



Association of International
Credential Evaluators, Inc.

SYMPOSIUM: Setting the Standards for Graduate Admissions: Three-year Degrees and Other Admissions Dilemmas

Symposium Report
AICE

APRIL 6, 2017
MILLENNIUM HOTEL
MINNEAPOLIS, MN, USA

AICE 2017 SYMPOSIUM

Setting the Standards for Graduate Admissions: Three-year Degrees and Other Admissions Dilemmas

Following the 2017 AACRAO Annual Conference, the Association of International Credential Evaluators (AICE) held its 2nd Annual Symposium on April 6, 2017, in Minneapolis, MN. The symposium's theme was: **"Setting the Standard for Graduate Admissions: Three-year Degrees and Other Admissions Dilemmas."** This event brought together AICE's Endorsed and Affiliate Members, representatives of AACRAO, university admissions officers and other international education professionals in an open dialogue to discuss issues of equating three-year degrees from various countries to US degree equivalents. The diverse and dynamic group of panelists and attendees provided in-depth insights on three-year programs from around the world as well as methodologies and tools for evaluating these programs for continuing education, graduate admissions and employment.

The Symposium was preceded by an enjoyable reception hosted by AICE on the evening of April 5th, 2017, at the Mission American Kitchen and Bar.

The symposium on April 6th was moderated by Dr. Alexander Agafonov, Executive Vice President/ COO of Globe Language Services, Inc and Chair of AICE. The program was divided into three modules, each addressed by a panel of experts:

Module 1: Bologna-Patterned Three-year Degrees.

Aleks Morawski, Director of Evaluations, Foreign Credits, Inc. (moderator) and AICE Endorsed Member; Melanie Gottlieb, Deputy Director, AACRAO; Robert Watkins, Assistant Director of Admissions, Graduate and International Admissions Office, University of Texas, Austin.

Module 2: Three-year Bachelor's Degree: South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka).

Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert, President/CEO, Academic Credentials Evaluation Institute, Inc. (moderator), AICE Endorsed and Charter Member and President of AICE; Ujjaini Shasrabudhe, Director, Office of Graduate Admissions, University of Southern California; Annetta Stroud, Senior Evaluator and Training Coordinator, AACRAO

Module 3: Beyond South Asia and Bologna: Three-year degrees from Australia, South Africa, and Israel.

Beth Cotter, President/CEO of Foreign Credential Evaluations, Inc. (moderator) and AICE Endorsed Member; Ann M. Koenig, Associate Director, AACRAO International; Stephanie

Ingvaldson, International Student Services and Programs, California State University, Sacramento; Josh Trevers, Globe Language Services, Inc, AICE Endorsed Member.

The introduction to the Symposium featured a presentation of survey results by Melanie Gottlieb. The survey, which focused on acceptance and treatment of three-year degrees by educational institutions, was jointly developed and administered by AICE and AACRAO prior to the Symposium. 360 AACRAO member institutions, a statistically significant response rate, participated in the survey providing valuable data on their policies for considering three-year degrees for graduate admissions. The results of questions regarding how educational institutions treat three-year degrees varied, and it was noted that in many instances, “I don’t know,” was the response. In the U.S., there is no central Ministry of Education as in many other countries to establish policy regarding the treatment of three-year degrees from other countries. Each university is autonomous with regard to how graduate admissions decisions are made, and the survey results reflected that autonomy.

Module 1: Bologna-Patterned Three-Year Degrees: a Summary

First, Aleksander Morawski, Moderator, provided an overview of and historical context for the Bologna process. Importantly, it was noted that the Bologna Agreement stipulates that bachelor’s degrees are comprised of a minimum of three years of university-level study, but that many Bologna bachelor’s degrees exceed three years in length. The focus of the Symposium discussion was limited to the Bachelor’s degrees of three years’ duration.

It was generally agreed that in countries whose educational systems include the equivalent of thirteen years of primary and secondary education (not including Kindergarten) such as the UK, the thirteenth year of secondary education makes up the deficit between the 4-year U.S. Bachelor’s degree and the 3-year Bologna degree. However, some countries do include Kindergarten as the first year of primary education. Since Kindergarten is generally mandated in the U.S. as well, consideration of Kindergarten as a 13th year of primary/secondary education was dismissed.

In addition, the issue of benchmarking versus year-counting was raised. Benchmarking refers to consideration of the first degree offered in a country (that’s country’s bachelor’s degree) as equivalent to a U.S. bachelor’s degree. The philosophy behind benchmarking is based primarily on the fact that the benchmark credential (i.e. Bachelor’s degree) qualifies the student for entry to Master’s-level study in the home country, and therefore should be accorded the same status in the U.S.

However, many three-year Bachelor’s degree programs lack the general education requirements found in the first year of the U.S. 4-year bachelor’s degree. The liberal arts component is fundamental to the U.S. degree. Because of the narrow focus on subjects offered in the major field of study of the typical three-year degree, as well as in fairness to U.S. students

who are required to complete four years of undergraduate study in order to be considered for admission to U.S. graduate schools, the year-counting approach was determined to be the most appropriate and equitable when evaluating three-year degrees. The year-counting approach awards one year of credit toward a U.S. bachelor's degree for each year of university study in the home country.

It was also recognized that often the student who holds a three-year degree with specialization in one major field of study may be adequately prepared to succeed in a master's degree program in that same subject. Therefore, graduate schools in the U.S. have the option to admit the three-year degree holder, on a case by case basis, when the faculty or admissions officer deems it appropriate to do so.

Functionally, the considerations by which evaluation companies operate can vary from those by which graduate admissions offices operate. Evaluation companies should apply consistent and transparent treatment of standards with regard to three-year degrees and do not have the opportunity and means to evaluate three-year degrees for graduate admissions purposes which the faculty at a university does, as described above. Therefore, the year-counting approach is appropriate for evaluation companies, while the evaluation should also include mention of the benchmark credential that was completed in the home country. For example, if a student has a three-year bachelor's degree, the evaluation company would correctly describe it as three years of post-secondary (or university) study that is transferable toward a U.S. Bachelor's degree, while also noting that this study represents the first university degree in the home country and grants access to further university study in that country (if applicable).

Generally, it was agreed that for the evaluation company, benchmarking is usually the correct approach for evaluating a secondary credential, whereas the quantitative/year-counting approach is most appropriate for post-secondary study.

Module 2: Three-Year Bachelor's Degree: South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka): A Summary

Module 2 focused primarily on the Indian three-year degree (Bachelor of Arts, Science, Commerce, BBA), as India is the country with the greatest number of students applying to U.S. institutions and visa-seekers. Increasingly, we are seeing 4-year degrees from Pakistan and Bangladesh. In India, the University of Delhi experimented with offering a 4-year degree, however the University Grants Commission quickly shut this program down. (This discussion did not include the four-year engineering, technology and other professional degrees.)

Although some have suggested that a three-year Indian degree can be equated to the four-year U.S. bachelor's degree based on the Indian institution's ranking and the student's degree classification, the Symposium participants agreed that these considerations are not valid. Universities in India participate in accreditation on a voluntary basis, and only about one-third

or less of all Indian universities do participate, which means that ranking of institutions is somewhat arbitrary and certainly is not inclusive. In addition, degree classification is often not a valid assessment tool, as grades can be inflated, and the classification is often based on third-year results only and not the student's overall academic performance over the three-year period.

As is the case with other three-year degrees discussed in Module 1, the Indian three-year degree lacks a holistic curriculum that includes a liberal arts foundation. Although the student may have advanced skills within the particular major, the basic curriculum is not well-rounded and the student may struggle once admitted to a U.S. graduate school. Anecdotal evidence points to a shaky performance in graduate school by the three-year degree holder, but more studies are needed to track academic success when these students are admitted to U.S. graduate schools.

As with the Bologna three-year degree holders, the Indian three-year degree holders may be admitted to graduate programs upon pressure from the admitting faculty. In the past, some graduate schools have addressed the problem of admitting a three-year degree holder by offering pathway and bridge programs. However, these programs lack appeal and incentive to the graduate school applicant and have not been completely successful.

There was also discussion of the one or two-year Indian Post Graduate Diploma and the first year of a two-year Indian Master's degree when considered in combination with the three-year bachelor's degree. Some think that when year-counting, the student who holds a legitimate three-year university degree plus an additional year of university study (PGD or first year of Master's degree), resulting in four years of university study, does have the equivalent of a four-year U.S. bachelor's degree. The point was made that passing the final examinations at the end of the first year of the Indian master's degree program does represent completion of a benchmark.

However, others argued that since the PGD is not a benchmark degree in India, and since the first year of a two-year Master's degree also is not a benchmark credential in India, neither completion of a PGD nor completion of the first year of an Indian Master's degree should be considered equivalent to a U.S. bachelor's degree. No general agreement was reached by Symposium participants on the equivalency of these degree combinations to the U.S. Bachelor's degree. (It was also noted that within India, the University Grants Commission (UGC) grants recognition to degree-granting universities, whereas the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) grants recognition to technical programs. The two are not academically equivalent.)

It was agreed, on the other hand, that functional outcomes of holding a three-year bachelor's degree do matter. Even when a U.S. institution decides to admit a three-year degree holder to a graduate program, after graduation that student still holds a three-year bachelor's degree.

This can present a problem for the graduate who wants to apply for professional certification in a field that requires the completion of a four-year bachelor's degree.

In evaluating three-year degree equivalencies, an evaluation company should always consider what the credential grants access to in the home country both academically and professionally and include that within the evaluation report. Recognition of the academic program by either the UGC or the AICTE should be noted.

In general, it was recommended that the Indian three-year degree should be treated as three years of undergraduate university study in the U.S. and not as equivalent to a 4-year U.S. bachelor's degree.

Module 3: Beyond South Asia and Bologna: Three-year Degrees from Australia, South Africa, and Israel: A Summary

AUSTRALIA:

Traditionally, Australia has offered a three-year (ordinary) bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., B.Com., B. App. Sci., BBA) followed by one-year (honors) bachelor's degree in an area of specialization (major). The three-year ordinary bachelor's degree was the focus of the Symposium. (Four-year degrees in engineering, education, and other professional fields were not considered.) Within Australia, the three-year degree is often accepted for access to higher education degrees, although the student likely will be required to complete a two-year master's degree rather than the one-year master's which is offered to holders of the honors bachelor's degree.

There was general agreement that the honors Bachelor's degree, representing four years of undergraduate study, is equivalent to the U.S. Bachelor's degree. However, some participants treat the three-year bachelor's degree as equivalent to the U.S. bachelor's degree. Specifically, USC-Sacramento admits student to its graduate school who are holders of three-year degree.

A discussion ensued around the reasons that USC-Sacramento has made this decision. This institution is not a highly selective institution, and it is seeking to grow the numbers of international students in its graduate programs. Holders of three-year degrees who are judged to be admissible to USC-S graduate degrees are therefore admitted. It was agreed that U.S. institutions have the autonomy and the right to make this kind of graduate admissions decision in cases such as USC-S, where the decision aligns with that institution's goals and mission.

On the other hand, it was agreed that highly selective institutions and evaluation services who seek to treat U.S. degree-holders equitably and who do not make decisions for institutional purposes, it is appropriate to treat the three-year ordinary degree as three year of study toward

a U.S. bachelor's degree, while treating the three-year degree plus the one-year honors degree as equivalent to a U.S. four-year bachelor's degree.

AACRAO recommends (in the EDGE database) three years of university credit for the three-year degree. However, Ann Koenig reminded the group that it is important for a university to determine its own philosophy toward three-year degrees and how that aligns with the institution's mission and goals, and then to select a credential evaluation service whose treatment of the three-year degree aligns with its own.

SOUTH AFRICA

As in Australia, in South Africa there have typically been three-year B.A., B.S., and B.Com degrees followed by one-year B.A., B.S. and B.Com honours degrees. Treatment of these degrees by EDGE and by most of the AICE Endorsed Members has been to award three years of transfer credit for the three-year degree, and to equate the Honours degree with the U.S. four-year bachelor's degree. Again, educational institutions may choose to grant admission to their graduate programs after completion of the three-year degree, depending on their institutional goals and level of selectivity.

Many countries, including South Africa, Australia, the UK, New Zealand and Scotland (to name a few), have now developed qualifications frameworks, and it was suggested that for current and future students, reference should be made to the country's qualifications framework rather than relying on the traditional degree models of the past.

The link to the South African qualifications framework is www.saqa.org.za/show.php?id-7391. Reference to this qualifications framework is necessary, because within it, one sees that not all Bachelor of Science degrees which are at Level 7 (which could have been either Level 6 or Level 7 pre-2009) consist of the same number of credits. For example, 360 credits (three years of study) are required for a Level 7 B.S. degree in Physical Sciences at the University of Pretoria, but 428 credits (3.5 years of study) are required for a Level 6 B.S. degree in Physical Sciences at the University of Venda. Clearly all South African B.S. degrees are no longer equal quantitatively, and these differences must be considered in a good credentials evaluation.

In general, reference should be made to current resources for current degrees, and to historical resources for degrees issued in prior years. One should also recognize that within a specific qualifications framework, not all qualifications at the same level mean the same thing: some may be academic while others are vocational/technical in nature.

WORD OF CAUTION: THE SAME ISSUES EXIST WITH REGARD TO PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION FOR HOLDERS OF THREE-YEAR DEGREES FROM AUSTRALIA AND SOUTH AFRICA AS DESCRIBED IN THE OTHER TWO MODULES.

ISRAEL:

Both the AACRAO EDGE database and the Endorsed Members of AICE treat the Israeli three-year bachelor's degree as equivalent to the U.S. 4-year bachelor's degree.

This treatment is based on historical precedent: Placement Recommendations going back as far as the 1976 recommendations by the Council on Evaluation of Foreign Student Credentials have suggested equal treatment of the Israeli university 3-year bachelor's degree and the U.S. 4-year bachelor's degree.

The reasons given for equal treatment of the two degrees have included awarding advanced placement credit for examinations passed on the *Teudat Bagrut* (high school matriculation certificate), comparability of the Israeli credit system to the U.S. credit hour system, the maturity of Israeli students who typically complete two or three years of compulsory military service prior to entering university, a campus life that reflects a more mature student population with limited extracurricular activities and distractions, and the expectation that students work year-round, including preparing written assignments and preparing for examinations during the summer months.

Despite these observations, the Israeli student completes twelve years of primary/secondary education and not thirteen. Also, the degree is still a 3-year degree regardless of the number of credits assigned to it. In addition, this three-year degree is similar to other three-year degrees, in that it typically does not include a general education component as found in U.S. degrees, and the student usually has a narrower focus on one or perhaps two majors. For these reasons, it appears somewhat arbitrary to equate the Israeli 3-year degree to the U.S. 4-year degree. However, for political and historical reasons, at this point in time it would be difficult to reverse the precedent. The attendees were undecided about how the Israeli three-year degree should best be evaluated.

BREAK-OUT SESSION:

The Symposium also included a breakout session, which allowed participants to interact with the panelists in a closer and less formal setting. This resulted in the most productive and informative discussion on the topic of three-year degrees. The breakout groups presented the results of their discussions identifying the common outcomes. The following conclusions reflected the consensus of the Symposium participants:

- 1) It is best to use the quantitative method (year-counting) to evaluate post-secondary studies from foreign countries;
- 2) It is useful to acknowledge completion of the home country benchmark credential in addition to the number of years of post-secondary study completed;

- 3) It is necessary to always review full educational history of an applicant (not just his or her three-year degree);
- 4) It is useful to acknowledge home-country access outcomes for a particular credential;
- 5) Evaluation recommendations should be based upon primary sources appropriate to the credential era.

The Association of International Credential Evaluators (AICE) will use these outcomes and other insights from the Symposium to update its Credential Evaluation Standards, which are published on AICE's website at www.aice-eval.org.



WELCOME TO THE **2017 AICE** **SYMPOSIUM**

Setting the Standard for Graduate Admissions: Three-year degrees
and other admissions dilemmas

April 5 – 6, 2017

Millennium Hotel
in Avenue 1 & 2
1313 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, MN



INSIDE:

- **Welcome from AICE President and Chair**
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- **Learn more about AICE and Membership Opportunities**

Welcome to Minneapolis!

From AICE President Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert and AICE Chair Alexander Agafonov, Ph.D.

Dear Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to the 2017 AICE Symposium in Minneapolis!

The Symposium will feature several distinguished panels of international education specialists whose perspectives will encourage each of us to reflect on the Symposium theme, *Setting the Standard for Graduate Admissions: Three-year Degrees and Other Challenges*. This year's Symposium continues with the spirit of past Symposia highlighting our Association's steadfast commitment to activate and reinforce dialogue on international credential evaluation standards, methodologies and practices. AICE is proud to have contributed to promoting best practices and collaboration for academic excellence and to strengthen communication among international educators from academia and professional organizations, laying a strong foundation for the development of long-term sustainable partnerships and networks.

The symposium would not be a reality without the creativity and unwavering commitment of many. We express our deep appreciation and gratitude for the enormous contributions of our panelists, presenters, sponsors, Symposium Planning Committee, and our Endorsed Members and Affiliates.

Thank you for joining us at the 2017 AICE Symposium. We hope that you will find your participation in the Symposium and connecting with new and familiar colleagues enriching and productive.



Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert
President and Treasurer
Association of International
Credential Evaluators (AICE)



Alexander Agafonov, PhD
Chair
Association of International
Credential Evaluators (AICE)

2017 AICE Symposium Schedule

Wednesday, April 5, 2017

Opening Reception 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Mission American Kitchen and Bar
77 N 7th St, Minneapolis, MN 55402

Thursday, April 6, 2017

Welcome and Introductions 9:00 – 9:30 AM

Symposium Moderator: Alexander Agafonov

Module 1: Bologna-Patterned Three-year Degrees 9:30 – 10:45 AM

Moderator: Aleksander Morawski
Panel of Experts: Melanie Gottlieb, Robert Watkins

BREAK 10:45 – 11:00 AM

Module 2: Three-Year Bachelor's Degree: South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka) 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

Moderator: Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert
Panel of Experts: Ujjaini Sahasrabudhe, Annetta Stroud, Johnny K. Johnson

LUNCH 12:15 – 1:15 PM

Sponsored by: **Shorelight Education** 

Module 3: Beyond South Asia and Bologna: Three-year degrees from Australia, South Africa, and Israel 1:15 – 2:30 PM

Moderator: Beth Cotter
Panel of Experts: Ann M. Koenig, Josh Trevers, Stephanie Ingvaldson

BREAK 2:30 – 2:45 PM

Breakout Groups 2:45 – 3:30 PM

Breakout Groups Report and Wrap-Up 3:30 – 4:30 PM

All attendees are invited to a post-Symposium Happy Hour Cash Bar!

All events on Thursday will be held in Avenue 1 and 2 of the Millennium Hotel.

Meet the Experts



**Symposium Moderator:
Alexander Agafonov,
Ph.D.**
GLOBE LANGUAGE SERVICES

Alexander Agafonov, Ph.D. is the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Globe Language Services, Inc. He holds a Ph.D. in Educational Administration and Policy Studies from the University at Albany (SUNY), M.S. in Higher Education Administration from the University at Albany (SUNY) and B.A. in Foreign Languages/ Linguistics from Murmansk State Humanities University in Russia. He has worked in education for more than 20 years as a teacher, administrator, researcher and consultant.

Prior to joining Globe Language Services Dr. Agafonov served as Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at ASA College in NYC. His extensive experience in the field of International Education includes advising international students, serving as PDSO (Primary Designated School Official), developing articulation agreements and dual-degree/ degree completion programs with US and foreign institutions, evaluating foreign credentials, and doing research in the field of comparative education. Dr. Agafonov served on accreditation and program review teams for Middle States Commission on Higher Education and New York State Education Department. He currently serves as Chair of the Association of International Credential Evaluators, Inc (AICE).

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MODULE 1: Bologna-Patterned Three-year Degrees 9:30 – 10:45 AM



**Moderator:
Aleksander Morawski**
FOREIGN CREDITS, INC.

Aleks is Director of Evaluation Services at Foreign Credits, Inc., and is an experienced international enrollment management professional with an extensive background in credential evaluation, university admissions, and management. He also serves as chair of the AICE Scholarship and Publications committee.

Morawski completed his bachelor's degree at Marquette University and master's degree at San Diego State University, both in political science with a focus on international relations. He is an active and experienced trainer and member of NAFSA Trainer Corps, presently serving as workshop dean of the credential evaluation curriculum. He has served as the NAFSA Admissions and Credential Evaluation network leader, and is a regular presenter at local, national, and international conferences.

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**Panel Expert:
Melanie Gottlieb**
AACRAO

Melanie Gottlieb joined the staff as Deputy Director of AACRAO in 2015. She came to the national office with 18 years as an AACRAO member, with experience in Records & Registration, Enrollment Management and International Recruitment and Credential Evaluation.

She has served the association in a variety of leadership roles throughout her career, most recently as Vice President for International Education on the AACRAO Board of Directors. Melanie earned an MA in Information Science from the University of Missouri - Columbia and a BA in History /American Studies from Marlboro College in Vermont.

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Panel Expert:
Robert Watkins
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT
AUSTIN

Robert Watkins has been in the field of international admissions and credential evaluation for 40 years all of it at The University of Texas at Austin where he is Assistant Director of Admissions in the Graduate and International Admissions Center. A member of NAFSA, AACRAO and EAIE, he has presented frequently on international credentials at annual meetings of all three organizations.

He is former Chair of the Admissions Section (ADSEC) now known as International Enrollment Management (IEM), former Vice President for International Education on the AACRAO Board of Directors, and served as Chair of the International Student Records Committee of the NCAA (2002-11). He served on and then chaired the former National Council on the Evaluation of Foreign Educational Credentials (1992-2000) as a NAFSA representative and was co-author of the PIER Canada Workshop (1989) and PIER Philippines Workshop (2001) and now serves on the AACRAO International Education Standards Council (IESC) which formulates the Credential Advice in AACRAO EDGE.

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MODULE 2: Three-Year Bachelor's Degree: South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka) 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM



Moderator:
Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert
ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS
EVALUATION INSTITUTE, INC.

Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert is the founder, President and CEO of Academic Credentials Evaluation Institute, Inc. (ACEI), incorporated in the State of California since 1994. She has authored the Country Guide Series Reports on Senegal (2000) and Cameroon and co-authored the 1998 book on the system of education of Hong Kong. She has contributed to PIER Reports on the systems of education of Central America (1987), Canada (1987), and the United Kingdom (1990). She served as Chair of the Admission-Section (ADSEC) Committee of NAFSA (National Association of Foreign Student Advisors: Association of International Educators) from 1999 to 2001,

as Chair of NAFSA's Region XII Southern District committee from 1995 to 1999, and served on AACRAO's Publication and Reviews Committee from 1990-1993.

She has provided training and made frequent presentations on foreign educational systems and the recognition of international credentials at conferences and symposiums in the United States and abroad. She is frequently called on by US government, academic institutions, state licensing boards, private enterprise as well as institutions and educational ministries abroad for assistance with international academic credentials. She holds the BA in Political Science from the University of San Diego and MBA from Pepperdine University. She is currently serving on the International Education Standards Council (IESC) of AACRAO and is President and Treasurer of the Association of International Credential Evaluators, Inc.

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Panel Expert:
Ujjaini Sahasrabudhe
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN
CALIFORNIA

Ujjaini Sahasrabudhe is the director of the Office of Graduate Admission at University of Southern California. She is responsible for coordinating with academic programs and managing graduate

admission-related operations for the university.

She holds master's degrees in human development and family studies, as well as social and multicultural foundations of education. She has presented at conferences such as NAFSA, NAGAP, Association for the Study of Higher Education and Comparative and International Education Society. She also serves as the managing editor for NAFSA's IEM Spotlight e-newsletter.

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Panel Expert:
Annetta Stroud
AACRAO

Annetta Stroud began working with AACRO in 2008 in the role of Senior Evaluator and Training Coordinator, and is currently the Associate Director for Training and Program Development. She has worked in the field of international education for over 15 years in both public and private institutions in various positions in international admissions and credential evaluation, student services and academic management.

Her current role with AACRAO allows her to engage in the research of international comparative education and support the training of professional in the field, and has presented at various conferences including both AACRAO and NAFSA annual and regionals and the Education USA MENA Forum. Annetta holds a B.A. in Music from the University of New Mexico, M.A. in Adult Education from San Francisco State University, and an Ed.M. in Human Resource Development from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

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Panel Expert:
Johnny K. Johnson
FOREIGN CREDENTIALS EVALUATION
SERVICES OF AMERICA

Johnny K. Johnson has had 45 years in international education which includes administrative and teaching positions at two-year and four-year colleges and universities, both public and private, in the United States, Asia and the Caribbean.

He has consulted with colleges, universities, government and private sector organizations, and has written or edited 33 publications and made more than 120 conference presentations in the fields of international education and student affairs. Research, conference presentations, and business and leisure travel have taken Mr. Johnson to more than 80 countries.

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MODULE 3: Beyond South Asia and Bologna: Three-year degrees from Australia, South Africa, and Israel 1:15 – 2:30 PM



Moderator:
Beth Cotter
FOREIGN CREDENTIAL
EVALUATIONS, INC.

Beth Cotter has been President and CEO of Foreign Credential Evaluations, Inc. since 2000. Beth received her B.A. degree in German from Wake Forest University and her M.B.A. degree in Finance from Georgia State University.

She had eight years of teaching and educational administration experience in curriculum development at the post-secondary level prior to joining FCE in 1997. She has been a member of NAFSA: Association of International Educators since 1999, where she has presented at State and Regional Conferences. Beth is currently the Chair of the AICE Membership Committee. FCE has been an Endorsed Member of AICE since 2006.

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Panel Expert:
Josh Trevers
GLOBE LANGUAGE SERVICES

Josh Trevers has been Director of Evaluation Services at Globe Language Services since 2004 and Translation Coordinator since 2014. Prior to joining Globe, he was a credential evaluator and area specialist at World Education Services.

He specializes in education systems of Western Europe, the Middle East, East Asia and Francophone Africa. He has represented Globe on numerous occasions at both NAFSA, where he presented a workshop on secondary level education, and the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). Josh holds a bachelor's degree from the State University of New York at Albany and a Master's Degree from George Washington University.

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Panel Expert:
Ann M. Koenig
AACRAO

Ann M. Koenig has been an associate director with AACRAO International since 2002. Her career in international education spans more than 25 years, including foreign credential evaluation in professional evaluation services, and campus-based work in international undergraduate and graduate admissions, student records management, academic advising and transfer credit evaluation, at Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee, a University of Maryland University College program in Germany, Golden Gate University in San Francisco, and the University of California, Berkeley.

Ann has done in-depth research on education in several countries. She is the author of the ECE monograph An Overview of the Educational System of Albania (1993),

co-author of the PIER workshop report on Poland (1992) and AACRAO Country Guide The Educational System of the Russian Federation (2008), and contributor to NAFSA's A Guide to Educational Systems Around the World (1999), the AACRAO EDGE online database, AACRAO's Guide to Bogus Institutions and Documents (2006), The AACRAO International Guide (2010 and 2016 editions), AACRAO's Transfer Handbook (2015), and AACRAO's quarterly journal College & University.

A frequent workshop trainer and conference presenter, Ann specializes in sharing information on country educational systems, best practices in international academic record review and admissions, and academic credential fraud awareness. She has presented at professional development and training events sponsored by AACRAO, NAFSA, NAGAP, EAIE, and other organizations in the U.S. and Europe.

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Panel Expert:
Stephanie Ingvaldson
**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY,
FRESNO**

Stephanie Ingvaldson has close to a decade of experience in enrollment management and evaluation, working at UCLA Undergraduate Admissions with both domestic and international students, and most recently at California State University, Fresno, where she is involved with the recruitment, admission, and enrollment steps of both undergraduate and graduate international students.

Ms. Ingvaldson oversees the International Student Services and Programs office at Fresno State and serves as the current Network Leader for the Admissions and Credential Evaluation Knowledge Community of NAFSA.

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MODULE 1: Bologna-Patterned Three-year Degrees 9:30 – 10:45 AM

The Bologna process of 1999 reformed higher education in much of Western Europe. Before the reforms, most countries' higher education systems (with some notable exceptions) were structured to include a long-cycle first university degree which granted access to doctoral programs. The reforms mandated the development of a 3+2 structure, consisting of a three-year first degree, typically referred to as a Bachelor, and a two-year graduate level degree, typically referred to as a Master.

The European three-year Bachelor degree brings about several challenges. Fundamentally, it does not meet the number of years required (four) to be equivalent to a US Bachelor's degree. However, many European countries have or had thirteen-year or longer secondary school programs, which, it can be argued, makes up the difference. Furthermore, graduates of the European three-year Bachelor are often equally advanced in their field of study as their US counterparts because most curricula place a greater emphasis on subjects within the major.

Credential evaluators consider a US bachelor's degree to consist of four years of study. As such, Bologna bachelor's degrees do not meet the minimum standard and are typically evaluated as three years of undergraduate study. Autonomous universities are not held to this mandate. Some admit holders of Bologna bachelor's degrees directly to graduate programs. Others require completion of a bridge program. Others still deny admission to anyone not holding the minimum of a four-year degree.

In this session, the panel will address the issues of secondary preparation, specialization, academic rigor and employment opportunities within the context of three-year Bologna degrees. This discussion will provide guidance to graduate admissions officers and attempt to establish the standards for graduate admissions in the United States.



TOPICS

Bologna Process overview and historical context (introduction)

- *Include admission requirements and components of a Bologna bachelor's degree*

Does the 13+ of secondary education make up the deficit between US Bachelor's degree and Bologna Bachelors?

- *Not all European secondary programs are 13+ years, and increasingly they are transitioning to 12 years. Theoretically, all graduates from secondary school in any Bologna signatory secondary program are eligible for admission.*

There is a greater focus on the major subject in Bologna bachelors.

- *Does this equal to the fourth year of study in the major subject of a US Bachelor's degree?*

European students generally claim to be stronger academically in their field of specialization than their American counterparts.

- *Does this make up for the shorter duration of Bologna bachelor's?*

The perception of a three-year Bologna bachelor's degree is lower than the previous 5-year first degree in the employment market, leading most students to pursue Master's degrees for similar employment opportunities.

- *Does this have any effect on academic evaluation in the US?*

MODULE 2: Three-Year Bachelor's Degree: South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka) 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

The three-year degree debate from countries in South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka) is one that continues to persist given the steady number of international students seeking graduate degrees at U.S. institutions of higher education. As the second largest exporter of international students to the U.S. after China and its leading source from South Asia, India's three-year bachelor's degree is of particular interest.

India's three-year Bachelor's degree in arts and sciences has been typically a three-year program patterned after the British system. Attempts were recently made by some Indian universities to champion the idea of expanding the three-year program by another year to include a research component and additional courses at the advanced level, particularly in the sciences. These institutions viewed this move as essential if India intends to be competitive globally, especially in scientific research and development.

This push toward expanding the three-year into a four-year degree was met with strong resistance from the University Grants Commission (UGC), India's higher education regulatory and funding body. The conflict between some key public universities and the UGC concerning the four-year bachelor's degree came to a head in September 2014. The UGC ordered those institutions that had either embarked on offering the four-year bachelor's degree or were already offering them, to abandon the program and revert to the standard three-year programs or lose their funding altogether.

On the other hand, Pakistan, India's neighbor, is taking steps to adopting the four-year bachelor's

degree, and reforming its two- and three-year degree programs. Some universities in Sri Lanka, India's other neighbor, are beginning to offer four-year bachelor's degree.



The proponents of India's four-year bachelor's degree, like their counterparts in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, see the additional year as a more holistic approach to teaching and learning, allowing for broad-based training in the humanities and sciences. The abrupt dismissal of the four-year program by the UGC is seen by many of the educators and the institutions in India as shortsighted and lacking any serious academic discussion supported by convincing facts and arguments. Many foresee that the UGC's resistance toward the four-year degree will only push students away from studying sciences, pursuing careers in sciences and stymieing India's chances in scientific innovation.

While educators in India grapple with the weaknesses and global competitiveness of their three-year Bachelor degree as compared to the four-year Bachelor, a cursory search of graduate admissions requirements of U.S. institutions of higher education show variations in the acceptance of the Indian three-year degree. The three-year Indian bachelor's degree appears to be viewed by some universities as sufficient preparation for admission to graduate school while regarded as insufficient by others. There are U.S. graduate schools and credential evaluation services that consider the three-year Indian degrees from select universities as equivalent to the U.S. bachelor's degree, while others recommend three years of undergraduate credit equivalence.

MODULE 2: Three-Year Bachelor's Degree: South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka) cont. 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

TOPICS

Indian Institution Ranking

Some U.S. institutions and credential evaluation services are considering three-year bachelor degrees as U.S. equivalent based on the ranking of the institution in India.

- *Does the rank of the Indian institution in the country's education hierarchy play a factor in the eligibility of a three-year bachelor's degree holder for graduation admission?*
- *Who determines the ranking of universities in India? And, what are the criteria to determine the ranking of institutions? How is quality control enforced?*

U.S. Perspective on Indian Degrees

Some U.S. institutions and credential evaluators, recognize the three-year Bachelor's degree from India as sufficient preparation for admission to graduate studies.

- *Is the General Education course component of U.S. bachelor degree programs applied to the three-year bachelor degrees from India (given its absence from the Indian bachelor's degree and the argument from some Indian universities supporting its inclusion as part of a "more holistic approach to teaching and learning")?*
- *Is focus to be placed on the Major-specific coursework of the three-year bachelor degree?*
- *Why are the Indian three-year bachelor's degrees assessed based on institution ranking and degree classification, when the same is not true of three-year degrees from other countries?*

Indian Universities Perspective on their 3- year degree

Some institutions of higher education in India (as cited above) have argued on the limitations of the three-year degree and in favor of expanding the degree to four years.

- *If the three-year bachelor degree is seen by some institutions in India as inadequate preparation for graduation school, should this be the deciding factor in determining graduation admission eligibility at U.S. institutions?*
- *Is the UGC's order for universities to revert back to 3yr programs primarily a funding issue?*
- *Are the 3-year Bachelor degrees treated differently than the 4-year degree holders in India? Is the quality of the 3-year Bachelor considered to be less than the 4-year Bachelor degrees in India?*
- *Are holders of 3-year Indian Bachelor degrees at a disadvantage in the employment market compared to holders of 4-year Bachelor degrees?*

Three-year bachelor degree classification

Some U.S. institutions and credential evaluation services are considering three-year bachelor degrees as U.S. equivalent based on the classification of the degree. For example, a three-year bachelor degree First Class with Distinction/Division I is required for admission to some graduate schools.

- *Is the classification of the three-year degree conferred considered a criterion for admission to the graduation school?*

MODULE 3: Beyond South Asia and Bologna: Three-year degrees from Australia, South Africa and Israel 1:15 – 2:30 PM

Three-year bachelor degrees in Australia and South Africa are modeled after the UK educational system. Australian Bachelor's (pass or ordinary) degrees require three years of full-time study or the part-time equivalent. These qualifications include Bachelor of Arts, Science and Commerce, i.e., BA, BSc. and BCom; Bachelor of Applied Science (BAppSc) and Bachelor of Business Administration (BBusAdmin). In Australia, four-year Bachelor's degrees exist in professional fields like Engineering, Education, Law, etc. An Honours degree usually follows an (Ordinary) three-year Bachelor's degree. It comprises one year of study in an area of specialization. Students are typically selected to pursue the honours degree based on academic achievement. The three-year Bachelor's degree is often accepted for access to higher education degrees. An Honours Degree is normally required for access to higher research degrees.

A major part of the history of education in South Africa has to do with apartheid which was first established in 1949. Apartheid became dismantled between 1990 and 1993 and the years since have allowed for all racial groups to play "catch-up" with education. Admission into Bachelor's degree programs is traditionally based on completion of year 12 (standard 10). Students sit for the Senior Certificate Examination (an external examination) as they approach the end of standard 10. The results of these examinations will determine whether one may be admitted into a Bachelor's degree program. In South Africa Bachelor's degrees require three years of full-time study or the part-time equivalent. These qualifications include Bachelor of Arts, Science and Commerce, i.e., BA, BSc. and BCom and the Bachelor of Social Science (BSocSc) degrees. Four to six-year bachelor degrees exist in professional fields like engineering, law, architecture and medicine. An Honours degree usually follows a three-year Bachelor's degree. It comprises one year of study in an area of specialization. Students are selected to pursue the Honours degree based on academic achievement.

In Israel, admission to higher education requires the Matriculation Certificate (Teudat Bagrut) and the



Psychometric Exam, which bears resemblance to the SAT in the USA. Historically, only universities could offer Bachelor's level programs, but that option has long since been extended to colleges. Bachelor's Degree programs in Israel are typically three years in length. Exceptions to this are Bachelor's Degrees in Nursing, Pharmacy, Education and Engineering, which are four years in length and medical and dental degrees which take six years. Degrees are heavily focused on the major field of study, often with little time remaining for electives in unrelated subjects. However, pursuit of double majors is quite common. In contrast to three-year degrees in Europe and South Asia, Israeli three-year Bachelor's Degrees are widely recognized as equivalent to four-year bachelor's degrees in the US. One reason for this assessment is the level of study required to earn the Bagrut certificate at the end of High School. The Bagrut can be considered to be on the level of the UK's A-Level exams. Undergraduate transfer credit is awarded in the US for Bagrut exams in academic subjects completed at the level of 3 or higher (on a scale of 1 to 6). As such, students entering Israeli universities can be considered to have already completed one year of undergraduate level study, covering the typical general education requirements of US universities. In addition, academic requirements in Israel tend to be rigorous. Students are typically older than their peers abroad due to mandatory military service and the common practice of taking time off to work or travel prior to matriculation. In addition, the number of courses taken per year is generally higher than at US institutions and summers are often spent preparing for exams or writing term papers.

MODULE 3: Beyond South Asia and Bologna: Three-year degrees from Australia, South Africa and Israel cont. 1:15 – 2:30 PM

TOPICS

Australia

Graduates from 3-year Bachelor's degrees are often admitted into Master's programs in Australian universities. This is almost universal for non-research based Master's programs.

- *Should the same practice be true for US institutions with non-research based Master's programs?*

What are the employment implications for graduates of Australian 3-year Bachelor's programs in Australia and in the USA?

- *Australian Bachelor's degrees vary in duration depending on the area of study.*
- *Are the graduates of 3-year Bachelor's degrees (Arts, Commerce, etc.) prepared to enter the workforce or should these degrees be considered preparatory for the additional training (either an Honours degree or a Master's degree)?*

South Africa

Since admission to Bachelor's degree programs is based on successful passing of external examinations, better prepared students are admitted.

- *Would this external examination serve as an extra level of college preparation (such as A-levels in the UK) or as a compensation for uneven level of secondary education in secondary schools (such as CXC exams in the Caribbean)?*
- *Are graduates of 3-year Bachelor's programs accepted into Master's programs by South African universities?*
- *What are employment implications for graduates of South African 3-year Bachelor's degrees in South Africa and in the USA?*

Israel

Should the grades on Bagrut exams be taken into account when deciding whether these exams should be equivalent to college-level academic work?

- *Should 3-year Bachelor's degrees from Israel be treated differently from 3-year degrees from other countries? Why or why not?*
- *What are employment implications for graduates of Israeli 3-year Bachelor's programs in Israel and in the USA?*



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