



## GUIDE TO THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF PANAMA AND ASPECTS TO CONSIDER FOR THE RECOGNITION OF HIGHER EDUCATION TITLES AND DEGREES IN COLOMBIA

### INTRODUCTION

The *Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia (MEN)*, Ministry of National Education of Colombia, has been working, in recent years, in the construction of guides for the educational systems of different countries. These guides have the objective of assisting the decision-making process on where and what to study abroad, as well as providing guidance on the process and requirements for the recognition of higher education titles and degrees in Colombia.

The *Dirección de Calidad de la Educación Superior del MEN*, Quality Office of Higher Education of the MEN, made a diagnosis on the Educational Systems Guides that are already published on the website. The need to bring the technical language of education closer to the citizen, as well as to generate an interactive instrument, were highlighted. Therefore, the MEN partnered with the *Asociación Colombiana de Universidades (ASCUN)*, Colombian Association of Universities, to update and redesign the Educational Systems Guides.

We have gathered information from different official sources in order to offer a practical and relevant instrument for the citizen. Relevant information is framed on four central aspects: 1) the higher education system; 2) the legality of higher education programs and institutions; 3) quality assurance of higher education institutions and programs; and 4) the elements to start the process of recognition of higher education titles and degrees obtained abroad.



All the information enclosed herein includes the different accessibility requirements in WEB tools and products that ease the access for people with disabilities. This work was possible thanks to the invaluable collaboration of the *Instituto Nacional para Ciegos (INCI)*, National Institute for the Blind.

## 1. HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM OF PANAMA

The *Ministerio de Educación (MEDUCA)*, Ministry of Education of Panama is the body responsible for the education system (including its three levels) providing policies, strategies and goals of education. The following institutions -- including civil societies -- operate under the coordination and surveillance of the *MEDUCA*. (Republic of Panama - Legislative Assembly, 1995):

- Universities
- *Centro de Estudios superiores*, Center of Higher Studies
- *Institutos para la Formación y Aprovechamiento de los Recursos Humanos (IFARHU)*, Institutes for training and management of Human Resources
- *Ministerio de Cultura (antes Instituto Nacional de Cultura - INAC)*, Ministry of Culture (formerly the National Institute of Culture)
- *Instituto Nacional de Deportes (INDE)*, National Institute of Sports
- *Instituto Nacional de Formación Profesional y Capacitación para el Desarrollo Humano (INADEH)*, National Institute of Professional Training and development for human development
- *Instituto Panameño de Habilitación Especial (IPHE)*, Institute of Special Habilitation of Panama
- *Organizaciones de docentes*, Teacher Organizations
- *Consejo Nacional de Evaluación y Acreditación Universitaria de Panamá (CONEAUPA)*, National Council for University Evaluation and Accreditation of Panama
- *Comisión Coordinadora de Educación Nacional*, Coordinating Commission for National Education



- *Confederaciones de Padres de Familia*, Parent Associations
- *Asociaciones estudiantiles*, Students' Associations

Higher education is provided by universities, higher education centers, and by post-secondary education centers. The academic offer of these institutions should include education of the highest quality, including knowledge of a broad general culture. Thus, students can access education in different fields of scientific, technical and cultural areas, research and human activity.

(Republic of Panama - Legislative Assembly, 1995).

### ***Structure of the Education System of Panama***

The education system of Panama includes formal or systematic education, which is structured with the aim of offering academic learning to children, youth and adults. The system through formal and non-formal education, considers population with special requirements. The education system is structured as follows:

(Republic of Panama - Legislative Assembly, 1995)

- 1) First level of education or basic education (universal, free and compulsory).  
Duration of eleven years, structured as follows:
  - Preschool Education < 4 to 5 years; duration of two years.
  - Primary Education – duration of six years.
  - Pre-Secondary Education – duration of three years.
- 2) Second level of education or secondary education, free of charge and duration of three years.
- 3) Third level or higher education / post-secondary education (universities and higher education centers)



- ***Instituciones de Educación Superior Universitaria, Institutions of Higher Education - Universities:*** these institutions can be public or private. The main requirement to access this level of education is to have completed secondary education.

The academic offer is professional learning and promotion of competencies in scientific research and culture stimulation.

*(RecoLATIN, 2019) (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censo – INEC. 2005).* National Institute of Statistics and Census.

Some public and private universities offer technical careers in different areas of specialization lasting two or three years. These degrees help students to continue higher university studies. The degree name is usually described as “Technical Engineer in...according to specialty” e.g.: Technical Engineer in Industrial Mechanics. This level corresponds to ISCED level 5 (2011).

***Centros de Estudios Superiores, Higher Education Centers:*** studies that are taught in higher education centers reaches education of the highest quality and cultural stimulation. The academic offer is professional learning and promotion of competencies in scientific research and culture stimulation. These centers belong to the universities structure, and their main goal is research. Some of these centers offer postgraduate programs as part of their academic portfolio, for example:

- *Instituto Centroamericano de Administración y Supervisión de la Educación,* Central American Institute of Administration and Supervision of Education.
- *Instituto de Ciencias Ambientales y Biodiversidad,* Institute of Environmental Sciences and Biodiversity.



- *Instituto de Criminología de la Universidad de Panamá*, Institute of Criminology of the University of Panama.

The University of Panama has thirteen institutes and centers for higher education:

- *Instituto de Alimentación y Nutrición (IANUT)*, Institute of Food and Nutrition.
- *Instituto Centroamericano de Administración y Supervisión de la Educación (ICASE)*, Central American Institute for Administration and Supervision of Education.
- *Instituto de Ciencias Ambientales y Biodiversidad (ICAB)*, Institute of Environmental Sciences and Biodiversity.
- *Criminología (ICRUP)*, Criminology.
- *Instituto de la Mujer (IMUP)*, Women's Institute.
- *Instituto del Canal de Panamá y Estudios Internacionales (ICUP)*, Institute of the Panama Canal and International Studies.
- *Especializado de Análisis (registro y control de especialidades farmacéuticas y productos similares)*, Specialized analysis (registration and control of pharmaceutical specialties and similar products).
- *Especializado de Negociación, Conciliación, Mediación y Arbitraje*. Specialized in Negotiation, Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.
- *Estudios de Tradiciones Étnicas y Culturales (INESTEC)*, Studies of Ethnic and Cultural Traditions.
- *Estudios Nacionales (IDEN)*, National Studies.
- *Instituto de Geociencias*, Institute of Geosciences.
- *Pro Mejoramiento de la Ganadería (PROMEGA)*. Improvement Initiative of Livestock.

The Technological University of Panama has five centers for higher education:

- *Centro Experimental de Ingeniería (CEI)*, Experimental Engineering Center.
- *Centro de Investigaciones Hidráulicas e Hidrotécnicas (CIHH)*, Center for Hydraulic and Hydrotechnical Research.



- *Centro de Producción e Investigaciones Agroindustriales (CEPIA)*, Center for Agroindustrial Production and Research.
- *Centro de Investigación, Desarrollo e Innovación en Tecnologías de Información y las Comunicaciones (CIDITIC)*, Center for Research, Development and Innovation in Information and Communication Technologies.
- *Centro de Investigación e Innovación Eléctrica, Mecánica y de la Industria (CINEMI)*,

The education system has other centers and institutions of higher education in official and private universities.

- o ***Educación superior profesional no universitaria, Non-University professional higher education:*** higher education centers and higher technical institutes belong to this level of education. The academic offer consists in 1) technical level lasting one year, and 2) higher technical lasting two years. These institutes can be public or private. This level of education corresponds to ISCED level 4 (2011).  
Dual Vocational training is aimed at students, workers, and teachers.

Students can access third level of education once completed a secondary level of education and award the degree that supports its learning. In the case of foreign applicants, the high school degree must have official recognition by the Ministry of Education of Panama (*MEDUCA*) (RecoLATIN, 2019).

The following is a description of the structure of the higher education system in Panama, as per the above mentioned information. It includes the learning options and the titles of higher education:



The education system of Panama includes different academic levels. They are structure as follows: a) regular/ general learning; b) artistic learning degrees and, c) degrees in health education.

## a). Titles for regular/ general learning

### *Undergraduate level*

#### – ***Técnicas superiores, Higher technical***

This level of education corresponds to higher technical level careers (university), with a minimum duration between a year and a half, and two years, with academic credit requirement between 90 to 120, at least.

These technical careers are considered post-secondary level and are offered in non-university higher education centers, and in some cases, are offered by universities. The fields of knowledge covered in this level are: commerce, tourism, secretarial, nautical, computer technology, among others.

#### – ***Licenciatura, Bachelor's Degree***

These degrees are offered in universities, and are structured in academic semesters. The minimum duration is three years and eight months, requiring an average of 14 to 160 academic credits. (RecoLATIN, 2019).

In the case of degrees in Law, Architecture, and Engineering, the duration is at least four years. The academic credit requirement varies between 210 to 217. (RecoLATIN, 2019). (*Repositorio de documentos digitales de Panamá (ReDDI)* , Collection of Digital Documents of Panama, 2001)

The access to undergraduate programs is based on the particular requirements established by each institution of higher education, however in general terms they are: a) high school diploma or its equivalent; b) copy of an official identification



document, c) admission test in the case of public institutions and, in some cases, for private institutions. (RecoLATIN, 2019).

### ***Postgraduate Level***

This education level has an academic offer of advanced, specialized and scientific level learning. This level of education comprises specialties programs, master's degrees, and doctorate degrees. (RecoLATIN, 2019).

#### **- *Especialización, Specialties***

Specialties are the first level of postgraduate level, and have a Bachelor's Degree as an admission requirement. The title awarded at this level is specialist/specialization or postgraduate. Sometimes, specialty programs may be part of Master's programs (academic or professional). (RecoLATIN, 2019).

The duration of these programs is approximately one year with a minimum of 24 academic credits. (*Repositorio de documentos digitales de Panamá (ReDDI)*, Collection of Digital Documents of Panama, 2001)

#### **- *Maestría, Master's Degree***

Master's Degrees are the second level of postgraduate level. A Bachelor's Degree is one of the admission requirements. The title to be awarded is a Master's or Master's Degree in "a specific field", with two alternatives of learning: 1) academic, which is research oriented, having as a requirement the development and defense of a dissertation; and, 2) professional, which has a focus on deep knowledge and high level of professional learning. For the professional master, the degree options can be as follows:

(RecoLATIN, 2019).

- General test of knowledge without assigned academic credit value.
- Professional practice for degrees whose suitability is required.





- National or international internship with the support of a final report mentioning the contributions of the specialty duly certified.
- Defense of a final project that includes the application of knowledge acquired in the specialty.

Professional masters have a minimum of 30 academic credits and Academic Masters have a minimum of 50. The duration of masters programs is eighteen months on average. Both master's alternatives allow access to doctoral programs in Panama.

- ***Doctorado, Doctorate Degree***

Doctorate Degrees are the third level of postgraduate level. The title awarded is Doctor in "a specific field". The main purpose is the qualification in a certain field of knowledge through research. (RecoLATIN, 2019). The average of academic credits at this level of education is more than 60. (RecoLATIN, 2019).

**b). Artistic Learning Degrees**

***Studies of artistic and musical learning***

The *Dirección Nacional de Educación Artística*, National Board of Artistic Education, which is attached to the Ministry of Culture of Panama, is in charge of organizing, directing, guiding, coordinating, planning and supervising specialized artistic education in educational centers throughout the national territory. Within the institutions and centers responsible for education in this field, we can mention: (UNESCO Regional Office for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2006):

- *Instituto Nacional de Música*, National Institute of Music
- *Instituto Superior de Bellas Artes*, Higher Institute of Fine Arts
- *Centros de Estudios de Bellas Artes y Folklore*, Centers for the Study of Fine Arts and Folklore
- *Escuelas*, Schools



The degrees offered in this area of knowledge are:

*Técnico Superior*, Higher Technical

- Plastic Arts
- Music (instrument)
- Dance
- Theater
- Crafts
- Folklore

Bachelor of Fine Arts with

- Specialty in Dance
- Specialty in Music
- Specialty in Musical Instrument and Singing
- Specialty in Theater Art
- Specialty in Visual Arts

Art education in Panama is focused on developing professionals with extensive knowledge, technological competences, and intellectual, ethical and moral tools that allow them to be integral artists and professionals with the background and support of a specialized training of a higher education program.

(UNESCO Regional Office for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2006).

Duration and academic credits requirements for each program should be checked directly with the above mentioned institutions.

### **c). Titles and Degrees in the field of Health**

Academic programs in the field of health are regulated by the [Law No. 43 of July 21, 2004](#), which establishes the *Régimen de Certificación y Recertificación de los*



*Profesionales, Especialistas y Técnicos de las disciplinas de la salud*, Certification and Recertification Board for Professionals, Specialists and Technicians of the health disciplines.

The above mentioned Law creates and develops processes and mechanisms that facilitate the evaluation of the level of competence in academic, scientific, and technical terms. In addition, validate the ethical behavior of nationals and foreigners who are within the health system, and keep updated the records of those who are practicing medicine. (*Centro Interuniversitario de Desarrollo - CINDA & Fundación UNIVERSIA*, Interuniversity Development Center & Universia Foundation 2016). The third level in education offers through universities technical, technological, professional, and postgraduate learning in the field of health. Academic programs, length of careers, academic credits and requirements depend on each institution.

Once completed, any of the previously mentioned types of education, students must obtain the certification that allows the practice of medicine in the health system of Panama.

The Basic or General Certification guarantees basic professional and technical competence. This certification must be carried out at least three times per year by professionals and technicians in the health area. This certification is in charge of the *Consejo Interinstitucional de Certificación Básica*, Interinstitutional Council for Basic Certification. (República de Panamá – Asamblea Legislativa, Republic of Panama - Legislative Assembly, 2004)

Health Professionals with postgraduate and specialty certifications must obtain the basic profession certification and approve the assessment of professional competencies for their postgraduate or specialty. These tests must be carried out at least two times per year and are coordinated by the *Consejo Interinstitucional de Certificación de Posgrados o Especialidades*, Council for the certification of postgraduate or Specialties. (República de Panamá – Asamblea Legislativa, Republic of Panama - Legislative Assembly, 2004).



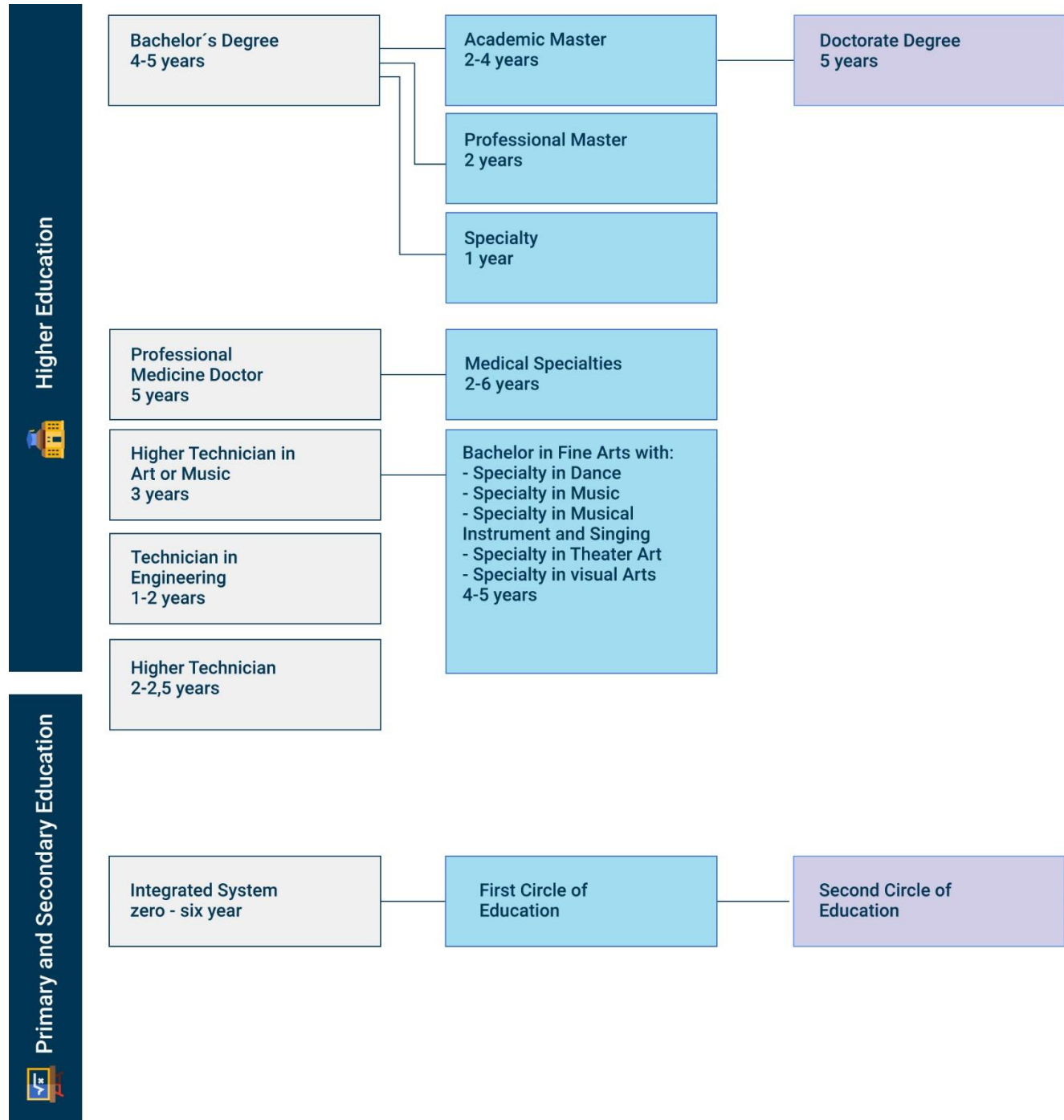
Professionals in medicine are those who hold a degree awarded by a university recognized by the University of Panama and authorized by the *Consejo Técnico de Salud del Ministerio de Salud*, Technical Health Council of the Ministry of Health.

The Law N° 43 and the [Executive Decree No. 119 of May 29, 2003](#) provide the requirements for all professionals in medicine in Panama, for example it is mandatory to perform clinical rotations for two years, with the education and supervision of former teachers (specialists' doctors or general doctors) of the assigned public hospital. This requirement fulfills the purpose of achieving professional improvement to gain suitability in the field of general medicine or any medical specialty. (Ministry of Health of Panama, 2003).

Medical students in each year of the internship must complete eleven months doing rotations (additional one month of vacation). For the first year, the intern will have to carry out ten mandatory rotation programs and one optional in the departments with hospitalized patients, with the preference of the doctor who is doing the program. For the second year of the program, interns must perform at least five months of rotation in hospitals of second level of care (depending in the zone to which they were assigned) those rotation might take place during the specialty or orientation of the doctor in training. (Ministry of Health of Panama, 2019).

The following chart represents the structure of the education levels in Panama.

## Structure of the Education System of Panama



\* Note. Own elaboration adapted from the [Higher Education System of Panama](#)



### 1.1 Comparative table of educational levels in Panama and Colombia

It is essential to understand the characteristics of the educational levels in both countries: Panama and Colombia. Therefore, herein you can find a comparative table of the two educational systems. This comparison is done based on the higher education levels:

- Level 8: Doctorate Degree or equivalent level
- Level 7: Master's Degree or equivalent level
- Level 6: Bachelor's Degree or equivalent level
- Level 5: Short-cycle tertiary education

Comparative table of educational levels in Panama and Colombia:

ISCED LEVEL	LEVEL NAMES IN PANAMA	YEARS	LEVEL NAMES IN COLOMBIA	YEARS
8	Doctorate Degree	3-5	Doctorate Degree	4-5
7	N/A	-	Surgical Medical Specialty	1-5
7	N/A	-	Medical Specialty	2
7	Professional Master	1,5-2	Master's Degree	2
7	Academic Master	2		
7	Medical Specialties	2-6		
7	Bachelor's Specialty	1	Bachelor's Specialty	1
6	Professional Medicine Doctor	5	Bachelor's Degree	4-5
6	Bachelor's Degree	4-5		
6	Bachelor in Fine Arts with: - Specialty in Dance - Specialty in Music - Specialty in Musical Instrument and Singing - Specialty in Theater Art - Specialty in Visual Arts	4-5		
5	N/A	-	Technologist Specialty	<1



ISCED LEVEL	LEVEL NAMES IN PANAMA	YEARS	LEVEL NAMES IN COLOMBIA	YEARS
5	N/A	-	Technical Specialty	1
5	Higher Technician in Art or Music	3	Technologist	3
5	Higher Technician (university)	2	Professional Technician	2

\* *Note.* Own elaboration adapted from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2013) and the education system of Panama.

It is relevant to mention the measure of time corresponding to the educational level and its comparison with international standards:

a) **Academic Credits:** in both Colombia and Panama, the estimated time of the student’s academic activity, based on the academic competencies that the program is expected to develop, is measured in units called Academic Credits.

- **Academic Credit in Colombia:** is the unit of measure of the student’s academic work that suggests the effort to be made to achieve the results of previous learning. It is equivalent to forty-eight (48) hours for an academic period. The institutions must decide the proportion between the classroom and home learning based on the syllabus and the learning results expected from the program.

Institutions must express in academic credits all learning activities included in the syllabus.

(Decree 1330 of 2019, article 2.5.3.2.4.1)

- **Crédito Académico en Panamá:** at the university level in Panama, there is no standard or system of academic credits. The academic credit system that governs higher education institutions is the one established by the



University of Panama, where a calculation is contemplated for academic periods every certain number of hours per credit. (RecoLATIN, 2019).

The academic credit is the temporality of the academic programs in relation to their weight an academic content, as per the above mentioned. Thus, one academic credit is established as equivalent to: each hour of theory in the classroom per week, and every two or three hours of practice or laboratory work. (RecoLATIN, 2019).

As a consequence, the made comparison is an approximation based on the relation with the level of study in each education system, and the duration in years.

- b) **ISCED Levels:** the International Standard Classification of Education- ISCED led by The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), is the global reference classification for assembling, compiling and analyzing cross-nationally comparable data on the education systems of countries worldwide.

## 2. LEGALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND INSTITUTIONS

The *Ministerio de Educación (MEDUCA)*, Ministry of Education is the main authority of the educational system in Panama. It has the responsibility of coordinating, monitoring, regulating, and providing the actions to be implemented at each of its levels. In the case of the higher level, education is ruled by special laws and aligned with the principles of the education system. (República de Panamá – Asamblea Legislativa, Republic of Panama - Legislative Assembly, 1995).

The third level of education or higher level will be taught in universities and higher education centers, as well as in post-secondary education centers, as established by the law. Thus, the creation of these higher education institutions will be





determined according to the socio-economic, cultural and professional needs of the country. The Ministry of education must grant an endorsement and guarantee. (República de Panamá – Asamblea Legislativa, Republic of Panama - Legislative Assembly, 1995).

For information in more detail about the institutions that are legally constituted and endorsed by MEDUCA, please visit the following links:

<http://ctf.ac.pa/>

<http://www.coneaupa.edu.pa/universidades>

### 3. QUALITY ASSURANCE

The *Sistema Nacional de Evaluación y Acreditación para el Mejoramiento de la Calidad de la Educación Superior Universitaria*, National Evaluation and Accreditation System for the Improvement of the Quality of Higher Education was created through the [Law N° 52 of June 26, 2015](#), which is managed by the *Consejo Nacional de Evaluación y Acreditación Universitaria de Panamá (CONEAUPA)*, National Council for University Evaluation and Accreditation of Panama (*República de Panamá - Asamblea Nacional*), Republic of Panama - National Assembly, 2015).

The *CONEAUPA* performs with academic autonomy, legal status and its own assets, following the guidelines and general policy of the Executive Body, attached to the Ministry of Education. The *Consejo Nacional de Evaluación y Acreditación para el Mejoramiento de la Calidad de la Educación Superior Universitaria de Panamá*, National Council of Evaluation and Accreditation for the Improvement of the Quality of University Higher Education of Panama is integrated by:

1. The Ministry of Education



2. *Consejo Nacional de Evaluación y Acreditación Universitaria de Panamá (CONEAUPA)*, National Council for University Evaluation and Accreditation of Panama
3. *Comisión Técnica de Desarrollo Académico*. Technical Committee for Academic Development.
4. Public and private higher education institutions that operate legally in the Republic of Panama.
5. The *Consejo de Rectores de Panamá*, Council of Rectors of Panama as an advisory body.
6. The Association of private universities of Panama, as an advisory body.

The *CONEAUPA* is in charge of two main process a) Institutional accreditation, and b) Accreditation of programs and careers, performing the following phases: (*República de Panamá - Asamblea Nacional*), Republic of Panama - National Assembly, 2015):

- Self-assessment
- External evaluation by academic peers
- Accreditation

Institutional accreditation process is mandatory for all universities or higher education institutions with eight years or more of foundation. However, the process can be done before the completion of that period by those universities that voluntarily decide it.

In the case of accreditation for programs and careers in higher education institutions, it is mandatory for two programs offered by the institution. The rest of the academic programs can be done on a voluntarily basis by the institution.

Once the institutional accreditation is granted through a certificate by *CONEAUPA*, it will be valid for a maximum of six years. Before the expiration date, the institution must should the re-accreditation process.



In the case of programs and careers, the accreditation certificate has a valid period of four, five or six years. To renew these certificates a re-accreditation process should be carried out. (*República de Panamá - Asamblea Nacional*), Republic of Panama - National Assembly, 2015).

For information in more detail about the accreditation process and the accredited institutions by the CONEAUPA, please visit the following official website at the section “universities”: (<http://www.coneaupa.edu.pa>)

For access to the institutions list, please visit the following link: [Universidades](#)

#### 4. ELEMENTS TO START THE PROCESS OF DEGREES AND TITLES RECOGNITION OF HIGHER EDUCATION OBTAINED IN PANAMA

The *Ministerio de Educación Nacional*, Ministry of National Education of Colombia, through Resolution 10687 of 2019, rules the recognition of higher education degrees and titles obtained abroad. Also, it acknowledges the quality assurance systems of the international issuing countries.

The process of recognition of higher education degrees and titles in Colombia is part of the *Sistema de Aseguramiento de la Calidad de la Educación Superior*, which guarantees that the titles and degrees obtained abroad has the recognition of the official quality of the countries where the titles were issued. Same as the quality criteria are also met at the academic offer in Colombia.

**IMPORTANT REMARK:** if your undergraduate title is in Law, Accounting, Education or the Health field, additional requirement must be verified. Those are mentioned in chapters one and two of Resolution 10687 of 2019 of the *Ministerio de Educación Nacional*, available at the following link:

[https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1759/articles-401316\\_archivo\\_pdf.pdf](https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1759/articles-401316_archivo_pdf.pdf)



## Essential Elements for recognition process

The recognition of titles and degrees obtained abroad is not a mandatory process. Nevertheless, it is required in the following scenarios:

1. For regulated professions in which professional associations require official recognition.
2. For professionals who wish to work in the public sector as a contractor or public official.
3. In the case of public tenders, in which the tender specifications suggest it as needed.
4. In the case of teachers of public education institutions, to be placed in the official ranks (*Escalafón*).

The recognition process of titles and degrees obtained in Panama considers the following:

1. Titles and Degrees must be granted by an institution of higher education legally recognized in Panama.
2. Titles and degrees must have apostille or legalization chain.
  - **¿What kind of documents can have an apostille certification?**  
(Hague Conference on Private International Law - HCCH, 2013):
    1. Documents authorized by the competent judicial authorities or officials, the Secretary of the Supreme Court of Justice or those who legally substitute him.
    2. Notarial authorized documents and private documents, whose signatures have been authenticated by a Public



Notary, or by the officials of the *Dirección de Servicios Administrativos del Ministerio de Gobierno y Justicia*.

3. Documents issued by any institution of the Central Government, autonomous and semi-autonomous institutions, municipal institutions, police, Public Ministry institutions, and officials from the Consular and Legalization Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
  4. Regarding other public documents, any of the three previous categories may be used.
- **Apostille:** By the Convention of October 5, 1961 which abolishes the requirement of legalization of foreign public documents (Hague Conference on Private International Law - HCCH, 2013). The use of public documents abroad is facilitated, through a unique apostille certificate issued by the competent Authority of the place where the document was issued. In the case of Panama, the competent authority is: (Hague Conference on Private International Law - HCCH, 2013):
    1. Documents authorized by competent judicial authorities or officials: *Secretario de la Suprema Corte de Justicia: Ancón, Calle Culebra, Edificio 224 y 236, Apartado Postal. 1770 - Zona 1, Panamá ([www.organojudicial.gob.pa](http://www.organojudicial.gob.pa));*
    2. Notarial authorized documents and private documents: *Dirección de Servicios Administrativos del Ministerio de Gobierno y Justicia, Avenida Central, entre calles 2a. y 3ª, San Felipe, Apartado postal: 1628 - Zona 1, Rep. de Panamá (<https://www.panamatramita.gob.pa/es/institucion/ministerio-de-gobierno>);*
    3. Other documents issued by any Central Government institution, autonomous and semi-autonomous institutions, municipal institutions, police, Public Ministry institutions: *Departamento de Autenticación y Legalización del Ministerio*



*de Relaciones Exteriores, Sun Tower Building, 1st Floor,  
Office Nr. 49, Avenue Ricardo J. Alfaro, Rep. de Panamá  
(<http://www.mire.gob.pa>).*

3. According to the field of study and the institution of higher education that grants the title, please consider there are different criteria for the process of degrees and title recognition.

In the case of having a degree issued by an institution of higher education in Panama, and the recognition is required, the following questions and answers can help to understand the process in Colombia:

- ¿When do I have to get the title recognition for a foreign higher education degree? you will find the answer in the following link:  
<https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/portal/convalidaciones/Convalidaciones-Educacion-Superior/350670:Conozca-el-proceso>
- ¿What is the difference between homologate and title recognition? you will find the answer in the following link:  
<https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/portal/convalidaciones/Convalidaciones-Educacion-Superior/355353:Preguntas-Frecuentes>
- If I need assistance ¿who can guide me in the title recognition process? you will find the answer in the following link:  
<https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/portal/convalidaciones/Convalidaciones-Educacion-Superior/355353:Preguntas-Frecuentes>
- ¿What are the steps for title recognition of higher education degrees? you will find the answer in the following link:  
<https://www.gov.co/ficha-tramites-y-servicios/T366>
- ¿What are the costs of the title recognition process of higher education degrees? you will find the answer in the following link:  
<https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/portal/convalidaciones/Convalidaciones-Educacion-Superior/350995:Costo-y-duracion>



For further information about the recognition process, please visit the following link:

<https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/portal/convalidaciones/Convalidaciones-Educacion-Superior/355353:Preguntas-Frecuentes>

## References

*Campus OEI - Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos. (30 de 01 de 2002).* Campus OEI - Organization for Ibero-American States. Obtain from Panama: <https://www.oei.es/historico/quipu/panama/10.pdf>

*Centro Interuniversitario de Desarrollo - CINDA & Fundación UNIVERSIA. (03 de 2016).* *Educación Superior en Iberoamerica, Informe 2016.* National Report: Panamá, Panama City, Interuniversity Development Center & Universia Foundation

Hague Conference on Private International Law - HCCH. (15 de 05 de 2013). *Hague Conference on Private International Law - HCCH.* Obtain from Panama - Competent Authority (Art. 6): <https://www.hcch.net/en/states/authorities/details3/?aid=338>

*Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censo - INEC. (25 de 07 de 2005).* National Institute of Statistics and Census. Obtained by the *Organización del Sistema Educativo Nacional:* <https://www.inec.gob.pa/Archivos/P1231Organizacion.pdf>

Ministry of National Education of Colombia. (25 de 07 de 2019). Decree 330 of July 25, 2019. Decree 1330 of July 25, 2019. Bogotá D.C., Cundinamarca.

Ministry of Health of Panama. (29 de 05 de 2003). Executive Decree No. 199. Panama City, Panama: Official Gazette.

Ministry of Health of Panama. (26 de 06 de 2019). National Medical Internship Program 2018 - Panama. Panama City, Ministry of Health.

UNESCO Regional Office for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean. (20 de 02 de 2006). Obtained from the Artistic education of Panama: <http://www.lacult.unesco.org/docc/PonenciaPanama.pdf>

RecoLATIN. (05 de 2019). *RecoLATIN – Credential Evaluation Centres and Recognition Procedures in Latin American Countries.* Obtained from the



system of higher education in Panama - National Report:  
[http://www.recolatin.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/National-Report-on-the-Higher-Education-systems-of-Panama\\_ES.pdf](http://www.recolatin.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/National-Report-on-the-Higher-Education-systems-of-Panama_ES.pdf)

*Repositorio de Documentos Digitales Panamá - ReDDI. (12 de 2001). Repositorio de Documentos Digitales Panamá - ReDDI. Obtenido de ReDDI- Collection of Digital Documents of Panama:*  
<http://bdigital.binal.ac.pa/bdp/artpma/educacionsuperior>

*República de Panamá - Asamblea Legislativa. (06 de 07 de 1995). Law No. 34 of 1995. Articles are repealed, modified, added and subrogated to the Ley Orgánica de Educación. Panama City, Panama: Oficial Gazette.*

*República de Panamá - Asamblea Legislativa. (21 de 07 de 2004). Law 43 of July 21, 2004. Del Régimen de Certificación y Recertificación de los Profesionales, Especialistas y Técnicos de las disciplinas de la salud. Certification and Recertification Board for Professionals, Specialists and Technicians of the health disciplines. Panama City, Panama: Oficial Gazette.*

*República de Panamá - Asamblea Nacional. (26 de 06 de 2015). Ley 52 de 26 de junio de 2015. Creación del Sistema Nacional de Evaluación y Acreditación para el Mejoramiento de la Calidad de la Educación Superior Universitaria de Panamá. Panama City, Panama: Oficial Gazette. Obtained from*  
[https://www.gacetaoficial.gob.pa/pdfTemp/27813\\_B/51278.pdf](https://www.gacetaoficial.gob.pa/pdfTemp/27813_B/51278.pdf)

*Universidad de Panamá. (27 de 09 de 2020). University of Panama. Obtained by Special Courses:*  
<https://vicinvestigacion.up.ac.pa/cursosEspeciales#:~:text=Los%20Cursos%20Especiales%20de%20Posgrado,el%20%C3%A1rea%20objeto%20de%20estudio.>