

US DEGREES:

CAN WE TRUST THEM WHEN THEY
ARE OFFERED OUTSIDE THE US?

FIRST: A REMINDER

Not all Schools within the US offer acceptable or universally recognized education—even when they are approved for granting F-1 visas to foreign nationals

EDUCATION OR CREDENTIAL?

From their web site (and accurate):

ASA College of Business and Computer Technology in New York is approved to issue F-1 visas for non resident aliens studying in the US.

New York Moves to Limit Colleges That Seek Profit

NYTimes, Jan 21, 2006:

The ASA College of Science and Computer Technology had to return \$500,000 in state financial aid when it was discovered that they were accepting students based on the students' unverified affidavits that they had completed High School in other countries but had difficulty getting their records.

Suggested Solution: Require Middle States accreditation

Some Lists You Should Know About

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diploma_mill

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Non-accreditedSchools_78090_7.pdf

<http://www.osac.state.or.us/oda/unaccredited.html>

- <http://www.belfordhighschool.com/>

These are lists (in the latter case an ad) of schools whose credentials are not recognized by all state governments

SO, WHAT ABOUT GETTING A US
EDUCATION WITHOUT COMING TO
THE US? CAN IT BE DONE? WHAT
DOES ONE GET? WHAT DOES ONE
NOT GET?

WHAT DON'T YOU GET ?

Socio-Cultural Aspects of US Education

- Multi-Cultural approaches and interactions in Classrooms
- Multi-Cultural approaches and interactions outside the Classroom

This is more than JUST an extra

WHAT CAN YOU GET ?

- Mission Driven Academic Achievement
- Documented Attainment of Goals and Objectives (not just in cognitive domain)
- Interactive Pedagogical Approaches
- Contact with/Encouragement to Challenge US faculty
- Respect for the Ideas and Comments of Other Students
- Independent Use of Information Resources
- Emphasis on Outcomes (and Pragmatism) rather than Input

POSSIBILITIES

- Branch Campuses Abroad
- Partnerships (Be Aware of the Accreditation realities)
- Distance Education Opportunities
- US Institutional or Programmatic Accreditation

The word “accreditation” has specific US meaning; others may use the word differently

BRANCHES ABROAD

- All academic decisions made by home campus (admission, retention, hiring, program content, graduation requirements, information resource use, etc); faculty often in Internet contact with "rest of department"
- May suggest or require term (or more) in US: check visa issues; be sure it is NOT in a situation where only foreign nationals will be present
- Host institution is administrative landlord ONLY; has NO academic authority
- Should prevent conflict of interest, political rather than academic determinants
- Host countries worry about oversight

Be Sure The Accrediting Agency Has Approved the Site

PARTNERSHIPS

- Formal--
- May be monitored by host country as well as US entity; may lead to misunderstanding; concern re oversight
- Does not equal accreditation
- Credits are Not granted by US institution
- Must include transferability to signatories; some US accreditors have very stringent rules about the kinds of partnerships into which their members may enter
 - Often has visiting speakers etc from US; often has opportunity for faculty to visit US campus
- Informal—
- Often between individuals or their programs or departments
- Carry NO accreditation implications
- Sometimes central administration of US entity is unaware of exact nature of the relationship (important when called)
- Often used at “start up” as advisory only

SETTING UP A PARTNERSHIP

- Ask: What's in it for the US institution (not only money)
- Make contacts at academic/scholarly meetings
- Remember that many state institutions cannot use taxpayers' money to support overseas activities for non-state citizens
- Look askance at any institution which will have more international campuses and students than they have at home (capacity)
- Familiarize yourself with the accreditation rules for partnerships/contractual relationships:

http://www.neasc.org/cihe/overseas_programs.PDF

DISTANCE EDUCATION

- Regionally Accredited
- No Indication on Transcript that it is not campus-based
- Transferable in US without prejudice
- Safe for academic credits
- “chat rooms”; password protected library resources; “office hours”
- DETC Accredited
- Only Accredits Distance Education
- Many regionally accredited entities (and some governments and employers) will NOT ACCEPT credits
- Should be safe for vocational credits

NOTE: If degree is give by institution accredited by ACICS, check with the accreditor; also if there is ANY part of the offering offered in the host country or in a language other than English

DISTANCE OR ON-SITE, THESE ARE SUSPICIOUS

- Reference to accreditor not recognized by CHEA or US D of E (especially if name is only slightly different from legitimate one)
- Attempts to justify not being accredited
- Administrators have LONG strings of degrees after their name and may be from same family
- Inordinate use of personal testimonials
- Picture or other emphasis on Diploma

See: The NIFI Criteria by Levicoff

WHAT ABOUT US PROGRAMMATIC ACCREDITATION (OR SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCE)

- Available to LEGITIMATE National Institutions abroad
- Focuses on Academic, Administrative, Student Resources of Individual Program regardless of institutional governance
- Most Frequently Found in Business, Engineering, Education, Nursing, etc.
- Remember: In The US, graduates of such programs must STILL take licensure exams
- Sometimes, a Foreign Government mistakenly expects ALL Programs at national University to achieve Program Accreditation (Kuwait) but outside of technical fields cultural differences may be paramount

ALL PROGRAM ACCREDITATION STANDARDS MUST BE MET;
SOMETIMES AGENCY CHARTER REQUIRES THAT THEY GRANT
SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCE RATHER THAN ACCREDITATION

FREE STANDING INSTITUTIONS ABROAD—AND US REGIONAL ACCREDITATION

- Why is this possible and with which agencies
- What is involved?
- How is it done?
- Who should we contact?
- How long will it take?

WHAT IS POSSIBLE AND WHY

- Charter/By-Laws Changes
- Choosing a Regional (partnerships help)
- Issues :
 - Language of instruction
 - Relation to MHE or owner; transparency
 - Governance (faculty empowerment)
 - Ethics/ non conflict of interest
 - Evaluation and Planning (emphasis on effectiveness)
 - Information resources
 - Academic Freedom

RULES OF THE REGIONALS: WHO IS ELIGIBLE

- NEASC: Anywhere, currently Greece, Switzerland, Bulgaria; applicants from ME
- Middle States: Pilot Project (freeze)
- Southern: Anywhere: Currently, Latin America, Caribbean, and UAE
- North Central: not at this time

ELIGIBILITY (QUANTITATIVE) AND CANDIDACY/ ACCREDITATION (QUALITATIVE)* REQUIREMENTS

Eligibility: Quantitative

- Appropriate Mission (defines its universe)
- College-level programs and degrees
- Programs comparable in length, objectives, outcomes to those in US
- Appropriate Academic Awards
- Adequate Evaluation

*THIS IS THE MAJOR DIFFERENCE FROM MANY COUNTRIES'
"ACCREDITATION"

MOVING FROM ELIGIBILITY TO CANDIDACY: QUALITATIVE

- Is every aspect of the institution driven by and in support of the mission?
- If under-prepared students are accepted, what do they have to do in relation to Pre-Collegiate Work (English Language, Math) and what, if any, credit do they receive?
- How is “Advanced Standing” applied? (process/ interpretation? too freely?)
- Describe the Multiple Types of Formative and Summative Assessment used

NOTICE THAT THESE QUESTIONS REQUIRE COMPLEX ANSWERS

ELIGIBILITY

- Primarily face-to-face instruction
- Level of English high enough to allow student to continue ed in US
- Offers General Education (level is collegiate)
- Publicly indicates admission criteria; has students enrolled (i.e., has to be already operating, not just planned)

CANDIDACY

- Describe Classroom Interactions; how is discussion encouraged?
- In reviewing Essays, what makes it clear that they have not been produced by translators; how would they be received at a US institution? Is the grading appropriate?)
- How does the gen ed program emphasize not only content but also the problem-solving methodologies methodology of humanities, social and lab sciences
- Does students' preparation allow them to benefit from university offerings as they are described in the catalog and is there adequate remediation if it does not

THESE ANSWERS ARE SUBMITTED IN A SELF-STUDY
WHICH IS THEN VERIFIED BY A VISIT

ELIGIBILITY

- Current catalog, faculty roster, student regulations, costs are public and available
- Legal charter or equivalent (degree-granting authority)
- Governing Board includes Public rep and fewer than half with direct tie to institution

CANDIDACY

- Are listed courses actually offered; do qualified faculty actually conduct courses; are student rights and regulations observed and impartial? (i.e., does what is observed support the written representation?)
- Are any local requirements in addition to (not in place of) regional requirements
- Examine the Board makeup carefully, remembering that Public representation does NOT mean governmental and that the definition of possible conflict of interest is very inclusive

ELIGIBILITY

- Full Time CEO
- Majority of faculty, staff with US higher ed experience
- Finances: adequate, shows evidence of planning; majority of gross income goes to support institution, annual audit by US approved method

CANDIDACY

- CEO: what other responsibilities does he/she have?
- At what level did the staff have experience?
- Are the finances adequate to overcome unexpected difficulties?
- Does planning include adequate contingencies?
- What does the “management letter” say?

ACHIEVEMENT OF CANDIDACY

- Meets the Eligibility requirements
- Has Organized Sufficient resources to meet all standards within five years
- Is accomplishing its immediate educational purpose
- Meets the Commission standard on *Integrity*

IN US WOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR ALL RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF ANY ACCREDITED INSTITUTION; APPEARS ON WEB SITE OF ACCREDITING AGENCY

CANDIDACY TO ACCREDITATION

- Takes AT LEAST Five Years
- There must be students enrolled
- At least ONE CLASS must have graduated
- On-going process of reports and evaluations
- All decisions will indicate what is still needed, set the time for follow-up reports and visits
- Remember: accreditation is a status only continued while standards are met; therefore the process is continuous and on-going

SOME OTHER ADVANTAGES

- Interaction between US faculty and national institution (including occasional joint research projects)
- Improved chances of successful matriculation in US at next level
- Basis for everyday comparison of activities with friends in national institutions
- Increase in cohort of employees of international corporations who combine US education with National experience

WHO TO CONTACT:

- NEASC: Barbara Brittingham
- SACS: Ann Chard
- Northwestern Association: Sandra Elman
- Middle States: Jean Morse

Exact addresses at
<http://www.chea.org/Directories/regional.asp>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

Questions?

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