



ABOUT WES CREDENTIAL EVALUATIONS:

A Guide for Individuals with Academic Credentials Earned Outside of the U.S. and Canada



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Why Evaluate Your International Academic Credentials?	2
Top Five Tips for Selecting an External Evaluation Service	2
Credential Evaluation for Different Purposes.....	3
For Education	3
For Employment	5
For Licensing with Professional Licensing Bodies/Boards.....	5
For Immigration, Work Permits, or H-1B Visas	6
How to Get a Credential Evaluation	7
What Are the Different Kinds of Evaluation Reports?	7
How Much Does an Evaluation Cost?	8
How Are Foreign Credentials Evaluated?.....	8
Does Everyone Recognize the Results of Credential Evaluation Reports?.....	8
Understanding WES Required Documents	8
Conclusion.....	9



INTRODUCTION

A credential evaluation report is an important part of your application to schools, jobs, or immigration authorities in the U.S. and Canada—it's how these institutions understand the value of your academic achievements.





For example, a credential evaluation report can help university admissions officers make admissions decisions by taking your prior education and experience into account. The time and energy you invested in your education pays off when your academic credentials are understood and recognized.

WHY EVALUATE YOUR INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS?

In North America, there are many challenges to the recognition of international academic credentials; however, with some basic research and planning, you can make the process advantageous for yourself and accomplish your professional and educational goals.

As an international student or immigrant to Canada or the U.S., you must do your part to ensure immigration authorities, employers, colleges, universities, and professional licensing bodies/boards give appropriate recognition to your international academic credentials. One way of gaining this recognition is using external evaluation services like **World Education Services (WES)**.

External evaluation services like WES play a significant role in facilitating recognition; however, it is ultimately the recognition by employers, professional licensing bodies/boards, and academic institutions that formalizes the value of international credentials. Generally, you may need to authenticate and evaluate your academic credentials for four main purposes:

-  Higher education, continuing education, and transfer credits
-  Employment
-  Licensing with professional licensing bodies/boards
-  Immigration, work permits, or H-1B visas

Top Five Tips for Selecting an External Evaluation Service

When selecting a credential evaluation service, keep the following tips in mind:

1. Call the academic institution or licensing board that you are applying to and ask about their international academic credential authentication and evaluation requirements to ensure the service you select is accepted.
2. Obtain an evaluation report that is useful for more than one purpose.
3. Find out if the evaluation service charges a separate fee for each academic credential or if the fee is per person for all of your credentials.
4. Find out if the evaluation service shares the authenticated academic documents with institutions and licensing boards, potentially saving you time and money by eliminating the requirement for you to arrange yet another set of official transcripts to be sent by your overseas institution to North American institutions or licensing boards.
5. Get a preview of your **U.S. and Canadian academic equivalency** and **U.S. GPA** before applying to external evaluation services.


As a potential international student or immigrant to North America, it is very advantageous to do some basic research and learn who requires evaluation reports, the types of evaluation reports available, and from which external evaluation service your report must be obtained.

As a general guideline, go with an external evaluation service whose evaluation reports are known to be accepted by employers, educational institutions, licensing boards, and immigration authorities. It is also beneficial for you to purchase an evaluation report that can be used for all four purposes or at least for more than one purpose.

CREDENTIAL EVALUATION FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES

For Education

Foreign credential evaluation is a process that converts the academic credentials that you earned outside of the U.S. or Canada. At the end of the process, you will receive a credential evaluation report that includes information about your original credentials as well as its U.S. or Canadian equivalency. This report allows your education to be understood by anyone who is familiar with the education system in the U.S. or Canada. The following image shows a sample **WES Course-by-Course** analysis.



CREDENTIAL EVALUATION AND AUTHENTICATION REPORT

Name: SAMPLE, Sample Date: September 29, 2017
 Date of Birth: Month 01, 1993 Ref #: Page: 1 of 2

CANADIAN EQUIVALENCY SUMMARY


Bachelor's degree (four years)

CREDENTIAL ANALYSIS

- Name On Credential:** Sample Sample
Credential Authentication: Official transcripts were sent directly by the institution
Country: India
Credential: Bachelor of Engineering
Year: 2015
Awarded by: Anna University
Status: Recognized Institution
Admission requirements: High school graduation
Length of program: Four years
Major/Specialization: Mechanical Engineering

Canadian Equivalency: Bachelor's degree (four years)

This report identifies and describes each credential, including: name of credential, requirements for entry and program length, and the equivalent degree in terms of Canadian education.



This evaluation type is usually required for applications to post-graduate programs, students interested in transferring schools before completing their degree, and licensing board applications.

COURSE-BY-COURSE ANALYSIS

Name: SAMPLE, Sample Date: September 29, 2017
 Date of Birth: Month 01, 1993 Ref #: Page: 2 of 2

INSTITUTIONS - DATES - SUBJECTS	Credits	Grades
Computer-Aided Machine Drawing Lab	1.0	B+
Manufacturing Technology Lab	1.0	B+
2013-2014		
Environmental Science and Engineering	3.0	C
Thermal Engineering	3.0	B
Dynamics of Machinery	3.0	B
Design of Machine Elements	3.0	B
Engineering Metrology and Measurements	3.0	B
Applied Hydraulics and Pneumatics	3.0	B
Thermal Engineering Lab	1.0	B
Dynamics Lab	1.0	B+
Metrology and Measurements Lab	1.0	B
CAD and CAM Lab	1.0	A
Communication Skills Lab	1.0	B
Unconventional Machining Process	3.0	B
Gas Dynamics and Jet Propulsion	3.0	B+
Design of Transmission Systems	3.0	C
Finite Element Analysis	3.0	B
Automobile Engineering	3.0	C
Thermal Engineering Lab	1.0	A
Design and Fabrication Project	2.0	A
Principles of Management	3.0	C
2014-2015		
Total Quality Management	3.0	B
Process Planning and Cost Estima	3.0	B
Robotics	3.0	B+
Mechatronics	3.0	B
Computer-Integrated Manufacturing	3.0	C
Power Plant Engineering	3.0	B+
Computer-Aided Simulation and Analysis Lab	1.0	A
Mechatronics Lab	1.0	B+
Maintenance Engineering	2.0	B
Advanced Internal Combustion Engines	3.0	B
Comprehension	3.0	B
Project Work	3.0	B
Engineering Economics and Cost Analysis	3.0	B

This report lists each course you have taken, a semester credit, and grade equivalent.

This report includes a GPA (grade point average).

SUMMARY

Total Undergraduate Semester Credits: 158.0 GPA: 2.81

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THIS REPORT: An explanation of the terms used in this report can be found on the reverse side. This report is valid only when printed on watermarked paper and sealed with an official WES stamp on each page.

WES is recognized by the Government of Ontario and is a designated service provider of educational credential assessment (ECA) for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

Higher Education, Continuing Education, and Transfer Credits

The United States is a top destination for students around the world, and upon arrival to Canada, statistics show that a very large number of immigrants pursue further education. For instance, an immigrant with a bachelor's degree from his or her home country is likely to pursue a master's level education upon arrival in Canada or they may consider getting another bachelor's degree with promising employment opportunities in a specific sector of the economy.

It is almost certain that the academic institution in the U.S. or Canada to which you are applying will require an authentication and evaluation report of your past academic credentials. Some North American institutions and their staff conduct the evaluation process at their own admissions office; others refer students to external evaluation services like WES.

To pursue higher education, you must demonstrate that you have the prerequisites to enter the program, have the necessary grade point average (GPA), or have taken the equivalent courses elsewhere. This is determined through a detailed, formal evaluation report, or a **Course-by-Course evaluation report**.

When an academic institution grants you admission based on your previous international academic training, it is considered recognition. One of the most tangible ways to receive recognition is when you are able to negotiate “transfer credits” or “advanced standing,” which can help you save tuition money and time by not having to repeat similar courses that you have already taken outside of North America. A Course-by-Course report includes converted credit hours for your courses as well as a GPA equivalency. Before applying to any institutions, you may want to use the free **iGPA Calculator** from WES to estimate whether you meet the targeted institution’s GPA requirement.

How to Transfer Credits for Courses Taken Abroad

If you want to attend a college or university in the U.S. or Canada, you may be able to transfer some credits for courses you have already taken. The decision to accept credits earned abroad varies from school to school, but here are some of the factors many universities consider:

- Is the institution you attended recognized by your country’s ministry of education?
- Are the courses you have taken similar to those offered by the institution you would like to attend?
- Do the courses you have taken meet the requirements for the degree and major you would like to transfer into?

Many academic institutions may allow you to transfer credits but limit how many foreign credits they accept. You should contact the admissions office of the institution you want to attend to learn their policy.

If the school does accept foreign credits, you will likely be asked to provide some or all of the following documents:

- Official academic transcripts from the institution you attended
- A formal English translation of your transcripts
- A credential evaluation report
- Official syllabi or catalogs that describe the courses you have taken

The process of transferring credits can be a long one, and you may not know which credits, if any, have been accepted until your studies begin. However, if your credits are accepted, you can save both time and money.

If you are an international student and want to learn more about studying in the U.S., read Education USA’s series **Your Five Steps to U.S. Study**.

Credential Evaluations for Financial Aid

Once you have obtained a credential evaluation for your admissions application, you can also use it for scholarships and other financial aid applications that require you to report your GPA. This will allow you to apply for funding outside of the school where you sent your report. Merit-based scholarships in particular usually have GPA requirements for consideration. A credential evaluation can increase the number of funding sources available to international students.

For Employment

Increasingly, employers are committing themselves to diversifying their workforce and tapping into the global talent pool; this is a win-win for businesses and job seekers alike. On the other hand, numerous studies have shown that human resources (HR) departments have little or no training in weighing the value of international academic credentials. Traditionally, this is not part of HR training; however, the international mobility of labor is changing this.

One simple rule is this: As a job seeker, when you are applying for a job and the job posting has an education requirement, it is highly recommended that you get a credential evaluation report and indicate your Canadian or U.S. equivalency in your résumé.

Here's an example of how you would phrase this in your résumé:

“Equivalent to a Bachelor’s Degree in Biology from a U.S. (or Canadian) university, as determined by World Education Services (WES).”

You may want to re-emphasize your Canadian or U.S. equivalency in your cover letter as well. Furthermore, you might consider submitting a copy, online or otherwise, of the evaluation report with your cover letter and résumé.

Also, you should share your academic equivalent information as early as possible in the application process, and do not wait until the job interview. Employment and career coaches advise that getting the job interview is more than 50 percent of the whole process of securing a job. With an evaluation report, you increase your chances for employers to screen you in rather than out.

Nowadays, there is a way of knowing your **Canadian** or **U.S.** academic equivalency before you pay the fee for an official evaluation report. WES has developed the **Degree Equivalency Tool** for individuals and institutions to preview the Canadian and the U.S. equivalencies for degree-level credentials for over 160 countries. Keep in mind that these equivalency results are unofficial, results are not based on authenticated documents, and institutions usually require an official result/formal report from external evaluation services.

In addition, research has shown that sometimes immigrants start with a lower salary level than their counterparts who have completed their formal education in North America. A formal evaluation report can provide you with an advantage in negotiating a better starting salary.

A formal evaluation report can be useful for promotion opportunities that may become available within the company where you are working. For promotion opportunities, employers are bound to provide an equal opportunity for all their qualified staff. With an equivalency report in hand, you will be in an advantageous position to compete for promotions.

For Licensing with Professional Licensing Bodies/Boards

There are thousands of professional licensing bodies and boards in North America. Normally, one of their requirements is the authentication and evaluation of international academic documents. It cannot be emphasized enough that the best way to proceed is to contact the appropriate licensing board directly before applying to external evaluation services.

Internationally trained engineers and accountants can often secure related employment with appropriate compensation level without a license. These positions can be secured and

negotiated by presenting evaluation reports. However, in other regulated professions—like the healthcare sector—it is unlikely that you would be able to secure an employment offer working at the clinical level without a license.

Candidates should always check with the licensing/certification board or agency to find out what type of credential evaluation is required. Most boards require a **WES Course-by-Course evaluation**. Some boards also require official copies of your academic transcripts. This requirement can be accommodated by purchasing the WES International Credential Advantage Package (ICAP), which is a service WES provides where WES will store your verified transcripts and evaluation report for easy sending later.

Some licensing boards conduct authentication and evaluation in-house, and others outsource this service to external evaluation services. If you intend to obtain a license in your occupation, consult the licensing board first. Some research or a simple phone call asking what type of evaluation report they require can save you considerable time and money.



For Immigration, Work Permits, or H-1B Visas

For skilled or economic class immigrants to Canada, there is a formal requirement by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (**IRCC**) for candidates to submit their Canadian academic equivalency or Educational Credential Assessment (**ECA**) with their immigration applications. Under the new immigration policies, **Express Entry**, educational attainments have a higher value. The primary applicants, including their spouses, can receive points toward their total Comprehensive Ranking System (**CSR**).

For the U.S. **H-1B Visa**, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services require a bachelor's degree or higher degree or its equivalent evaluation report.

HOW TO GET A CREDENTIAL EVALUATION

WES offers credential evaluations that verify and evaluate high school and post-secondary credentials from more than 150 countries. You can also learn the equivalency of your foreign education by using the free [Degree Equivalency Tool](#).

Before you apply, be sure to watch our step-by-step videos that walk you through the WES application process for both the [United States](#) and the [Canadian ECA Application for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada \(IRCC\)](#).

Before you begin your application:

- ✓ Review your required documents list. Make sure you can meet these requirements before you submit your application.
- ✓ Determine the evaluation type you need. All WES evaluations include a statement of authenticity for each credential evaluated. There are several evaluation types available based on the level of education you earned and the purpose of your evaluation:
 - A Course-by-Course report includes a U.S. equivalency of your credential, a list of courses you have taken with the grades you earned, and a U.S. GPA (grade point average). This evaluation type is usually required for applications to post-graduate programs, students interested in transferring schools before completing their degree, and licensing board applications.
 - A Document-by-Document report includes the U.S. equivalency of your credential. This is typically required for freshman admission to universities, employment, and immigration.
 - The CPA Supplemental report provides additional analysis of your business and accounting courses for CPA (certified public accountant) boards.
- ✓ Be prepared to fill out the application accurately.



Are you ready to begin the credential evaluation process? [Apply now](#).

What Are the Different Kinds of Evaluation Reports?

In general, an individual can request a “basic” credential evaluation that describes the credential, or a “detailed” (sometimes called “course-by-course”) report that provides additional information on the student’s grades, credit hours, and course content. Credential evaluations consider the value of the credential in the context of the country’s educational system, whether the university is recognized, credential name, entrance requirements, program length, major/specialization, and the date it was awarded. The evaluation report includes all of this information about the original credential, along with the U.S. equivalency.

For an additional cost, a detailed report will analyze each course on the transcript, and convert credit hours, grades, and course levels to their U.S. equivalents. Some agencies will calculate

a grade point average (GPA), which is the standard way of reporting academic achievement in the U.S. A WES Course-by-Course evaluation is almost always necessary when an individual is applying for transfer credit, or a graduate degree.

How Much Does an Evaluation Cost?

The cost of an evaluation depends upon many factors—the degree of detailed analysis required for your purpose, whether or not an agency charges for each credential it evaluates, processing time, etc. Fees for “basic” reports typically range from USD \$70 to \$150; “detailed” reports range from \$150 to \$350 (plus any applicable mailing or courier costs).

How Are Foreign Credentials Evaluated?

Agencies use a variety of research tools and resources to determine the status of foreign academic institutions and to assess an individual’s academic achievement within the U.S. system and standards of education.

Over the last 40 years, WES has collected data from more than 200 countries and jurisdictions, including:

- 40,000 educational institutions
- 20,000 academic credentials and equivalencies
- 1,600 grading scales

These resources ensure that your WES evaluation is based on the most current and rigorously researched information available, ensuring your evaluation is accurate and fair.

Does Everyone Recognize the Results of Credential Evaluation Reports?

No. Evaluation reports are advisory and not binding on any institution. Ultimately, the institution receiving the credentials has the authority to make the final decision on how they’ll recognize the credentials and isn’t bound by the opinions and recommendations of the evaluation service—even if they require or recommend the service.

Understanding WES Required Documents

Academic credentials are valuable documents (for example, a certificate, degree, or diploma) that you earned at an academic institution. If you are seeking education or employment opportunities in Canada or the U.S., it is important to have your credentials evaluated by WES to prove the validity and authenticity of your documents.

The documents that are sent to WES must be:

- Issued by recognized educational institutions
- Issued or translated into English
- Signed and sealed by authorized officials (see example below)

How to Send Academic Documents in a Sealed Envelope to WES

Front of the sealed envelope:

The WES reference number must be included above WES' address as shown below.

Name of Academic Institution
Address

WES Reference No. _____
World Education Services
Documentation Center
P.O. Box 5087
Bowling Green Station
New York, NY 10274-5087
U.S.A.

Back of the sealed envelope:

A seal, stamp, or signature must be across the back flap as shown below.

Seal or stamp overlaps flap closure

UNIVERSITY
OFFICIAL IF SEAL HERE

Official officer's signature

Note: WES cannot accept any documents if the envelope was opened or if a seal, stamp, or signature is missing.



The **WES application** form and the **Required Documents** sections of our website provide instructions on the documents required for each country. Please read and follow those instructions carefully.

Instructions on which documents to submit to WES and how to submit them will vary depending on the country you studied in. It is important to carefully follow the provided instructions to make sure your evaluation is completed on time. WES also recommends requesting credentials from the academic institution(s) you attended and submitting your application as early as possible to avoid any delay.

If requested, you may need to send the original documents to WES and WES may submit documents for verification to the institution(s) that issued them. If the institution(s) charges a fee in exchange for information, it is your responsibility as the applicant to pay the institution directly.



If you have additional questions about WES credential evaluations, please visit our **Help Center**.

CONCLUSION

A credential evaluation is a key step in helping academic institutions, employers, professional licensing bodies, and immigration officials understand your educational background. As a skilled immigrant or international student, if you are clear about what is required and deliberate about your intentions when obtaining a credential evaluation, your chances of receiving recognition will be greatly increased. WES is dedicated to helping you achieve your educational and professional goals in the United States and Canada by providing trusted education evaluations and advocating for a future where there are no boundaries to global mobility.



Ready to begin the credential evaluation process? **Apply now.**



Our Expertise. Your Success.

 wes.org/advisor-e-guides

 advisor@wes.org

WES Advisor is an initiative of World Education Services, a non-profit with more than 45 years of experience in international education.

We provide advice and resources for international students and skilled immigrants to help them make informed decisions about education, employment, immigration, and integration opportunities in the U.S. and Canada.

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