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Credential Evaluation: What is it? Why is it Needed?

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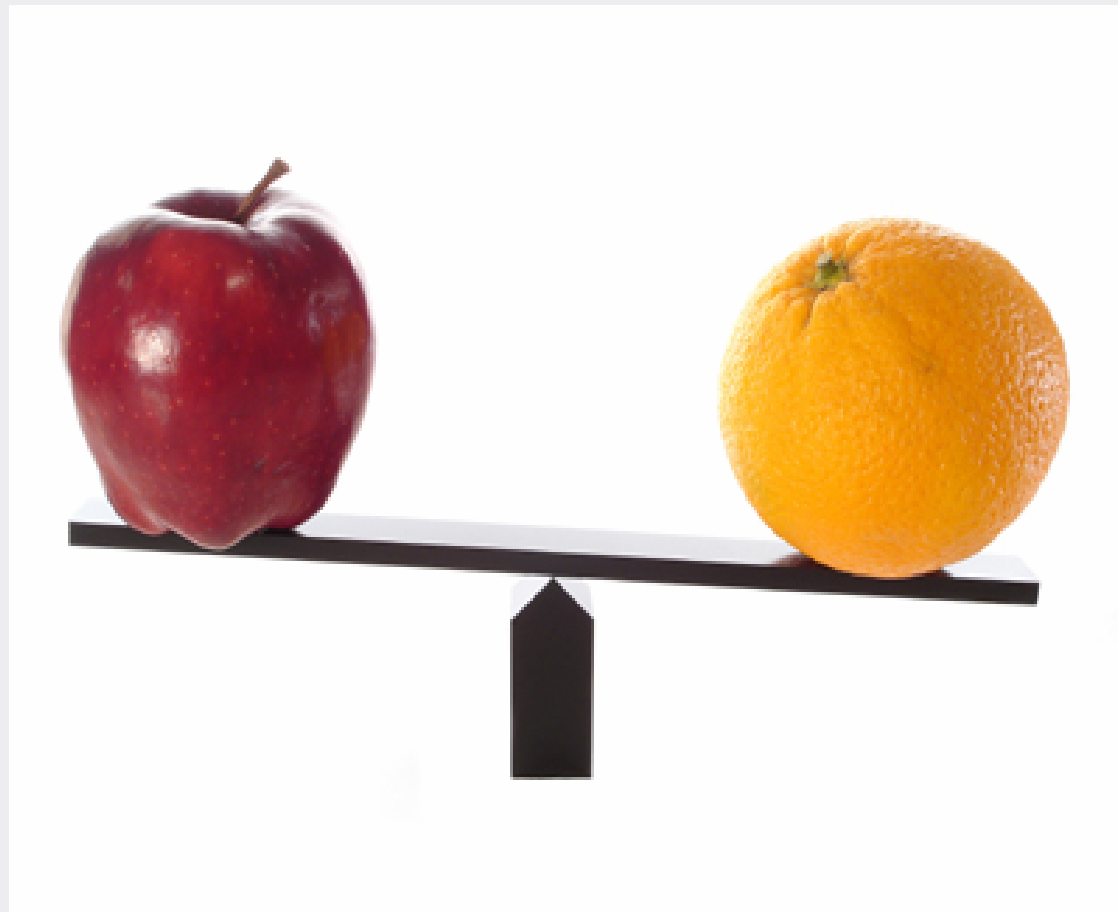
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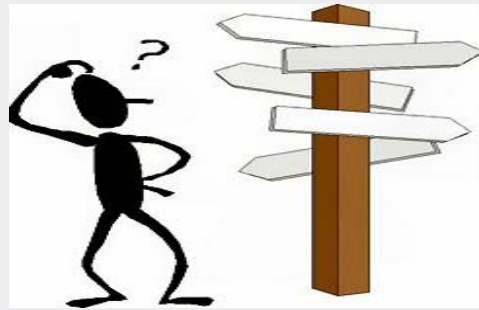


Evaluation of Foreign Educational Credentials

- ◆ There are 3,500 accredited colleges and universities in the US. There is no standard way in which institutions deal with the issue of foreign credential evaluations. Therefore, international students applying to several different schools will have to complete several different procedures during their admission process.



- ▶ Some schools will evaluate in-house the foreign credentials of their applicants. The staff is trained, experienced, and they have the necessary resources.
- ▶ Some schools will out-source the evaluation function to a specified evaluation service (such as AACRAO-OIES or a NACES member).



- ▶ Some schools tell the applicant to have their credentials evaluated by a credential evaluation service - perhaps only listing one service, providing a list of many services, or giving their applicants no direction.
- ▶ And sadly, some schools neither evaluate the credentials themselves, nor do they out-source the function.

Purposes for a Credential Evaluation

- Admissions: Freshman/Graduate-level
- Eligibility for intended Program of Study
- Grade Point Average Calculation
- Transfer Credit
- Scholarship/Financial
- Visa Requirements



Glossary



Benchmark Credential: An academic award which marks the point of transition from one level of education to the next higher level.

Comparability: Determination of degree of similarity between two foreign educational credentials.

Degree: A tertiary educational qualification that requires a minimum of two years of full time study beyond secondary school.

Officially Recognized degree-granting: The status acquired by an educational institution whereby its degrees merit reciprocal recognition by other educational institutions in the same country, and whereby its individual courses merit transfer of credit or exemption from requirements when a student enrolls in a degree program at another educational institution in the same country.

Tertiary: The third level of education, which requires for admission prior completion of primary and secondary education.



EVALUATION PROCESS

Credential evaluators find answers to the following questions when evaluating educational credentials from other countries:

1. What is the level of the institution that offered the educational program: primary, secondary, or tertiary?
2. If it is a tertiary institution, is it officially recognized as a degree-granting institution by the authorities who have jurisdiction over tertiary education in the country in which it operates? (I.e., does it have its country's equivalent of regional academic accreditation in the United States?)
3. Are the educational credentials authentic? Or have they been altered, counterfeited, forged, or falsified in some other way (e.g., obtained through bribery)?
4. Do the educational credentials represent completion of academic work in a degree program? Or do they represent completion of the equivalent of non-credit adult education courses or continuing education courses or supervised practical training?





EVALUATION PROCESS (Continued)

5. What is the level of the educational program, and what is its role in that country?
6. Did the applicant complete the program?
7. What is the equivalent of the quantity of education represented by the educational credentials? Is it the equivalent of a degree? Or does it fall between two degrees?
8. What is the credit equivalent of the quantitative data reported in the educational credential?
9. What is the grade equivalent of the qualitative data reported in the educational credentials?



Major Principles of Comparative Education:

- ✦ In every geographic area, the range of human intellectual ability, from the very bright to the very dull, can be described by the standard bell-shaped curve of normal distribution
- ✦ One year of full-time academic work at one academic institution is the equivalent of one year of full-time academic work at another academic institution at the same level of education
- ✦ There are significant differences between primary and secondary education, and between secondary and tertiary education.



Major Principles of Comparative Education, continued:

- ✦ One educational program can be considered to be the equivalent of another educational program even if the two programs are not identical.
- ✦ Experienced reasonable persons can reach differing conclusions concerning the nature of an educational program and concerning the equivalence or lack thereof between two educational programs.



Requirements



- Application Form
- Biographical Data
- Educational History Information
- Submission of required documentation
- Fees