of exams.

## Grading

Letter grades from Ghana are equivalent to U.S. letter grades. Other letter grades such as I, Y, X, and Z may be issued to denote an incomplete or other special notice. The university of Ghana provides explanations regarding all letter grades on the backs of their transcripts.

Grade	Percentage	Description	Credits
A	80-100	Outstanding	4.0
B+	75-79	Very good	3.5
B	70-74	Fairly good	3.0
C+	65-69	Good	2.5
C	60-64	Average	2.0
D+	44-49	Below average	1.0
D	50-54	Marginal pass	1.0
E	45-49	Unsatisfactory	0.5
F	0-44	Fail	0.0

Each grade is assigned on equivalent Grade Point (GP) as indicated above. The number of grade points earned by a student for each course completed is computed as the product of the number of credits for the course and the grade point equivalent of the grade obtained in the course.

The student's cumulative grade point average (CGPA) is calculated by dividing the total number of grade points obtained, up to any specific time, by the total number for credits of all courses for which the student has registered up to that time.

The final grade point average (FGPA) is the CGPA for all courses under consideration calculated up to the end of a student's academic program.

## **Course Load and Credit Equivalency**

Credits listed for international students on a transcript from the University of Ghana are equivalent to U.S. credits.

Ghanaian students follow a structured curriculum specific to the degree they are pursuing. The actual number of hours in class varies according to the department or subject and the amount of work expected from students outside of class. One course credit is defined per week for a semester as one of the following: one-hour lecture, one -hour tutorial, one practical session of two to three hours, or six hours of field work.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 5

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 15

Number of weeks per term: 16

# GREECE

## American College of Thessaloniki

### Education System

In inspiration, mission, governance, and programs, the American College of Thessaloniki resembles the traditional New England colleges upon which it has been modeled. ACT is one of the few institutions outside the United States with full, free-standing U.S. accreditation by NEASC and EU validation of its undergraduate programs. All courses at ACT are taught in English.

Classes are smaller in size and may be lecture or lab based (especially for science disciplines). Attendance and class participation are important components of the grading system. An interactive approach to academics allows students to engage with the course content in unique ways such as field work, workshops, conferences, site visits, internships and practicums. An average class consists of less than 20 students. This means that coursework can be tailored to class needs and each student's contribution is acknowledged, particularly in discussion settings, with plenty of opportunities for personalized attention.

### Academic Calendar

The ACT calendar is divided into four terms:

Fall: September – December  
Spring I: January – April  
Spring II: April – June  
Summer: June – July

ISEP students may attend ACT for the following program periods:

Fall  
Spring I  
Spring I & II  
Full Year (Fall & Spring I)  
Summer

### Credit Equivalents

All credits and grades issued by ACT are in U.S. credit equivalencies. Courses are normally one semester in length and assign credit depending on the material and course hours. Grades may be based on a variety of factors including attendance and participation, homework assignments, exams or papers. Some classes may consist only of a midterm and final exam.

In the U.S., full-time status generally consists of at least four semester-long courses which is equivalent to 12 credits. One credit usually equals 15 classroom hours, and most classes are 3 credits. If a class has more credits it means that it meets more frequently. 1 U.S. credit is generally equal to 2 ECTS credits.

### *Course Load*

Fall or Spring I: 12-15 credits  
Spring I & II: 18-21 credits

Full Year (Fall & Spring I): 24-30 credits  
Summer: 6 credits

# HONG KONG

## Higher Education

Hong Kong returned to the People's Republic of China and became a Special Administrative Region on July 1, 1997, after one and a half centuries of British rule. The formation and evolution of higher education in Hong Kong has been quite unlike that in China. Hong Kong's colleges and universities operate separately from those within jurisdiction of China's State Education Commission. In addition, they are financed by Hong Kong's University Grants Committee. Coursework includes lectures, seminars, tutorials, laboratory work, fieldwork, examinations and research projects.

## Academic Calendar

The academic year is divided into two terms: September to December and January to May. Examinations are scheduled in December and early May.

## Grading

Chinese Grade	U.S. equivalent
A	A
A-	A-
B	B
C	C
D	D
F	F

Note: +/- grades can be transferred equivalently if used at home university.

ISEP participants are evaluated according to the standards of each academic department at CUHK.

## Course Load and Credit Equivalency

At the Chinese University of Hong Kong, one unit is roughly equivalent to one hour of instruction per week. In general, most three-unit courses are composed of three hours of lecture, or two hours of lecture and one hour of tutorial per week.

A full workload for a semester is about 12-18 credits/units. A student with a workload of 12 credits will have an average of 12 hours of lecture per week.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 4-6 (12-18 credits/units)

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 12-18

Number of weeks per term: 13 first term, 15 second term

# HUNGARY

## Higher Education

After high school, students may attend one of Hungary's fifteen universities, five medical schools or 49 institutions of higher education (including nine technical institutes).

The arts and sciences universities offer a five-year curriculum which is not divided into graduate and undergraduate levels. Students graduating from these institutions receive accreditation as secondary school teachers in addition to their subject degree (B.A). Master's degrees are awarded pending successful exams in three subjects as well as a foreign language and the research and defense of a dissertation. Like many European institutions, Hungarian institutions do not differentiate between 100, 200, and 300+ level courses.

Students do not typically graduate upon completion of their bachelor's credits, but instead go straight on to obtain their master's. Therefore, international students in their fourth year of studies with the appropriate amount of credits may be considered as "Graduate" students for ISEP exchange programs.

### University of Debrecen:

#### Academic Calendar

Full Year: September - May

Semester 1: September - December

Semester 2: February - May

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 10 (one major); 15 (two majors)

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 20-25 (one major); 35 (two majors)

Number of weeks per term: 14

#### Grading

Grade	Hungarian	English	U.S. Equivalent
5	jeles	Excellent - Very good Outstanding with minor errors	A
4	jó	Good - Generally sound work with a number of notable errors	B
3	közepes	Satisfactory - Acceptable Fair but with significant shortcomings	C
2	elégséges	Pass - Performance meets the minimum criteria	D
1	elégtelen	Fail - Further work is required	F

#### Credit Equivalent

The system of credits in use (ECTS) is a cumulative calculation of credit points based on the workload of a student. It is a student-centered credit system to measure the workload required to achieve the objectives of a curriculum. One credit point corresponds to 26 hours of study performed by a student (including lectures, seminars, practice, homework, independent work, and assessment of learning outcomes). ECTS credits are allocated to course units and are awarded to students who successfully complete the course. Please see the section "European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)" at the beginning of this guide for more information.

# INDIA

## Higher Education

To apply to higher education institutions, an Indian student must complete 12 years of primary and secondary school. India follows the 10+2 (high school) +3 (bachelor's) +2 (master's) system.

## Academic Calendar

The Indian academic year begins in late July and ends with exams in April. Semesters run from July to November and December to April. Depending on the university, some faculties may have different start and end dates.

## Grading

Grades in India are the same as U.S. grades. +/- grades can be transferred equivalently in the U.S.

India	U.S. equivalent
A	A
B	B
C	C
D	D
F	F

## Course Load and Credit Equivalency

Each course is equivalent to four credit hours, which amounts to four hours of time spent in the classroom per week. Four credits in a semester course equates to 60 hours spent in the classroom.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 3-4

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 12-16

Number of weeks per term: 16-18



# INDONESIA

## Higher Education

Higher education in Indonesia includes universities and colleges that offer undergraduate and some graduate/post graduate programs.

To apply to higher education institutions, a student must complete 12 years of primary and secondary school. The latter may be completed at a technical institution, and students must receive a secondary school leaving certificate. Admission depends upon grades and qualifying exams.

It takes four years (146 credits) to obtain a bachelor's degree (Sarjana). For a master's degree, the program is two years, and a minimum of three years is required for doctoral programs.

## Academic Calendar

The academic calendar is divided into two semesters; odd semester (September – February) and even semester (February – July). Some universities also have compact semester (July – August).

Udayana University: first semester is September – December second semester is January – May.

## Grading

The course work is assessed through assignments and exams.

Indonesia Grade	Percentage	U.S. equivalent
A	91-100	A
A-	86-89	B+/A
B+	81-85	B+
B	76-80	B/B+
B-	71-75	B
C+	66-70	C+
C	61-65	C
D	50-60	D
E	<50	F
F	Attendance issues	F

## Course Load and Credit Equivalency

One credit is equal to a 50-minute class session per week (for 13 weeks). Most regular classes carry at least two credits.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 4-7

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 12-18

Number of weeks per semester: 16

# ITALY

## Education System

Most ISEP students will take courses at the bachelor level in a Laurea degree. A Laurea degree is composed of 180 ECTS credits and is normally completed in three years. The five- to six-year Laurea Magistrale a Ciclo Unico degree is usually reserved for architecture, law or medical sciences.

Regular class attendance is important to academic success in Italy. Students may find that some professors do not take attendance, while others have strict attendance policies, where absences may affect the grade. Italian students often enroll in many courses (more than 30 ECTS) and then take exams in only a few at the end of the semester. Individualized learning is emphasized; there is a large amount of outside reading and students study hard for exams.

## Academic Calendar

Italy operates on the Northern Hemisphere academic calendar. Semester 1: September-February (International Curriculum at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore ends in mid-December); Semester 2: February-June/July

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 4-5 (24-30 CFU)

Number of hours a typical student spends in class: 6-8 hours of lecture per class

Number of weeks per term: 26 for full year courses, about 14 for semester courses

## Grading

<u>Italian Grade</u>	<u>U.S. Equivalent</u>
29-30	A
27-28	B
24-26	C
18-23	D
>18	F

Coursework is assessed by the final exam, although other exams and course assignments may be required. The Italian grading system ranges from 18/30 to 30/30. The highest mark (30/30) is with distinction. All exams under 18/30 are considered “not passing” and may not be registered on the final transcript of records.

## Credit

ECTS Credits are allocated to each course. Some Italian universities use a different credit system, the CFU (crediti formativo universitario). CFU credits measure the total amount of effort the student must put into a course, including outside study. Each CFU typically represents 25 hours of student work. One CFU credit equals one ECTS credit. Please see the section “European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)” at the beginning of this guide for more information.

Students taking courses in the International Curriculum at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore should note that course credits are awarded in U.S. credit hours. Typically, these courses bear three U.S. credits unless otherwise noted.

# JAPAN

## Higher Education

Japanese universities offer four-year bachelor's degrees and six-year medical degrees. Japanese universities require at least 124 credits for graduation.

## Academic Calendar

The Japanese academic calendar runs from April to March, the first semester from April to September and the second from October to March. These include three major vacation periods (winter, spring and summer).

Toyo operates on a quarter system in some departments. Each semester is divided into two 8-week quarters. The course are worth 2 credits.

Special arrangements and some ISEP member institutions allow students to finish exams in December. Some ISEP members follow the U.S. academic calendar.

## Grading

Japanese Grade	U.S. equivalent
S/A+	90+
A	80-90
B	70-79
C	60-69
F/D	59-40
F/E	39-0

## Course Load and Credit Equivalency

University	Classes/term	Hrs./week
Chukyo	10-15	18-24
Kansai Gaidai	4-5	14-17
Nanzan	6-7	18-21
Nihon	7-10	10-15
TIU	3-4	12-18
Toyo	10-12	15-18
Rikkyo	7-12	10-18

If a student fails a course for any reason (low attendance, low grades), the course may appear on the transcript with a \* or is left blank.

Chukyo, Rikkyo: One credit equals 15 hours of class per semester. Most regular courses are assigned to two credits (30 hours). Some language, physical education and laboratory courses are only assigned one credit, although they may meet for 30 hours. Language courses require at least 15 hours per week and earn up to 6 credits.

Toyo: Academic courses are worth 2 credits. Sports courses, lab work and foreign language are worth 1 credit. Academic courses meet once a week for 90 minutes, which they calculate as 2 hours (45 minutes = 1 hour). Students are expected to do two hours of preparation for each hour of lecture. A two-credit course is considered to be 90 hours of work.

Kansai Gaidai and Nanzan: Japanese language courses meet three to five times a week for 50 minutes. Lecture courses meet for 90 minutes once or twice per week.

Nihon: 1 credit = 15 hours of class per semester. Most lecture courses are assigned two credits (30 hours). Some language P.E. and laboratory courses are also assigned two credits; however, they require 60 hours per semester. Exchange students are offered two Japanese language courses and they can earn up to four credits.

Nanzan: Japanese language courses meet three to five times a week for 90 minutes per class. Japanese seminar courses, open courses and practical courses in Japanese arts are 2 credits. Lecture courses in Japanese areas studies are 3 credits.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 4-6

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 12-18

Number of weeks per term: 15-16

# LATVIA

## Higher Education

Academic higher education is divided into two stages in Latvia. At the end of the first stage (which can last three or four years), an academic degree and a *bakalaura* (bachelor's) diploma are awarded. If a three-year program is completed, this is not considered to be a completion of higher education. Rather, it is viewed as preparation for a one- or two-year professional training program or a continued academic education.

At the end of the second stage, which takes about two years to complete, the academic degree of *magistrs* (master's degree) and a diploma are awarded. A *bakalaura* degree is a prerequisite for admission to a *magistrs* program. Students who complete the three-year *bakalaura* program may enter the *magistrs* program at the same institution, or they may continue the *bakalaura* program at another institution. Generally, there is little movement between institutions.

The academic year begins in September and ends in late June or mid-July. Generally, it comprises 40 weeks of lectures, seminars, and practical work, which is usually divided into two semesters.

### University of Latvia:

#### Academic Calendar

Full Year: August – June

Semester 1: August – January

Semester 2: Late January – June

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 3-4

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 20-25

Number of weeks per term: 15-16

## Grading

Grade	Latvian grade	Comments	Estimated corresponding ECTS grade
10	izcili (with distinction)	Knowledge of the student is substantially higher than the estimated normal level.	A
9	teicami (excellent)	Knowledge of the student is higher than the estimated normal level	A
8	ļoti labi (very good)	Knowledge corresponds to the highest expected level.	B
7	labi (good)	The student has mastered the subject deeply and with understanding, is progressing within the expected limits, but makes minor mistakes.	C
6	gandrīz labi (almost good)	The student has generally succeeded in the course within the required limits, but he or she is either merely reproducing the knowledge rather than actively using it, or making more substantial mistakes.	D
5	viduvēji (satisfactory)	Awarded to students who are progressing within the limits of their individual abilities, generally are not behind the appropriate age group, but make substantial mistakes and reproduce the facts rather than analyze them.	E
4	gandrīz viduvēji (almost satisfactory)	The very last positive grade. Awarded to students who do their best but still make grave mistakes and just reproduce most of the relevant material.	E/FX
3-1	neapmierinoši (unsatisfactory)	Marks of different levels for students whose records are below the expected.	Fail

## Credit Equivalent

The system of credits in use (ECTS) is a cumulative calculation of credit points based on the workload of a student. It is a student-centered credit system to measure the workload required to achieve the objectives of a curriculum. One credit point corresponds to 26 hours of study performed by a student (including lectures, seminars, practice, homework, independent work, and assessment of learning outcomes). ECTS credits are allocated to course units and are awarded to students who successfully complete the course. Please see the section “European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)” at the beginning of this guide for more information.

# LITHUANIA

## Higher Education

There are two types of higher education institutions in Lithuania - universities and colleges, which are divided into state and non-state institutions.

Colleges only provide undergraduate study and are focused on practical activities. They are aimed at acquiring a professional bachelor's degree and/or a professional qualification. This results in a professional bachelor's diploma or higher education diploma and takes 3-4 years.

Two evaluation systems have run side by side at Vilnius University since 1993; a ten-point system and a pass/fail system. For examinations, a grade of 5 and higher is a passing, and 4 and lower is a failing grade. The courses that do not end with examinations use the pass/fail system to test if a student has earned the credits allocated to the class. They pass when they prove that they learned more than 50% of required knowledge.

The education system at Lithuanian universities is organized into three cycles – undergraduate (bachelor's), master's and specialized professional studies, and doctoral, post-graduate and residency studies.

### Vilnius University:

#### Academic Calendar

Full Year: September – June

Semester 1: September – December/January

Semester 2: February – June

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 5-7 (30 ECTS credits)

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 20-23

Number of weeks per term: 16

#### Credit Equivalent

The system of credits in use (ECTS) is a cumulative calculation of credit points based on the workload of a student. It is a student-centered credit system to measure the workload required to achieve the objectives of a curriculum. One credit point corresponds to 26 hours of study performed by a student (including lectures, seminars, practice, homework, independent work, and assessment of learning outcomes). ECTS credits are allocated to course units and are awarded to students who successfully complete the course. Please see the section “European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)” at the beginning of this guide for more information.

## Grading

Pass/fail system	Marking system	Definition
Pass	10 (Excellent)	Excellent performance, outstanding knowledge and skills
	9 (Very good)	Strong performance, good knowledge and skills
	8 (Good)	Above the average performance, knowledge and skills
	7 (Highly satisfactory)	Average performance, knowledge and skills with unessential shortcomings
	6 (Satisfactory)	Below average performance, knowledge and skills with substantial shortcomings
	5 (Sufficient)	Knowledge and skills meet minimum criteria
Fail	4, 3, 2, 1 (Insufficient)	Knowledge and skills do not meet minimum criteria/below minimum criteria



# MALAYSIA

## Higher Education

Primary education and secondary education is mandatory in Malaysia. Upon completion of secondary education, students can opt to pursue 1-2 years of postsecondary education, which is the university entrance preparatory course.

At tertiary education level, students can receive certificates, diplomas, first degree and higher degree qualifications. The duration of study for a basic bachelor's degree is 4 years.

## Academic Calendar

The academic year is divided into two semesters: September to January and February to June.

## Grading

Students will be assessed throughout the semester in the form of daily work (essays, quizzes, presentations and participation in class), as well as projects/term papers, and practical work (lab work, fieldwork, clinical procedures and drawing practice).

Malaysian grades are essentially the same as U.S. grades. Some Malaysian institutions do not assign +/- grades.

Malaysian Grade	U.S. Equivalent
A+/A/A-	A
B+/B/B-	B
C+/C/C-	C
D+/D/D-	D
F	F

Note: +/- grades can be transferred equivalently if used at the home university.

## Course Load and Credit Equivalency

Malaysian credits are equivalent to U.S. credits. Three hours of lecture per week is equal to three U.S. credits. 1 hour of lecture is 1 credit. Most courses are 3 credits.

# MALTA

## Education System

The University of Malta, established in 1592, is Malta's only university. The University of Malta teaches courses in English and is one of the oldest universities in the British Commonwealth. Higher education is offered at the undergraduate and post-graduate level. The University of Malta is publicly funded and open to all those who have the requisite qualifications.

The majority of first-degree programs take three years. Before the end of the course, students are generally required to submit a dissertation. A master's degree generally requires an additional one or two years.

## Academic Calendar

Malta follows the Northern Hemisphere academic calendar. Semester 1: September/October-February; Semester 2: February-June. Students cannot depart before the end of semester exams, which go into February and June. No exceptions for early exams are possible.

## Course Load

Most students are enrolled in 30 ECTS per semester. The minimum number of ECTS that can be taken per semester at the University of Malta is 8 ECTS. Students spend on average 14 hours per week in class, and terms last 15 weeks. Most international students enroll in 24-30 ECTS for the semester. However, the home university will determine the minimum number of units in which a student can enroll.

The number of credits per course can vary, as can the length of the course. Courses may meet for only a portion of the semester, for six or nine weeks, while others meet for the duration of the semester. Additionally, a class might meet for two one-hour sessions on a Monday and then for a one-hour session on Thursday.

Since the scheduling of classes at the University of Malta is more rigid than at U.S. institutions, students tend to spend longer periods together attending common classes and working on group projects. Emphasis is placed on working in groups and credit is awarded for team effort. Exchange of notes and study materials among students is a common practice within the various faculties. Homework usually consists of keeping up with readings and reviewing lecture notes; professors question students on assigned readings.

## Grading

<u>Maltese Grade</u>	<u>U.S. Equivalent</u>
80-100 (A+, A)	A
70-79 (B+, B)	B
55-69 (C+, C)	C
45-54 (D+, D)	D
>44 (F)	F

Grades are assigned between A+ (top mark) to F (failure). A grade of D is considered the lowest passing grade. Students may be assessed through assigned coursework, examinations, fieldwork, practical placements, etc., as detailed in the syllabi. If students fail to complete the necessary requirements for the course they will not receive a grade. Students who do not sit for their examinations or fail to submit assignments on time (without a

justifiable reason) will receive a failing grade on their transcripts. Some courses may only grade students using a final examination, so it is important to keep up with coursework and attend class regularly.

## **Credits**

Credits are awarded in ECTS. Please see the section “European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)” at the beginning of this guide for more information.

# MEXICO

## Education System

Students who graduate from either a bachillerato or preparatoria program are qualified for entrance into university-level studies after having passed an entrance exam. Some programs at the university level require graduation from a specific type of secondary school program.

University-level programs may be called centro (center), colegio (college), escuela (school), instituto (institute) or universidad (university). Students are admitted directly from secondary schools into their undergraduate majors, or carreras. Undergraduate study may last from three to five years and culminates in a degree called a licenciatura. This degree is very similar to a bachelor's degree. Graduate study may be pursued at the maestría (masters) or doctorado (doctorate) level.

Short assignments, such as papers and problems, and monthly exams are typical during the semester. Longer assignments are given at the end of the semester, either as a term project or in the form of a final exam. Professors usually follow students' progress rather closely and are fairly accessible for individual conferences. There is a relatively high degree of class participation. Attendance is important, and there may be a minimum attendance rate needed in order to sit for final exams.

## Academic Calendar

Mexico follows the Northern Hemisphere academic calendar. First semester is from August to December and second semester is from early January to May.

## Course Load

Mexican students will typically take between four and seven classes a semester. The number of classes to be considered a full-time student varies at each ISEP university in Mexico. It is ultimately the home institution that determines the minimum number of classes/credits a student needs to take abroad.

## Grading and Credits

Credit systems vary across ISEP member institutions in Mexico. Grading may vary slightly from school to school, but it almost always is based on a scale of zero to 10 (10 being the highest grade and a six or seven being the lowest passing mark) or a scale of zero to 100 (with 100 being the highest grade and 70 being the lowest passing mark). Failing grades may not be included on the transcript. AC (or A/C) is considered to be a passing mark in the pass/fail system.

There is no curve method; grades are based only on students' scores on tests. Monthly exams and special assignments are weighted differently at different schools and even within the same school by different professors. The final exam, which is usually cumulative, often carries the most weight in determining the final grade.

***Universidad La Salle (La Salle) and Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Occidente (ITESO):***

<u>La Salle/ITESO Grade</u>	<u>U.S. Equivalent</u>
9-10	A
8	B
7	C
6	C-/D+
1-5	F

Grades at La Salle and ITESO are assigned on a scale of 0-10. Six is considered to be the lowest passing grade. The American grade of D may not factor into this equivalence unless it is considered a passing grade at the home institution. The number of hours of instruction per week and credits are listed on transcripts.

Eight ITESO credits are normally translated to three U.S. credits. At La Salle, most courses include 60 hours of instruction, but this may vary. Please contact the ISEP Coordinators at ITESO and La Salle if any further clarification is required.

***Universidad Regiomontana (UR), Universidad de Monterrey (UDEM) and Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM):***

<u>UR/UDEM/ITESM Grade</u>	<u>U.S. Equivalent</u>
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-7	C
0-69	F

At UR, UDEM and ITESM, 70 is the lowest passing grade.

Two columns appear on the UR transcript. “F/S” column indicates the number of instructional hours a week, including lab hours. The “C” column indicates the number of credits UR awards, which indicate the number of weekly hours the average student dedicates to that class.

At UDEM most courses are assigned six UDEM credits, which are equal to 3 U.S. credits.

At ITESM, units are the hours per week a student is expected to work in order to complete a course. These hours include both classroom instruction and homework.

***Universidad de Guanajuato (Guanajuato):***

<u>Guanajuato Grade</u>	<u>U.S. Grade</u>
9-10	A
8	B
7	C
0-6	F

Grades at Guanajuato are assigned on a scale of 0-10. Seven is considered the lowest passing grade.

At Guanajuato theoretical courses are assigned two credits for each hour that the class meets per week (for example, two hours of class weekly is equal to four credits). Practical and lab courses are assigned one credit for each hour that the class meets per week (two hours of class weekly is equal to two credits).

***Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla (UPAEP):***

<u>UPAEP Grade</u>	<u>U.S. Grade</u>
10	A
9	B
8	C
7	D
REP	F

Grades at UPAEP are assigned a scale of 0-10. Seven is considered the lowest passing grade. The American grade of D may not factor into this equivalence unless it is considered a passing grade at the home institution. UPAEP offers the following explanation for credit equivalency:

At UPAEP credits are granted according to the number of hours the course is taught weekly and the number of hours the student must work independently. For example, if class is taught for three hours a week, it totals 48 instructional hours and 48 independent work hours a semester (independent hours are always the same as instructional hours). These credits are according to a 16-week semester. If you take the number of hours per week ( $48+48=96$ ) and divide that by the number of weeks (16), it equals six credits.

For the case of transferring to the U.S. credit system (where 48 hours equals three credits), students receive credit for either the in-class hours or the independent work hours. In other words, students will be receiving double the credits considered in the U.S. system.

# MOROCCO

## Higher Education

At most universities in Morocco the language of instruction in the humanities and social sciences is Arabic, while French is the language of instruction in scientific subjects. Curricula in all fields are, for the most part, standardized by the Ministry of Higher Education.

Al Akhawayn University is an English-speaking institution and all courses are taught in English.

Admission to postsecondary institutions is only open to baccalaureate holders and many schools and faculties require that students also pass an entrance examination. Most institutions or faculties will also require that students have the minimum grades necessary for their proposed majors. Some institutions will only accept students who have obtained their baccalaureate in the year of application for registration.

## Academic Calendar

Academic year: late August to mid-May

Semester 1: late August to December

Semester 2: mid-January to mid-May

## Grading

Al Akhawayn grades are based on four-point GPA system according to demonstrated performance and skill levels. It is similar to that in the U.S. Students who receive a D or F at Al Akhawayn are required to repeat the course for graduation.

Moroccan Grade	U.S. Equivalent
A+ 97-100 (4.0)	A+
A 93 -96 (4.0)	A
A- 90-92 (3.67)	A-
B+ 87-89 (3.33)	B+
B 83-86 (3.00)	B
B- 80-82 (2.67)	B-
C+77-79 (2.33)	C+
C 73-76 (2.00)	C
C- 70-72 (1.67)	C-
D+ 67-69 (1.33)	D+
D 60-66 (1.0)	D
F below 60 (0.0)	F

## Course Load and Credit Equivalency

1 hour = 1 credit. Generally, courses are 3 credits.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 5

Number of hours a typical student spends in the classroom: 15-17 hours of lecture per week

Number of weeks per term: 30 for full year courses and about 15 per semester.

# THE NETHERLANDS

## Higher Education

When students in The Netherlands finish secondary school, they can continue their education at an institution of higher education. The Netherlands has two main types of higher education: universities (*universiteiten*) and universities of applied sciences (*hogescholen*). Universities focus on the independent practice of research-oriented work in an academic or professional setting. The universities of applied sciences are more practically oriented, preparing students directly for specific careers. Students are equally challenged at the two schools; it is simply a difference in what they are studying.

The bachelor's program at a university requires three years of full-time study (180 credits). Depending on the discipline, a master's program will last one to two years (60-120 credits).

## Academic Calendar

Full Year: August – June/July

Semester 1: August – December/January

Semester 2: January – June/July

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 4-6 (24-30 ECTS)

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 20

Number of weeks per term: 13-20

## Grading

Dutch Grade	U.S. Equivalent
8.5-10 (outstanding)	A
7.5-8.4 (very good)	B
6.5-7.4 (good)	C
6-6.4 (satisfactory)	D
0-5.9 (fail)	F

Marks exceeding 9 are very rare. Educators uniformly comment on the great difficulty in obtaining a 9 or 10 and the respectability of getting a 6. (Some grade equivalency scales equate a 6 to a C – it is up to the home institution to award credit as they see fit.) There is also agreement that an 8 represents a high level of achievement, while grades 6 and 7 generally account for the majority of passing grades of awarded.

## Credit Equivalent

The system of credits in use (ECTS) is a cumulative calculation of credit points based on the workload of a student. It is a student-centered credit system to measure the workload required to achieve the objectives of a curriculum. One credit point corresponds to 26 hours of study performed by a student (including lectures, seminars, practice, homework, independent work, and assessment of learning outcomes). ECTS credits are allocated to course units and are awarded to students who successfully complete the course. Please see the section “European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)” at the beginning of this guide for more information.



# NEW ZEALAND

## Higher Education

There are four types of higher education institutions in New Zealand: universities, institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs), wananga (Maori centers), and private training establishments (PTEs). There are eight state-funded universities, which offer a wide range of courses leading to both undergraduate and post graduate degrees. Undergraduate degrees take 3-4 years to complete.

## Academic Calendar

The academic year is based on the southern hemisphere calendar. It normally begins at the end of February and ends with an examination period in mid-November.

Semester 1: February – July

Semester 2: July – November

## Grading

Grading scales differ between institutions but are typically based on the letter scale with A+ as the highest grade and F as the lowest. Students can receive +/- grades. Failing grades are D, E, and F with a Q or DNC given for failing to meet mandatory course requirements (this notation may differ between universities).

New Zealand Grade	New Zealand Percentage
A	80-100%
B	65-79%
C	50-64%
D	40-49%*
E/F	0-39%

\*University of Auckland 0-49% = D.

## Course Load and Credit Equivalency

Most institutions assign each class (called papers in New Zealand) a credit/point value, which varies between institutions. At the university level, students usually take four papers per semester. Papers are usually 15 NZ credits, which generally equate to 3 or 4 U.S. credits/paper.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 4

Number of hours a typical student spends in the classroom: 15-20 hours of lecture per week

Number of weeks per term: 16-18

The number of credits a paper is worth is made up of the number of contact hours, time spent in private study, group work, labs, etc. Many business and humanity papers consist of three hours in lecture and one in tutorial. Science and creative arts papers have a laboratory or practical component that are usually three hours; this is in addition to time spent in lectures.

Because New Zealanders usually start specializing in their majors during the early part of their undergraduate career, a course with a seemingly lower level or number may be equivalent in content to a mid-level course in the United States. Likewise, mid-level courses in New Zealand could equate to a very advanced course in the United States.

# NICARAGUA

## Educational System

Degrees, or títulos, are awarded upon completion of a plan de estudios, or plan of study that may last from three to six years. Students begin coursework directly related to their carrera, or major, in their first year of university study, and follow their prescribed semester course load in their plan de estudios. Students rarely take elective courses outside of their Carrera and must complete all courses within their plan de estudios to graduate. In some academic fields, students are also required to complete a project of social service or take a standardized national exam. Classes will likely be smaller in size and may be lecture or lab based (especially for science disciplines). Attendance is an important component of the grading system. At Universidad Americana students are required to attend at least 80% of all classes to have the right to sit for their final exam.

## Academic Calendar

Nicaragua follows the Southern Hemisphere academic calendar. The first semester is from early March to June. The second semester runs from early August to early December.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 4-6  
Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 12-18  
Number of weeks per term: 16

## Grades

Grades are given on a zero to 100-point scale with 100 being the highest possible grade. A grade of 70 is considered passing at the undergraduate level (80 for post-graduate). Grades may be based on a variety of factors including attendance and participation, homework assignments, exams or papers. Some classes may consist only of a midterm and final exam.

## Credits

At Universidad Americana, students spend 16 hours in class for every one credit they receive for classes taught in both English and Spanish. A full course load is four to five classes per semester.

<u>Nicaraguan Grade</u>	<u>U.S. Equivalent</u>
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
0-69	F

# POLAND

## Higher Education

Students who go to basic vocational school or technical secondary school during their high school years have the option of continuing on to supplementary general secondary school (*uzupełniające liceum ogólnokształcące*) or supplementary technical secondary school (*technikum uzupełniające*).

Specialized secondary school, general secondary school, and technical secondary school attendees may elect to go to one of the many academic schools (*szkoły wyższe*). The academic schools are divided by field of study and are similar to undergraduate institutions in the United States.

Like many European institutions, Polish institutions do not differentiate between 100, 200, and 300+ level courses.

Students do not typically graduate upon completion of their bachelor's credits, but instead go straight on to obtain their master's. Therefore, international students in their fourth year of studies with the appropriate amount of credits may be considered as "Graduate" students for ISEP exchange programs.

## Academic Calendar

Full Year: September – June/July

Semester 1: September – February

Semester 2: February – June/July

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 4-7

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 10-20

Number of weeks per term: 17

## Grading

ECTS grade	Polish grade	Definition
A	5 (bdb)	Excellent - outstanding performance with only minor errors
B	4,5 (+db)	Very good - above the average standard but with some errors
C	4 (db)	Good - generally sound work with a number of notable errors
D	3,5 (+dst)	Satisfactory - fair but with significant shortcomings
E	3 (dst)	Sufficient - performance meets the minimum criteria
FX, F	2 (ndst)	Fail - some more work required before the credit can be awarded

## Credit Equivalent

The system of credits in use (ECTS) is a cumulative calculation of credit points based on the workload of a student. It is a student-centered credit system to measure the workload required to achieve the objectives of a curriculum. One credit point corresponds to 26 hours of study performed by a student (including lectures, seminars, practice, homework, independent work, and assessment of learning outcomes). ECTS credits are allocated to course units and are awarded to students who successfully complete the course. Please see the section "European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)" at the beginning of this guide for more information.

# PORTUGAL

## Higher Education

Students are admitted to a university directly into their field of study from high school. They begin intensive study in their field in their first year and take few elective courses. The first cycle is designated for study to obtain a licenciatura (bachelor's degree) and takes three to four years to complete. The second and third cycles are dedicated to graduate (mestrado) and doctorate degree (doutoramento), respectively.

## Academic Calendar

Portugal follows the Northern Hemisphere academic calendar. Although individual faculties will begin courses at different times, the academic year runs from September to July. The first semester runs from late September to mid-February and the second semester runs from mid-February to July.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 5

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 25

Number of weeks per term: 15

## Grading

<u>Portuguese Grade</u>	U.S. Equivalent
18-20	A
16-17	A
14-15	B
10-13	C
1-9	D/F

Grades in Portugal are distributed on a scale of 0-20, with 10 being the lowest passing grade.

## Credit Equivalent

Credits are assigned in ECTS. A typical Portuguese student is enrolled in 30 ECTS per term. Please see the section "European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)" at the beginning of this guide for more information.

# SOUTH AFRICA

## Higher Education

Most undergraduate degrees consist of three years of study except for professional programs such as medicine, law, engineering and architecture. Admission into a graduate program in South Africa requires completion of an honors program.

Master's degrees consist of a dissertation or thesis depending on the program.

## Academic Calendar

South Africa follows the Southern Hemisphere calendar. The academic year generally runs from February to December.

## Grading

The South African grading system is far more stringent than the U.S. system. It is extremely difficult for a South African student, either on the high school or tertiary level to obtain an A.

South Africa	U.S.	U.K.	Europe
90-100%	A+	1	16-20
75-89%	A	1	14-15.9
70-74%	B+	2.1	12-13.9
60-69%	B	2.2	12-13.9
50-59%	C	3	10-11.9
45-49%	D		8-9.9
0-44%	F	Fail	F

## Course Load and Credit Equivalency

UJ uses the NQF credit system. A typical course is worth 6,8, 12, 18, 24, or 36 NQF credits. Study abroad and exchange students are advised to select courses starting with 18 NQF credits.

One NQF credit equals 0.222 semester credits. Multiply the number of NQF credits by 0.222 and round it off to the nearest credit. The usual full load for study abroad an exchange student is 72 NQF credits which would be an equivalent of 16 U.S. credits. This is considered a full academic load.

NQF credits	% of load	U.S. credit hrs.
18	25	4.0
24	33	5.0
36	50	8.0

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 4

Number of hours a typical student spends in the classroom: 8 hours per course

Number of weeks per term: 14 weeks

# SOUTH KOREA

## Higher Education

Higher education in South Korea includes universities and colleges that offer undergraduate and some graduate programs, as well as two-year junior colleges and technical vocational schools. To apply to higher education institutions, a South Korean student must complete 12 years of primary and secondary school (the later may be completed at a technical institution) and receive a secondary school-leaving certificate. Admission depends upon grades and qualifying exams.

Colleges and universities offer BA degrees after four years of study, and two additional years in the same subject earn a master's degree. With the addition of three more years, a doctorate is awarded.

## Academic Calendar

The regular academic year runs from March to December with two terms: March to June and September to December.

The Yonsei academic year runs from March to December: first term is March to June and second term is September to December.

## Grading

Coursework is assessed through exams, essays and class participation.

South Korean grades are similar to U.S. grades. If +/- grades are assigned at the home institution, the +/- grades received in South Korea should be transferred equivalently. Note: some South Korean institutions do not assign "minus" grades.

South Korean Grade	U.S. equivalent
A+/A0/A-	A
B+/B0/B-	B
C+/C0/C-	C
D+/D0/D-	D
F	F

Keimyung University does not use - grades. Keimyung has a maximum point of 4.5 = A+.

## Course Load and Credit Equivalency

South Korean credits are equivalent to U.S. credits. Three hours of class work per week for 16 weeks is equal to three U.S. credits. Eight hours of class lecture per week for six weeks (summer session) is equivalent to three U.S. credits.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 4-6

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 12-18

Number of weeks per term: 16

# SPAIN

## Higher Education

Spanish students follow a prescribed plan of study for each degree, called a plan de estudios. Students will begin taking coursework specific to their degree in their first year of study and are usually not permitted to take courses outside of their degree. Spanish students do not enroll in general education courses. “Minors” do not exist in Spain, but many students will take courses in a specific concentration of their degree. To avoid scheduling issues, ISEP strongly recommends that students take courses in one *carrera* or degree if at all possible. Spanish students in the same year of the same degree will likely take the majority of their classes together, similar to a cohort, and their classes will normally be located close together.

After four years of study students earn a *grado* equivalent to a bachelor’s degree. Technical undergraduate degrees such as engineering and architecture are also awarded at this level. Graduate programs are designated as *maestría* (masters) or *doctorado* (doctorate).

As a part of the new grado degrees, many courses have tutorials, lab sessions, or *prácticas* as a part of the class. Class attendance is important, as materials covered in class make up a large portion of the exam. Attendance may be taken regularly, but if it is not students should resist the urge to skip classes, as exams will be difficult without regular class attendance.

## Academic Calendar

The academic year is divided into two semesters (*cuatrimestres*) that run from September to February and February to June. Courses may be taught on either a semester or year-long basis.

Universidad de Murcia’s Language & Culture program follows the U.S. academic calendar, with semesters from September to December and January to May.

## Course Load

Spanish students attending university full-time take 30 ECTS per semester. ISEP students may not be expected to take as many credits, but it is recommended they maintain enrollment in at least 24 ECTS per semester. A student’s course load depends on their home institution’s policies for their outbound students. The number of classes per semester will vary depending on the number of credits granted per course. Depending on the degree field students may take fewer courses that grant a high number of ECTS, or several courses that carry fewer ECTS per course. An average of 15 to 25 hours per week is spent in lectures.

## Grading

<u>Spanish Grade</u>	<u>U.S. Equivalent</u>
10 (Matrícula de Honor)	A+
9-9.9 (sobresaliente)	A
7-8.9 (notable)	B+
5-6.9 (aprobado)	B-/C/D
0-4.6 (suspenso)	F
No Presentado	Dropped course or did not take the final exam
Apto	Pass (in a pass/fail system)



Matrícula de Honor is the highest grade awarded in the Spanish system and is generally given to the student with the highest score in a course, or 1 out of 20 students in a larger class. A score of 9 or 10 is considered excellent, 7 or 8 is very good, and 6 is average. Aprobado is the minimum passing grade in the Spanish system. Students generally receive a grade between 6 and 8. Spanish professors are tough in their grading in comparison to the U.S., and there is no grading curve. In technical fields such as architecture it is not uncommon for over 50% of students in a class to fail.

Re-take exam periods in July and September are available for students who fail their exams the first time. ISEP benefits do not cover these re-take periods, and it is not guaranteed that re-take exams can be completed remotely.

## **Credits**

Spain operates on the ECTS credit system (see page 4). ECTS credits take into account the total student workload per class or degree program.

ISEP students enrolled in Language and Culture programs are generally awarded university credit as opposed to ECTS. This is because a full-time student at the university would not be allowed to apply the credit earned for these courses towards their undergraduate degree (the European requirement to grant official ECTS). Students' transcripts may note the number of hours per course for the semester instead of the number of credits. Many U.S. universities divide the number of hours of instruction per course by the length of the program to arrive at the number of credit hours granted, although this is at the discretion of each home institution.

# SWEDEN

## Higher Education

Slightly more than 40% of young people in Sweden go on to higher education within five years of completing their upper secondary schooling.

The degree of selectivity in higher education institutions depends on the program of study. Admission is based on upper secondary grades as well as the results of the national university aptitude test. Having a good command of English is required for all applicants, and working experience is also considered. About 130,000 students take the aptitude test every year, and annual first-time enrollments total about 83,000.

## Academic Calendar

Full Year: August – June

Semester 1: August – December/January

Semester 2: January – June

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 4-6 (up to 30 ECTS)

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 10-15

Number of weeks per term: 20

## Grading

ECTS grade	Swedish grade	Definition
A	Pass with distinction - Väl Godkänd (VG)	Excellent - outstanding performance with only minor errors
B	Pass with distinction - Väl Godkänd (VG)	Very good - above the average standard but with some errors
C	Pass - Godkänd (G)	Good - generally sound work with a number of notable errors
D	Pass - Godkänd (G)	Satisfactory - fair but with significant shortcomings
E	Pass - Godkänd (G)	Sufficient - performance meets the minimum criteria
FX, F	Fail - Underkänd (U)	Fail - some more work required before the credit can be awarded

## Credit Equivalent

The system of credits in use (ECTS) is a cumulative calculation of credit points based on the workload of a student. It is a student-centered credit system to measure the workload required to achieve the objectives of a curriculum. One credit point corresponds to 26 hours of study performed by a student (including lectures, seminars, practice, homework, independent work, and assessment of learning outcomes). ECTS credits are allocated to course units and are awarded to students who successfully complete the course. Please see the section “European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)” at the beginning of this guide for more information.

# SWITZERLAND

## Higher Education

The universities in Switzerland have been instituting reforms in degree programs in accordance with the Bologna Declaration. This is a two-cycle (undergraduate/postgraduate) system and has the following qualifications and structure:

Bachelor's degree: 180 ECTS credits or three years of full-time study.

Master's degree: 90-120 ECTS credits or 1.5-2 years of full-time study beyond the bachelor's degree. Access to a master's degree program requires the successful completion of the bachelor's degree.

Like many European institutions, Swiss institutions do not differentiate between 100, 200, and 300+ level courses. Students attend courses based on how far they have advanced in their field of study. Individual arrangements with professors must be made to ensure proper accreditation.

Students do not typically graduate upon completion of their bachelor's credits, but instead go straight on to obtain their Master's. Therefore, international students in their fourth year of studies with the appropriate amount of credits may be considered as "Graduate" students for ISEP exchange programs.

## Academic Calendar

Full Year: October – July

Semester 1: October – February

Semester 2: March – July

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 6-8 (up to 30 ECTS)

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 20-25

Number of weeks per term: 20

## Grading

ECTS grade	Description	Swiss grade
A	Excellent	6
B	Very good	5.5
C	good	5
D	Satisfactory	4.5
E	Sufficient	4
F	Fail	< 4

Grade averages between 5.5 and 6 are very rare; an average of a 6 is almost impossible. In exams, quarter steps are usually used to indicate grades between integer grades: e.g., 5.25. Anything above a 4 is considered a passing grade.

## Credit Equivalent

The system of credits in use (ECTS) is a cumulative calculation of credit points based on the workload of a student. It is a student-centered credit system to measure the workload required to achieve the objectives of a curriculum. One credit point corresponds to 26 hours of study performed by a student (including lectures, seminars, practice, homework, independent work, and assessment of learning outcomes). ECTS credits are allocated to course units and are awarded to students who successfully complete the course. Please see the section “European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)” at the beginning of this guide for more information.

# TAIWAN

## Higher Education

There are three basic classifications for higher education in Taiwan: universities, including research institutes or graduate level programs; colleges, which at the undergraduate level represent the major subdivisions in the universities; junior colleges, including both two and three-year schools. The universities in Taiwan offer four-year bachelor's degrees and six-year or seven-year medical degrees.

To apply to higher education institutions, a Taiwanese student must complete 12 years of primary and secondary school (the latter may be completed at a technical institution). Admission depends upon grades and qualifying exams. If admitted to a university or college, a student must then choose a major and be accepted by an individual department, where places are often limited.

## Academic Calendar

The academic calendar in Taiwan is September to June, dividing the year into two semesters.

Semester 1: September to January

Semester 2: February to June

## Grading

Taiwanese Grade	U.S. Equivalent
80-100	A
70-79	B
60-69	C
0-59	F

## Course Load and Credit Equivalency

One credit is equivalent to 18 contact hours of class. A period of the credit is an hour-long (classes meet once a week). There are 18 weeks in one academic semester.

Exchange students will receive 3 credits per class (3 hours x 18 weeks = 54 hours).

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: most students in Taiwan take 8-10 classes and receive 24 credits in one academic year. Exchange students generally take less number of classes and receive fewer credits.

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 8-10

Number of weeks per term: 9

# THAILAND

## Higher Education

After 12 years of primary and secondary education, students obtain a secondary school leaving certificate. They then take a national entrance exam to be eligible for admission to institutions of higher education.

A bachelor's degree takes four years to complete but an additional one or two years may be required for certain fields. Graduate education leads to a master's degree after two years of study and a thesis presentation. A doctorate is awarded after an additional three years of graduate study.

## Academic Calendar

The Thai academic year begins in August and ends in May. Semesters run from August to December and January to May.

The academic year for courses taught in English (except SIIT and postgraduate programs) begins in August and ends in May. Semesters run from August to December and January to May.

## Grading

Thai Grade	U.S. equivalent
A	A
B	B
C	C
D	D
F	F

## Course Load and Credit Equivalency

Thai credits are equivalent to U.S. credits. An average course load is about 15-18 credits. Students must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 credits to be considered full time.

Number of classes typical student takes per term: 3-6

Number of hours per week typical student spends in class: 9-18

Number of weeks per term: 16

# UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

## Higher Education

The current system consists of both a public and private sector. U.A.E. citizens have the choice of attending a public university free of charge or a private university that will usually be modeled after an international system of education. The U.A.E. Ministry of Education oversees and accredits both public and private universities.

## Academic Calendar

Because the academic year is based on the lunar calendar, the Islamic holiday of Ramadan causes the academic calendar to shift from year to year. Typically, Ramadan shifts three weeks early each year, sometimes causing the academic year to start and end later. It is best to refer to the academic calendar posted on the university or ISEP website.

## Grading

The American University of Sharjah is based on the American university system and is very similar in grading and credit equivalency.

U.A.E. grade	U.S. equivalent
A, A-	A
B+, B, B-	B
C+, C, C-	C
D	D
F	F

## Course Load and Credit Equivalency

The grade point average (GPA) is based on a 4-point scale. The minimum passing grade for any course at AUS is a C-. Each class is three to four credit hours, and one credit hour is 50 minutes of class time per week or approximately 15 hours of class time per semester. A student taking four classes will have 12 contact hours per week for a full load.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 4-5 (3-4 credit hours each)

Minimum: 9 credit hours

Maximum: 16 credit hours

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 12-16

Number of weeks per term: 16 weeks including exams

# UNITED KINGDOM

## Higher Education

While the higher education systems in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland are similar, the Scottish system is quite different.

After taking the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), students in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland may leave secondary schooling. They may choose to continue their education at vocational or technical colleges, or they may take a higher level of secondary school examination known as AS-Levels after an additional year of study. Following two years of study, students may take A-Level (short for Advanced Level) examinations, which are required for university entrance in the United Kingdom.

Scotland has its own qualification framework. After seven years of primary education and four years of compulsory secondary education, students aged 15-16 may take the Scottish Certificate of Education (SCE). The SCE is recognized throughout the United Kingdom as the equivalent to GCE A-levels and is usually the entry qualification for university.

Undergraduate degrees take three years to complete in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, whereas at Scottish universities they last four years. At the graduate level, a master's degree is normally earned in a single year, a research master's degree in two years, and a doctoral degree in three years.

The idea of an undergraduate being "undeclared" in their major can be very strange to people in the United Kingdom. U.K. students tend to specialize in their field of study early and may even start specializing in their majors during the final year of high school. General education or basic courses are not as common at U.K. universities because they have already been covered at the GCSE level. Many faculties assume that a university student has a basic understanding of the concepts that will be addressed in the course, so it is common for third-year students of other countries (particularly the US) to take first- and second-year courses at a U.K. university. The curriculum in these courses is not considered introductory or lower level.

## Academic Calendar

Full Year: September – May

Semester 1: September – December/January

Semester 2: January – May

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 3-6 modules (classes)

A typical course load in the United Kingdom will vary from three to six modules (or classes) per term, depending on how many credits each module is worth. The number of hours in class per week will vary by institution. In addition to lectures, students may also be required to sign up for tutorials or lab work. For specific details on a particular host institution, please read the details in student Acceptance Packages and the Country Handbooks.

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 20-25

Number of weeks per term: 11-16 (trimesters may be shorter)



## Grading

Percentage	ECTS Grade	U.S. Equivalent
80-100%	A	A+
70-79%	A	A
60-69%	B	B+
53-59%	C	B
46-52%	D	C
40-45%	D/E	D
0-40%	F	F

Important note: In the U.K. system, it is often more difficult to obtain the higher grade designations than in the U.S. system. Though a grade may appear low according to a home university's grade scale, it may actually reflect very good performance on the U.K. scale.

Grades are given as percentages rather than letter grades. Forty percent is the minimum passing grade and high percentages are rarely awarded. A grade of 70% or higher is considered "with distinction." In general, percentages increase from 40 rather than decrease from 100.

The percentage range for each class varies from institution to institution. Individual modules on the transcript sometimes carry only the percentage mark.

## Credit Equivalent

Credits in the U.K. system are not equivalent to U.S. credits. A full-time student in the U.K. will carry 60 credits per semester, which is usually equivalent to 15 U.S. credits or 30 ECTS.

The system of credits in use (ECTS) is a cumulative calculation of credit points based on the workload of a student. It is a student-centered credit system to measure the workload required to achieve the objectives of a curriculum. One credit point corresponds to 26 hours of study performed by a student (including lectures, seminars, practice, homework, independent work, and assessment of learning outcomes). ECTS credits are allocated to course units and are awarded to students who successfully complete the course. Please see the "European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)" section at the beginning of this guide for more information.

# UNITED STATES

## Education System

Higher education in the U.S. follows the completion of high school (secondary school) when students receive their high school diploma (certificate of completion). There are several types of higher education in the United States.

University/College: Universities and Colleges are very similar and are the most common type of institutions that students attend following high school. These schools award undergraduate degrees and some also provide a graduate school option. They offer a variety of majors ranging from arts to engineering to sciences.

Graduate level schools can also include studies such as medical school and law school. These are not an option through ISEP.

## Academic Calendar

The U.S. academic calendar is generally divided into two semesters.

Fall Semester: August/September – December/January

Spring Semester: January – May/June

Western Washington University operates on a quarter calendar rather than a semester calendar. Please see the university's membership directory page on the ISEP website for academic calendar information.

Some U.S. universities offer a January or May term. These are month-long periods of study where students can complete one university course. If the university offers this, it will be noted in the student's acceptance package.

Classes a student typically takes per semester: 4-5

Hours spent in class per week: 12-15

Number of weeks per semester: 12-16

## Credit Equivalents

In the U.S., full-time status generally consists of at least four semester-long courses which is equivalent to 12 credits. One credit usually equals 15 classroom hours, and most classes are 3 credits. If a class has more credits it means that it meets more frequently.

1 U.S. credit is generally equal to 2 ECTS credits. However, this varies from school to school, so please refer to the back of the particular transcript for more information.

# URUGUAY

## Education System

Access to higher education in Uruguay depends on the presentation of a *bachillerato*, which indicates 12 years of study (6 years primary + 4 years high school + 2 years preparatory).

Upon completion of four to six years of university study, a student may receive a degree of *licenciado* (first university degree), followed by a *bachiller*, *doctor*, *experto*, or *técnico* (three years); *procurador*, *bachiller*, or *técnico* (four years); *arquitecto*, *ingeniero*, or *doctor* (five years); and *ingeniero*, *notario*, or *doctor* (six years). Technical and teacher-training schools are also available.

The university is comprised of *facultades*, analogous to academic departments. However, *facultades* are fairly autonomous in their administration within the larger university. Local students take all of their classes in one *facultad* and receive a degree in one field because Latin American universities operate on the *carrera* system. Under this system, students studying the same subject take all of their classes together for the full four years until they graduate with a degree from their *facultad*. Because of the *bachillerato* and *carrera* system, third- or fourth-year classes may be difficult to manage as professors will assume students have background knowledge of the subject.

## Academic Calendar

Uruguay follows the Southern Hemisphere academic calendar. The academic year runs from March to December. Semester 1 is March to July; Semester 2 is from August to December.

## Course Load

In the Latin American system, classes may meet for fewer hours and have higher expectations about the amount of time students put into their studies outside of class. Classes may meet in one solid block of time once a week as opposed to one hour three times a week.

Number of classes a typical student takes per term: 5-7

Number of hours per week a typical student spends in class: 20-25

Number of weeks per term: 16

## Grading

<u>Uruguayan Grade</u>	<u>U.S. Equivalent</u>
S ( <i>sobresaliente</i> )	A
MB ( <i>muy bueno</i> )	B
BMB ( <i>bueno muy bueno</i> )	B
B ( <i>bueno</i> )	C
R ( <i>regular</i> )	D
D ( <i>deficiente</i> )	F

Uruguayan universities tend to be more severe in their grading than U.S. universities, and a grade of S (*sobresaliente*) is awarded less frequently. The grade of B (*bueno*) is the lowest possible passing grade in Uruguay.

## **Credit Equivalents**

There is no system of credits used in Uruguay. A full workload per semester for international students is four to five courses. Courses from the regular curriculum average about 45 hours per semester. Spanish language for foreign students is more intensive and is 67.5 hours per semester.

# VIETNAM

## Higher Education

The admission to higher education institutions (including colleges and universities) for Vietnamese students is based on their result of the annual National University Entrance Examination, which is critically competitive.

College programs usually take three years. Undergraduate programs take four to six years. Master's programs take two years for bachelor's degree holders. Doctorate programs take four years for bachelor's degree holders and three years for master's degree holders.

## Academic Calendar

Full year: September/October – June

Semester 1: September/October – January

Semester 2: January – June

## Grading

International University (IU) grades are equivalent to U.S. grades but differ from other Vietnamese universities.

100 pt. grading	4 pt. grading	U.S. equivalent
90-100	4	A+
80-90	3.5	A
70-80	3.0	B+
60-70	2.5	B
50-60	2.0	C
40-50	1.5	D
<40	0	F

The course assessment includes:

- Assignment and class participation: 20-40%
- Midterm exam: 20-30%
- Final exam: 40-60%

The assignments can be individual or group. The midterm and final exam are written or presentation.

## Course Load and Credit Equivalency

The measurement of a credit is determined by the class's contact hour. The actual amount of a single semester credit hour is often calculated as follows:

- Each credit represents 15 hours of contact hour per week plus self-study
- Each contact hour is 45 minutes spending time in the classroom
- Generally, each course is 3 credits

The minimum academic workload is 12 credit points (about 4 courses) per semester.

The maximum academic workload is 24 credit points (about 8 courses) per semester.

Number of classes an IU student typically takes per semester: 4-8 (12-24 credits)

Number of hours per week an IU student typically spends in class: 16-32

Number of weeks per semester at IU: 19-20