

Education system

# India

described and compared with  
the Dutch system

This document contains information on the education system of India. We explain the Dutch equivalent of the most common qualifications from India for the purpose of admission to Dutch higher education.

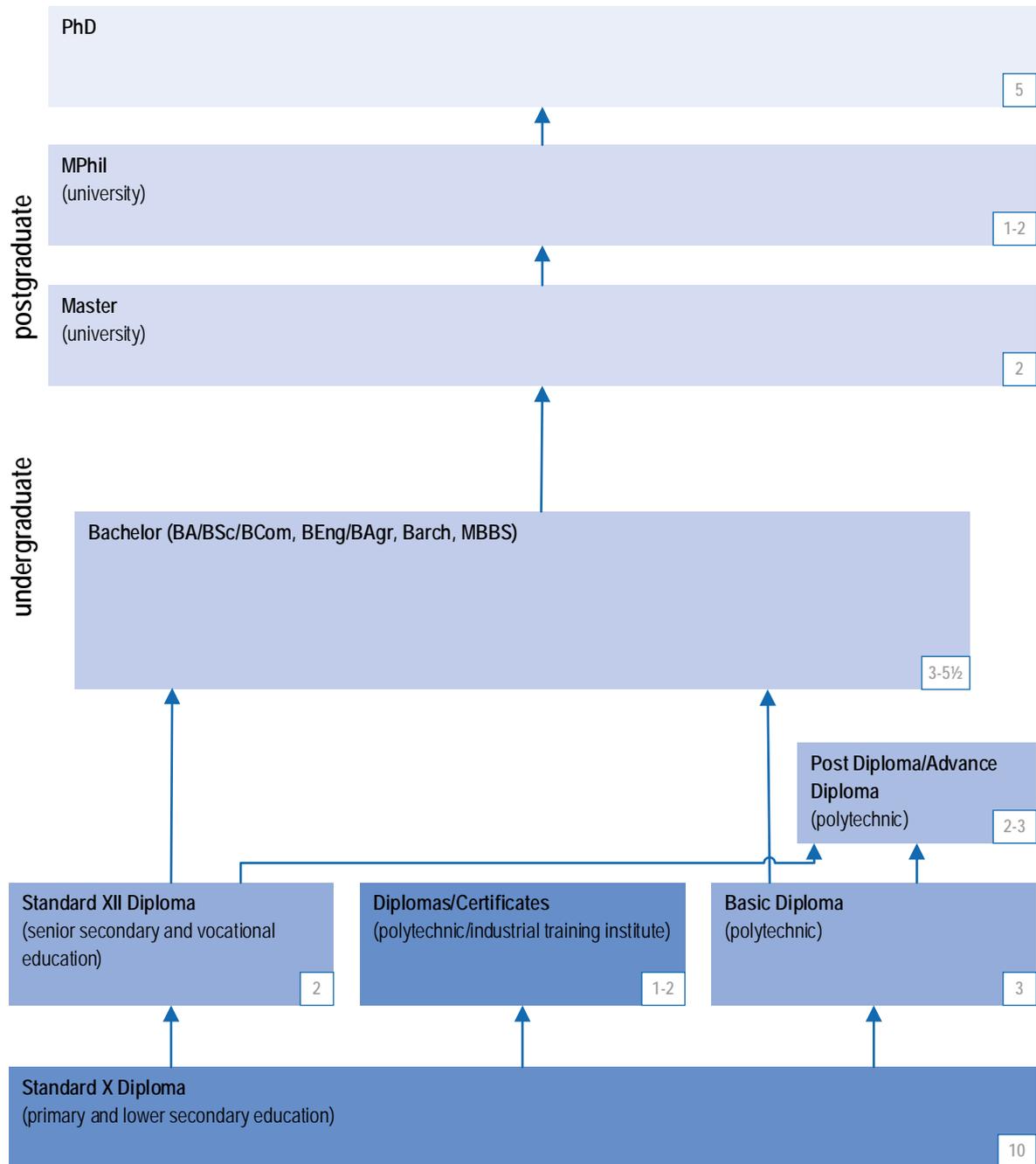
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## Education system India



0 Duration of education

## Evaluation chart

The left-hand column in the table below lists the most common foreign qualifications applicable to admission to higher education. The other columns show the Dutch equivalent along with the comparable levels in the Dutch and European qualifications frameworks.

Degree or qualification	Dutch equivalent and NLOF level		EQF level
Standard X diploma: All India Secondary School Certificate/Indian Certificate of Secondary Education/Secondary School Certificate/Matriculation Certificate	VMBO-T diploma	2	2
Vocational Diplomas and Certificates	MBO diploma (qualification level 2, 3 or 4)	2-4	2-4
Polytechnic Diploma following Standard X (Basic Diploma)	MBO diploma (qualification level 4)	4	4
Standard XII diploma (vocational stream)	MBO diploma (qualification level 4)	4	4
Standard XII diploma (academic stream): Intermediate Examination Certificate/Higher Secondary School Certificate with marks ranging from A-E in 5 subjects	HAVO diploma	4	4
Standard XII diploma (academic stream): All Indian Secondary School Certificate with marks ranging from A (A1, A2) or B (B1) in 5 subjects	VWO diploma	4+	4
Standard XII diploma (academic stream): Indian School Certificate with an average of 75% in 5 subjects	VWO diploma	4+	4
Polytechnic Diploma following Standard XII (Post Diploma, Advance Diploma)	2 or 3 years of HBO	5	5
General Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science	In most cases 2 years of WO	5	5
General Bachelor of Commerce	3 years of HBO	5	5
Honours Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science (other institution)	2 years of WO	5	5

## Education system India

Degree or qualification	Dutch equivalent	NLOF level	EQF level
Honours Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science (with first class distinction from a leading institution)	WO bachelor's degree	6	6
Honours Bachelor of Commerce	HBO bachelor's degree	6	6
Bachelor of Engineering	HBO bachelor's degree	6	6
Bachelor of Agriculture	HBO bachelor's degree	6	6
Bachelor of Dentistry	WO bachelor's degree in dentistry	6	6
Bachelor of Medicine	WO bachelor's degree in medicine	6	6
Bachelor of Laws	WO bachelor's degree in law	6	6
Master degree	HBO master's degree or WO master's or bachelor's degree	6-7	6-7
Master of Philosophy	WO master's degree	7	7

## NB

- The information provided in the table is a general recommendation from which no rights may be derived.
- NLOF = Dutch Qualifications Framework. EQF = European Qualifications Framework.
- The EQF/[NLOF level](#) is not so much a reflection of study load or content; rather, it is an indication of a person's knowledge and skills after having completed a certain programme of study.
- Information about Dutch equivalent qualifications can be found on our website: [the Dutch education system](#).
- [The Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market \(SBB\)](#), evaluates statements on foreign qualifications and training at VMBO and MBO level. The evaluation may vary if SBB evaluates the diploma for admission to VET schools or the labour market in the Netherlands.

## ■ Introduction

**India was part of the British Empire from the second half of the 19th century until the first half of the 20th century. Under the leadership of Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi, India was declared independent in 1947. The country is divided into 28 states and seven territories.**

Of India's population of one billion people, 80% are Hindu, 14% are Muslim and 3% are Christian. Hindi is the official language of India, but English is used the most in higher education, politics, and trade and industry.

The Ministry of Human Resource Development is responsible for education at all levels. It consists of two departments, the Department of School Education and Literacy and the Department of Higher Education. The former is responsible for elementary education, secondary education, and adult education and literacy, the latter for university and higher education, technical education, and minority education.

The Indian education system was originally based on the British model, but changed over the years into a 10+2+3 system, i.e. 10 years of basic education, 2 years of senior general secondary education and 3 years of higher education. The basis for the structure of all parts of the education system is the National Policy on Education (1992).

Adult education is primarily aimed at increasing literacy. Private education is also under the jurisdiction of the government, but differs in that its funding does not come from the treasury. Rules that apply to state schools concerning curricular content, etc., apply equally to private education institutions.

School attendance is officially compulsory for children aged 6 to 14, but this is not enforced in practice. In some states, particularly the poorer ones, less than 50% of the children in this age group attend school.

The language of instruction in basic education is the most common language of the region (Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Tamil or Urdu). In standard VI, English or Hindi is introduced as a second language. The language of instruction during the last two classes (standard XI and standard XII) of secondary school is English or Hindi. In higher education the language of instruction is in most cases English.

The school year for primary and secondary schools runs in most cases from July to April. For universities, the academic year runs in most cases from June or July until the end of March or April.

Institutions in regions at higher altitudes (about two per cent of the total) follow a different schedule, starting in March and usually running until December. Most universities divide the academic year into trimesters, while some work with a semester system. There is no specific system of summer schools.

## ■ Primary and secondary education

The school system follows the 10+2 system, with different subdivisions being followed by each state during the first 10 years. The school years are numbered and indicated by class or standard, these terms are used interchangeably. Class X or standard X or even K-10 mean the same.

Primary school generally refers to education for children aged 6 through 11 (standard I through standard V). Upper primary school and secondary school cover education for children aged 11 to 16 (standard VI through standard X). The last 2 years (standard XI and XII) are sometimes referred to as high school (ages 16 through 18).

In some states, the concept middle / upper primary school exists for standard VI to VIII. In that case, standard IX to XII are referred to as high school. The government guarantees education for all children aged 6 to 14.

### **Standard X**

Pupils take an examination at the end of standard X. If they pass it, they receive either the All India Secondary School Certificate, the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education or the Secondary School Certificate. Before its abandonment in the 1990s the Matriculation Certificate was also one of the diplomas commonly issued after successful completion of the standard X. Final school examinations can be organized per school by various examination boards.

There are two national examination boards, also known as central boards: the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE). There are also boards that organize examinations in the separate states. This is one of the reasons for the different names for final examinations and diplomas. In most cases, there are no major differences in terms of final examination subject matter. For example, for the aforementioned Indian Certificate of Secondary Education, pupils are examined in six subjects. A candidate needs to attain a pass standard in at least five subjects which must include English, four or five subjects are elective. Other examination boards specify similar requirements.

In terms of level, a *Standard X diploma/All India Secondary School Certificate/Indian Certificate of Secondary Education/Secondary School Certificate* is comparable to a VMBO-T (theoretical pathway) diploma.

### Standard XII

High school education (standard XI and XII) has two tracks: the academic stream and the vocational stream. The academic stream is intended to prepare pupils for further study at a university or other higher education institution, while the vocational stream prepares pupils for work or further vocational education.

After passing the national or state examinations at the end of standard XII of the academic stream, pupils receive one of the following certificates: the Indian School Certificate, the Intermediate Examination Certificate, the Higher Secondary School Certificate or the All India Senior School Certificate.

The level of Standard XII examinations is generally higher than that of HAVO examinations. Senior secondary school certificates can thus be regarded as at least comparable to a HAVO diploma, subject to two criteria: the examination must have covered at least six subjects and the results achieved must be good, at least A, B or C. Senior secondary school certificates with at least 5 subjects (results A - E) are comparable to a HAVO diploma.

In some cases, a comparison can also be made with the VWO diploma. This applies to certificates issued by the two central boards, the CBSE and the CISCE. These boards apply slightly higher requirements than the state boards. As a result, the better (private) schools prepare the largest number of students for examinations for the All India Senior School Certificate or Indian School Certificate. In order to justify a comparison with the VWO diploma, in the case of the All India Senior School Certificate, pupils must have taken examinations in five subjects with good results: an A (A1, A2) or B (B1). The subjects are assessed externally by the relevant board, except for some subjects that are assessed internally by the schools. The latter, that do not count for evaluation, are *work experience, physical & health education* and *general studies* for the All India Senior School Certificate, and the subject *Socially Useful Productive Work and Community Service* for the Indian School Certificate.

In terms of level, a *Standard XII diploma (academic stream) Intermediate Examination Certificate* and a *Higher Secondary School Certificate*, with 5 subjects with marks ranging from A-E, are comparable to a HAVO diploma.

In terms of level, a *Standard XII diploma (academic stream) All India Senior School Certificate*, with five subjects with marks ranging from A (A1, A2) or B (B1), is comparable to a VWO diploma.

In terms of level, a *Standard XII diploma (academic stream) Indian School Certificate* with an average of 75% over 5 subjects is comparable to a VWO diploma.

### Senior secondary vocational education

Instead of choosing the academic stream after 10 years of education, it is also possible to enter the vocational stream at secondary schools. These programmes also last 2 years, and lead to a Standard XII diploma. This diploma grants access to higher education, including bachelor's programmes, although access is generally limited to identical or similar study programmes. In terms of function, the vocational Standard XII diploma is comparable to an MBO diploma at qualification level 4. However, the programme is shorter in terms of its actual duration.

In terms of level, a *vocational Standard XII diploma* is in terms of function comparable to an MBO diploma at qualification level 4, despite the fact that the programme only lasts 2 years.

In addition to the vocational stream at secondary schools, other forms of secondary vocational education are also available at various levels. These programmes last 1 to 3 years, full-time or part-time, and are offered by institutions with various names, such as Industrial Training Institutes and Polytechnics.

The Industrial Training Institutes mainly offer vocational training courses. These are vocational training programmes at the level of senior secondary vocational education, such as: Typewriting, Stenography, Secretarial Practices, Computer Operator & Programme Assistant, Architectural Draughtsmanship, Desk Top Publishing, Electrical Technician, Electronics (Radio/TV/Tape Recorder Mechanic), Refrigeration & Air Conditioning, Plumbing, Library Assistant, Cutting/Tailoring & Dress Making, Hair & Skin Care, Fruit & Vegetable Preservation Programs.

In terms of level, *vocational Diplomas and Certificates* are comparable to an MBO diploma at qualification level 2, 3 or 4, depending on the duration and specialisation of the programme.

The Polytechnics offer various Certificate and Diploma programmes, at the level of both secondary and higher vocational education. These are often technical or engineering programmes. The basic diploma programme lasts 3 years and the admission requirement is 10 years of education.

In terms of level, a *Polytechnic Diploma* following *Standard X (Basic Diploma)* is comparable to an MBO diploma at qualification level 4, although the programme only lasts 3 years.

Polytechnics also provide higher professional education. See [Higher professional education](#).

## ■ Admission to higher education

Admission to university education is in principle possible for everyone with one of the certificates from the high school (standard XII), but many faculties set additional requirements for a minimum score (many programmes require a minimum of 50%, but 45% is often sufficient) or for subjects in which the examination was taken (for technical programmes, for example, science subjects are generally required).

There are admission criteria for some programmes (such as medicine and engineering) and for the most prestigious institutions.

## ■ Higher education

Higher education mainly consists of university education, leading to the award of a Bachelor's, Master's or Doctor's degree (PhD). Polytechnics provide higher professional education, leading to the award of certificates and diplomas, although this represents a relatively small group.

There are approximately 400 independent, recognised institutions providing university education, including some 250 universities and around 100 deemed universities.

Most of the universities can be subdivided into two categories: affiliating universities and unitary universities. Affiliating universities form a sort of umbrella bringing smaller colleges and institutions together. These affiliated institutions primarily provide undergraduate education. Postgraduate education and research take place at the main institution in almost all cases.

About 15,000 colleges and institutions are linked to a larger affiliating university. Recognition of these small institutions takes place via the main university. Unitary universities, on the other hand, have no affiliated institutions and provide both the undergraduate and graduate education themselves.

In addition to the universities, there are also the so-called deemed universities and institutes of national importance. Deemed universities were originally private institutions specialising in a specific field such as medicine or technology. Deemed universities have the same rights as ordinary universities and may award their own degrees. Institutes of National Importance specialise in a limited number of fields, exclusively at postgraduate level. There are also thirteen renowned Indian Institutes of Technology offering a level comparable to that of the best US universities.

All universities in India are public institutions, but many affiliated colleges and institutions are private.

There is also a long tradition of open universities. Several universities have provided correspondence courses since 1962. In 1982, the first open university was founded in Hyderabad, and in 1985 the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was founded in Delhi. There are open universities in the states of Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka. An additional 57 universities have separate departments for distance education for part-time and working students.

There are approximately 1000 polytechnics, which offer both secondary and higher professional education.

## ■ University education

### **Bachelor**

The first university degree in India is the bachelor's degree. A programme leading to this degree generally has a nominal duration of 3 years. The most common bachelor's degrees are the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science and the Bachelor of Commerce. These degrees can be obtained through both General and Honours programmes. The material covered by these degrees can vary considerably. Students are often free to determine the contents of their

programme. This sometimes makes it difficult to compare an Indian bachelor's degree with a specific Dutch programme.

### **General Bachelor**

A typical structure for both General Bachelor programmes is to study a small number of subjects for 3 years; a Bachelor of Arts, for example, could consist of the subjects English, Hindi and economics for the first 2 years and only the main subject in the third year, or a Bachelor of Science could consist of the subjects chemistry, biology and zoology. Another variation is a Bachelor of Arts in five subjects, with English and a modern Indian language being compulsory, and three other optional subjects that have little or nothing in common. The considerable variation in the subject matter of the General Bachelor programmes makes a general evaluation of these degrees rather difficult.

It should be pointed out that the amount of General Bachelor programmes on offer has been declining over the past few years. A General Bachelor of Commerce in general has a more coherent programme with subjects in the field of economics or business administration.

In terms of level, a *General Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science* is in most cases comparable to 2 years of university education (WO).

In terms of level, a *General Bachelor of Commerce* is comparable to 3 years of higher professional education (HBO) in an economic field of study.

### **Honours Bachelor**

In most cases, an Honours Bachelor is also a 3-year programme, but with more specialisation in a particular area than a General Bachelor. This type of programme differs from the General Bachelor programmes in that there is a smaller spread of subjects, with more specialisation in a particular field.

The level of Honours Bachelor's degrees can differ depending on the university. Honours Bachelor's degrees obtained with first class distinction from a leading institution are equivalent to a Dutch WO bachelor's degree. A leading institution is an institution rated as A+ or five star by the NAAC. Other Honours Bachelor's degrees can be evaluated as comparable to 2 years of university education.

In terms of level, an *Honours Bachelor of Arts/of Science* obtained at a leading institution (with first class distinction) is comparable to a WO bachelor's degree.

In terms of level, an *Honours Bachelor of Arts/of Science* obtained at another institution is comparable to 2 years of university education (WO).

In terms of level, an *Honours Bachelor of Commerce* is comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree in an economic field of study.

An Honours Bachelor of Arts/of Science is generally more comparable to Dutch university education than a General Bachelor's degree. Admission to university master's programmes is possible in some cases.

### **Professional Bachelor**

Professional Bachelor programmes last longer than the programmes described above. A few examples are Bachelor of Engineering (4 years), Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) (5½ years), Bachelor of Agriculture (4 years), Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine (4 years), Bachelor of Dentistry (4 years) and Bachelor of Architecture (5 years).

In terms of level, a Bachelor of Engineering is comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree.

In terms of level, a Bachelor of Agriculture is comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree.

In terms of level, a *Bachelor of Dentistry* is comparable to a WO bachelor's degree in dentistry.

In terms of level, a *Bachelor of Medicine* is comparable to a WO bachelor's degree in medicine.

### **Postgraduate Bachelor**

Postgraduate Bachelor's degree programmes such as Bachelor of Education (1 year) and Bachelor of Laws (3 years) are programmes for which a bachelor's

degree is an admission requirement. For the Bachelor of Laws, there are also initial 5-year programmes after standard XII.

In terms of level, a *Bachelor of Laws* is comparable to a WO bachelor's degree in law.

### **Postgraduate diploma**

Postgraduate diplomas are obtained after a bachelor's degree. The programmes are often more specialised than master's programmes and focus more on future professional practice than continued study. The nominal programme duration is generally 1 year. With a Postgraduate Diploma it is also possible to enter in the second year of a master's programme.

### **Master degree**

Master degrees can generally be completed within 2 years after finishing a relevant bachelor's programme. There are often admission requirements, either a minimum score or an entrance examination, but these requirements vary both per institution and per subject area. A score of 45% or 50% is often sufficient for admission.

Most master's programmes are coursework Masters aimed at acquiring more in-depth knowledge of the main subject. These master's programmes do not generally devote any attention to research methods and techniques. This means that coursework master's programmes can be compared more closely with HBO than WO programmes. The final level is comparable to an HBO master's degree. Admission to a doctorate programme is in principle possible upon completion of the master's degree, but this only seems wise if sufficient attention has been paid to research methods and techniques.

In terms of level, a *Master* degree is comparable to an HBO master's degree in a similar specialisation. In some cases, a comparison can also be made to a WO master's or bachelor's degree, depending on the discipline and previous education.

Master of Philosophy (MPhil) degrees are heavy research master's programmes with the primary objective of carrying out independent academic research and preparing for admission to the PhD. Writing a final paper is also compulsory. MPhil programmes usually have a nominal duration of 1 year. The admission requirement is a relevant master's degree with a specified average score (varies per institution) or an entrance examination.

In terms of level, a *Master of Philosophy* is comparable to a WO master's degree in a similar specialisation.

### Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

PhD degrees are awarded by universities and institutions of national importance. The admission requirement is often a good master's degree, but some universities also accept professional bachelor's degrees, such as those in Engineering, Medicine or Law, for admission to their PhD programme. Almost all universities hold entrance examinations. The nominal duration of the programme (coursework and thesis) is generally 5 years. The name of the degree obtained is usually PhD, but the names DBA (Doctorate of Business Administration), LLD (Doctorate in Laws) and DSc (Doctorate in Science) also exist.

## ■ Higher professional education

Polytechnics offer higher level diplomas: Post Diplomas and Advance Diplomas. Programmes culminating in a Post Diploma last between 2 and 3 years. In order to be admitted, students must have obtained a Basic Diploma or Standard XII diploma. The amount of study time needed to obtain an Advance Diploma appears to be 3 semesters, although there are differences. There are also major differences in terms of the names of the various Certificates and Diplomas at both levels.

In terms of level, a *Polytechnic Diploma* following *Standard XII (Post Diploma, Advance Diploma)* is comparable to 2 or 3 years of higher professional education (HBO) in a similar specialisation .

## ■ Assessment systems

India uses a number of different grading systems in both secondary and tertiary education. Grades can be assigned in percentages or in letters. Examination bodies and education institutions are free to decide which percentages and grades constitute a fail or a pass. This means there is no national standard. The grading and credit system applied by an institution is generally featured on the reverse side of the transcript. Many institutions apply the following systems.

**Secondary education**

In percentages	Qualification
60% and higher	First Class/First Division
45-59%	Second Class/Second Division
30-44%	Third Class/Third Division
29% and lower	Fail

In percentages	Grade
70% and higher	A
60-69%	B
50-59%	C
40-49%	D
35-40%	E
fail	F

**Tertiary education**

In percentages	Qualification
70% and higher	First Class/First Division
60-70%	Second Class/Second Division
40-59%	Third Class/Third Division

In many cases, students to have achieved an exceptional score are also awarded a distinction in addition to a First Class grade. Many universities also apply a 35% minimum score.

## ■ Quality assurance and accreditation

By law, all universities have to be accredited. The government dictates that institutions without accreditation are not entitled to call themselves universities or to award degrees.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) was established in 1956 as statutory body by the Government of India to manage the quality of higher education in India. Higher education institutions are recognised when they have an approval from UGC. In 1994 the UGC further established the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) to guarantee the quality of the programmes and the higher education institutions. Accreditation by NAAC is not compulsory for the institutions. The quality tested by NAAC is indicated as follows:

Institutional score (upper limit exclusive)	Grade
95-100	A++
90-95	A+
85-90	A
80-85	B++
75-80	B+
70-75	B
65-70	C++
60-65	C+
55-60	C

A complete [list](#) of recognised universities and colleges by NAAC and a detailed explanation of the grading system are featured on the [website](#) of NAAC.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) also includes a number of accrediting bodies that are concerned with regulated professions and the qualifications required for these:

- All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE): technical and engineering training
- Distance Education Council (DEC): distance education
- Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR): agricultural training
- Bar Council of India (BCI): Attorney-at-law training
- Council of Architecture: architectural education
- National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE): teacher training programmes
- Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI): programmes in care for the handicapped and special needs education
- Medical Council of India (MCI): medical training
- Pharmacy Council of India (PCI): pharmacist training
- Indian Nursing Council (INC): nursing training
- Dental Council of India (DCI): dentistry training
- Central Council of Homeopathy (CCH): homeopathy training
- Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM): traditional Indian medicine

A database of recognised higher education institutions is featured on the website of UGC's INFLIBNET, please see [List of higher education institutions](#).

The above named All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) includes the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT). These institutions are well known for their excellence and receive accreditation from the National Accreditation Board (which is established by the AICTE).

## ■ International treaties

India has concluded international agreements with a large number of countries in the field of education. See the [overview](#) provided by the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

## ■ Composition of dossier

For secondary education, diplomas should be presented for the examinations taken after 10 and 12 years of education. For higher education, a diploma and a transcript should always be presented.

In many cases, provisional certificates or provisional result slips are presented, stating that the diploma or degree will be awarded at the next graduation ceremony. Due to fact that Indian universities are often slow in issuing the actual diploma, students continue to present provisional statements even if they took the relevant examinations years ago. In these cases, we recommend asking the student to request the diploma in question from his/her university, as the diplomas are always issued eventually.

## ■ Overview of higher education institutions

- [Website](#) of UGC's Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) with a search function for different types of recognized higher education institutions.
- [Website](#) of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council with a search function for accredited universities and colleges.
- [Website](#) of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) with a list of recognized institutions.
- [Website](#) of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), please see 'Higher Education' for an overview of different types of recognized higher education institutions.

## ■ Useful links

- [Website](#) of the University Grants Commission (UGC).
- [Website](#) of the UGC's Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET).
- [Website](#) of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC).
- [Website](#) of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).
- [Website](#) of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD).
- [Website](#) of the MHRD with an overview of international agreements with a large number of countries in the field of education.
- [Website](#) of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).
- [Website](#) of the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE).
- [Website](#) of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU).