

# Degree Recognition & its Impact on Student Mobility

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INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION INTELLIGENCE



## Content

- The context
- The environment
- Considerations in International Credential Evaluation
- Conclusion



## The Context

- U.S relies on international talent at the graduate level
- Rapidly changing and highly competitive international higher education landscape
- Increased worldwide competition for the best graduate students

3



## US Context: International Students in the US in 2007/08 (Source: IIE and NCES)

### 623,805 international students

- 3% of total U.S. higher education enrollment

### 283,503 international graduate students

- 12% of graduate enrollment
- 30% of graduate science and engineering enrollment

4



## US Context: International Graduate Enrollment in S & E (Source: NSF 2008)

Fields of Study	International Students
Engineering	45%
Computer Sciences	43%
Physical Sciences	40%
Mathematics	37%

5



## US Context: Percentage of Graduate Level Students 2007/08 (Source: IIE)

India*	94,563	72%
<b>Bologna Area</b>	<b>83,981</b>	<b>41.9%</b>
China*	81,127	65.4%
Korea	69,124	35.7%
Japan	33,974	20.2%
Canada	29,051	44.9%
Taiwan*	29,001	55.4%
Mexico	14,837	30.6%
Turkey*	12,030	54.8%
Saudi Arabia	9,873	23.4%
Thailand*	9,004	56%

6



## Number of Scholars in 2008 (Source: IIE)

1	China	23,779
2	India	9,959
3	Korea	9,888
4	Japan	5,692
5	Germany	5,269
6	Canada	4,758
7	France	3,802
8	UK	2,823
9	Spain	2,320
10	Taiwan	2,185

7



## US Context: New Graduate Enrollment 2007/08 (Source: CGS)

	Largest 25 Institutions	Largest 50 Institutions	All Other Institutions
China	13%	12%	16%
India	7%	-1%	-5%
Korea	-2%	-4%	-2%
Middle East	17%	10%	4%
International Total	5%	3%	3%

8



## Graduate Application Trends for Fall 2009 (Source: CGS)

Table 1. Change in International Graduate Applications, 2005 to 2006 through 2008 to 2009

	Final Number of Applications, 2005 to 2006	Final Number of Applications, 2006 to 2007	Final Number of Applications, 2007 to 2008	Preliminary Number of Applications, 2008 to 2009
<b>International Total</b>	12%	9%	6%	4%
<b>Country/Region of Origin</b>				
China	19%	19%	11%	16%
India	26%	12%	2%	-9%
South Korea	4%	0%	2%	-7%
Middle East & Turkey *	10%	17%	14%	20%
<b>Field of Study</b>				
Arts & Humanities	5%	8%	7%	8%
Business	16%	15%	10%	7%
Education	1%	12%	-1%	1%
Engineering	19%	13%	4%	4%
Life Sciences	9%	18%	3%	-2%
Physical & Earth Sciences	15%	12%	7%	4%
Social Sciences & Psychology	6%	0%	9%	4%
Other Fields **	--	--	--	4%

\* Middle East & Turkey includes: Bahrain, Cyprus, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

\*\* Prior to 2009, data for 'Other Fields' were not collected separately.

Note: Not all responding institutions provided data by country of origin and/or field of study.

Sources: CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey, Phase II, 2006 to 2008 and Phase I, 2009

9



## The International Recruitment Landscape

- Keen competition for graduate talent among Asia, Australia, Europe & the U.S.
- Bologna Process reforms make Europe more attractive
- Study in Europe less costly than in the US
- Increased availability of scholarships in Europe
- Expansion of higher education capacity in major sending countries
- Better opportunities for post-completion employment and permanent residence in Australia, Canada & Europe than in US

10



## Implications of Bologna Reforms for US Institutions

- 15% of international students are from “Bologna countries” (3<sup>rd</sup> after India and China)
- European universities aggressively promoting the new programs and degrees in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and South America
- New master’s degrees taught in English to attract international students
- Increased demand for dual degree arrangements
- 3-year degrees will become the norm in 25 out of 30 OECD countries after 2010

11



## Role of International Credential Evaluation

- **Facilitate international mobility**
- **Enable institutions to select qualified students by:**
  - Providing information on programs of study
  - Analyzing the performance of individual students in order to compare them to other candidates
  - Providing assistance to faculty who make the ultimate decisions

12



## WES Evaluation Approach

- recognizes the inherent differences in educational systems
- acknowledges that general education is unique to US undergraduate education
- adheres to the principles of the 1997 Lisbon Convention on the recognition of higher education credentials
- offers functional and not absolute equivalencies:
  - what function does the credential serve in the home country?
  - where does it best fit in the US system?

13



## International Rules: 1997 Lisbon Convention

Section VI – Recognition of higher education qualifications (Article VI.1):

“To the extent that a recognition decision is based on the knowledge and skills certified by the higher education qualification, each Party shall recognize the higher education qualifications conferred in another Party, unless a substantial difference can be shown between the qualification for which recognition is sought and the corresponding qualification in the Party in which recognition is sought.”

14



## Basic Evaluation Criteria

### Program Level

- Requirements for admission
- Type of institution attended

### Program Scope

- Program structure, content and length

### Program Purpose

- Purpose and function of credential in the home country
- What does graduate know and what can he or she do?

### Quality

- Grades achieved by student
- Accreditation and other institution quality indicators (ranking)

15



## New Tools that Facilitate the Evaluation of European Degrees

- **A standard degree sequence: bachelor, master, doctorate**
- **ECTS Credit & ECTS grading scale**
- **Degree descriptors that define degrees by outcome**
- **Qualification Frameworks (where they exist)**
- **Diploma Supplement that presents all the necessary information in a consistent manner**

16



## WES Compared The Two Degrees

[www.wes.org/ewenr/bolognaprocess.htm](http://www.wes.org/ewenr/bolognaprocess.htm)

### New Italian Degree (Laurea I)

- Offered by Bocconi University
- Requires maturity certificate for admission
- Three years
- 100% of the program devoted to the major and supporting subjects
- 180 ECTS credits
- Grants access to employment or graduate study

### US Bachelor's Degree

- Offered by Indiana University -Bloomington
- Requires high school diploma for admission
- Four years
- 50% of program in general education and distribution requirements
- 120+ US semester credits
- Grants access to employment or graduate study

17



## WES Evaluation of Bologna-compliant Degree

- Despite some common nomenclature the new European degree remains distinct from its US counterpart
- Studies are concentrated in the major
- Electives are taken within the same faculty
- The required workload (as expressed in ECTS credits and US semester credits) is largely comparable
- Both degrees share a similar focus in the major - both are designed to lead to graduate study or employment at comparable levels
- WES considers them to be functionally equivalent

18



## How Three-year Degrees are Viewed in the US

- Degrees from the UK, Israel, Ireland, Singapore, Hong Kong...are usually accepted for admission to graduate school
- The new -Bologna-compliant- European degree is gaining increased acceptance
- U.S. universities continue to resist recognizing similar degrees from other countries, namely India

19



## Reasons for not Recognizing Three-Year Degrees

- Length: three-years as opposed to four and/or fewer than 16 years of education
- Absence of general education in the undergraduate curriculum
- Fairness: students in the U.S. must study for 4 years to earn the bachelor's degree
- Not enough information
- "That is the way we've always done it."

20



## Evolution of Policy on Three Year Degrees

(Source: CGS)

Table 2. Changes in Institutional Policies Regarding Bologna Three-Year Degrees, 2005 to 2006

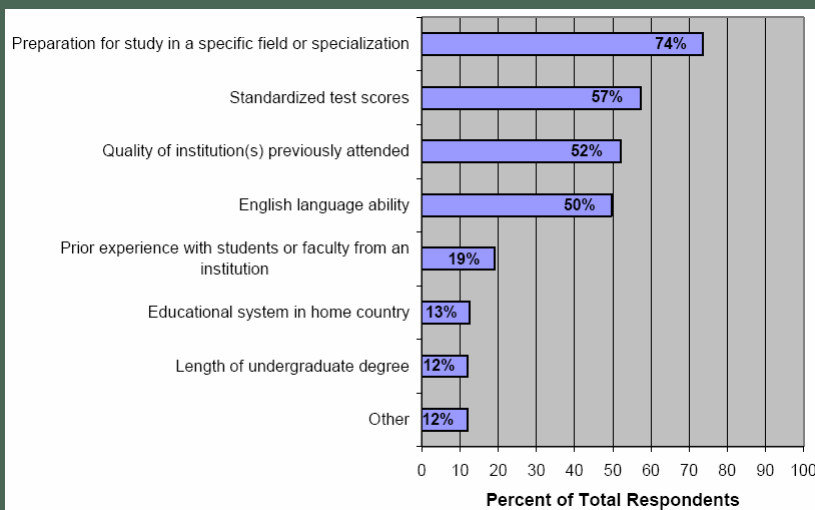
	2005	2006
<b>Bologna Three-Year Degrees as an Issue on Campus</b>		
Major Issue	18%	12%
Minor Issue	41%	32%
Not an Issue	41%	56%
<b>Single Institution-wide Policy or Policies Vary By Department</b>		
Single	62%	62%
Different	16%	18%
Combination	22%	20%
<b>Approach to Evaluating Bologna Three-Year Degrees</b>		
Do not accept	29%	18%
Provisional acceptance	9%	4%
Evaluation for equivalency	40%	49%
Determination of individual's competency to succeed	22%	29%

Source: 2006 CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey III: Admissions and Enrollment



## Key Factors in Graduate Admissions

(Source: IIE 2009 Survey)





## Some Universities that Accept the New European 3-year Degree

- The University of Chicago Graduate School of Business
- Carnegie Mellon University
- Columbia University Graduate School of Business
- McGill University (Canada)
- North Carolina State University
- Oregon State University
- Purdue University
- Stanford University
- University at Buffalo (SUNY)
- University of California – Berkeley
- Wharton School/ University of Pennsylvania
- York University (Canada)

23



## Conclusion and Observations

- Major changes are taking place in education all over the world
- There is very strong competition for the best graduate students
- US graduate schools reviewing the effectiveness of existing evaluation and admission practices
- Degree recognition and admission increasingly based on preparation for graduate study rather than on the number of years
- Program and candidate quality are the key factors
- Three-year degrees gaining increased recognition

24



## Key Resources

1. <http://www.ihep.org/Research/thebolognaprocess.cfm>
2. <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/about/>
3. <http://www.eua.be/bologna-universities-reform/>
4. <http://www.wes.org/ewenr/bolognaprocess.htm>
5. <http://www.cgsnet.org/Default.aspx?tabid=172>
6. [http://www.iae.org/Template.cfm?section=Research\\_and\\_Evaluation](http://www.iae.org/Template.cfm?section=Research_and_Evaluation)

25



## Contact information

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**Thank you.**

26