

ENGLISH LANGUAGE QUALIFICATIONS

English language proficiency has a particular importance for overseas applicants. For many of them, English is not the mother tongue and, in some instances, the English Language syllabus of their school-leaving examination may be regarded as less than rigorous or, indeed, is known to be inadequate. It may be prudent to take particular care regarding competence in the English language in respect of applicants with an acceptable 'group qualification'.

The standard qualification is GCSE English Language, but there are other examinations and tests specifically designed for candidates whose first language is not English and which, for a long time, have been regarded as providing evidence of proficiency in English. Although this is not an easy matter to resolve, it may well be that the most useful approach should be in terms of an assessment of the ability to cope; that is, some evidence of competence for the task ahead rather than the achievement of a particular academic qualification. Appendix F lists some of the main English Language Proficiency tests available to international applicants.

Bahrain

EVALUATION

Tawjahiya (Secondary School Leaving Certificate)

Acceptable at 60% or better in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis (except English Language).

Would need to be supplemented by GCE A Levels, Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers, or a bridging course.

GRADING SYSTEM

Marking varies between subjects; the maximum and minimum marks per subject are shown on the certificate, but see below under Education System.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Arabic is the medium of instruction in schools. Six years of primary education (English is normally introduced in year three, but an experiment involving 25% of students is under way to introduce English in year one) leads to three years of intermediate education. The Intermediate School Certificate or its equivalent is a prerequisite to proceeding to three years of secondary education culminating in the Secondary School Leaving Certificate. Until recently in secondary education, there was a choice of curriculum between literary, science, commercial applied or technical. The system is undergoing a process of unification of tracks moving towards a comprehensive model for all except the technical stream. The award of the Secondary School Certificate involves a credit-hours system and requires 156 credit-hours, except for technical, which requires 180.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Admission to four-year degree courses in Bahrain is on the basis of the Secondary School Leaving Certificate with an average mark of 60% or more.

Bangladesh

EVALUATION

Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC)

Acceptable in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis (except English Language). Would need to be supplemented by GCE A Levels, Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers, or a bridging course.

Bachelor of Arts, Science and Commerce (Honours)

Satisfies the general entry requirements for entry into a UK Higher Education Institution (HEI) and may be eligible for entry with credit (advanced standing). Students with high grades may be considered for Masters programmes.

Bachelor of Arts, Science and Commerce (Ordinary)

May satisfy general entrance requirements for UK higher education.

See also Overseas Examinations of UK Awarding Bodies (Appendix A).

GRADING SYSTEM

HSC

Letter Grade Grade Point Marks Obtained

A+ 5.00 100 – 80

A 4.00 79 – 70

A- 3.50 69 – 60

B 3.00 59 – 50

C 2.00 49 – 40

D 1.00 39 – 33

F 0.00 32 – 0

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Five years of primary education may be followed by three years of junior secondary and two years of secondary (Class 10, Secondary School Certificate). Two further years (higher secondary) lead to the Higher School Certificate (HSC) in Class 12. The medium of instruction is predominantly Bengali, but English is used in a small number of schools. English is taught as a compulsory subject at secondary and higher secondary levels.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The HSC gives access to undergraduate studies in universities, colleges and other institutions of HE in Bangladesh. Such studies include two-year pass degrees, three-year honours degrees, four-year engineering, agricultural and business administration degrees, and five-year medicine and architecture degrees. Pass degrees can be undertaken only in affiliated colleges, although the degree is granted by a university on the basis of examinations administered by the university.

Botswana

EVALUATION

At the end of form 5 students have attained either BGCSE or IGCSE (the UK equivalent of O Levels, GCSEs and Standard Grades).

Very few students go on to do A Levels at private schools; however for those who do these are equivalent to UK A Levels.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

The education system in Botswana is structured as follows:

- _ Primary is for 7 years: Standard 1–7
- _ Junior Secondary is for 3 years: Form 1–3
- _ Senior Secondary is for 2 years: Form 4–5

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

University of Botswana

Entry to the University of Botswana (UB) is on BGCSE results.

Entry to UK universities

As the UB doesn't offer all subjects many students are sponsored overseas to countries including the UK – students who are granted sponsorship to the UK first complete 2 years at the UB

UK universities accept 2 years at University of Botswana (part 1 of a degree course, eg BSC part 1) as equivalent to A Level for entry purpose – that is to say if a student has done part 1 of a degree course at UB they may enter into year 1 of a UK degree course or in some Scottish universities such as Caledonia they may enter into year 2 of the degree course.

UK universities also accept Botswana A Levels as entry requirements to join year 1 of a UK degree course.

Botswana students who have done neither A Levels or 2 years at the UB usually need to go onto foundation access courses in UK universities; BGCSE are accepted as entry requirements into foundation courses.

University of Botswana degrees are accepted as the required entry to get onto UK Masters courses and University of Botswana Masters degrees are sufficient to allow access to UK PHD courses.

University of Botswana has undergraduate degrees, masters and PHD level courses but not in all subjects.

For entry to UK colleges: Those colleges accepting UK students on GCSE results would also be able to accept Botswana students on BGCSE / IGCSE results as they are equivalent.

Brazil

EVALUATION

Certificado de Conclusão de Ensino Fundamental
Below GCSE standard.

Certificado de Ensino Médio

Acceptable in lieu of A Levels on a subject for subject basis if grades achieved are 8 or higher (except English Language, which requires official proof of knowledge, such as an IELTS exam certificate or other relevant qualification).

Compulsory subjects, as set in the national curriculum, include: Portuguese, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Geography, History, Arts, Physical Education, Foreign Language, Cultural Diversity, Environment, and Health.

Students can also opt for studying the three years of “ensino médio” following a vocational route. Subjects studied vary according to the career path chosen. Students can also follow the standard “ensino médio” route and the vocational route simultaneously.

GRADING SYSTEM

Marking systems vary between states. However, in general terms: Either graded on a scale of 10 (maximum) to 1, with a pass mark of 5, or

SS 10 – 9

MS 8 – 7

MM 6 – 5

MI 4 – 3

II 2 – 1

SR 0

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organisation of the educational system in Brazil is decentralised: local authorities have responsibility for primary education (Primeiro Grau); states are responsible for secondary education (Segundo Grau); and the Federal Government has responsibility for HE. The Ministry of Education issues guidelines for curricular content at primary and secondary level, but there are still enormous regional variations. In addition to the state system, there is a broad network of private schools and HEIs. The medium of instruction is Portuguese.

Brazilian education is organised in two main blocks. The first is basic, compulsory education from age seven to 14, on completion of which, successful students are awarded the Certificado de Conclusão de Ensino Fundamental. This is followed by a further, voluntary three years of secondary education. The school leaving qualification is the Certificado de Ensino Médio. Students may take the Exame Nacional Do Ensino Médio (ENEM). This is a test designed to enable the Ministry of Education to assess national standards. It is not a qualification, but is being increasingly used in Brazil to gain university entrance. Vestibular are university entrance examinations, which are broadly equivalent to GCSEs.

The minimum score for entry into HE in Brazil is 3 in Portuguese, 3 in one other subject, and a score greater than 1 in all other subjects. The ENEM is often given a percentage weighting with the Vestibular for the purposes of university entrance. The Programa De Avaliação Seriada (PAS) is another university entrance examination gained over the last three years of secondary education.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Demand for HE and competition for places is high. Entrance to HE is based on the Certificado de Ensino Médio (or Certificado de Conclusão de Segundo Grau) and an additional entrance exam (Vestibular). The first degree, Bacharel, Licenciado or a Professional title usually take from three to six years depending upon the specialisation.

Brunei

EVALUATION

Brunei-Cambridge General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (B-C GCE O Level) examination (at upper secondary level). Grades A, B and C (grade A = grades 1 and 2, grade B = grades 3 and 4, grade C = grades 5 and 6) equivalent to GCSE grades A, B, C.

Qualifications currently offered

Brunei-Cambridge General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (BC-GCE A) examination

Examination equates to UK GCE Advanced standard (at pre-tertiary level). Grades A to E equivalent to UK GCE Advanced Level grades A to E

EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Brunei Darussalam Education System provides schooling in a 7+3+2+2 pattern, representing primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and pre-tertiary levels respectively. At the age of five, the child will start pre-school education. Then they will proceed to primary school for six years, at the end of which, they sit the Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (PSR)/Primary School Assessment. The students who pass the examination will continue on to three years of lower secondary education and two years of upper secondary education. In the third year of secondary education, students must sit for the Penilaian Menengah Bawah (PMB)/Lower Secondary Assessment and on meeting the criteria of promotion will qualify for the next level which will allow them to proceed to another two years of secondary education where, in the fifth year, they will sit for the Brunei-Cambridge General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (B-C GCE O Levels) examination. There are two languages of instruction, Malay for subjects such as Bahasa Melayu, Islamic Religious Knowledge and Malay Literature, and English. Students who have adequate and relevant O Level qualifications may proceed to the pre-university level. At this level, the students follow a two year course leading to the Brunei-Cambridge General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (B-C GCE A Level) examination.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Students who have completed the PMB or the BC-GCE O Level examination can pursue vocational education in a Technical or Engineering College offering two- to five-year crafts or technician programmes. Those who complete A level courses with adequate and relevant passes may be eligible for entry to The University of Brunei Darussalam or other tertiary institutions or be awarded scholarships for further studies abroad.

China

EVALUATION

Senior High School Examination (Huikao)

Considered to be between GCSE and GCE A Level standard.

Those students with high grades may be considered for admission to access or foundation level programmes.

Vocational Secondary School Diploma (Zhixiao)

Considered to be comparable to BTEC First Diploma/NVQ level 2.

University Entrance Examination (Gaokao)

Considered to be between GCSE and GCE A Level standard.

It is generally considered more advanced than the Senior High School Examination. Those students with high grades may be considered for admission to access or foundation level programmes.

GRADING SYSTEM

Senior High School Examination

Nine subjects are taken and graded A – D (with A being the highest).

A 100 – 80%

B 79 – 70

C 69 – 60

D Fail

University Entrance Examination

Five core subjects with each paper being marked out of a possible 150, giving a total mark of 750.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Primary and secondary education in China comprises three stages: six years of primary school, three years of junior middle school, and three years of senior middle school. Primary and junior middle school education is compulsory, and commences at age six. To progress from junior middle school, students must pass locally organised entrance examinations. Results of these entrance examinations are used to stream students into a general academic route or a technical and vocational route.

The technical and vocational schools offer the Vocational Secondary School Diploma which includes general knowledge, basic technology and a subject specialism. Senior secondary schools offer the Senior High School Examination, which is usually taken in five or six subjects. As it is taken across the country, but organised on a provincial basis, curricula and standards may vary.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Graduation from Senior Secondary School is a prerequisite for sitting the University Entrance Examination, the upper age limit for which is 25 years. The University Entrance Examination format can vary between provinces, but is taken nationwide. There are five core subjects, of which Chinese, mathematics and politics are compulsory. Competition for university places is high, and a mark of 500-550, depending on the provincial arrangements, out of a possible 750 is required for entry into university.

HE is structured into four-year Bachelor programmes (xueshi), three-year Masters programmes (shoshi) and three-year Doctorates (boshi).

Cyprus

EVALUATION

Greek-Cypriot System

Apolytirion (School Leaving Certificate)

Acceptable in lieu of GCSEs (Grades A – C) on a subject for subject basis (except English Language), where a mark of at least 10 has been achieved. Some HEIs may additionally require one or two UK Advanced Level qualifications to satisfy specific entry requirements; others accept the Apolytirion as satisfying general entry requirements.

Turkish-Cypriot System

Devlet Lise Diplomasi (State High School Diploma) and Lise

Bitirme Diplomasi (Private High School Finishing Diploma)

Considered to be at a standard of at least GCSE level. Students with an overall average of four (under the new system, or eight under the old system) may satisfy the general entry requirements of some UK HEIs.

GRADING SYSTEM

Greek-Cypriot System

Graded 1–20 (with 20 being the maximum), pass mark 10.

Turkish-Cypriot System

New system – graded 1–5 (with five being the highest), pass mark 2.

Old system (prior to 1996) – graded 1–10 (with 10 being the maximum), pass mark 5.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Under the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, the two communities, the Greek and the Turkish community respectively, are responsible for dealing with educational affairs.

Greek-Cypriot System

Education is co-educational and compulsory until the age of 15.

As of academic year 2004/5, pre-primary education also became compulsory, followed by six years of primary education and six years of secondary education. Secondary education is divided into two cycles of three years; three years Gymnasio (compulsory lower secondary), followed by three years Eniaio Lykeio (upper secondary) or Secondary Technical and Vocational Education (SVTE). In 2000/1, the Eniaio Lykeio replaced the former Lykeio of optional subjects which had functioned for 20 years.

The students of the last two years of Eniaio Lykeio have the flexibility to form their own timetable according to their interests; at primary, lower secondary level and in the first year (Class A) of Eniaio Lykeio, a core curriculum is followed.

Since 2001/2, STVE is offered in two streams: theoretical and practical. The content of the revised STVE aims to provide technical school graduates with the necessary educational background to enable them to enter the labour market or pursue further studies.

Turkish-Cypriot System

The Education System follows the same model as Turkey, and has equivalent standards. Education is compulsory between the ages of five and 15. Kindergarten education is taught from age five to six; primary education level I from seven to 11; primary education level II from 12–15. Optional education is taught at high school (lycée) from age 16–18. Students completing primary levels I and II can choose to attend high school. There are six different types of high schools – vocational lise; multi-programmed lise; science lise; art lise; anadolu lise (science and mathematics courses are taught in English); and maarif college (all courses except Turkish literature and Turkish history are taught in English).

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Greek-Cypriot System

Higher Education in Cyprus is provided by Universities, Public Institutions of Higher Education and Private Institutions of Higher Education. The University of Cyprus was established in 1989 and accepted its first students in 1992. The Open University of Cyprus started its operations in September 2006, with two postgraduate programmes of study, while in September 2007 the Cyprus University of Technology will resume operation by accepting students in eight programmes of study.

Access to State Higher Education Institutions of Cyprus and Greece is done through the Pancyprian Examinations, organised by the Examinations Service of Ministry of Education and Culture. The Pancyprian examinations have replaced, since 2006, the Eisagogikes Exetaseis (Entrance Examinations) and are organised for the purposes of both graduation from secondary education and access to State Higher Education Institutions of Cyprus and Greece.

For access to the Open University of Cyprus, interested candidates need to apply directly to the institution and their applications are evaluated by a special committee.

Private Institutions of Tertiary Education accept the Apolytirion as satisfying general entry requirements. As the medium of instruction is English in all private HEs, candidates have to provide proof of their proficiency in English. Private HEs have their own English placement test and, if judged necessary, students have to follow an English Foundation Programme.

The new law providing for the establishment and operation of private universities was approved in July 2005 and five applications have been submitted to the relevant Committee for the Evaluation of Private Universities.

Turkish-Cypriot System

Access to the higher education universities and institutions of Cyprus and Turkey is through a competitive central entrance examination. Students who have successfully completed high school and gained the Lise Diploması need to take the University Entrance Examination to gain entry to universities. This exam is organised by Higher Board of Education (YOK). Local universities also accept students without the YOK Entrance Exam (OSS) on condition that they pass an entrance exam administered by the institutions themselves. In most universities in Turkey, and in all universities in Cyprus, the medium of instruction is English. Therefore, students are obliged to provide proof of at least intermediate level of English (TOEFL or IELTS) or to pass the institution's own English proficiency test. Students who are unsuccessful will study a year's English foundation programme, which has an ongoing assessment process in addition to a final proficiency test at the end of the academic year.

Gambia

EVALUATION

West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) Regarded as being below the standard of UK A Levels. Those students with high grades may be considered for admission to a bridging programme.

See also Overseas Examinations of UK Awarding Bodies (Appendix A).

GRADING SYSTEM

A1 excellent

B2 very good

B3 good

C4 – C6 credit/minimum acceptable pass

D7 pass

E8 pass

F9 fail

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Gambia has now adopted the 6+3+3 educational structure which has become common to West African Anglophone countries. Six years of Lower Basic (Primary) education and three years of Upper Basic (Junior Secondary) education lead to the Gambia Basic Education Certificate Examination. A further three years of secondary education culminate in the WASSCE. The examination, conducted by the West African Examinations Council, is based upon continuous assessment (30%) and external examinations (70%). English is the medium of instruction. The School Certificate and A Level examinations, a legacy from the previous system, were phased out by 1999.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The University of Gambia was inaugurated in September 1999. Admission to a four-year degree is on the basis of passes at credit level (at Grade 6 or better) in five subjects including English in the WASSCE.

Ghana

EVALUATION

Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE)
Regarded as being below the standard of UK A Levels. Those students with high grades may be considered for admission to a bridging programme.

GRADING SYSTEM

A1 excellent
B2 very good
B3 good
C4 – C6 credit/minimum acceptable pass
D7 pass
E8 pass
F9 fail

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Before the radical revision of state education began in 1987, six years of primary education and (following a Common Entrance Examination) five years of secondary education led to the West African School Certificate examinations (WASC) and two further years to the WAHSC. The current education structure is 6+3+3. Six years of primary school is followed by three years of junior secondary school leading to the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), which is below GCSE standard. Those pupils then admitted to senior secondary school follow one of seven options: agricultural science, business, general arts, general science, home economics, technical, and visual arts; and after three years take the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE). The senior secondary school leaving examination is currently being harmonised throughout the sphere of the West African Examinations Council as the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). The SSSCE has two components: continuous assessment (30%) and external examination (70%). English is the medium of instruction, except in the initial years of primary school when a local language is used alongside English.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Admission to university in Ghana is on the basis of achievement at SSCE. In addition to the SSCE results, admission may also require a University Entrance Examination. The first degree is of a minimum of four years' duration.

Hong Kong

EVALUATION

Hong Kong Certificate of Education (HKCEE)

Prior to 2007, acceptable at grade C or better in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis (except English Language (Syllabus A), Accommodation & Catering Services and Fashion & Clothing).

Also, for mathematics and some science subjects, the level of attainment required for the award for a given grade is recognised as being higher than that awarded in the UK.

From 2007 onwards, acceptable at Level 3 or better or in Chinese Language and English Language in lieu of IGCSE.

Hong Kong Advanced Supplementary Certificate (HKASL)

Comparable to UK Advanced Supplementary (AS) Level. Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) Grades A – E equate to GCE Advanced Level. However, for mathematics and some science subjects, the level of attainment required for the award of a given grade is recognised as being higher than that awarded in the UK. For these subject areas, many UK HEIs regard a Grade D in the HKALE as acceptable in lieu of a Grade C at A Level from a UK awarding body.

Associate Degree

Satisfies the general entrance requirements for UK higher education. Candidates holding the Associate Degree may be considered eligible for entry into the second year of undergraduate degree programmes.

GRADING SYSTEM

HKCEE, HKALE

Graded A – F, of which grade A is the highest and F the lowest.

Results below grade F are designated as Unclassified (UNCL).

Previous to 2002, sub-grades were used, ie A(01), A(02), B(03), B(04) etc.

As a general guide to performance, the following figures provide percentages in the grades achieved in selected high-entry subjects for day school candidates in 2006:

HKCEE HKALE

Percentage Percentage

awarded Grade awarded Grades

Grade A A–C Grade A A–C

Biology 4.0 30.9 2.7 19.0

Chemistry 4.3 30.1 3.4 24.4

Chinese Language 3.2 17.8 - -

Chinese Language and Culture - - 2.6 24.8

Computer Studies - - 3.5 27.8

Computer and Information Technology 3.2 23.4 - -

Economics 2.8 22.2 3.6 20.6

English Language (Syllabus B) 2.9 13.9 - -

Mathematics 3.3 30.1 - -

Pure Mathematics - - 4.3 27.6

Physics 3.8 27.5 4.3 25.9

Use of English - - 0.7 15.5

Associate Degree

Uses a Grade Point Average system, the scale for which varies between awarding institutions.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Six years' primary education starts at age six and is compulsory. It is followed by a further three years of compulsory junior secondary education. After an additional two years of secondary education, the HKCEE is taken (most day school candidates take seven or eight subjects). The HKALE qualification can then be taken after a further two years of selective senior secondary education. These major public examinations are conducted by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority.

With the exception of language-related subjects, all subjects can be taken either in English or Chinese with the syllabuses, examination papers and marking systems common to both media. The experience of the English language may, therefore, vary according to the educational route taken. Since 1998, the Government has been promoting the use of Chinese as the medium of instruction, with the aim of students being biliterate (ie Chinese and English). The language in which the subject is undertaken is not recorded on the certificate. In the HKASL, the Use of English examination at grade E or above may provide appropriate evidence of proficiency in the English language.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The HEIs offering three-year degrees in Hong Kong admit mainly on the basis of HKALE passes in at least two subjects, or one A Level and two AS Levels. Entrants are also required to have a grade E or better result in both Use of English and Chinese Language and Culture. Degree study may also be pursued at the universities on the basis of other overseas qualifications, at the discretion of individual universities.

The Associate Degree is a two- to three-year programme of study which may be a terminal qualification, or act as a bridging programme to further higher education. An Associate Degree is normally regarded as one-third of a three-year university degree.

India

EVALUATION

Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE)

May be considered acceptable at Grades 1–6 in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis.

All India Senior School Certificate Examination (SSC)

Higher Secondary School Certificate

All India Senior Secondary School Certificate

Indian School Certificate (ISC)

Students with high scores (75%) at Standard XII from the Central Board of Secondary Education and the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination may satisfy entry requirements, provided an appropriate standard of English has been attained.

Higher Secondary School Certificate; Intermediate Certificate

At least 80% from state boards of education may satisfy entry requirements, provided an appropriate standard of English has been attained. It should be noted that there is no national level quality assurance system (see Education System below).

GRADING SYSTEM

SSC

Externally assessed subjects are given numerical scores, with 33% being the pass mark. All students that pass the SSC are given a rank order with A – 1 representing the top eighth, ranging down to D – 2 representing the bottom eighth of candidates that have passed within the cohort. E indicates a failed candidate.

ISC

1 (maximum) – 8 (pass) – 9 (fail)

School examinations are marked on a percentage basis and the award is indicated in Grades 1 to 8. All subjects are assessed externally. The pass mark is at 40%. The Certificate is awarded with Grade 1 to 8.

The Indian School Certificate (ISC) is acceptable at Grades 1–3 in lieu of Scottish Highers on a subject for subject basis.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Educational responsibilities are split between the Union Government and state governments. Differences exist between states, but the most common pattern is of 10 years of general education (Standard X) followed by two years of higher secondary education (at Junior or Intermediate Colleges in some regions) and terminating in examinations for one of the various school-leaving certificates (Standard XII). There may also be two- to two-and-a-half-years' preschooling available. School courses are commonly taught in the medium of Hindi, the regional language or English. In many cases, whilst flexibility is offered by examination boards, due to the pressure of numbers in schools, students may be streamed with little option to mix subjects. For the ISC, there is no streaming of students or clustering based on numbers. Students are free to select their combination of subjects, apart from English, which is compulsory. The school year runs from April to March with examination results available in May/June. A high proportion of achievement is based on external final assessment.

It should be noted that there is no national quality assurance system in place in India and that the National Council of Educational Research and Training has highlighted that a “widespread disparity in standards of examinations among 34 boards conducting examinations at the end of Classes X and XII has been experienced and no common or national standards of achievement are available for equating them”.

The ISC involves 12 years of schooling. The award of a Pass Certificate in the ISC requires a pass in four or more subjects, including English, at one sitting. In the ISC, English is the medium of instruction.

In addition to undertaking Indian qualifications, some centres may offer students the opportunity to sit A Levels through attending after-school classes. A number of international schools are also offering GCSE/IGCSE and GCE examinations from UK Exam Boards. Students may have also taken College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) SATs (see entry for United States of America). The International Baccalaureate is becoming increasingly popular (see Appendix C).

Several school examination boards have started to offer

vocational courses to students, for example, Certificate of Vocational Education Examination offered by the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE). However, as the learning culture is geared towards HE, only a small proportion of students choose to take this option.

Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) offer craft and skills programmes, of between one and three years' duration, to instruct students in skilled labour.

The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), formerly known as National Open School (NOS), was established as an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India in 1989. The NIOS is a National Board for Secondary and Senior Secondary Examinations similar to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE). NIOS follows a learner-centric approach to teaching through Open and Distance modes. It offers a wide range of subjects in comparison to any other formal school. The learners are free to choose subject combinations as per their needs and goals, and study at their own pace from specially designed self-instructional materials. There is a provision of credit accumulation and the registration of the learners is valid for a period of five years. The focus of the National Institute of Open Schooling ranges from elementary education to courses at the pre-degree level, both academic and vocational. It attempts to reach out to physically, mentally, socially and geographically disadvantaged groups through suitable learning material and delivery mechanisms. For more information, the website of NIOS is www.nos.org

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

In theory, university admission in India is open to all students passing a Standard XII examination from a recognised Examination Board in at least four subjects. In practice, however, with over 300 universities including "deemed to be universities", 14,000 colleges and 10 million students, there is fierce competition. Places are awarded with reference to academic merit in the 12th-year examinations and/or in special university entrance examinations, which are often linked to particular degree courses such as business, medicine and engineering. First degrees, both Honours and Pass, of a duration of three years are generally undertaken at colleges affiliated to a specific university. Undergraduate professional degrees, for example, medicine, engineering and architecture, can be between four and five years' duration. Due to the geography of the country, some HEIs offer students multimodal study, including remote teaching utilising computer-aided instruction and multimedia packages. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), an autonomous body, provides quality assurance for HE. A couple of state governments have enacted the Private Universities Bill. All such universities that have been set up by individual acts passed by state legislature have been evaluated by the Universities Grants Commission (UGC, which regulates universities in India) and are now recognised as legitimate universities. The Supreme Court of India has struck down an act

passed by Chhattisgarh state that resulted in a large number of institutions being designated as universities. The Court has ordered that such institutions should seek affiliation to existing universities. These institutions are now in the process of seeking affiliation to existing universities or are working with state government to pass individual legislation for these universities.

Indonesia

EVALUATION

Surat Tanda Tamat Belajar Sekolah Menengah Umum Tingkat Atas/STTB: SMA (Senior Secondary School Certificate of Completion)

Acceptable in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis (except English Language). Would need to be supplemented by GCE A Levels, Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers, or a bridging course.

GRADING SYSTEM

10 excellent

9 very good

8 good

7 above average

6 average

5 below average

4 – 1 fail

EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Indonesian Education System recognises two different paths of education: school education and out-of-school education.

Nowadays, Indonesia basically adopts a 6-3-3-4 school education system, which consists of six years of primary (age 6/7–12), three years of junior secondary (age 13–15), three years of senior secondary (age 16–18), and four years of tertiary education.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Admission to public higher education in Indonesia is mainly by the UMPTN (Entrance Examination to State Universities) in either Sciences or Social Sciences.

The Sarjana Satu (S1) degree (144–160 credits) is awarded after four years of study. Professional disciplines require an additional two to six semesters.

The Magister (S2) (180–194 credits) is awarded after two further years of study.

The Doktor (S3) (230 credits) requires additional coursework and a dissertation after the Magister.

Non-university higher education is offered by polytechnics and academies.

Iran

EVALUATION

Diplom-Motevaseteh (National High School Diploma)

Considered to be above GCSE standard (grades A, B, C) on a subject for subject basis, provided minimum marks of 50% have been obtained, subject to English Language proficiency. Would

need to be supplemented by GCE A Levels, a SQA Award or equivalent qualification.

Pre-University Certificate

Acceptable as satisfying general entrance requirements in related subjects, provided a minimum mark of 60% has been obtained, subject to English Language proficiency.

National Entrance Examination (Konkur)

Acceptable as satisfying the general entrance requirements, subject to English Language proficiency.

Kardani

Acceptable in lieu of BTEC HND (but not necessarily appropriate for direct entry to the third year of an undergraduate course).

GRADING SYSTEM

Konkur

Graded on a scale of 20 (maximum) to 0, where 10 is a minimum pass. Grades can also be expressed as letters:

A 20.0 – 17.0

B 16.9 – 14.0

C 13.9 – 12.0

D 11.9 – 10.0

EDUCATION SYSTEM

The first eight years of education are compulsory. The Education System comprises a five-year primary education cycle, followed by a three-year middle (guidance) cycle and a secondary education cycle, which has been reduced from four to three years (grades 9–11). English is available as a second language from grade 7. There are qualifying examinations at each break point and national examinations are conducted at the end of each grade of the secondary cycle. There are three main branches of the secondary cycle: theoretical, vocational and technical.

Students must complete 96 units within the three years to be awarded the High School Diploma. Candidates for HE must undertake a post-Diploma preparatory year. On successful completion of this, they are awarded the Pre-University Certificate and become eligible to sit the university entrance examination (Konkur). Farsi (Persian) is the medium of instruction throughout.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Admission is basically related to a candidate's ranking in the Konkur. The Konkur is highly competitive, with university places available for about 35% of applicants. The first degree, Kardani/Technician, usually takes two years and the second degree, Licence/Kar-Shenasi, usually takes four years. They are awarded on a credit system (72 units and 146 units respectively, an overall GPA of 12 or better out of 20).

Iraq

EVALUATION

Sixth Form Baccalauréat (Adadiyah)

Acceptable at 60% or better in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis (except English Language). Would require to be supplemented by GCE A Levels, Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers, or a bridging course.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

There are six years of primary and six years of secondary education in Iraq. Secondary education is divided into two three-year phases: the Intermediate Cycle (on completion of which students are awarded the Certificate of Intermediate Studies) and the Preparatory Cycle (which leads to Sixth Form Baccalauréat). There is a measure of specialisation in scientific or literary studies in the last two years of study. The Baccalauréat commonly involves six subjects. Tuition is in Arabic throughout secondary education and mainly so in HE.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The Baccalauréat is the basis of admission to university study in Iraq. The four-year general arts degree has a limited intake and competition is even stronger in the 'professional' areas.

Japan

EVALUATION

Kotogakko Sotsugyo Shomeisho (Upper Secondary School Leaving Certificate)

Acceptable in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis (except English Language). Would need to be supplemented by GCE Advanced Levels, Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers, or a bridging course.

Associate Degree from a Junior College (Jun-Gakushi)

Vocational Degree (Senmon-shi) from a Vocational College

Acceptable in lieu of BTEC National Diploma or NVQ Level 3 award. Holders may be eligible for direct entry to HE, depending on the subject.

GRADING SYSTEM

A 5

B 4

C 3

D 2 minimum pass

F 1 fail

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Educational institutions in Japan can be divided into three categories according to their source of funding: national – financed by central government; public – financed by local government (prefectures, municipalities); and private – financed by private organisations. Around a third of senior high school students attend private schools, while three-quarters of undergraduates are at private universities. Entrance to national high schools and universities is generally competitive, while the academic level of both public and private schools and universities varies widely.

Compulsory education in Japan comprises six years of primary school (from age six), and three years of lower secondary school, finishing at 15. However, 98% of students continue on to upper secondary education. They take an entrance exam that determines the level of upper secondary school that they enter.

After three years, they graduate with the internally assessed Upper Secondary School Leaving Certificate (Kotogakko Sotsugyo Shomeisho). Students who did not complete upper secondary school can take the Upper Secondary School Equivalence Examination (Daiken), which makes them eligible to take the entrance examinations for Japanese universities. It is thus of an equivalent level to the upper secondary school leaving certificate.

Students at upper secondary school have some choice regarding the subjects they study, but generally cover a much broader curriculum than their counterparts in the UK.

English is currently taught as a compulsory subject from lower secondary school (age 12) upwards, with many primary schools including English lessons as part of their "integrated studies" time; there is continued debate about whether or not to make English compulsory at primary level.

Reforms have introduced some schools that offer integrated lower and upper secondary education within one institution, amended curricular content to include elective elements and reduced the school week to five days instead of six. The aims of these reforms were to create a more flexible learning environment, to increase the scope of the curriculum and to foster greater independence. However, there have been recent moves to return to a more traditional academic curriculum amid fears that standards are falling. The Fundamental Law of Education was revised in December 2006, for the first time in over 50 years; but curriculum guidelines have not yet been amended.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Applicants to national and public universities (Daigaku) in Japan are expected to have successfully completed 12 years of school education, attained an Upper Secondary School Leaving Certificate and taken a preliminary entrance examination, the National Centre for University Entrance Examination ("Centre Test"), as well as taking the entrance examinations of individual institutions. Some, but not all, private universities also require applicants to take the National Centre for University Entrance Examination as a preliminary examination. The scores obtained in these entrance examinations are accorded more importance than school grades by universities. However, there are a growing range of alternative entrance methods such as recommendation by high schools or "AO" (admissions office) under which applicants effectively recommend themselves. Applicants who apply by these routes do not have to take an entrance examination.

Most universities operate an American-style grades and credit-based system, leading to a four-year first degree (Gakushi).

Junior college associate degree courses (Jun-Gakushi) last two years. Vocational degrees (Senmon-shi) at vocational colleges also last two years. These two qualifications are considered to be of comparable level and holders of either are eligible in Japan for entrance to the third year of a four-year degree course in a related subject.

Korea (South)

EVALUATION

Ilbankye Kodung Hakkyo (General High School Diploma)

Considered to be between GCSE and GCE A Level standard. Those students with grades above 'mi(70–79)' may be considered for admission to access or foundation level programmes.

Within academic high school education, there are specialised high schools for talented students in arts, sports, science or foreign languages, which are called arts high school, physical education high school, science high school and foreign language high school respectively. These schools set higher entry requirements and higher-standard education in the academic or practical area is provided. Considered to be equivalent to GCE A Level and students with above 'mi' may be considered for direct admission to first degree in relevant subjects.

Silopkye Kodung Hakkyo (Vocational High School Diploma)

Acceptable in lieu of BTEC First Diploma or NVQ level 2.

GRADING SYSTEM

A (soo) 90% or above

B (woo) 89 – 80

C (mi) 79 – 70

D (yang) 69 – 60

E (ga) below 60

There is no universal Grading System in Korea. Assessment depends on the individual school and may use grades and/or percentage marks.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Korea has a 6+3+3+4 system of primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and HE, the first nine years being compulsory.

A National Curriculum covers the 10 years from primary to the first year of upper secondary education. The medium of instruction is Korean (except the study of English), and English is a compulsory subject from the third year of primary school.

Upper secondary education is divided into two streams: academic or vocational. Vocational high school students can request academic classes be arranged for college entrance. On successful completion of academic high school, students are awarded the High School Diploma. Academic high school students must take all National Curriculum subjects plus elective subjects, which make up a minimum total of 204 units.

Vocational high school students take general academic subjects plus vocational subjects, and are awarded the Vocational High School Diploma upon completion.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Entry to a four-year first degree course in Korea is based on the applicant's high school transcript and results of the national College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT), but the ratio of each element for student selection depends on the individual institution's decision.

The subject areas of the newly revised CSAT consist of five subjects: verbal (Korean), mathematics, English, science, humanities and social studies, or vocational studies, and foreign languages – all are optional (students select subjects required by the colleges they wish to attend). The new CSAT adopts two ways of marking: one is raw mark and the other is standard mark.

Subject areas (standard) Full (raw) mark Range

Verbal 100 0 – 200

Mathematical 100 0 – 200

English 100 0 – 200

Humanities and Social Studies or Science 50 0 – 100
or Vocational Studies

Foreign languages 50 0 – 100

Malaysia

EVALUATION

Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM/Certificate of Education)

Acceptable at grades 1–6 in lieu of GCSE Grades A – C on a subject for subject basis.

Unified Examination Certificate (UEC)

Offered by the Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools system. Widely recognised as being acceptable at grades 1–6 in lieu of Scottish Highers on a subject for subject basis (except English Language).

Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia (STPM/Malaysia Higher School Certificate)

Acceptable at Grades A to C in lieu of GCE A Level on a subject for subject basis.

GRADING SYSTEM

SPM

1A, 2A Cemerlang (distinction)

3B, 4B, 5C, 6C Kepujian (credit/minimum acceptable pass)

7D, 8E Lulus (pass)

9G Gagal (fail)

UEC

Grades Marks

Distinction A1 85 – 100

A2 80 – 84

Credit B3 75 – 79

B4 70 – 74

B5 65 – 69

B6 60 – 64

Pass C7 55 – 59

C8 50 – 54

Fail F9 0 – 49

STPM

Subject Subject Subject Subject
Grade Grade Value Grade Grade Value

A 4.00 C 2.00

A- 3.67 C- 1.67

B+ 3.33 D+ 1.33

B 3.00 D 1.00

B- 2.67 F 0.00

C 2.33

The STPM has introduced a new Grading System which corresponds with that of the Matriculation system, the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). The number of grades available has been increased from seven to 11 categories (see table). Each grade is equivalent to subject grade points: Grades A to C have subject grade points between 4.0 and 2.0 and are considered a full pass; Grades C- to D have subject Grade points of 1.67 to 1.0 and are considered partial pass; F grade is a grade point of 0.

Each paper's grade appears on the result slip and the certificate. The subject's grade and grade point is determined by the weighted average results of all that subject's papers, where all papers must achieve 'Pass' otherwise the grade and grade point would be F and 0 respectively. The cumulative grade point average is the average of the top four subjects taken and usually rounded up to 2 decimal points. Therefore, if a student scores A in four subjects and fails in the fifth, his CGPA would be 4.0.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Six years of compulsory primary education is followed by five years of secondary and two years of post-secondary education. The medium of instruction is in the national language, Malay, except for maths and science (which are taught in English). English language is compulsory from primary level onwards. An English language syllabus developed with Cambridge International Examinations is a compulsory element of the SPM. As of 2006, students are given a GCE O Level grade for their English paper in addition to the normal English SPM paper. (Previously, this was reported on result slips as a separate result labelled 1119, which meant students received two grades for their English papers.) This separate grade is given based on the marks of the essay-writing component of the English paper. The essay section of the English paper is re-marked under the supervision of officials from British O Levels examination. Although not part of their final certificates, the O Level grade is included on their results slip. Entry to post-secondary education is based on examination performance at the SPM stage. There are two types of pre-university programmes: the STPM (1.5 years) and Matriculation (one-year or two-year programme). Previously, the Matriculation was a one-year programme, but beginning 2006, 30% of all matriculation students were offered two-year programmes.

The SPM and STPM examinations are the responsibility of the Malaysian Examinations Syndicate and the Malaysian Examinations Council respectively under the aegis of the Ministry of Education.

The Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools System (MICSS) provides a six-year curriculum leading to the Unified Examination Certificate. Chinese is the main medium of instruction, but Malay and English are compulsory subjects as well as mathematics and science (taught in English). The MICSS is recognised in Chinese-speaking areas of south-east Asia but not in Malaysian public institutions. However, most private colleges recognise it.

The UEC is available in three levels: Vocational Unified Exam (UEC-V), UEC Junior Middle Level (UEC-JML) and Senior Middle Level (UEC-SML). The syllabus and examinations for the UEC-V and UEC-JML are only available in the Chinese language. The UEC-SML has questions for mathematics, sciences (biology, chemistry and physics), bookkeeping, accounting and commerce in both Chinese and English. The difficulty of UEC-SML test papers is nearly equivalent to A Level except English.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The intake of students by the Ministry of Higher Education into public universities is based on the principle of meritocracy. The merit of candidates or ranking of applicants is based on 90% academic marks and 10% co-curriculum marks scored by each and every candidate. Admission to three-year first degrees in Malaysia is mainly on the basis of the STPM or matriculation courses. Access to HE is now based on a system of merit, rather than the previously used quota system. Usual minimum requirements are passes in two subjects at STPM, and a compulsory credit level pass in Malay at SPM, but in practice, higher achievements are required due to the severe competition for places. All Malaysian pre-university students are required to sit the Malaysian University English Test (MUET). This covers listening and reading comprehension, speaking and writing. It is graded on a 6-band scale with Band 6 considered as the Excellent User and Band 1 as the Very Limited User. The recommended minimum band for entry to a Malaysian first degree is Band 3 Modest User.

With the introduction of the semester system, local universities are willing to offer credit transfers for relevant subjects taken in Diploma and other post-secondary courses.

Mauritius

EVALUATION

School Certificate
Higher School Certificate.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

There is universal provision of primary education for six years (called Standard I – VI). Promotion is automatic, the only standard which can be repeated being standard VI. The six years of primary education culminates in the national Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) examination, which serves as a selection tool for entrance at secondary level, with only those passing the CPE being allowed access to secondary schools. Primary education was made compulsory in 1990. Since 2005, education is compulsory up to the age of 16 in Mauritius. The current transition rate from primary to secondary is about 65%. There are consequently a sizable number of the 27,000 annual CPE candidates who do not succeed and need to re-sit the examination. Further to this re-sit, there are still some 3500 children annually who do not succeed in the CPE. These double failures are not allowed entrance to secondary schooling but instead are channelled to the pre-vocational schooling where both remedial and pre-vocational education are carried out for three years, after which the students can join the vocational sector. They can later join the world of work, seek apprenticeship or follow further trade training programmes. There are two main national examinations in the secondary school system in Mauritius. These examinations are co-prepared by the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate and Cambridge, UK. Students are awarded at the end of five years of secondary schooling the Cambridge School Certificate and after two additional years can sit for the Cambridge Higher School Certificate.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Admission for a place in the public-funded institutions, more particularly the two public Universities (UoM and UTM), is competitive. Although the admission requirement for undergraduate courses is a pass at A Level in the fields of study, applicants usually need to have at least a grade aggregate at HSC of 22 (A=10 points; B=8; C=6; D=4; &E=2) for securing entrance, especially in the high demand management, IT and engineering sectors.

Admission requirements at Postgraduate and PhD levels are similar to those in the UK, namely respectively a good degree or masters in the requested area of study.

Morocco

EVALUATION

Baccalauréat

Acceptable as a group qualification satisfying general entrance requirements provided that an overall grade of at least 'bien' has been achieved.

GRADING SYSTEM

20 – 16 très bien (very good)

15 – 14 bien (good)

13 – 12 assez bien (fair)

11 – 10 passable (pass)

9 – 0 insuffisant (fail)

Candidates with 9/20 may be passed exceptionally by the examination committee.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Fundamental education is compulsory and lasts for nine years. It is divided into two cycles of six and three years respectively.

Following fundamental education students go on to either General Secondary Education (usually at a lycée) or Technical Education (offered at Technical Secondary School), and study for a further three years. This culminates in the Baccalauréat in arts/economics/mathematics/sciences. Assessments counting towards the award of the Baccalauréat are made twice a year (February and June) in each of three senior secondary years. Both Arabic and French are used in teaching.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

There are 13 universities in Morocco. The Baccalauréat is the basis of entry to university in Morocco but there are restrictions on numbers admitted, especially to the 'professional' areas where specific entrance examinations may be an additional requirement. Two years of study lead to the Diplôme d'Etudes Universitaires Générales (DEUG) and a further two years to the Licence.

Nigeria

EVALUATION

Senior School Certificate Education (SSCE)

West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE)

Regarded as being below the standard of UK A Levels. Those students with high grades may be considered for admission to a bridging programme.

GRADING SYSTEM

SSCE

1 excellent

2 very good

3 good

4 – 6 credit/minimum acceptable pass

7 – 8 pass

9 fail

WASSCE

A1 excellent

B2 very good

B3 good

C4 – C6 credit/minimum acceptable pass

D7 pass

E8 pass

F9 fail

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Six years of primary education may be followed by six years of secondary education: three years in junior secondary school and three years in senior secondary school. Senior secondary education is evaluated by continuous assessment and by a national examination conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), leading to the award of the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate. (This replaced a system of O and A Levels in 1989.) The WASSCE, harmonised throughout the WAEC's member countries, is awarded on the basis of 30% continuous assessment and 70% external examination. In the initial primary years, instruction is usually in the medium of a local language, but thereafter, English mainly is used.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

WASSCE passes with credit in five relevant subjects, obtained at not more than two sittings, together with an acceptable standard in the competitive University Matriculation Examination administered by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), secures admission in Nigeria to a degree course of not less than four years in length.

Oman

EVALUATION

Thanawiya Amma (Secondary School Leaving Certificate)

Acceptable at 70% or better in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis (except English Language).

Would need to be supplemented by GCE A Levels, Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers, or a bridging course.

GRADING SYSTEM

Percentage scale, with no minimum pass mark.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Six years of primary education and three years of preparatory education are followed by three years of secondary education, with an option to choose either science or arts stream from Year 2. The medium of instruction is Arabic, but English is taught from Primary 4. The Secondary School Leaving Certificate is a Year 12 examination.

Since the 1998/9 school year, a new 10-year system of Basic Education has been in the process of being introduced. Under this new system, two cycles of four and six years respectively are followed by two years of secondary education. The medium of instruction is Arabic, but English is taught from grade 1. More schools are added to the new system each year, with it due to be fully implemented by 2007. The Secondary School Certificate remains a Year 12 examination, but its title is being reviewed.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Admission to university in Oman, for a Bachelor degree course of a minimum of four years, is on the basis of the Thanawiya Amma, in theory at an overall mark of 65%, but competition for places commonly ensures an entrance level of over 70% and of 90% for medicine. Study in faculties other than Islamic studies is preceded by a one-and-a-half-year preparatory course in English and science.

Pakistan

EVALUATION

Intermediate/Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC)
Acceptable at 50% or better in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis (except English Language). Would need to be supplemented by GCE A Levels, Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers, or a bridging course.

See also Overseas Examinations of UK Awarding Bodies (Appendix A).

GRADING SYSTEM

A1 100 – 80% outstanding
A 79 – 70 excellent
B 69 – 60 very good
C 59 – 50 good
D 49 – 40 satisfactory
E 39 – 33 pass
F 32 – 0 fail

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Education is compulsory at primary and secondary levels. Primary education commences at age five and continues for five years, largely in the medium of Urdu. It is followed by five years of secondary education, the last two years of which are streamed into either science or general studies.

A further two years at a higher secondary/intermediate college leads to the Intermediate/Higher Secondary School Certificate or the Diploma of Faculty of Arts/Science (FA/FSc). English is widely used in higher secondary and university education.

The Punjab Government is giving a monthly stipend to those students considered deserving in order to promote literacy, particularly with female students. Additional legislation is underway by the Provincial and Federal Governments in order to further improve education policies.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The HSSC gives access to a two-year pass degree and three-year honours degree in Pakistan. Pass degrees are usually taken at an affiliated college and honours degrees at a university. The Higher Education Commission Pakistan is in the process of ensuring that by 2007 all undergraduate degrees will be of four years' duration.

The Philippines

EVALUATION

National Elementary Achievement Test (NEAT) National Secondary Achievement Test (NSAT)
Philippine Validating Tests (PVT)
Accreditation and Equivalency Programme (AEP)
Accelerated Learning Programme for Elementary School (ALPES)

GRADING SYSTEM

Grading systems vary per institution.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Pre-school education begins at the age of three. Compulsory elementary education begins at the age of six and lasts for six years. Most private schools, however, have extended this to seven years. Four years of secondary education follow. Most high schools administer their own entrance examination. Secondary education is the stage of free formal education following the elementary level below college level corresponding to four years of high school. Can be attained through alternative learning system.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Admission to colleges and universities is usually based on the weighted average of the first three years of high school, performance in the entrance examination of the particular institution and on other requirements or restrictions of specific departments. Foreign students may be considered on the basis of their performance on the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Examination (3 Ordinary Level passes and 2 Advanced Level passes) or Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) (minimum total score of 1200), or by having an International Baccalaureate Diploma.

Bachelor's Degrees usually take four years to complete. It can take as little as three years in institutions that use trimesters as opposed to semesters. Master's Degrees take approximately two years.

Russia

EVALUATION

Attestat o (Polnom) Srednem Obshchem Obrazovanii
(Certificate of Secondary Education)

Acceptable (if taken at Grade 11) in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis (except English Language). Would need to be supplemented by GCE A Levels, Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers, or a bridging course.

Diplom o Srednem Professionalnom Obrasovanii (Secondary Vocational Education Diploma)

Comparable to NVQ level 2.

GRADING SYSTEM

5 excellent

4 good

3 satisfactory/minimum pass

2 unsatisfactory

1 totally unsatisfactory

EDUCATION SYSTEM

The first nine years of education are compulsory and comprise primary education (from age six to 10) and senior school (age 11 to 15). Students completing this basic education are eligible to enter senior secondary school (lyceum or gymnasium) or vocational secondary school (technikum) for a further two years. Secondary education leads to the award of Attestat o (Polnom) Srednem Obshchem Obrazovanii (Certificate of Secondary Education) for general education, and Diplom o Srednem Professionalnom Obrasovanii (Secondary Vocational Education Diploma) for vocational education. The Attestat o (Polnom) Srednem Obshchem Obrazovanii has a considerable element of oral examining and all subjects taken must be passed to qualify for the Certificate. Although instruction in one of a large number of local languages may occur in the early primary years, Russian language dominates in secondary and HE.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Entry to HE in Russia is based on possession of the school leaving certificate and upon a competitive entrance examination. After four years of study, the Bakalavr is awarded. Following a further year of study, the Specialist Diploma is awarded or two years for a Magistr's degree.

Saudi Arabia

EVALUATION

Tawjihyah (General Secondary Education Certificate – GSEC) Acceptable at 60% or above in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis (except English Language). Would need to be supplemented by GCE A Levels, Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers or a bridging course.

GRADING SYSTEM

100 – 90% excellent
89 – 75 very good
74 – 60 good
59 – 50 pass
49 – 0 fail

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Education in Saudi Arabia is free, but not compulsory. General education comprises six years of primary school, three years of intermediate school and three years of secondary school. Education is strictly segregated along gender lines at all stages, and boys and girls follow a slightly different curriculum and take different exams. Religious and cultural education form a significant element of the curriculum. Arabic is the medium of instruction, apart from technological and scientific courses at HE level. Throughout their intermediate and secondary education, students must pass end-of-year exams each year to progress to the next stage. Primary education commences at age six. On successful completion of final year primary education examinations, students then progress to intermediate school where they study for three years.

In the first year of general secondary school, students follow a common curriculum. Students are streamed on the basis of their first year end-of-year examinations to follow a scientific or literary curriculum. Students obtaining 60% or above in the end-of-year examination can choose which curriculum to follow. Those obtaining below 60% must follow the literary stream. Secondary education culminates with the General Secondary Education Certificate (Tawjihyah). At secondary level, students can also attend technical/vocational schools, which award the Secondary Vocational School Diploma, the Secondary Commercial School Diploma or the Secondary Agricultural Diploma. A new secondary school system is currently being piloted. However, the decision whether to fully implement this system has yet to be taken.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

University admission in Saudi Arabia is based primarily on the results of the GSEC, although some faculties may administer their own university entrance examination. A national aptitude test has been introduced in addition to the GSEC, as a measure of student ability. It covers areas that are not traditionally covered in GSEC, such as logical thinking and quantitative methods. It consists of two main sections; language and quantitative abilities.

The test is administered by an independent examination body, QYAS, developed by the Ministry of Higher Education. An average GSEC mark of 90% is necessary for entry into medicine courses and 80% for others.

Singapore

EVALUATION

Singapore/Cambridge GCE Ordinary Level

Acceptable at grades A1 – C6 in lieu of GCSE Grades A, B and C on a subject for subject basis.

Singapore/Cambridge GCE Advanced Level

Acceptable at grades Distinction and A – E in lieu of GCE A Level on a subject for subject basis.

International Baccalaureate Diploma

Grades are awarded for each of the six courses of study ranging from 1 point (lowest) to 7 points (highest). The diploma is awarded to those who score a minimum of 24 points, subject to certain minimum levels of performance across all subjects, as well as satisfactory participation in creativity, action and service. The total highest score is 45 points, as students can also be awarded up to three points for their combined results on theory of knowledge and the extended essay.

Polytechnic Diplomas

There are five polytechnics that offer two- to three-year diplomas to GCE O and A Level graduates. These range from business management, engineering, life sciences, health sciences, computing, media studies, sports and wellness to hospitality management.

GRADING SYSTEM

Grading is based on the Grade Point Average (GPA) system of computation as follows:

Grade GPA

A 4.0

B+ 3.5

B 3.0

C+ 2.5

C 2.0

D+ 1.5

D 1.0

E 0.5

F 0

GPA = Total score

S (course/module credit value)

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Compulsory education (six years for the primary years) was introduced from 2003. Six years of primary education is followed by four or five years of secondary education. Students are streamed according to academic ability from Primary 4 onwards. The majority of students complete secondary education and study for GCE O Levels, either through a four-year 'Express' course, or a five-year 'Normal' course.

A seamless education where the top 10% of secondary school students can proceed to pre-university without taking the GCE O level examination was introduced in 2004 to provide them with an enriched education where the curriculum is more broad-based and multi-disciplinary. Students under this Integrated Programme (IP) will skip the GCE O Levels and take the GCE A Levels or International Baccalaureate Diploma after six years of study. The medium of instruction in schools is English, with pupils offering their mother tongue (Chinese, Malay or Tamil) as their second language. GCE O and A Levels are provided by Cambridge Assessment (formerly known as University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate).

The Singapore Ministry of Education and the Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board are responsible for subjects examined in the mother tongue.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Eligibility for higher education is based on results obtained in GCE A Levels, International Baccalaureate Diploma or a Diploma from one of the five local polytechnics – Singapore Polytechnic, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Temasek Polytechnic, Nanyang Polytechnic and Republic Polytechnic.

GCE A Level students must have attained at least two H2 passes, attempted General Paper (GP) or Knowledge and Inquiry (KI) in the same sitting and achieved a minimum of grade 'S' in their mother tongue. Selection to the National University of Singapore and the Nanyang Technological University is based on grades in GP (or KI), Project Work, three H2 and one H1 content-based subjects (one of which has to be a contrasting subject). In addition, the universities may also consider students' achievements in other areas, such as co-curricular activities and community involvement programmes. Polytechnic diploma holders must have achieved excellent academic performance (top 10% to 20% of their cohort) for entry into the local universities.

Entry to the local universities is very competitive due to the strong demand for places and high standards for entry are usually expected. General Bachelor degrees take three years to complete, with an additional year for an Honours degree (usually offered to the top 10% to 15% of the cohort) and five years for medicine.

South Africa

EVALUATION

Senior Certificate with or without Matriculation Endorsement

Standard Grade: Acceptable at Grades A – D in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis.

Higher Grade: Acceptable at grades A – D in lieu of qualifications widely used for entry to UK HE, eg GCE or SQA awards. Passes in five subjects at Higher Grade may satisfy general entry requirements.

GRADING SYSTEM

A 100 – 80%

B 79 – 70

C 69 – 60

D 59 – 50 minimum acceptable

E 49 – 40

F 39 – 33

FF 33 – 30

The official pass mark for Higher Grade subjects is 40% except for second language Higher Grade subjects as well as all Standard Grade subjects where the pass mark is 33.3%. The mean mark in any subject is usually about 55%. Only a small proportion of candidates score an A in any subject (from as little as 2% to a maximum of about 10% in subjects taken by highly select groups). A further 8–15% are likely to gain a B and about 20–25% achieve a C grade. Though variations will occur from year to year, this may be considered as a typical distribution. The Senior Certificate is a group certificate and records an aggregate mark (a minimum of about 40%). (See also Access to Higher Education below.)

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Following from the new constitution of 1996, the Department of Education has responsibility for all general educational policy to be implemented by nine provincial education departments and two independent providers. Nine years of compulsory education constitute the general education and training phase. This phase is followed by three years of non-compulsory senior secondary education leading to examinations for a Senior Certificate at the end of Grade 12. The Senior Certificate will be replaced by the National Senior Certificate (NSC) which has been phased in from Grade 10 in January 2006 and Grade 11 in January 2007. The last Senior Certificate examination will be concluded nationally in 2007 and the first NSC examination will be conducted in 2008. Senior Certificate candidates will be allowed to supplement single Senior Certificate subjects until 2011. The phasing in of the NSC will complete the process of curriculum and assessment change that was introduced in 1994. A specific GETC for adult learners was developed for award from 2002. A statutory body, the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurer (known as Umalusi) is responsible for quality assuring the GETC and the current Senior Certificate as well as the future NSC. Currently the Senior Certificate requires a minimum of six subjects selected from six different groups, of which two official languages are compulsory.

Subjects may be taken at either Higher or Standard Grade or at N3 level for the National Senior Certificate (not to be confused with the future NSC), a vocational qualification. The Senior Certificate aggregate is on a total (for the best six subjects, though some subjects' results must be counted even if not in the best six) of between 1,800 and 2,100. For a Senior Certificate to be awarded, a candidate must achieve an aggregate of 720 marks; for university entrance a candidate must achieve an aggregate of at least 950 and endorsement. Since 2001, Senior Certificates are awarded with distinction (1,680+ marks) and merit (1,260+ marks). A relatively small percentage of candidates, 2.5%, obtain their certificates with distinction and a further 11.4% with merit in a typical distribution. For the numerous degree programmes, an aggregate of 1440 and performance in specified subjects would as a rule qualify the holder for university admission.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The certification of the minimum requirement for admission to university in South Africa was administered from 1992 by the South African Certification Council (SAFCERT), which validated the various Senior Certificates. The functions of SAFCERT were taken over by Umalusi. Umalusi also endorses Senior Certificates where the candidate has met the matriculation requirements set by the universities (these requirements are set out in ministerially approved minimum requirements; the universities do this through their Matriculation Board). These requirements include passing at least five subjects at one sitting, with an average mark of 45% or better; having at least four of the subjects passed at the Higher Grade; and including passes in two official languages at the Higher Grade (of which one must be a university medium of instruction). The Matriculation Board also issues certificates of complete or conditional exemption from the endorsement requirement to candidates who qualify in terms of ministerially approved regulations. Individual institutions may have additional requirements and many set specific faculty requirements. Different points systems are used by individual institutions, but a typical points system for admission awards Higher Grade passes at A – E, 6–2 points and Standard Grade passes 4–2 points. Institutions specify a minimum points score, over and above matriculation endorsement for admission. These minima will range from 23 to 35 on this scale. Other scales are used by various institutions. The South African Bachelor degree is taken over three years and may be followed by a single-subject one-year Honours degree. National Policy has prescribed a minimum of three NSC achievement levels for admission to three entry level higher education qualification types. As of 2009, the three types will be higher certificate, diploma and bachelor's degree. Institutions have jointly developed an admission points system to assist them with admission as of 2009 onwards. Individual institutions have institution-specific cut-off levels for admission to the three qualification levels.

Sri Lanka

EVALUATION

Sri Lanka Ordinary Level

Acceptable at Credit and Distinction levels in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis (except English Language).

Sri Lanka Advanced Level

Acceptable at Grades A, B and C in lieu of GCE A Level on a subject for subject basis.

GRADING SYSTEM

O Level

100 – 75% D Distinction

74 – 50 C Credit

49 – 35 S Pass

34 – 0 Fail

A Level

100 – 75% A Distinction

74 – 65 B Very good pass

64 – 55 C Credit

54 – 40 S Ordinary pass

39 – 0 F Fail

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Five years of primary education and six years of secondary education culminate in the Sri Lanka O Level. A two-year collegiate course leads to A Levels in a minimum of three subjects. Sinhala and Tamil are the media of instruction. English is taught as a secondary language from the fourth year of primary education, but is not compulsory.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Entrance to university in Sri Lanka is at A Level standard for a three-year general or four-year honours degree. Candidates are required to have three A Level passes. Professional courses tend to be taught in English, which is used also in the later stages of most other degrees.

Switzerland

EVALUATION

Schweizerisch Anerkanntes Kantonales Maturitätszeugnis

Certificat de Maturité Cantonal Reconnu par la Confédération

Attestato di Maturità Cantonale Riconosciuta dalla

Confederazione Eidgenössisches Maturitätszeugnis Certificat

de Maturité Federale Attestato di Maturità Federale

Acceptable as group qualifications satisfying general entrance requirements for universities.

GRADING SYSTEM

6 (maximum), 5, 4: satisfactory 3, 2, 1: insufficient

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Considerable educational autonomy rests with the 26 cantons. Systems thus vary in many quite basic respects, especially between cantons in different linguistic regions. There is, however, considerable agreement upon nine years of compulsory education followed by three or four years of upper-secondary education leading to the school leaving qualification, a Cantonal Maturity Certificate or a Federal Maturity Certificate, or a Professional Maturity Certificate, the name identifying the first language as German, French or Italian, as noted above. The duration of schooling up to maturity certificate is 12 years.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The Cantonal Maturity Certificate is the basic qualification for admission to university or teacher training establishment. Most such certificates are specifically endorsed as 'federally recognised'; those which are not are often specialised (eg artistic or pedagogic) and have uncertain currency, especially outside the specific canton. A Federally recognised Maturity Certificate is required for entry to medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and pharmacy. There is a *numerus clausus* for studies in medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine. Since the 2001/02 winter semester, Swiss universities have been busy adjusting their curricula to comply with the Bologna Declaration. Under this new two-tier system the first grade awarded is the Bachelors degree (180 ECTS credits or three years full-time study) and the second one the Masters degree (90-120 ECTS credits or one and a half years full-time study). A Bachelors degree is the prerequisite for admittance to studies at Masters level. A Masters degree and good grades are the prerequisite for undertaking a doctorate. Furthermore, the universities can confer Master's degrees in further education, the so-called Masters of Advanced Studies – MAS (a minimum of 60 ECTS credits or one year full-time study). A MAS does not give access to doctoral studies. Since implementation of the new two-tier study system has not yet been completed, degrees according to the former system are still being awarded. The first grade awarded is the *Lizentiat/Licence* or *Diploma* with a total length of full-time study of 4–5 years and 6 years for medical studies (no ECTS credits). However, experience shows that they usually last 1 or 2 years longer. The *Lizentiat/Licence* and *Diploma* correspond to a Master's degree level in the United States; at most Swiss universities, they are the prerequisite for undertaking a doctorate. It is expected that by 2011 only grades according to the new, two-tier system will be awarded.

UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES.

The Professional Maturity Certificate is the basic qualification for university of applied sciences admission. The universities of applied sciences are awarding Bachelor's and will be awarding Master's degree in future.

Taiwan

EVALUATION

Senior High School Diploma

Acceptable at Grade C or better in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis (except English Language). Would need to be supplemented by GCE A Levels, Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers, or a bridging course.

GRADING SYSTEM

A 100 – 80%

B 79 – 70

C 69 – 60 minimum pass mark

D 59 – 50

EDUCATION SYSTEM

A school system based on the US model has six years of primary education, three years of junior high school and three years of senior high school. The Senior High School Diploma may be completed in Year 12 and the award requires marks of 60 or above in all prescribed subjects and a total of 160 credits from the three years of senior high school. Chinese and Mathematics are both compulsory subjects from primary through to secondary education. English becomes compulsory from Grade 3 onwards. Chinese remains the main medium of instruction.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Admission to a four-year general bachelor degree in Taiwan is primarily on the basis of the Subject Competence Test. According to the result, students can either apply for a place in Taiwanese Colleges/Universities by themselves or be recommended by their high schools. If students are not satisfied with the results they can take the Joint College Entrance Examination (JCEE) which is highly competitive in some areas, for admission by placement. Moreover the exemption from entrance examination is for gifted students.

Tanzania

EVALUATION

Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE)

Acceptable at Grade C or better in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis.

GRADING SYSTEM

CSE A Excellent

B Very Good

C Good

D Satisfactory

F Fail

ACSE A Excellent

B Very Good

C Good

D Fair

E Satisfactory

S Basic/Subsidiary Pass

F Fail

The Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) and the Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education (ACSE) are both awarded in four Divisions. Though variations will occur from year to year, this may be considered as a typical distribution.

Division I II III IV

CSE 2.84% 3.65% 11.81% 45.56%

ACSE 7.40% 20.20% 38.05% 24.20%

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Seven years of primary education, in the medium of Kiswahili, leads to the Primary School Leaving Certificate. The Certificate of Secondary Education is taken after four years. Two years in High School lead to the ACSE. Both the CSE and the AVCE are taught through the medium of English.

For evaluation of performance, 50% is derived from continuous assessment carried out by the National Examination Council.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Minimum entrance requirements to first degree courses in Tanzania are:

CSE (or equivalent), with passes in five appropriate subjects obtained prior to the sitting of the ACSE (or equivalent) and two principal level passes in appropriate subjects at the same sitting, with total points not below 5, based on the scale A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1, F=0; or

two principal level passes (in appropriate subjects) not at the same sitting, provided they are both of grade C or above; or an appropriate equivalent Diploma/Certificate of not less than second class/credit level and approved by the Senate.

Thailand

EVALUATION

Mathayom Suksa 6 (M6)

Mathayom 6 is the final examination taken by students at the end of their three years of upper secondary education and is acceptable at Grade 1 or better in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis, except in English Language. It would need to be supplemented by GCE A Levels, Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers, or a bridging course, as well as an appropriate English qualification.

GRADING SYSTEM

4 excellent

3 good

2 fair

1 pass

0 fail

EDUCATION SYSTEM

The system has been going through two reforms in the last five years – basically the first nine years of education to Mathayom 3 are compulsory. The last three years of the upper secondary level to M6 is divided between academic or vocational routes. For the academic route, students choose either an Arts or Science stream, and in either stream, choose three to five specialised subjects. There is a new emphasis on vocational qualifications, which students can use to enter the workforce or continue to HE.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Prior to 2004, admission to university for a four-year degree course was dependent on an M6 certificate, with a pass in three main subjects, including Thai and English, plus high marks in a very competitive, national examination administered by the Ministry of University Affairs. Since 2004, 25% of the accumulated Grade Point Average (GPA) in the M4, M5 and M6 has been an additional requirement, and some institutions, particularly private universities, have additional or separate entrance procedures that involve examinations and interviews. From 2006 students are considered on a score made up of 30% of a school-based assessment and 70% of an examination-based assessment.

The examination-based assessment is divided into two parts, the O-Net (Ordinary National Education Test) and the A-Net (Advanced National Education Test). University departments determine what subjects and scores they require in the O-Net and the A-Net. The elements determining HE admission are weighted as follows.

- _ GPAX (Grade Point Average) of M4–M6 curriculum 10%
- _ GPA of three to five specialised/elected subjects 20%
- _ O-NET result 35–70%
- _ A-NET result 0–35%

Students can progress from vocational as well as academic routes. Academic is for M6 students leading to Bachelor, Master and Doctorate levels.

Vocational is for both academic and vocational upper secondary school students to study at Diploma or Bachelor level, which is aimed at producing technicians. During this year and the next two years, the entry system to Thai universities is being radically changed.

Uganda

EVALUATION

Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE)

Acceptable at Grades 1–6 in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis.

Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE)

Acceptable at grades A – E in lieu of GCE A Level on a subject for subject basis.

GRADING SYSTEM

UCE

1, 2 distinction

3 – 6 credit/minimum acceptable pass

7, 8 pass

9 fail

UACE

A – E pass

F fail

In nine high-entry subjects at A Level, in recent years, an average of 0.8% of the candidates achieved Grade A and an average of 11.7% were awarded Grades A – C. (The Uganda National Examinations Board suggests that candidates who take UACE and also University of London A Levels achieve comparable results, especially in science and mathematics.)

EDUCATION SYSTEM

After seven years of schooling, at about age 14, the Primary Leaving Examination serves as a qualifying test for post-primary institutions. Four years of lower secondary education leads to the UCE examination in not less than eight subjects, which must include English. UCE results are the basis of selection for advanced secondary education. The UACE is taken after a further two years in at least three subjects and a General Paper. English is the medium of instruction throughout the educational system.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Admission to a three-year degree course in Uganda would usually involve a minimum requirement of six UCE and two UACE passes.

United Arab Emirates

(Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras al-Khaimah, Sharjah, Umm al Quwain)

EVALUATION

Tawjihyya (Secondary School Certificate)

Acceptable at 70% or better in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis (except English Language). Would need to be supplemented by GCE A Levels, Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers, or a bridging course. Dependent on the syllabus offered, HEIs may consider that the depth of study involved approaches GCE A Level standard on a subject for subject basis.

GRADING SYSTEM

The maximum score available in each subject is shown on the School Certificate and varies according to the subject's weighting in calculating the overall assessment of the award.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

After six years of primary education, a selection examination admits to three years of preparatory education and three years of secondary education, ending in examinations for the Secondary School Certificate. Since 1998, a 20-year reform programme, called Vision 2020, has been embarked upon under which there may be reforms to the structure of the school system. Arabic is the medium of instruction.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

University admission in the United Arab Emirates is on the basis of the Secondary School Certificate with an overall average mark of 60–80% depending upon the course of study and an English level of IELTS band 5 or equivalent. Some courses may also require an interview. The Bachelor degree is awarded on the basis of credit units in a semester system and would commonly be of four years in length.

Venezuela

EVALUATION

Bachillerato

Título de Bachiller

Comparable to GCSE standard (Grades A, B, C) on a subject for subject basis (except English Language).

Técnico Medio

Comparable to BTEC First Diploma standard.

Técnico Superior

Considered comparable to BTEC National Diploma standard.

GRADING SYSTEM

The grading is on a scale of 20–1, with 10 as the minimum pass mark.

The academic year is divided into three or more periods. Grades are given for each period. At the end of the year, the grades are averaged to form a previa grade.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

There are nine years of basic compulsory education combining primary and secondary from the age of six to 14. At secondary level (age 14 to 16), students can choose diversified secondary and train for the Bachillerato in science, arts and/or humanities; or they can train for the Técnico Medio at an Educacion Media Profesional. Studies are divided into industrial husbandry, commercial and health sectors. The medium of instruction is Spanish.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Admission to university level and non-university level studies (technical/vocational type) requires students to have obtained the Bachillerato with the minimum mark of 10, and sit the Prueba de Aptitud Académica aptitude test.

West Indies/Caribbean

In this context, the West Indies is taken to be the following English-speaking Caribbean Commonwealth territories which have a considerable measure of shared educational tradition and practice:

Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St Kitts/Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands.

EVALUATION

Caribbean Examinations Council, Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC)

Acceptable at the General or Technical Proficiency levels on a subject for subject basis in lieu of GCSE, provided that grade III or better has been achieved. Would require to be supplemented by Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE), GCE A Levels, Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers, or a bridging course.

Caribbean Examinations Council, Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE)

Acceptable at the two-unit level in lieu of GCE A Levels on a subject for subject basis.

Overseas Examinations of UK Awarding Bodies

Some prospective candidates for HE in the UK will have prepared on the basis of GCSE and A Level examinations (see Appendix A).

Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE)

Acceptable at grade C or better in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis. Would require to be supplemented by GCE A Levels, Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers, or a bridging course.

College of the Bahamas Associate Degree Programme

Acceptable as a group qualification satisfying general entrance requirements.

Barbados Community College Associate Degree Programme

Acceptable as a group qualification satisfying general entrance requirements.

Bermuda Secondary School Certificate (BSSC)

Acceptable in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis, provided that a grade-point average of 2.0 has been achieved. Would require to be supplemented by GCE A Levels, Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers, or a bridging course.

Bermuda College University Transfer Programme (Diploma in Arts and Science)

Acceptable as a group qualification satisfying general entrance requirements.

GRADING SYSTEM

CSEC

I, II, III (minimum acceptable) ... VI

There is no pass/fail mark.

CAPE

I Excellent

II Very Good

III Good

IV Satisfactory

V Acceptable

VI Limited

VII Very Limited

BGCSE

Seven grades, A – G

College of the Bahamas Associate Degree Programme

4.00 – 3.45 Distinction

3.44 – 2.85 Credit

2.84 – 2.00 Pass

Barbados Community College Associate Degree Programme

Letter Mark Definition Grade Point

A* 100 – 90 Exceptional

A 89 – 80 Excellent 4.0

B+ 79 – 75 Very Good 3.5

B 74 – 70 Good 3.0

C+ 69 – 65 Fairly Good 2.5

C 64 – 60 Satisfactory 2.0

D 59 – 50 Passing 1.0

F 49 – 00 Failing 0.0

BSSC

A 4.0 outstanding

B 3.0 very good

C 2.0 good

D 1.0 satisfactory

E 0.0 unsatisfactory

Bermuda College University Transfer Programme (Diploma in Arts and Science)

Individual subjects:

A Excellent 4.0

B Good 3.0

C Satisfactory 2.0

D Pass 1.0

E Fail Fail

Overall classification: Grade Point Average (GPA): 3.50 minimum award for Distinction, 3.00 minimum for Merit, 1.50 minimum for Diploma

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Although there are local variations, the common structure throughout the West Indies/Caribbean is six years of primary education followed by five years of secondary education leading to the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) or to GCSE or their equivalent.

A further one to two years may lead to the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) and two years may lead to A Levels of UK Awarding Bodies.

CAPE was first administered in May/June 1998, by the CXC.

CAPE syllabuses are structured as one- or two-unit courses.

A one-unit course consists of three modules, 150 credit hours, which include contact time and time spent on projects and other assignments. The unit is based on content, knowledge and skills drawn from specific subject areas. A two-unit course consists of two one-unit courses designed to cover a well-defined subject area and to contain the core content of the A Level and additional content considered to be relevant to the needs of the region in a global environment. Each unit is separately examined and certified by internal and external examiners.

CXC have recently introduced Associate Degrees in nine areas: Business Studies, Environmental Science, General Studies, Humanities, Computer Science, Mathematics, Modern Languages, Natural Science and Technical Studies. These degrees will be awarded based on performance at Grades I to V in seven CAPE Units, including Caribbean Studies and Communication Studies. While most school candidates will achieve their CXC Associate Degrees in two years, candidates

Qualifications currently offered

54 INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

have a maximum of five years to acquire the minimum of seven units required. The first CXC Associate Degrees were awarded in 2006, using a four-point GPA.

I 4.0

II 3.5

III 3.0

IV 2.5

V 2.0

English is the medium of instruction throughout the West Indies/Caribbean educational system.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The University of the West Indies, which has campuses in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, and the University of Guyana admit to a three-year degree on the basis of at least six CAPE units, including two one-unit courses, Caribbean Studies and Communication Studies, or two two-unit CAPE subjects. They also admit on the basis of at least two GCE A Level and three GCSE/CSEC passes. English Language is compulsory.

Alternatively, entry may be on the basis of five GCSE/CSEC passes into a four-year degree, beginning with a preliminary year.

Qualifications gained are BSc; BA; BEd; MBBS; LLB; BMedSci; DDS; DVM; BPharm; MPhil; MSc; MA; (Honours and Ordinary); DM, Doctorate.

The United Kingdom National Recognition Information Centre (UK NARIC) has advised UK universities that six CAPE units will be accepted. As universities in Canada and the United States accept students on the basis of the CSEC, CXC is discussing with these institutions the award of credits and advanced standing to persons with CAPE certification.

Zambia

EVALUATION

Zambia School Certificate

Acceptable at Grades 1–6 in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis.

Would need to be supplemented by GCE A Levels, Scottish Highers or Advanced Highers, or a bridging course.

See also Overseas Examinations of UK Awarding Bodies (Appendix A).

GRADING SYSTEM

1, 2 Distinction

3, 4 Merit

5, 6 Credit/minimum acceptable performance level formerly required for a GCE O level pass

7, 8 Satisfactory

9 Unsatisfactory

Grade boundaries are fixed for each examination session by an Awards Committee based on the examiners' recommendations, background information about the candidates and performance statistics. The grade boundaries will, therefore, vary from subject to subject and, within a subject, from year to year.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

The medium of instruction is English. There are seven years of primary education, two years of junior secondary education and three years of senior secondary education culminating in the joint examination for the Zambia School Certificate and General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level). All the requirements for the School Certificate must be satisfied at the same examination sitting. To qualify for the award of a School Certificate, a candidate must reach a satisfactory general standard as judged by their best performance in six subjects and either:

_ pass in six subjects (including English Language) with credit or better in at least one of these; or

_ pass in five subjects (including English Language) with credit or better in at least two of these.

Candidates who do not meet the requirements for the award of a School Certificate are awarded a General Certificate of Education in the subjects in which they attain grade 8 or above. The Zambia School Certificate is equivalent to the School Certificate formerly issued by Cambridge Assessment (formerly the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate) to candidates in Zambia. The Examinations Council of Zambia does not offer A Level examinations, but it is responsible for students who prepare for A Levels of a UK Awarding Body. It is also possible for other institutions to prepare students for A Levels of a UK Awarding Body.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Most degree programmes last for four years, except for engineering and veterinary medicine, which take five years, and the degree in medicine, which takes seven years. Admission to university degree programmes is on the basis of a minimum of five passes at credit level in the joint School Certificate and General Certificate of Education examinations. Entrants with GCE A Level passes in relevant subjects may be given exemption from the first year of university courses.

Zimbabwe

EVALUATION

Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE)

Ordinary Level pass acceptable at Grade C or better in lieu of GCSE.

Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education (ACSE)

Acceptable at Grades A – E in lieu of GCE A Level on a subject for subject basis.

GRADING SYSTEM

CSE

A Excellent

B Very good

C Good

D Fair

E Unsatisfactory

U Fail

ACSE

A Excellent

B Very good

C Good

D Fair

E Pass

O Subsidiary of O Level

F Fail

EDUCATION SYSTEM

Previously, a system of O and A Levels was administered by Cambridge International Examinations (CIE). Responsibility for O Levels was localised in November 1999, and A Levels in November 2002. The examination system is now organised by the Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC).

The school system is made up of seven years of primary education from age six to 13. After four years of lower secondary school, pupils attain O/GCE, and after a further two years, they attain A/GCEs. The language of instruction throughout the school system is English.

National examinations are held in Grade 7, followed by progression to lower secondary school. In Form 2 of secondary school, students take the Zimbabwe Junior Certificate. O/GCE is taken in Form 4 at the end of lower secondary education. Students are required to achieve at least five passes including Maths, English and a Science subject at O/GCE in order to progress to upper secondary school. A/GCEs are taken at the end of Form 6.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Admission for three- and four-year degrees is based on five O/GCE passes in English, Mathematics and three other subjects unless specified by a university plus two A/GCE passes in relevant subjects. A relevant Higher National Diploma may also be considered. Entry into universities is highly competitive. Admission to Polytechnics and teacher training colleges is based on five O/GCE passes, including Mathematics and English Language.

Source of Information: UCAS