The American education system described and compared with the Dutch system
This document provides information about the education system of the United States. It also includes the Dutch comparison of qualifications obtained in the United States.
Education system United States

- **Elementary school** (primary education)
  - 0

- **High School Diploma** (secondary education)
  - 6

- **Associate's degree** (junior / community college)
  - 2

- **Bachelor's degree** (university / college)
  - 4

- **Master's degree** (university / college)
  - 1-3

- **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)** (university)
  - 6

- **Doctor of Medicine (MD) / Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) / Juris Doctor (JD)** (university)
  - 3-4

- **GREs/LSAT/GMAT/MCAT** (entrance examinations)

- **SAT/ACT** (entrance examinations)
## Evaluation chart

In the following chart, the left part lists foreign qualifications. The right part lists the Dutch comparisons, with corresponding levels in the Netherlands and European qualifications frameworks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree or qualification</th>
<th>Dutch equivalent and NLQF level</th>
<th>EQF level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Educational Development diploma</td>
<td>VMBO-T diploma</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School diploma</td>
<td>in most cases a HAVO diploma, but can vary from a VMBO-T to a VWO diploma</td>
<td>4/2-4+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s degree (terminal/vocational program)</td>
<td>usually MBO diploma (qualification level 4)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s degree (transfer program)</td>
<td>Associate Degree or in some cases a VWO diploma</td>
<td>5/4+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>in most cases WO or HBO bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>in most cases WO or HBO master’s degree</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB

- The information provided in the table is a general recommendation from which no rights may be derived.
- NLQF = Netherlands Qualifications Framework. EQF = European Qualifications Framework.
- The evaluation of a foreign qualification in terms of the EQF/NLQF does not necessarily mean that all of the learning outcomes associated with these levels have been achieved.
- The information regarding international study programmes at VMBO and MBO level is issued by the Cooperation Organisation on Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (SBB). The evaluation may vary if the diploma is being evaluated for purposes other than admission to higher education in the Netherlands.
Introduction

The United States is a federal republic made up of 50 states, one district (the capital) and four territories. The national Department of Education sets guidelines relating to general education policy, collects data and awards subsidies and scholarships, but exerts limited influence on the content, learning outcomes or quality of education – these tasks have been delegated to the individual states, who are responsible for education at primary and secondary level, and partially at the higher education level. Each state has a State Board of Education responsible for education policy, funding for education, and quality assurance at primary and secondary level.

The education system in the United States is very diverse, with major differences in level, content and quality. None of the various phases of education conclude with a standardized final examination. For this reason, the concept of standardized entrance and outcome levels does not exist in the American system. This means that the content of the relevant programme must always be examined to determine how the course will be evaluated; the diploma itself indicates very little. Private and public institutions exist at all educational levels, from primary school to higher education. Although the number of private higher education institutions is much higher than that of public institutions, the number of students is the reverse: more students study at public institutions. The status of an institution (i.e. public or private) is no indication of level or quality, and all institutions must be accredited in the same fashion. See the section Quality assurance and accreditation.

The academic year runs from September to May/June, and education is compulsory until the age of 16 or 18, depending on the state. The language of education is English.
Primary and secondary education

Sub-tertiary education is made up of 6 years of elementary (primary) education, followed by 6 years of secondary education. Exactly how these twelve years (or grades) are divided up depends on the state or school district. The most common divisions are 6 plus 3 plus 3 (elementary plus junior high plus high school), 6 plus 2 plus 4 (elementary plus middle school plus high school) and 8 plus 4 (elementary plus high school). Regardless of the division, secondary education begins in the seventh year, i.e. when students start receiving instruction in individual subjects from subject-specific teachers.

Secondary education is mostly general in nature; options to take vocational-technical subjects vary according to school and region. The basic six-subject curriculum of English, mathematics, science, social studies, visual arts and physical education is supplemented each year with subjects in related disciplines taken at an increasingly higher level and/or in a different specialization within the field. For example, English subjects include creative writing, American or British literature and mass communication; electives include a foreign language, economics or the history of a particular country. At good schools the choice can be quite broad. As opposed to the study of mathematics at secondary level in many countries, the American curriculum follows a sequence of specific types of mathematics, each of which is studied 5 hours a week for 1 year. Students begin with algebra 1 in the 8th or 9th grade, and in subsequent years take 1 year of geometry, then either algebra 2 or calculus. Depending on what an individual school offers, students may choose from several additional math courses, such as trigonometry or mathematics analysis.

At the end of the twelfth year, the same diploma is awarded to all students, regardless of the programme completed. This diploma is popularly referred to as the High School Diploma, yet in most cases the certificate itself only contains the word ‘Diploma’, with the name of the high school written above. Each state sets its own minimum requirements for obtaining the High School Diploma, expressed in a minimum number of credits that must be earned in the last 4 years (grades 9-12), distributed across six subject areas. The number of credits is around 20, including credits in non-academic subjects such as health and physical education. The choice of which subjects to take is determined by aptitude and ambition. Students who fulfil only the minimum requirements will still obtain a High School Diploma, but those who wish to continue on to higher education (even at an institution of average quality) will always need to satisfy more than the minimum requirements. Due to the differences in programme content, the evaluation of a High School Diploma in the Netherlands can vary from a VMBO-T diploma (although this is fairly uncommon) to a VWO diploma. In most cases, however, the High School diploma is evaluated as comparable to a HAVO diploma.
In terms of level, a *High School Diploma* is in most cases comparable to a *HAVO diploma* in the Netherlands, but can vary from a *VMBO-T* to a *VWO diploma*, depending on the curriculum.

For a diploma to be evaluated at HAVO level, students should complete a college preparatory programme (by far the most common). A more rigorous academic programme consisting of subjects taken at a more advanced level in which the student has achieved good results can be evaluated as comparable to a *VWO diploma*. These are the educational characteristics of any student who wishes to succeed in a very competitive education system and is seeking admission to a more selective higher education institution. Some indications: a subject taken at an advanced level is often distinguished by words such as ‘honors’, or ‘advanced placement’; in the field of mathematics, students will have completed algebra 2, calculus and (less frequently) trigonometry in addition to the compulsory algebra and geometry. In the natural sciences, science and biology are often supplemented by 1 year of chemistry and 1 year of physics. Students will also have obtained at least 16 credits in academic subjects, a high SAT-score (SATs are entrance examinations that assess aptitude for mathematics and English language ability as well as knowledge in certain subjects) and a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher.

Advanced Placement (AP) subjects are the only secondary subjects that are examined externally, and for this reason most closely resemble European secondary school examinations. Individual AP subjects are studied at a level comparable to that of higher education at US institutions, and each subject is concluded with a national exam. Exam grades vary from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). EP-Nuffic recommends evaluating a *High School Diploma* at VWO level if a student has earned a grade of 3, 4 or 5 in the exams for at least 4 AP subjects. (This recommendation only applies to AP subjects concluded with an examination; it is also possible to study the material at AP level without taking the exam.) For this evaluation, an official AP score report is required (sent directly from the College Board) in addition to the official transcript. It should be noted that a *High School diploma* awarded with fewer than 4 AP subjects can also be evaluated as comparable to a *VWO diploma*, provided the student has completed a challenging academic programme as described above.

People who never finished school but who still wish to obtain a *High School Diploma* can obtain a *GED diploma* (General Educational Development). This diploma is awarded after taking a multiple choice test in 5 subjects (language arts, writing; social studies, science, language arts, reading; mathematics).
In terms of level, a General Educational Development diploma is comparable to a VMBO-T (theoretische leerweg) diploma in the Netherlands.

International American schools

A relatively large number of students who apply to Dutch higher education institutions have a High School Diploma from an international school. These programmes usually correspond to those described above in terms of purpose, content, duration and level, including all possible variations. The most important point relating to international American schools is accreditation. Most schools offering an American-style curriculum outside of the US have regional accreditation. It’s important to check this before beginning the evaluation process. For more information on the accreditation of secondary schools, including American schools overseas, see the section on Quality Assurance and accreditation further on.

Admission to higher education

The large variations in level and quality among American higher education institutions are also evidenced by the differences in entrance requirements. These requirements are usually characterized by the degree of selectivity applied when admitting students. At the low end of the spectrum are institutions with an ‘open doors admissions policy’, that set little to no selection criteria. Institutions with an open doors policy generally accept all students who apply, provided they have a High School/GED Diploma and are aged over 18. The top of the spectrum contains a relatively small number of very selective institutions that select students according to (among other things) the criteria named earlier: level, programme content and performance during the last 4 years of high school, SATs and other entrance examinations. Active involvement in extra-curricular activities and evidence of leadership qualities also play an important role, as do letters of recommendation and essays. Most institutions lie between these two extremes, some being more selective, others less so. It should be noted that the selectivity (or lack of selectivity) of an individual institution isn’t the only criterion that determines institutional quality. An institution may have an open doors admissions policy, but only a small percentage of its students actually obtaining a diploma. In other words, selection can take place during the degree program as well as during the admissions process.
Higher education

An important aspect of the American higher education system is its inclusiveness—anybody who wishes to take a higher education course in any discipline should be able to do so. All programmes requiring a High School Diploma qualify as higher education, and status is derived not so much from the fact that someone has completed higher education, but rather at which institution and at what level. Although the names of the degrees most commonly awarded are limited, just as in secondary education, the differences in level and content can be quite large. There are 2-year MBO-type programmes offered by community colleges, undergraduate and graduate programmes at colleges and universities up to the PhD level, as well as post-bachelor advanced professional programmes in the medical sciences and law. There is no strict distinction between higher professional education and academic education; both types of education can be combined in a degree programme at the same institution. Bachelor students can always choose from a variety of electives, meaning that a professionally-oriented major can be supplemented by subjects of a more academic nature, and vice-versa.

There are over 4000 public and private higher education institutions in the United States. The fact that an institution is public or private is no indication of the quality or level of the programmes offered. The same applies to the terms ‘college’ and ‘university’ – these terms are used interchangeably. The quality of the education can be good or substandard at either type of institution. Officially, the difference between universities and colleges is that a university offers both graduate and undergraduate programmes and has more professional schools, whereas colleges concentrate on undergraduate programmes. There are many exceptions, however.

Higher education degrees

Since no distinction is made in the United States between academic education and higher professional education, a summary is provided below of the features of the most commonly awarded degrees, which can be obtained in either type of education.

Associate’s degree

Associate’s degree programmes are offered by two-year colleges (junior colleges or community colleges) or four-year colleges or universities, and require 2 years to complete. Most community colleges have an open doors admissions policy, but specific programmes (technical specializations, nursing and most transfer programs) often involve some sort of selection procedure. In general, there are two types of programmes leading to the associate’s degree:

1. predominantly vocationally-oriented programmes that prepare students for immediate employment at a level comparable to that of an MBO diploma (qualification level 4), and
2. transfer programmes, which can be vocational or general in nature, but contain enough liberal arts subjects (such as English, science, social sciences, etc.) to allow students to transfer to the third year of a bachelor’s programme after obtaining their associate’s degree.

The name of the degree is often followed by an indication of whether it is an arts or science programme: Associate in Arts (AA), Associate in Science (AS), Associate in Applied Arts (AAA), Associate in Applied Science (AAS). A programme in the applied arts and sciences is in most cases comparable to an MBO programme in the Netherlands.

In terms of level, an associate’s degree (terminal or vocational program) is usually comparable to an MBO diploma at qualification level 4 in the Netherlands.

In terms of level, an associate’s degree (transfer program) is comparable in the Netherlands to an Associate Degree or in some cases to a VWO diploma, depending on the curriculum and type of study.

Bachelor’s degree

Bachelor’s degrees are awarded by a four-year college or university at the end of an undergraduate programme lasting 4 years, usually expressed in a minimum number of credits. In most cases the study programme consists of general subjects (liberal arts) and electives (either of these may or may not be related to the major), a major and sometimes a minor. There is usually a progression from a broad base towards increased specialization, although 4 years of liberal arts is not uncommon. At some institutions, fourth-year students must take research methodology and complete a research project or bachelor’s thesis. If an internship is part of the programme, it is generally no longer than a few months. The course is completed as soon as the required number of credits has been reached, with a prescribed division according to level and content. There is no final examination. The name of the degree is followed by an indication of whether it was an arts or science programme: Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BS).

In terms of level, a bachelor’s degree is in most cases comparable to an HBO or WO bachelor’s degree in the Netherlands, depending on the level and type of study.
NB: Due to the breadth of most American bachelor’s programmes, their content is in most cases only partially comparable to bachelor programmes in many other countries.

Master’s degree
All courses taken after a bachelor’s degree are provided at a graduate school, usually (but not always) at a university. Individual departments determine admissions to graduate programmes. All candidates must have a bachelor’s degree, and there are also some additional requirements, depending on the selectivity of the institution and/or the specialization. These additional requirements can relate to the GPA, prerequisite subjects, entrance examinations, knowledge of a second language, etc. A master’s programme can take between 1 and 3 years, depending on the specialization and the number of credits required. In contrast to bachelor’s programmes, master’s programmes are very specialized, usually focusing on one discipline. Many interdisciplinary master’s programs are also available, studying one central theme from a variety of disciplines. Students can choose between master’s programmes with an academic or professional focus. A thesis and/or comprehensive examinations are usually required for the more research-oriented master’s programmes. The same can also apply to a professional master, however, here the emphasis is on professional practice at an advanced level. Professional master’s programmes commonly take longer (2/3 years) and the field of study is indicated in the degree, e.g. Master of Business Administration, Master of Social Work, Master of Public Health, Master of Divinity. Graduates of research-oriented programmes are usually awarded a Master of Arts (MA) or a Master of Science (MS).

In terms of level, a master’s degree is in most cases comparable to an HBO or WO master’s degree in the Netherlands, depending on the level and type of study.

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
PhD programmes are also provided by graduate schools and universities, and consist roughly of the following steps: at least 1 year of instruction, extensive oral and written examinations (qualifying exams), based on which official permission is granted to conduct research, and the writing and public defence of a dissertation. A master’s degree is required for admission to a PhD programme, yet it is not uncommon for the more selective research universities to grant admission to promising students with a bachelor’s degree. In such cases, the entire course takes longer. The duration of PhD programmes depends on various factors, however, the average length for students with a master’s degree is 5/6 years. Admission is very selective.
Advanced professional degrees

Advanced professional degrees form a separate category. These programmes prepare students for professional careers, mostly in medical sciences and law. The entrance requirement is a bachelor’s degree with a partially prescribed curriculum, such as a pre-medicine or pre-law programme, supplemented with entrance examinations and the selection criteria mentioned above. Admission is very selective. The length of the most common courses varies from 3 years for the Juris Doctor (law) to 4 years for the Doctor of Medicine (MD), the Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) and the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM). In these cases, the term ‘Doctor’ refers to a professional title and is not a PhD.

Assessment systems

Grading system

The following system applies to all forms of secondary and higher education, unless otherwise indicated on the transcript (there are many variations as well as more detailed grading systems):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numerical grade</th>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>excellent/superior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>very good/above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other common symbols (especially in higher education) include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>pass (no mark awarded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>satisfactory (no mark awarded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>incomplete (student did not satisfy all of the college’s requirements by the end of the semester, and must do so by a set date)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>withdrawn: with permission, student has stopped taking the subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC</td>
<td>no credit: no credits awarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>repeat: a subject being taken for the second time because the student did not pass the first time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Credit system

Various credit-point systems exist for the quantification of study programmes, all of which are based on the number of contact hours and not on the study load as a whole. The systems most commonly used are described below.

At the high school level, 1 credit represents a subject involving 5 hours of lessons per week for 1 school year (approx. 36 weeks). Sometimes 5 credits are awarded for the same number of hours. For example, if a student takes physics for 5 hours per week over 36 weeks, at the end of the school year he/she will be awarded either 1 or 5 credits, depending on the system used.

In higher education, each credit represents approximately 1 hour in the classroom and 2 hours of preparation. It is important to know whether an institution uses a semester calendar (15-16 weeks) or a quarter calendar (10-12 weeks), as it will affect the study load. This is usually made clear on the transcript, and otherwise in the transcript explanation. A semester year is divided into fall and spring, and a quarter year into fall, winter and spring. Both calendars contain an optional summer semester/quarter.

1 semester credit = 1 contact hour per week for a period of 15-16 weeks;
Usually 120 semester credits are required for a bachelor’s degree (30 per year).

1 quarter credit = 1 contact hour per week for a period of 10-12 weeks;
180 quarter credits are required for a bachelor’s degree (45 per year).

Practical instruction (laboratory work / internship) is quantified differently than more theoretical classes: 1 credit is given for 2-3 hours of practical instruction.

NB: The same credit system is used at both undergraduate and graduate level. Because significantly more is asked of graduate students within the same time period, 30 semester credits / 45 quarter credits obtained at graduate level are comparable to 1½ years of study.

Qualification frameworks

The United States has not established a national qualification framework, nor have national qualifications been referenced to an overarching framework.
Quality assurance and accreditation

Post-secondary education
The system of recognition and quality assurance in the United States is known as ‘accreditation’, and is made up of institutional accreditation (i.e. for entire institutions) and professional accreditation (for individual study programmes). The Federal government is not involved in the accreditation process, which for institutions is carried out by seven regional institutional accrediting bodies, and by a large number of specialized/professional accrediting bodies for the content of professional programmes. There are also a number of national institutional accrediting bodies that are responsible for the accreditation of institutions offering primarily religious or career-related programmes. The most important goal of institutional accreditation is to establish the extent to which an institution is capable of achieving its stated mission, and if necessary to provide suggestions for improvement. For this reason, accreditation is viewed as a quality assurance system.
The fact that an institution is accredited does not necessarily mean that the level or quality is particularly high; accreditation only indicates that the institution fulfils minimum criteria.

Two organizations in the US approve accrediting agencies: the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), an organization that defines quality standards for accreditation, and the U.S. Department of Education, which reviews accrediting agencies for purposes related to federal financial support. Prior to evaluating an American degree programme, it is important to make sure that the institution is accredited by one of the seven regional institutional accrediting bodies recognized either by CHEA or the DOE, or both. There are other approved accreditors, but to be eligible for transfer credit or admission to further study in the Netherlands, in most cases a student’s previous study should have been completed at a regionally-accredited institution. The seven regional accrediting bodies are:

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSCHE)
- [www.msche.org/](http://www.msche.org/)
New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)
- [www.NEASC.org/](http://www.NEASC.org/)
Higher Learning Commission (HLC)
Northwest Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)
- [www.nwccu.org/](http://www.nwccu.org/)
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC)
- [www.sacscoc.org/](http://www.sacscoc.org/)
WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)
- [https://www.wascsenior.org/](https://www.wascsenior.org/)
Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC)
- http://www.accjc.org/

All accrediting bodies recognized by CHEA and/or the DOE and the institutions that they accredit are listed on the websites of these two organizations:
- www.chea.org
- www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg6.html#NationallyRecognized

Professional accreditation is particularly important for people dealing with professional recognition, and is relevant for the professions requiring this separate type of accreditation in the United States. Professional accreditation organizations exist for a wide variety of professions, yet this type of accreditation is only required in the US for professions involving public safety (engineers, medical/paramedical staff, architects). Competent authorities (institutions, ministries, employers) could use professional accreditation as an additional indication of quality for some disciplines (business administration, law, engineering), showing that a course of study completed by a prospective student has been evaluated and approved by the relevant professional sector.

NB: A number of pseudo-accreditation bodies have emerged for the accreditation of ‘degree mills’ and other fraudulent institutions. In some cases, the names are almost exactly the same as those of recognized bodies, making it easy to confuse the legitimate and non-legitimate accreditors. See under Authenticity.

Secondary education
Each regional accrediting body has a separate commission responsible for the accreditation of schools offering secondary education. With regard to schools outside of the US offering an American high school programme, it’s particularly important to check to see if the school is accredited in the United States. The websites of the various commissions accrediting secondary education can be found at the following addresses:

http://msa-cess.org
Commission on secondary schools of the Middle States Association (MSA-CESS).

www.neasc.org/
Links to three separate commissions of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) are provided on the home-page:
- public high schools
- independent non-public K(inder)garten)-12
- K-12 international schools
www.advanc-ed.org/
AdvancED is a relatively new organization resulting from the merger of three accrediting commissions: the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI).

http://www.acswasc.org/:
Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association for Schools and Colleges.

In addition to these regional accrediting bodies, there are numerous accrediting agencies in the US for secondary education. In many cases, it's unclear what the status of these accrediting bodies is and who monitors the work that they do. It may also be difficult to determine if a school has obtained an acceptable form of accreditation or recognition. This is particularly true of private schools and schools offering an American style curriculum located outside of the US. For schools located within the US, we recommend that schools having regional accreditation and/or those that are approved by the state board in the state in which they are located be considered recognized. It should be noted that while checking to see if a school has regional accreditation is a simple process, confirming state board approval can be time-consuming.

Most American schools located in other countries are accredited by one of the regional associations, but you may encounter schools that do not have this type of accreditation. These schools may be accredited by other organizations such as the Council of International Schools (http://www.cois.org) or the National Council for Private School Accreditation (http://www.ncpsa.org/). These two organizations are generally considered to be acceptable accrediting bodies in the US.

### International treaties

The United States has several bilateral and multilateral treaties and agreements with other countries for the mutual recognition of diplomas / certificates. More information on this subject is available on the website of the U.S. Department of Education. See under Addresses.

### Addresses

www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ous/international/usnei/edlite-index.html
Website of the American ENIC.

www.chea.org
Website of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, with information and databases on accreditation, accredited institutions and diploma mills.
Composition of file

The most important thing to be aware of regarding the composition of American evaluation files is that the diploma by itself never provides enough information for evaluation. Students who have completed either secondary or higher education must also submit a transcript or academic record. This document contains information on the content of the study programme, grades, credits, date of graduation, etc. It is strongly recommended to make it compulsory for students to have an official transcript sent directly from the issuing institution to the evaluating body in the receiving country. The transcript may be sent in a sealed envelope or through a secure electronic delivery service. An official transcript does not pass through the hands of the student, making it a reliable document. It is always required by American institutions from students who transfer to another higher education institution.

The exam results of students who have taken Advanced Placement exams at high school must be sent directly from the College Board to the evaluating body, in addition to the official transcript.

Authenticity

Official transcripts sent directly from American institutions are an effective means of guaranteeing the authenticity of the educational documents. When discussing authenticity, it's also important to realize that ‘degree mills’ or ‘diploma mills’ issue official transcripts as well. Diploma mills have actually nothing to do with education, but are businesses that sell diplomas ranging from high school to PhD level without providing any (serious) education. The layout and terminology used on the documentation provided by diploma mills often give the impression that they are institutions accredited in the U.S. This is not the case. It is a simple matter to check whether an institution exists and/or is accredited on the CHEA website. If you have doubts about the status of an individual institution, you can always get in touch with EP-Nuffic.
List of Higher Education Institutions

www.chea.org
Website of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) with a list of accredited higher education institutions (under 'Databases and Directories'). To search for an institution,

- Go to www.chea.org,
- Click on Databases and Directories/Databases of Institutions and Programs Accredited by Recognized US Accrediting Organizations,
- Scroll down and click on “I agree”,
- Conduct your search.
High School Diploma

Newbury Park High School
Newbury Park CVUSD California

This Certifies That

Has completed a Course of Studies in accordance with
the requirements of the State Board of Education and the
Conejo Valley Unified School District and is therefore awarded this
Diploma

Given at Newbury Park, California,
this ninth day of June, 2011.

Principal

Ingekomen
02 APR. 2012
Bureau Inschrijving
High School - transcript

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.0000</td>
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<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td>World History</td>
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<tr>
<td>World History</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total Credits: 23.0000
GED Diploma

[Image of GED Diploma]

Maine High School Equivalency Diploma
Maine Department of Education

has demonstrated general knowledge and educational development equivalent to that attained by high school graduates under standards approved by the State of Maine Department of Education and is hereby awarded this

STATE HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY DIPLOMA
having the legal status of a high school diploma

Given at Augusta, Maine, this 1 day of May 2012 A.D.

Certificate Number

STATE ADVISOR, High School Equivalency Program
GED CHIEF EXAMINER, Local Test Center

COMMISSIONER of EDUCATION
### GED - transcript

**Official Transcript of GED Tests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Name</th>
<th>Standard Score (Max)</th>
<th>Percentile Rank</th>
<th>Test Code (Valid)</th>
<th>Test Form Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts, Reading</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4102012</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Language Arts, Writing</td>
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<td>73</td>
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<td>Mathematics</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>4102012</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>939</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>4102012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>41112</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall Status:** Pass

**Total Standard Score:** 2710

---

**Status:** Indicates if candidate passed or failed the battery of tests. Passing the battery requires a total standard score of 220; and a minimum standard score of 40 on each subtest. If a candidate has not taken all the tests, “Incomplete” is noted.

**Standard Score:** Standard scores range from 100 to 300. These scores compare performance to a grade 12 student and do not reflect how many questions the candidate correctly answered on test.

**PacifiCains**

---

**Issued Date:** Tuesday, May 15, 2012

---

**Candidate's Name:**

**Last Name:**

**First Name:**

**Middle Initial:**

**Address:** AVENUE TANGER.

---

**Test Center:**

**Address:** Brussels, Belgium, 1000

---

**Commissioned by:**

**Signature:**

---

**Notes:**

- The document is public and non-confidential.

---

**Additional Details:**

- The transcript includes detailed information on each test taken, including standard scores and percentiles.

---

**Footer:**

- Education system United States

---

**Page Information:**

- Page 22
## Results AP exams

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Exam</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>07</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
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<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>German Lang</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>European Hist</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: In the 2003-04 school year, Java was used as the programming language for Computer Science. Prior to 2003-04, C++ was used.*
Associate Degree

Nassau Community College
under the supervision of the
State University of New York

Upon recommendation of the Faculty and by virtue of the authority vested in them
the Trustees of the College have conferred on

the degree of
Associate in Applied Science
Hotel Technology Administration

with all the rights and privileges pertaining thereto and in witness whereof the seal
of the College and the signatures of its officers are hereunto affixed

this twenty-third day of May, two thousand and ten.

Mary A. Adams
Chairman, Board of Trustees

David P. Nathaniel
President
Associate Degree - transcript
Bachelor Degree

Michigan State University

Upon the Nomination of the Faculty of the
College of Social Science
has conferred upon

the Degree of
Bachelor of Science
With a Major in Interdisciplinary Studies in Social Science-International Studies
With Honors
Given under the Seal of the University at East Lansing in the
State of Michigan on this fifteenth day of December in the
year Two Thousand and Six.

[Signature]
[Signature]

[Seal]

Chancellor, Board of Trustees

President of the University
Bachelor Degree - transcript (page 2)
Master Degree

RICE UNIVERSITY
AN AMERICAN INSTITUTION
DEDICATED TO THE ADVANCEMENT
OF LIBERAL AND TECHNICAL LEARNING
AND THE PROGRESS OF HUMANKIND
IN LETTERS, SCIENCE AND ART
FOUNDED AND ENDOwed
AD MAOREM DEI GLORIAM
BY WILLIAM MARSH RICE
IN FREEDOM FOR RESEARCH
TO SOBER, FEARLESS PURSUIT
OF TRUTH, BEAUTY, RIGHT, GOUINess
AND TO ALL HIGH EMPIRE CONSECRATED
WOULD HAVE ALL KNOW BY THESE PRESENTS
THAT IN THE PRESENCE OF THE TRUSTEES, FACULTY,
STUDENTS AND FRIENDS OF THIS UNIVERSITY
IN PUBLIC CONVOCATION ASSEMBLED
THE TRUSTEES HAVE CONFERRED UPON

A STUDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
WITH ALL THE RIGHTS, DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES
APPERTAINING TO THAT DEGREE

HOUSTON, TEXAS
JANUARY TWENTY-EIGHTH
A. D. MMVIII

/S/ DAVID W. LEFEBRON

This is to certify that this is a true and correct copy of the diploma awarded to An Hong on January 28, 2008.

STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF HARRIS

Sworn to and subscribed before me on the _26th_ day of _June_ 2009, by _David A. Tenney_,
University Registrar.

SIGNED, SEAL, AND affixed to me as a Notary Public in and for the State of Texas

SIGNED, SEAL, AND affixed to me as a Notary Public in and for the State of Texas

DAVID A. TENNEY
University Registrar
Rice University
June 26, 2009
Master Degree - transcript (page 1)
Master Degree - transcript (page 2)
Master Degree - transcript (page 3)

Rice University
Office of the Registrar - 120 N.
P.O. Box 1320
Houston, TX 77201-1320
Phone: 713-348-2828 Fax: 713-348-2889
Email: registrar@rice.edu
Web: www.registrar.rice.edu

THE UNIVERSITY
Rice University, a private institution of higher education, opened in September 1912 on
The Rice Institute. The Rice Institute became Rice University on June 1, 1945.
Rice University is accredited through the general level by the Southern Association of
 Colleges and Schools. Many individual programs are accredited by other professional
organizations.

ACADEMIC CREDIT
The academic year includes ten 15-week sessions plus a winter session. Credit is
 awarded for term exams, which generally represent the hours of study meeting
for each week. A maximum of 12 semester hours is required for the senior (last)
year of graduate degrees. Additional credits are required for other programs.
Requirements for graduate degrees vary. Please refer to the Student Handbook for
additional information.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS - A Master’s degree will be granted in an academic major leading
to the completion of 30 credit hours.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Cr</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</table>

Other Requirements - hours earned will include graduate and academic GPA

Other Courses - hours earned will include graduate and academic GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>A</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACADEMIC STANDING
All students are considered to be in good academic standing as long as they receive an
academic standing of the same or better standing as above.

GPA: A student who has been approved by academic standing may be considered for
transfer and who are successful in the first semester, and after one year for a second
or third semester. In extreme circumstances, students may be granted approval to

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
A student for an undergraduate major must complete 12 semester hours, in which he or she
must complete 12 semester hours per semester.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION
In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, the
information is released on the condition that the recipient will not disclose any
information without the written consent of the student.

TO TEST FOR AUTHENTICITY, transcriptions may have been altered in order that
the student's academic record may be protected.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS: Upon completion of the program, the student will be
required to pass the following exams:

1. Comprehensive Exam
2. Oral Presentation
3. Written Exam
4. Project
5. Research Paper

A student who fails any of these exams will be required to retake the exam or to
resubmit the completed work.

A grade of "P" will be given for passing, and "F" will be given for failing.

The final transcript will be sent to the student within 30 days of the
completion of the program.

50590900 B.W. Barlow-Pritchard, Inc. Cincinnati, OH 45204-1300
Qualification United States

High School diploma

- diploma upper secondary education
- grants access in the United States to all higher education programmes provided additional entrance requirements, where applicable, have been met

This qualification is in most cases comparable to a HAVO diploma in the Netherlands, but can vary from a VMBO-T to a VWO diploma, depending on the curriculum.

This information is a general recommendation from which no rights may be derived.
Associate’s degree (transfer program)

- diploma short cycle higher education
- grants access in the United States to the third year of the bachelor’s programme provided additional entrance requirements, where applicable, have been met
- has a duration of 2 years

This qualification is comparable to an Associate degree and in some cases to a VWO diploma in the Netherlands, depending on the curriculum and type of study.

This information is a general recommendation from which no rights may be derived.
Qualification United States

Associate’s degree (terminal /vocational program)

- diploma short cycle higher education
- grants access in the United States to the labour market
- has a duration of 2 years

This qualification is usually comparable to an *MBO diploma* at qualification level 4 in the Netherlands.

*This information is a general recommendation from which no rights may be derived.*
Qualification United States

Bachelor’s degree

- first cycle higher education diploma
- grants access in the United States to master’s programmes provided additional entrance requirements, where applicable, have been met
- has a duration of 4 years

This qualification is in most cases comparable to an HBO or WO bachelor’s degree in the Netherlands, depending on the level and type of study.

This information is a general recommendation from which no rights may be derived.
Qualification United States

Master's degree

- second cycle higher education diploma
- grants access in the United States to PhD programmes provided additional entrance requirements, where applicable, have been met
- has a duration of 1 to 3 years

This qualification is in most cases comparable to an HBO or WO master's degree in the Netherlands, depending on the level and type of study.

This information is a general recommendation from which no rights may be derived.