

Overview of Higher Education Programmes and Certificates in Different Regions

Country/Region	Certificate/Diploma/Degree	Explanation
Mainland China	Graduation Certificate for Associate Degree Programmes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Programmes awarding graduation certificate for associate degree programme (certificate of regular higher education): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Full-time programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2-year programmes - 3-year programmes (2) Off-campus programmes (distance education programmes): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Radio broadcast programmes - Television broadcast programmes - Correspondence programmes - E-learning programmes - Other programmes (3) Self-study higher education examination 2. According to Article 3 of <i>Interim Provisions on Regular Higher Education Qualification Certificate Management</i>, 'The country recognises the qualifications proved by the regular higher education certificate. The holder of the certificate enjoys relevant treatment as stipulated by the country.'
	Graduation Certificate for Undergraduate Programme Bachelor's Degree Certificate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Programmes awarding graduation certificate for undergraduate programme and Bachelor's Degree certificate: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) 4-year-or-above full-time programmes (2) Off-campus programmes (distance education programmes): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Radio broadcast programmes - Television broadcast programmes - Correspondence programmes - E-learning programmes - Other programmes <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Nb: Apart from undergraduate programme, off-campus programmes include courses upgrading from associate degree to undergraduate degree</p> (3) Self-study higher education examination 2. Certificates can be obtained under two circumstances: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Only graduation certificate for undergraduate programme (certificate of regular higher education) obtained after graduating from undergraduate programmes. (2) Both graduation certificate for undergraduate programme and bachelor's degree certificate obtained after graduating from undergraduate degree. 3. Both graduation certificate for undergraduate programme and Bachelor's Degree certificates recognised by Ministry of Education of People's Republic of China. 4. According to Article 3 of <i>Interim Provisions on Regular Higher Education Qualification Certificate Management</i>, 'The country recognises the qualifications proved by regular higher education certificate. The holder of the certificate enjoys relevant treatment as stipulated by the country.' 5. According to the provisions of Article 4 of <i>Regulation of People's Republic of China on Academic Degrees</i>, 'The Bachelor's Degree shall be conferred on graduates from institutions of higher education who have good academic records and have attained the following academic standards: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) having a relatively good grasp of basic theories, specialised knowledge and basic skills in the discipline concerned; and (2) having initially acquired the ability to undertake scientific research or to engage in a special technical work.'

Country/Region	Certificate/Diploma/Degree	Explanation
Mainland China	Graduation Certificate for Master's Programme Master's Degree Certificate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Programmes awarding graduation certificate for Master's programme and Master's Degree certificate : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Full-time programmes (2) Off-campus programmes 2. Certificates can be obtained under two circumstances: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Only graduation certificate for Master's programme (regular higher education certificate) obtained after graduating from Master's programmes. (2) Both graduation certificate for Master's programme and Master's Degree certificate obtained after graduating from Master's programme. 3. According to Article 3 of <i>Interim Provisions on Regular Higher Education Qualification Certificate Management</i>, 'The country recognises the qualifications proved by regular higher education certificate. The holder of the certificate enjoys relevant treatments as stipulated by the country.' 4. According to the provision of Article 5 of <i>Regulation of People's Republic of China on Academic Degrees</i>, 'The Master's Degree shall be conferred upon postgraduates in institutions of higher education or scientific research institutes or persons with qualifications equivalent to postgraduates on graduation, who have passed examinations in the required courses for the Master's Degree and successfully defended their dissertations and attained the following academic standards: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) having a firm grasp of basic theories and systematic specialised knowledge of the discipline concerned; and (2) having the ability to undertake scientific research or to engage in special technical work. 5. According to the provision of Article 7 of <i>Interim Measures for Implementation of Regulations of People's Republic of China on Academic Degrees</i>, examination of Master's Degree requires student to be specialised in a foreign language.

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Mainland China	Graduation Certificate for Doctoral Programme Doctoral Degree Certificate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Programmes awarding graduation certificate for doctoral programme and doctoral degree certificate: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Full-time programmes (2) Off-campus programmes 2. Certificates can be obtained under two circumstances: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Only graduation certificate for doctoral programme (regular higher education certificate) obtained after graduating from doctoral programmes. (2) Both graduation certificate for doctoral programme and doctor's degree certificate obtained after graduating from doctoral programme. 3. According to Article 3 of <i>Interim Provisions on Regular Higher Education Qualification Certificate Management</i>, 'The country recognises the qualifications proved by regular higher education certificate. The holder of the certificate enjoys relevant treatment as stipulated by the country.' 4. According to the provision of Article 6 of <i>Regulation of People's Republic of China on Academic Degrees</i>, 'The doctoral degree shall be conferred on postgraduates in institutions of higher education or scientific research institutes or persons with qualifications equivalent to postgraduates on graduation, who have passed examinations in the required courses for the doctoral degree and successfully defended their dissertations and have attained the following academic standards: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) having a firm and comprehensive grasp of basic theories and profound and systematic specialised knowledge in the discipline concerned; (2) having the ability to undertake scientific research; and (3) having made creative achievements in science or in a special technology.' 5. According to provision of Article 11 of <i>Interim Measures for Implementation of Regulations of People's Republic of China on Academic Degrees</i>, the examination of doctoral degree requires the student to be specialised in two foreign languages. For some subjects and disciplines examined and approved by the academic degree evaluation committee of degree-conferring units, only examination in the first foreign language is required.
Taiwan, China	Associate Degree	<p>According to the provision of Article 2-1 of <i>Degree Conferral Law</i> imposed by Department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education, Republic of China (Taiwan), 'An Associate Degree shall be awarded to any student in junior college or university division of junior college who completes with passing grades the required credits and the term of study as set forth in the law, including any required internship period.'</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Programmes awarding certificate of Associate Degree: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) 2-year programme: student graduate of vocational school or equivalent can apply for this course. (2) 5-year programme: student graduate of junior high school or equivalent can apply for this course.

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Taiwan, China	Bachelor's Degree	<p>According to the provisions of Article 3 and 4 of <i>Degree Conferral Law</i> imposed by Department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education, Republic of China (Taiwan), 'A Bachelor's Degree shall be awarded to any student in university Bachelor's Degree programmes who completes with passing grades the required credits and the term of study as set forth in the law, including any required internship period.'</p> <p>'Separate Bachelor's Degrees may be awarded to university students with double majors who have completed the required credits in their first major department and their second major department. Students shall not receive a separate degree for a minor.'</p> <p>1. Programmes awarding certificate of Bachelor's Degree:</p> <p>(1) 2-year programme: student with Associate Degree or equivalent can apply for this course.</p> <p>(2) 4-year programme: student graduate of senior high school or equivalent can apply for this course.</p>
	Master's Degree	<p>According to provision of Article 6 of <i>Degree Conferral Law</i> imposed by Department of Higher Education in Ministry of Education, Republic of China (Taiwan), 'A Master's Degree shall be awarded to students in university graduate school Master's Degree programmes who complete the required Master's Degree curriculum, submit a thesis, and pass review by a Master's examination committee.'</p>
	Doctor's Degree	<p>According to provision of Article 7 of <i>Degree Conferral Law</i> imposed by Department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education, Republic of China (Taiwan), 'A graduate student enrolled in a doctoral programme may be recognised as a doctoral candidate if he/she meets the following conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. has completed the required doctoral curriculum; and 2. has passed the doctoral candidacy examination. <p>A doctoral candidate who submits a dissertation and passes a review by a doctoral examination committee shall be awarded a doctoral degree.'</p>
Hong Kong SAR	Certificate	<p>1. The Bachelor's Degrees currently launched in Hong Kong SAR are usually 3-year Bachelor's Degree with Honours programmes. According to Education Bureau of Government of Hong Kong SAR, 4-year Bachelor's programmes are to be launched in 2012.</p> <p>2. There are two types of Bachelor's Degree held by Open University of Hong Kong. Students either take 120 credits to accomplish a normal Bachelor's Degree or take 160 credits to obtain Bachelor's Degree (Hons.).</p>
	Diploma	
	Higher Diploma/Associate's Degree	
	Bachelor's Degree	
	Bachelor's Degree with Honours	
	Postgraduate Certificate/Postgraduate Diploma	
Master's Degree		
Doctor's Degree		
Macao SAR	Certificate	<p>The study periods for certificates, diplomas and postgraduate diplomas usually last for one year but actual study periods are subject to decisions of higher education institutes opening courses.</p>
	Diploma	
	Postgraduate Diploma	

Country/Region	Certificate/Diploma/Degree	Explanation
Macao SAR	Advanced Diploma Associate's Degree Diploma	Study periods for Associate Degree diplomas usually last two years but actual study periods subjected to decisions of higher education institutes opening courses.
	Higher Diploma	Study period for higher diploma usually 3 years.
	Bachelor's Degree	Bachelor's Degrees and Master's Degrees conferred by Asia International Open University (Macao) are in accordance with following regulations: 1. According to provision of Article 6 in attachment of Ordinance No. 196/92/M of 28 September, for graduates taking degree programmes opened by Asia International Open University (Macao) conducted in Chinese or English before 6 th December, 1999, Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree obtained are equivalent to the current higher diplomas (Bacharelato) and Bachelor's Degrees (Licenciatura) in Macao, respectively.
	Master's Degree	2. According to Article 4 of Ordinance No. 467/99/M of 6 December and provisions of Article 5 of 'Organisation Rules of Asia International Open University (Macao)' approved by Ordinance 467/99/M, for graduates taking revised and re-announced degree programmes conducted in Chinese or English after 6 th December, 1999, Bachelor's Degree with Honours and Master's Degree obtained are equivalent to the current Bachelor's Degrees (Licenciatura) and Master's Degrees (Mestre) in Macao, respectively. 3. According to provision of Article 4 of Ordinance No. 465/99/M of 6 December, graduates taking (3-year) Chinese Bachelor's Programme of Business Administration opened by Asia International Open University (Macao) before 6 th December 1999 can automatically transfer academic credits to (4-year) Chinese Bachelor's programme in Business Administration. They can be awarded Bachelor's Degree of Business Administration after finishing the courses in the fourth year and obtaining 60 credits. This degree corresponds to Bachelor's Degree currently launched in Macao and relevant certificate will bear the phrase of '4-year programme'.
	Doctor's Degree	
United Kingdom	Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)	
	Higher National Certificate (HNC)	HNC and HND in UK are vocational higher education programmes of one to two years, equivalent to the beginning stage of the local Bachelor's programme. After completing these programmes, students are considered to have finished the first or second years of Bachelor's programme if they transfer to the undergraduate system.
	Higher National Diploma (HND)	
	Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)	
	Foundation Degrees (FdA, FdSc etc.)	The study period of foundation degrees lasts two years; the programmes focus on vocational training. Students completing course are considered to have finished the beginning stage of Bachelor's Degree and may transfer to the undergraduate system.
	Graduate Certificate	
	Graduate Diploma	
Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)		

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United Kingdom	Undergraduate - Bachelor's Degree - Bachelor's Degree with Honours	Undergraduate programmes in UK usually last 3 years. However, engineering programmes and medical programmes last 4 and 5-6 years, respectively. Most programmes are Bachelor's Degree with Honours.
	Postgraduate Certificate	
	Postgraduate Certificate in Education	
	Postgraduate Diploma	
	Integrated Master's Degree	
	Master's Degree Doctoral Degree	
United States of America	Associate Degree	
	Bachelor's Degree / Honours Bachelor's Degree	
	First Professional Degree	A First Professional Degree is equivalent to academic qualification specialised in certain category of subject. Applicants must finish particular undergraduate coursework or degree before taking related programmes.
	Post-Bachelor's Certificate	Post-Bachelor's Certificate is a non-degree professional certificate programme. Study period often does not exceed one semester. It usually can be finished during study period of Bachelor's Degree or in a short period after finishing Bachelor's Degree.
	Master's Degree - Research Master's Degree - Professional Master's Degree	
	Research Doctorate Degree / Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)	
Canada	College Diploma (two years)	
	University Certificate / Diploma	
	Associate Degree	
	Applied (Bachelor's) Degree	
	Applied Master's Degree	
	Bachelor's Degree / Bachelor Degree (Honours)	Bachelor's Degrees in Canada are divided into Bachelor Degree (Ordinary) and Bachelor Degree (Honours). Students usually need to take more academic credits to finish the latter. These two degrees are both recognised by local government.
Master's Degree Doctoral Degree (Doctorate / Ph.D.)		
Australia	Diploma	
	Advanced Diploma	
	Associate Degree	Associate Degree in Australia is a 2-year educational qualification after finishing Grade 12 or Certificate III or IV.
	Bachelor Degree	Study period of Bachelor's Programmes (arts, commerce, science, etc.) in Australia usually last 3 years. However, study period of engineering, law and medicine lasts 4 years, 4 to 5 years and 6 years, respectively.
	Bachelor Degree (Honours)	
	Graduate Certificate Graduate Diploma	Graduate certificate and graduate diploma in Australia are professional programmes. They can usually be finished in six months or one year (complete all courses). Applicants must hold Bachelor's Degree.

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Australia	Master Degree	Master's Degrees in Australia are either research-based or course-based. Study period for Master's programme by research and by course last for one year and one to two years, respectively.
	Doctoral Degree	
New Zealand	Certificate	
	Diploma	
	Bachelor Degree	
	Graduate Certificate	The graduation certificate and graduate diploma programmes in New Zealand belong to undergraduate level. These programmes are pathways for graduates of Bachelor Degree to take courses different to their majors in university. It is a level-7 programme in New Zealand Qualifications Framework.
	Graduate Diploma	
	Bachelor's Degree with Honours	Bachelor's Degree with Honours in New Zealand is for Bachelor's students with outstanding academic performance and is similar to that in Canada.
	Postgraduate Certificate	Postgraduate certificate and postgraduate diploma in New Zealand are launched for students graduating with Bachelor's Degrees who wish to continue studies in their academic majors. It is a level-8 programme in the New Zealand Qualifications Framework.
	Postgraduate Diploma	
	Master's Degree	There are three types of Master's programme in New Zealand, including programmes by thesis, by coursework and thesis, and by coursework only.
	Doctoral Degree	

Notes:

1. The above information serves to assist citizens to understand the general situation of education in various regions but does not provide education recognition guidelines. This overview does not depict the acceptability of the aforementioned courses. It does not have any legal effect.
2. The above information is provided for reference only, and is subject to change without further notice. With respect to the actual situation, the information accounted for by the relevant government departments shall prevail.
3. Please refer to 'List of Agencies for Authentication of Academic Qualifications in Different Regions' to check if higher education certificates issued by higher education institutes are recognised by the local government.
4. References:
 - (1) *Interim Provisions on Regular Higher Education Qualification Certificate Management, Regulations of People's Republic of China on Academic Degrees, Interim Measures for Implementation of Regulations of People's Republic of China on Academic Degrees, and Higher Education Law of Peoples Republic of China*, published by Ministry of Education of People's Republic of China.
 - (2) *Degree Conferral Law* promulgated by Department of Higher Education in Ministry of Education, Republic of China (Taiwan).
 - (3) *Higher Education in Taiwan 2010*, website: www.edu.tw/high
 - (4) Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications, website: www.hkcaavq.edu.hk/zh/main.asp
 - (5) Decree-law no. 11/91/M (Higher Education Act of Macao)
 - (6) *Macao Tertiary Education Database*, website: www.gaes.gov.mo/esdbonline/mainframe.html, Tertiary Education Services Office of Macao SAR.
 - (7) Ordinances concerning degrees conferred by Asia International Open University (Macau): Ordinance No. 196/92/M of 28 September, Ordinance No. 465/99/M of 6 December, Ordinance No. 467/99/M of 6 December

- (8) British Council Hong Kong (Study in UK), website : www.educationuk.org.hk/pdf/Education_chart.pdf
- (9) *Education UK information booklet*, British Council Hong Kong
- (10) U.S. Department of Education (Structure of U.S. Education), website:
www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ous/international/usnei/us/edlite-structure-us.html
- (11) *IAU International Handbook of Universities 2010 (21st Edition)*, United States of America – Structure of Higher Education System, Palgrave Macmillan, P.3963-3965.
- (12) The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, website: www.qaa.ac.uk
- (13) National Zealand Qualifications Authority (Qualification types), website:
www.nzqa.govt.nz/studying-in-new-zealand/nzqf/qualification-types/