



GUIDE TO THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 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 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The United States of America is a sovereign country constituted as a Constitutional Federal Republic. It consists of 50 states and a Federal District. This country has a decentralized educational system based on the Federal Constitution, which grants power over education to states and local authorities, as well as to schools and institutions of higher education.

The education system is based on a wide variety of federal, state, and local laws, as well as judicial decisions and regulations. There are rules and policies adopted by associations and educational schools and independent institutions, which have legality within their field of action.

For information in more detail about the laws and articles of law that apply to a wide variety of education sectors, please visit the following link:

<https://corporate.findlaw.com/law-library/education-law/>

The federal government has a limited role in the U.S. education system; nevertheless, it provides important policy leadership and provides support to the education structure throughout the nation. The following links offer useful information regarding the U.S. education system.

[The White House Website](#): information on presidential activities and initiatives related with different topics, education included: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/>



[The Department of Education Website](https://www.ed.gov/): information about federal government's role including initiatives and programs in the field of education:

<https://www.ed.gov/>

[Findlaw State Resources Directory](https://caselaw.findlaw.com/#statelaw): provides links to state constitutions, law codes, regulations, and legislatures.

<https://caselaw.findlaw.com/#statelaw>

This section has been adapted from International Affairs Office, U.S. Department of Education:

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ous/international/usnei/us/edlite-org-us.html>

- ***Institutions of Higher Education***

Higher education in the United States is well known by offering a variety of institutions, programs and levels of college degrees. Some of the most relevant are:

- **Community Colleges**: also known as Junior Colleges. They are institutions of higher education and their academic programs usually have a length of two years (for full-time students). The cost of this education is usually lower than a university. Community Colleges offer education in specialized fields such as technology, auto mechanics, nursing, physical therapy, among others, which allow students to access the job market faster than they would in a professional career. Community Colleges award the Associate's Degree, which guarantees that the student has developed the technical knowledge, academic basics and skills required to obtain employment and study in a specific field of knowledge. Students who hold a degree from a Community College may access a university to obtain a professional degree under the transfer modality.
- **Colleges & Universities**: these institutions offer Bachelor's Degree programs with specialties in different fields of study. Some universities offer Master's

Degree, Professional Doctorate and Research Doctorate. Besides, some institutions offer the opportunity of obtaining a combination degree, e.g. Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree, or a Master's Degree with a professional title. This possibility may reduce the time required to complete the two programs. The academic programs that usually have this option are developed in the areas of education, law, medicine, and business.

– ***Access to Higher Education***

College-level admission tests:

The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT): it is a test for higher education in the United States. It is designed to evaluate the high school student's knowledge to access university academic level.

The American College Test (ACT): it is another standardized test designed to measure the preparation of high school students in order to access university academic level.

These two tests are similar, although there are some differences in their structure and emphasis. Both are accepted by most universities in the United States. Nevertheless, it is important to check with the university to confirm its own requirements.

Graduate-level admission tests:

Graduate Record Exam (GRE): it is a general knowledge test required to access most graduate programs in the United States. However, it is important to check with the programs of your interest because, in certain fields of study, it is not required.

Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT): it is an admission test to postgraduate degrees in business administration and other types of management. It measures the verbal, quantitative and analytical writing skills of the applicant.

Law School Admission Test (LSAT): it is a standardized test for students who are interested in academic programs in the field of law (Juris Doctor, o JD) at the universities in the United States. The test is designed to determine the analytical skills, reading comprehension, logic and verbal reasoning.

Medical College Admission Test (MCAT): it is developed, and administered by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), it is a standardized, multiple-choice examination created to evaluate applicants for medicine academic programs. The MCAT evaluates applicants regarding problem solving, critical thinking, and knowledge of natural, behavioral, and social science concepts and principles.

All doctors who want to be eligible to practice medicine in the United States must apply and obtain a license from the Medical Board in the state where they intend to practice, regardless of whether they studied in the United States or another country. The specific steps to obtain the license will depend on the state as well as the country where the medical degree was awarded. The requirements for obtaining a license generally include the following:

- 1) Obtain your first professional medical degree from a medical school in the United States or Canada, accredited by the Liaison Committee for Medical Education or the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation, or a medical school in another country that appears in the World Directory of Medical Schools with a remark indicating that graduates are eligible for a certification from the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates - ECFMG.
- 2) Complete a period of residency (clinical practice).
- 3) Overcome the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) for graduates with a degree in medicine (M.D.) or the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination (COMLEX) for graduates with a degree in osteopathic medicine (D.O.).

For information in more detail about the steps to practice medicine in the United States, please visit the following link: <https://students-residents.aamc.org>.

International medical graduates who want to practice medicine in the United States can find useful information in the following link: <https://www.ama-assn.org/education/international-medical-education/practicing-medicine-us-international-medical-graduate>.

- ***Degrees and Titles***

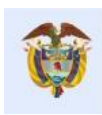
Description of higher education levels in the United States of America

Associate's Degree: it is a higher education degree awarded after two year study period. The student can finish the studies by achieving this degree, or can continue the education for an additional two years and obtain the professional degree. Some examples of this type of title include: Associate of Applied Business (AAB), Associate of Arts (AA), and Associate of Applied Technology (AAT).

Bachelor's Degree: it is an academic program that leads to a higher education degree. Usually the length of the learning is four years of full time study, which requires a significant amount of independent work to obtain mastery in a specific field of study. Some examples of this type of title include: Bachelor of Science (BS), Bachelor of Arts (BA), and Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA).

The Bachelor's Degree can be awarded with honors, which implies that the university degree contains a greater volume of material or a higher standard of study. However, this additional characteristic is not relevant in the degree recognition process in Colombia.

Master's Degree: it is a higher education academic degree awarded upon completion of academic requirements. It usually lasts at least one year, and is characterized by a greater depth of study and specialization than a college undergraduate program such as Bachelor's Degree. Some examples of this type of title include: Master of Arts (MA), Master of Science (MS), Master of Business Administration (MBA), and Master of Social Work (MSW).



Advanced Professional Degree: it is an academic degree of higher education awarded upon completion of a program that prepares students with knowledge and skills required to obtain a license, and then be able to practice a profession. Most of the students have already obtained a Bachelor's Degree before applying to a professional doctoral program. Some examples of this type of title include: Doctor of Dental Surgery (D.D.S.), Juris Doctor (J.D.) in law, Doctor of Medicine (M.D.), and Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D).

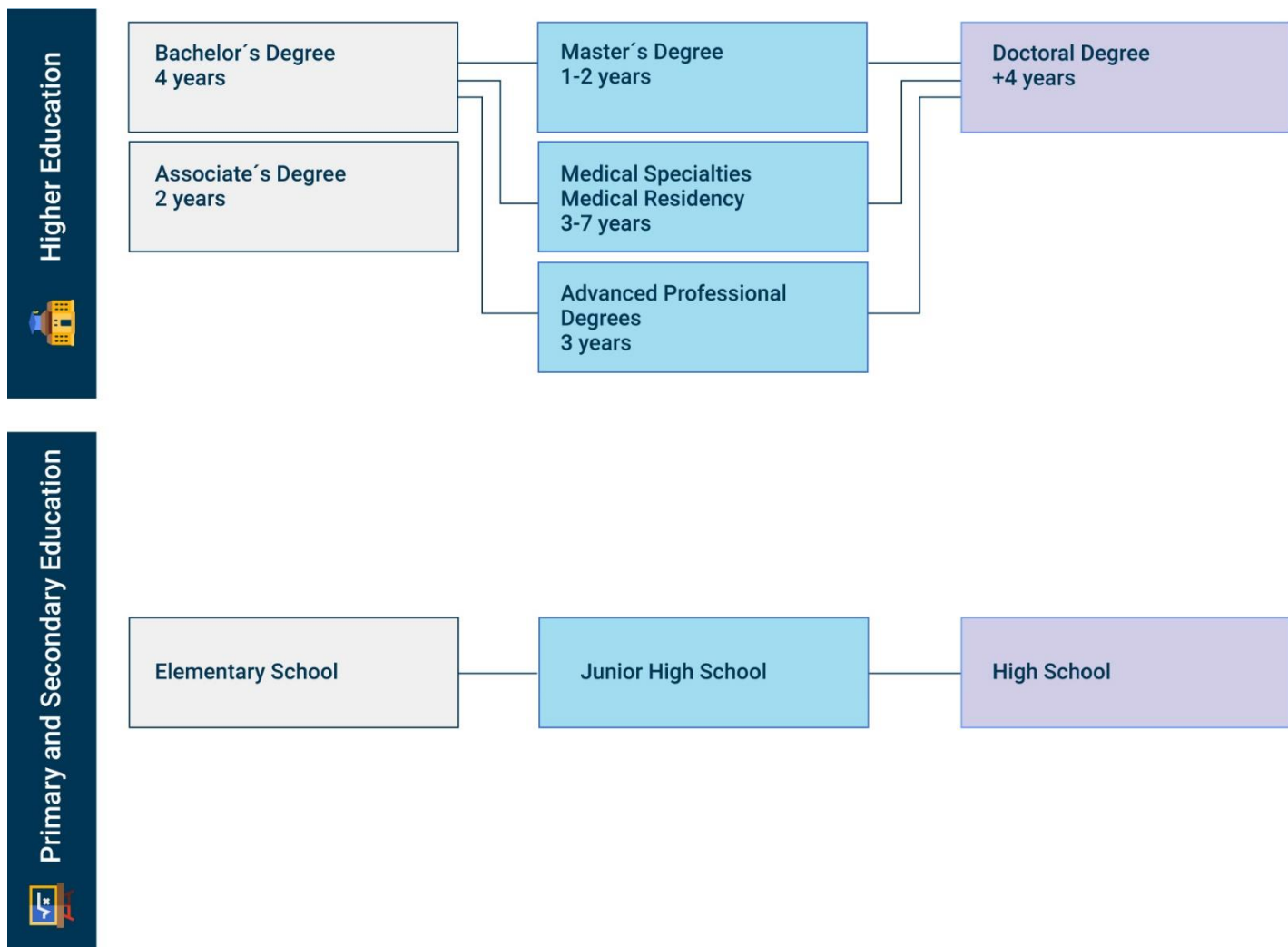
Doctorate or Doctoral Degree: it is a postgraduate academic program that grants the highest education degree which accredits training and competence for academic knowledge and high-quality research. The final phase of this academic degree is the production and defense of a research work structured as a dissertation work.

Among the research doctorates awarded in the United States, the majority (98%) are the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). Some examples of other research doctorates include: Doctor of Arts (D.A.), Doctor of Science (D.Sc.) and, Doctor of Juridical Science (J.S.D).

For information in more detail, please check the Survey of Earned Doctorates in the official website of the National Science Foundation:

<https://nces.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf20301>

Structure of the Education System of United States of America



* Note. Own elaboration adapted from the official website of *U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics*: <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d01/fig1.asp>

1.1 Comparative table of educational levels in United States of America and Colombia

It is essential to understand the characteristics of the educational levels in both countries: United States 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 United States and Colombia:

ISCED LEVEL	LEVEL NAMES IN UNITED STATES	YEARS	LEVEL NAMES IN COLOMBIA	YEARS
8	Doctorate	+4	Doctorate Degree	4-5
7	Advanced Professional Degrees	3	N/A	N/A
7	Medical Specialties	3-7	Surgical Medical Specialty	1-5
7	Medical Residency		Medical Specialty	2
7	Master's Degree	1-2	Master's Degree	2
6	N/A		Bachelor's Specialty	1
6	Bachelor's Degree	4	Bachelor's Degree	4-5
5	N/A	N/A	Technologist Specialty	<1
5			Technical Specialty	1
5	Associate's Degree	2	Technologist	3
5			Professional Technologist	2

* Note. Own elaboration adapted from the official website of the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics: <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d01/fig1.asp>

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 United States, 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 the United States:** the U.S. Department of Education established that an academic credit (semester credit hour) is equivalent to one hour of classroom learning, plus two hours of autonomous home study per week for a fifteen-week period. Most classroom learning and seminars have three academic credits, while laboratory classes usually have four academic credits. A full time bachelor's student takes fifteen academic credits per semester, thus obtaining an Associate's Degree in two years or a Bachelor's Degree in four years. The exact number of academic credits varies and depends on the institutions and the program selected.
- **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)

- 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 education system in the United States is decentralized. Therefore, state and local governments have the responsibility of education.

Some of the public bodies that are in charge of education include: state legislatures, state board of education, and state departments of education, among others.

The education system in the United States does not have a federal education ministry that controls higher education institutions in the country. As mentioned before, the main role in higher education is in the hands of state governments; however, Federal Government also has an important role developing programs and policies for education through the U.S. Federal Department of Education. Also is the body responsible for the administration of educational credits (loans) and the recognition of high quality accrediting agencies.

The state governments grant authorization to higher education institutions to award academic degrees and titles. In the case of religious universities, an exception- from a governing body.

Students who want to access the recognition process in Colombia of titles and degrees obtained in the United States must confirm that the higher education institution is legally established, with the authorization mentioned above. In addition, it is important to highlight not only the legality but also the relevance of quality accreditation. In this regard, please review the section N° 3 of this guide called: Quality Assurance.

In the following links you can find official lists of state education agencies in the United States:

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/contacts/state/index.html>

<https://www.chea.org/state-licensed-or-authorized-institutions>.

The following chart offers official links of legal institutions in each of the states, with academic higher education offer:



State	Entity	Official Website
Alabama	Commission on Higher Education Alabama	https://ache.edu/AL_Inst_Map.aspx
Alaska	Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education	https://acpe.alaska.gov/Alaska-Postsecondary-Institutions
Arizona	Arizona Commission of Postsecondary Education	https://higherred.az.gov/sites/all/modules/flipbook1/mobile/index.html#p=11
Arkansas	National Center for Education Statistics	https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?s=AR
California	Bureau of Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE) for private HEI	https://search-bppe.dca.ca.gov/
Colorado	Colorado Department of Education	https://higherred.colorado.gov/Data/InstSelect.aspx
Connecticut	Office of Higher Education	http://www.ctohe.org/HEWeb/CollegesList.asp
Delaware	Higher Education State of Delaware	https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?s=DE
Florida	Commission For Independent Education (private HEI)	https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?s=FL
	State University System of Florida (public HEI)	https://www.flbog.edu/universities/
Georgia	Non Public Postsecondary education Commission (private HEI)	https://gnpec.georgia.gov/directory-institutions
	University System of Georgia (Public HEI)	https://www.usg.edu/institutions/directories/instdir/
Hawaii	Official website of the state of Hawaii	https://portal.ehawaii.gov/residents/education/
Idaho	Idaho State of Board Education (private HEI)	https://boardofed.idaho.gov/higher-education-private/private-colleges-degree-granting/registered-college-listing/
	Postsecondary Idaho Institutions	https://nextsteps.idaho.gov/schools/
Illinois	Illinois Board of Higher Education	http://ibheprofiles.ibhe.org/



State	Entity	Official Website
Indiana	Official Website of the State of Indiana	https://transferin.net/transfer-resources/transfer-databases/academic-program-inventory/
Iowa	Postsecondary Registration in Iowa	https://iowacollegeaid.gov/DataCenter
Kansas	Kansas Board of Regents (public HEI)	https://www.kansasregents.org/universities_colleges/public_institutions
	Kansas Board of Regents (private HEI)	https://www.kansasregents.org/academic_affairs/private_out_of_state/private_and_out_of_state_institutions
Kentucky	Kentucky Council of Postsecondary Education (Federal HEI)	http://cpe.ky.gov/campuses/state.html
	Kentucky Council of Postsecondary Education (Private HEI)	http://cpe.ky.gov/campuses/in-state.html
	Kentucky Council of Postsecondary Education (private HEI's that do not have a physical building in the state, but can offer education)	http://cpe.ky.gov/campuses/out-of-state.html
	Kentucky Council of Postsecondary Education (Religious Institutes with license exemption)	http://cpe.ky.gov/campuses/in-state-exempt.html
	Kentucky Council of Postsecondary Education (program finder for all HEI)	https://dataportal.cpe.ky.gov/KYAcademicProgramInventory.aspx
Louisiana	Board of Regents State of Louisiana	https://regents.la.gov/about/our-institutions/
Maine	Official Website of the State of Maine	https://www.maine.gov/portal/education/colleges.html
Maryland	Maryland Higher Education Commission	https://mhec.maryland.gov/institutions_training/Pages/collegeinfo.aspx
Massachusetts	Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (public HEI)	http://www.mass.edu/system/campusdirectory.asp
	National Center for Education Statistics (private HEI)	https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?s=MA



State	Entity	Official Website
Michigan	National Center for Education Statistics	https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?s=MI
Minnesota	Minnesota office of Higher Education	http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/sPages/instSearch.cfm
Mississippi	Official Website of the State of Mississippi	http://www.mississippi.edu/universities/
Missouri	Missouri Department of Higher Education	https://dhewd.mo.gov/public-and-independent-colleges.php
Montana	Montana University System	https://mus.edu/Universities/
Nebraska	Official Website of the State of Nebraska	http://www.nebraska.gov/education/colleges/
Nevada	Official Website of the State of Nevada	https://www.csn.edu/state-nevada-and-nshe
New Hampshire	New Hampshire Department of Higher Education	https://www.education.nh.gov/pathways-education/higher-education-new-hampshire
New Jersey	Office of the Secretary of Higher Education New Jersey	https://www.state.nj.us/highereducation/colleges/schools_sector.shtml
New Mexico	Official Website of the State of Nuevo México	https://hed.state.nm.us/nm-college-guide/
New York	Office of Higher Education of New York	http://eservices.nysed.gov/collegedirectory/index.htm
North Carolina	National Center for Education Statistics (HEI)	https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?s=NC
	Approved Degree Programs of Licensed Institutions - The University of North Carolina System	https://www.northcarolina.edu/institutions/
North Dakota	National Center for Education Statistics	https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?s=ND
Ohio	Official Website - Ohio Higher Education	https://www.ohiohighered.org/campuses/map
Oklahoma	Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education	https://www.okhighered.org/state-system/colleges-universities/list.shtml
Oregon	Official Website of the State of Oregon - Higher Education Coordinating Commission- Public HEI	https://www.oregon.gov/highered/institutions-programs/private/Pages/private-colleges-ODA-authorized.aspx



State	Entity	Official Website
	Official Website of the State of Oregon - Higher Education Coordinating Commission- Private HEI	https://www.oregon.gov/highered/institutions-programs/private/Pages/policy-authorization.aspx
Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania State Finder (check section of: Postsecondary and Higher Education Entities)	http://www.edna.pa.gov/Screens/wfSearchEntity.aspx
Rhode Island	National Center for Education Statistics	https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?s=RI
South Carolina	South Carolina Commission on Higher Education	https://www.che.sc.gov/Students,FamiliesMilitary/LearningAboutCollege/SCCollegesUniversities.aspx
South Dakota	Official Website of the State of South Dakota	http://sd.gov/education.aspx
Tennessee	Higher Education Commission - State of Tennessee	https://www.tn.gov/thec/learn-about/tennessee-s-colleges-and-universities.html
	Higher Education Commission - State of Tennessee (Alphabetic list)	https://www.tn.gov/thec/bureaus/student-aid-and-compliance/postsecondary-state-authorization/authorized-institutions-and-data/institutions-a-f.html
Texas	National Center for Education Statistics	https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?s=TX
	Texas Higher Education Coordinator Board (check section: Recognition of Accrediting Agencies- download the excel file)	https://www.highered.texas.gov/institutional-resources-programs/private-postsecondary-institutions/recognition-of-accrediting-agencies/
Utah	Official Website of the State of Utah	https://www.utah.gov/education/colleges.html
Vermont	Official Website of the State of Vermont	https://www.vermont.gov/learn?id=191#gsc.tab=0



3. QUALITY ASSURANCE

Each state develops different degrees of control over education as a consequence of the decentralized education system in the United States. However, in general, higher education institutions work with considerable independence and autonomy. Thus, American institutions of education can vary widely in their character and the quality of their programs.

Accreditation process emerged in the United States as a way of conducting non-governmental evaluations of institutions of education and academic programs with the aim of guaranteeing a basic level of quality. Accreditation agencies are private associations that develop evaluation criteria about education quality and, as per the universities request, they perform peer evaluation activities. After being evaluated, universities that meet the agency's criteria become "accredited". The process for programmatic accreditation is similar.

Accreditation of higher education institutions is voluntary. The federal government does not demand institutions to obtain accreditation, and most state governments also do not require accreditation as a condition to grant authorization to an institution of higher education.



On the other hand, it is important to emphasize that accreditation can be a factor of great relevance within the American context, both for students and for institutions. Here you can find some reasons:

- Access to employment: most of the public agencies and many companies only hire people with degrees from accredited universities.
- Professional License: professional licensing authorities generally only accept applications from graduates of accredited programs.
- Financial aid: usually students can receive grants and loans from public sources – and some private ones – only if they attend an accredited university.
- Continuation of studies: universities that offer postgraduate programs usually only receive applicants that hold a previous degree from an accredited university. Students who have a degree from a non-accredited university might experience a difficult process to access postgraduate education.
- Student visas: for those applicants who intend to study in the United States, student visas are only granted to those who will attend an accredited institution.

Accreditation process has two types: 1) Institutional, that applies to the entire institution, and 2) Programmatic -sometimes called Specialized- that applies to programs, departments or schools that are part of an institution.

Programmatic accreditation is not required for all programs in the United States. For most careers, institutional accreditation is sufficient. However, programmatic accreditation becomes relevant when it is related with regulated careers such as engineering or medicine, whose students need a license to practice its profession.

Most programmatic accrediting organizations focus on evaluating programs within an institution of higher education that is accredited by one of the institutional

accrediting agencies. However, some programmatic accrediting organizations may also accredit specialized institutions when the main focus is on a single major or area of study, e.g. an art institute or a music conservatory.

The Federal Law for Higher Education establishes that the Secretary of Education of the United States is responsible for publishing the list of recognized accrediting agencies. For information in more detail about the list of accrediting agencies and the institutions and programs that have accreditation, please visit the [Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs \(DAPIP\)](https://oep.ed.gov/dapip/#/).

The following table offers a compilation of useful links with relevant information regarding the quality assurance of higher education in the United States:

ENTITY	DESCRIPTION	LINK
Accreditation: Institutions y academic programs accredited	Database with institutions and programs accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.	https://oep.ed.gov/dapip/#/home
Accreditation Agencies nationally recognized by the Department of Education of the United States	List of accrediting agencies recognized by the United States Department of Education.	https://oep.ed.gov/dapip/#/agency-list
ACGME - Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education	Accredited programs for clinical residency and specialties (Medicine).	https://apps.acgme.org/ads/public/
CHEA - Council of Higher Education Agency	A non-governmental association focused on the accreditation of higher education institutions.	https://www.chea.org/chea-recognized-organizations

ENTITY	DESCRIPTION	LINK
Education USA	A resource from the United States Department of State (Foreign Office) on how to study in that country.	https://educationusa.state.gov/your-5-steps-us-study

4. ELEMENTS TO START THE PROCESS OF DEGREES AND TITLES RECOGNITION OF HIGHER EDUCATION OBTAINED IN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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

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 United States of America considers the following:

1. Titles and Degrees must be granted by an institution of higher education legally recognized in United States.
2. Titles and degrees must have apostille or legalization chain.

Apostille authenticates the seals and signatures of officials on public documents, so they can be recognized in foreign countries that are members of The Hague Convention Treaty. The U.S. Department of State carries the apostille process for Federally-issued documents. In the same way, State-issued documents must be apostilled by the competent authority in the state where the document was executed. Costs and requirements vary from state to state.

For information in more detail about the competent authorities that carry out the apostille process in the United States, please visit the following link:

<https://www.hcch.net/es/states/authorities/details3/?aid=353>

For information in more detail about apostille in the United States, the following links are available:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/records-and-authentications/authenticate-your-document/apostille-requirements.html>

<https://assets.hcch.net/docs/6dd54368-bebd-4b10-a078-0a92e5bca40a.pdf>

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 United States, 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

- The structure of education in the United States. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.
<https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d01/fig1.asp>
- Accreditation and Quality Assurance: Postsecondary Accreditation. U.S. Network for Education Information (USNEI)
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