

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

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of National Education of Colombia (MEN) has been working, in recent years, on the construction of guides for the educational systems of different countries. These instruments aim to facilitate decision-making as to where and what to study abroad, as well as to guide on the process and requirements for the recognition of foreign higher education degrees in Colombia.

The Directorate of Quality of Higher Education of MEN made a diagnosis of the Guides of Educational Systems that are already published on the website. In the exercise carried out, the need to bring the technical language of education closer to the citizen was highlighted, as well as to generate an interactive instrument. In this order of ideas, MEN and the Colombian Association of Universities – ASCUN, updated and redesigned the Educational Systems Guides.

In order to construct this guide, information was consolidated from various official sources, which made it possible to offer a practical and relevant tool for the citizen. Therefore, this includes relevant information on four central aspects: 1) the higher education system; 2) the legality of higher education programmes and institutions; 3) the quality assurance of higher education institutions and programmes; and, 4) aspects to be considered in starting the process of recognition of higher education diplomas obtained abroad.

All the information contained here includes the different accessibility requirements in Web tools and products, facilitating access to people with disabilities. This work was possible thanks to the invaluable collaboration of the National Institute for the Blind – INCI.

1. RUSSIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

In Russia, the federal law established four levels of general education: 1) preschool, 2) initial, 3) basic, 4) general secondary, and four levels of professional education: 1) secondary vocational 2) higher baccalaureate 3) higher specialization and master's degree 4) higher - preparation of specialists of the highest level (where aspiration (аспирантура) - equivalent to the doctoral program in Colombia, except for the requirement of the dissertation). For more information on the definition of levels, you can consult federal law 273ФЗ, article 10: <http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102162745>.

The titles of kandidat nauk (equivalent to doctor, in Colombia) and doktor nauk (equivalent to the habilitation in European countries) have regulations as part of the activities of science, technology, and research. The granting of such degrees and the process of supporting the corresponding dissertations does not formally belong to the educational system. The relevant law is 127ФЗ, 1996, "From Science and State Policy to Science and Technology": <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/9973>.

General secondary education (up to the ninth grade) is a constitutional right of Russian citizens, and typically ends at the age of 14 to 16. At the end of this stage, students choose the secondary education ("grades 10 and 11") or vocational secondary, with a duration ranging from two to four years. In Russia, the words *teknikum* and *kolledzh* refer to vocational institutions of this level.

Typically, high school students receive current grades, fourth-year (four times a year) or half-year (twice a year) grades, cumulative grades from the school year. The exact rules depend on the educational institution. At the end of ninth and 11th grades, the Basic State Examination (ОГЭ) or the Unified State Examination (ЕГЭ) are held, respectively. The rules at the national level can be consulted in law 273ФЗ, article 30: <http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102162745>.

ЕГЭ is performed in several academic disciplines. Passing two disciplines (Russian and mathematics) is part of the requirements to receive the Attestation of Secondary Education. ЕГЭs in other disciplines are part of secondary education grades and play a main role in the competition to higher education institutions. The requirements for access to higher education after vocational secondary education are more varied; the main difference is that results of ЕГЭ are not always required. For more details of the rules of admission to higher education for graduates of vocational institutions, the Order of the Ministry of Education can be consulted: <https://rg.ru/2015/11/16/obr-dok.html>.

The access of foreign students to higher education in Russia is carried out on the basis of international agreements, within the framework of personal contracts with higher education institutions, or within quotas for foreign students with financial support from the government of Russia. Compatriots (people without Russian nationality but with cultural or family connections to Russia) enjoy certain privileges. For the detailed regulation of education for foreigners in Russia, Law 273ФЗ, Article 78 can be seen.

<http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102162745>, and for practical information aimed at foreigners: <https://russia-edu.minobrnauki.gov.ru/>.

Higher education institutions

Higher education in Russia is developed in state and private higher education institutions. The words "university", "institute", "academy", among other, in terms of their naming, do not affect the legal status of the institution. Historically (twentieth century), the denomination "universities" corresponded to classical universities, while "institutes" had a more limited focus (for example, pedagogical institutes, polytechnical institutes, medical institutes). Beginning in the 1990s, many "institutes" changed their names to "universities" or "academies," and extended their profile (for example, a medical academy may offer management programs). Taking into account these trends, as from 2012, there is legally a single denomination: "higher education institution".

Example of an official name: Частное образовательное учреждение высшего образования «Владикавказский институт управления» (Private higher education institution of "Vladikavkaz Management Institute").

For more information about higher education institutions and programs they offer, <http://abitur.cbias.ru> can be consulted. On legal definitions of types of educational institutions, Law 273FZ, articles 21, 23, 24 can be read: <http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102162745>.

Most public institutions are administered by a Federal Ministry in charge of higher education (minobrnauki.gov.ru, a denomination that frequently changes), while there are higher education institutions in the systems of the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Taxation, etc.

The State, through the Rosobrnadzor agency ("Superintendence of Education"), carries out accreditation of higher education programs. Graduates of accredited programs receive diplomas in a unified way, regardless of the dependency (public, private, military, etc.) of the institution. Non-accredited programs and institutions are free to award their own institutional diplomas.

For more information on the accreditation process, Law 273ФЗ, article 92 can be consulted: <http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102162745>.

Access to higher education

The Constitution of Russia stipulates that citizens have access to higher education on a competitive basis. State institutions organize competitions for admission to baccalaureate (undergraduate) level studies, the main part of which is the results of ЕГЭ. However, many institutions have some freedom to include additional evidence. The law allows special processes for the admission of foreigners. A share of those admitted, dependent on the program, but typically around 50%, have the expenses of their tuition assumed by the State. Alternatively, it is common for tuition fees to be funded by a company or a state entity where the student undertakes to be refunded at the end of their studies. There are privileges for

Olympic winning candidates, and for other extraordinary individuals. For more information on the rules of admission to undergraduate programs in state institutions, Law 273ФЗ, articles 56, 70, 71 can be consulted: <http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102162745>.

Institutions have the autonomy to organize admission to specialization and master's programs. In practice, the vast majority of applicants are baccalaureate graduates from the same institution whose selection process may be limited to one interview. For more information on the rules for admission to specialization and master's programs, Law 273ФЗ, article 69 can be consulted: <http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102162745> and internal documents of each institution.

Degrees and titles

Higher education degrees are:

Bakalavr (Бакалавр): It is the higher education degree that corresponds to undergraduate (university degree) in Colombia. It is awarded upon completion of four years of training that includes foundations of professional knowledge and extensive general training. This degree gives the possibility to continue with professional studies, and is a typical formal requirement for employment.

Specialist (Специалист): Typically consists of bakalavr + 1 year. Historically, it corresponds to the university degree of 5 years of studies that existed before transition to the Bologna system. In the country's labor market, graduates with specialist diplomas are preferred to graduates with only one bakalavr. In some fields of study, particularly medicine, the specialist diploma is directly awarded, without the intermediate step of bakalavr.

Master (Магистр): Typically, bakalavr +2 years, dedicated to academic and research deepening in the field of studies. Studies culminate, in most cases, with the performance and support of a degree work.

Диплом о дополнительном образовании (Diploma of Additional Training): it is awarded, among other conditions, at the end of a deepening program whose prerequisites include, for example, the title of bakalavr. However, the law allows the use of this figure and type of diploma in different circumstances. For example, this is also called a certificate that foreigners receive when completing a Russian language course before starting their main studies. Something similar to the "option" in the Colombian system.

Диплом об окончании аспирантуры "Исследователь": Diploma of aspiration completion - Diploma of Researcher. Aspiration is a form of organization of studies towards the title of candidate in sciences (equivalent to the Colombian doctorate) that typically lasts three years after the master's degree or diploma of specialist. The aspiration approach consists of research work with an advisor. Regardless of whether or not such studies culminate in a dissertation, the student who meets the other requirements receives a diploma that informally stands for ABD ("all but dissertation"). It is worth mentioning that the aspiration is not a necessary requirement for the title of science candidate. This higher education degree is more advanced than the master's degree and does not have an exact equivalent in the Colombian system.

For more information on the higher education degrees described above, Law 273Ф3, article 60; on the diploma of further training -- the same law, article 76 can be consulted:

<http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102162745>.

The process for obtaining the degrees of **кандидат наук -- candidate of sciences** and **доктор наук -- doctor of sciences** consists of the presentation and defense of a thesis to a "диссертационный совет " (Committee of Dissertations), subordinated to the Higher Commission of Attestation (VAK), which

is outside the system of higher education institutions or, as a special privilege, by some universities or research centers. The term "учёная степень" ("academic degree") refers to these two degrees which, due to their regulations, are not considered in Russia as higher education degrees.

Regulations in force require a higher education graduated to present the science candidate thesis (for example, a bakalavr degree). In practice, people whose professional life is developed outside the academy have the possibility of accessing the title of science candidate without master's or aspiration studies.

For more information on the organization of research in Russia, the part of which is the preparation of candidate and doctor of science theses, Law 127ФЗ, 1996, <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/9973> can be consulted.

For more information on the process of granting academic degrees (candidate and doctor of science), the Government Decree 30 January 2002 N 74 can be consulted at <http://www.psi-ras.ru/polozh.html>.

The science candidate dissertation contains original research results published in at least two or three articles in VAK-recognized journals. This degree corresponds to a Colombian doctorate.

The Dissertation **of Doctor of Science** contains results from at least 10 to 15 research products, corresponding to a highly original and important contribution, with worldwide recognition, certifying the power to be a leader of a research group. This qualification corresponds to the academic level of a Colombian Professor, or to Habilitation in France and Germany.

Medical and Pharmaceutical Specialties: The superior training of medical professionals typically lasts 6 years, with the title of specialist; 4 or 5 years in some programs. Graduates interested in being employed as doctors continue their theoretical and practical studies in Ordinateure (equivalent to residence in other

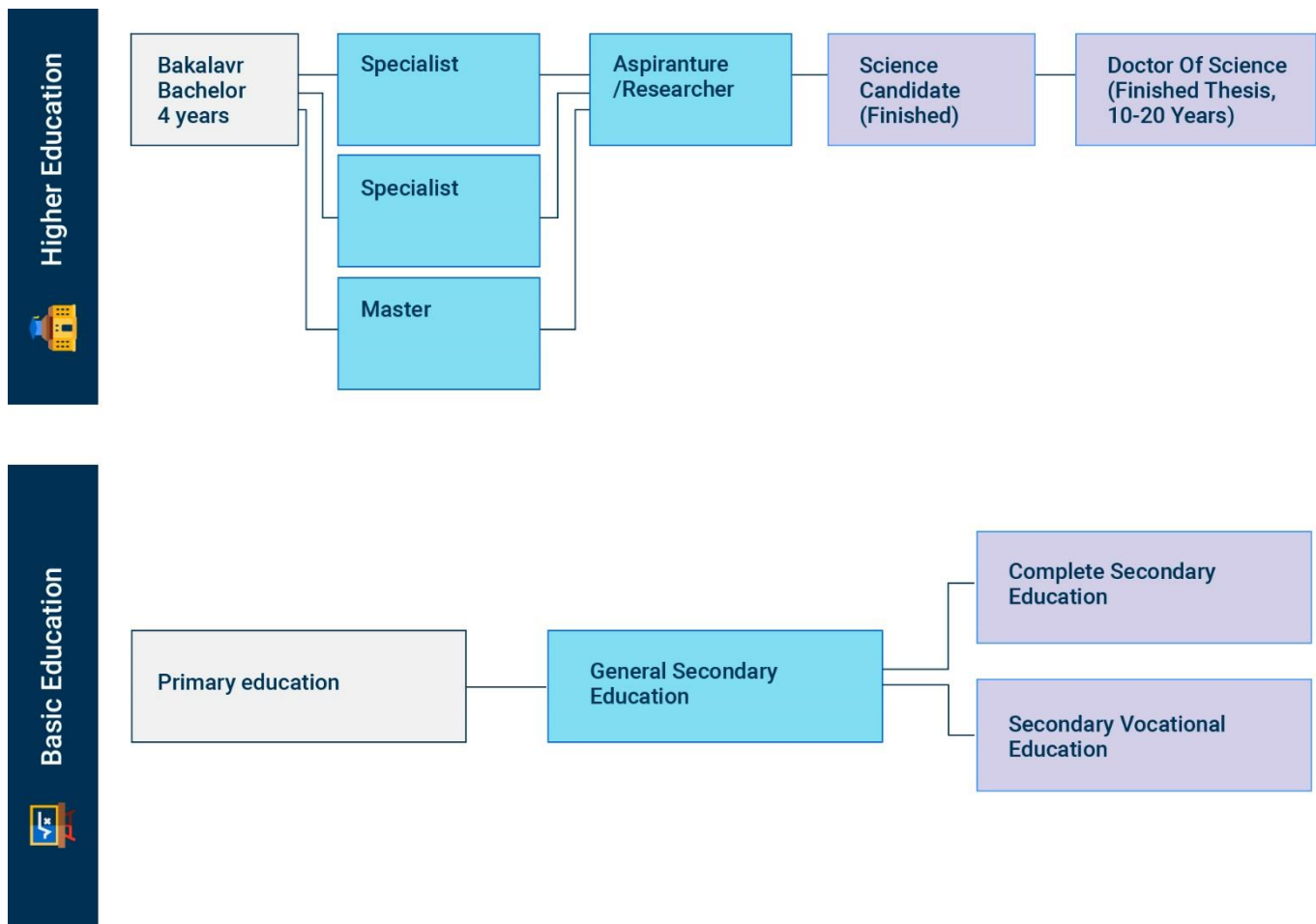
countries), for 2 years. Upon completion of Ordinateure they obtain a certificate of their medical specialization, which is a requirement for an employment in the health system.

For more information on the training of medical professionals, Law 273Ф3, Article 82 can be consulted: <http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102162745>.

For training requirements to be employed in the Russian health system, the Order of the Ministry of Health 707н 2015) can be consulted:

https://edu.rosminzdrav.ru/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/mz/2012-2015/707n.pdf .

Structure of the Russian Educational System



*Based on the official structure of the Russian educational system.

Comparative table of educational levels in Russia and Colombia

It is important to know the particularities of each of the educational levels, both in Russia and Colombia. Therefore, the following table presents a comparative analysis of both systems. In this comparison, reference is made to the levels of higher education:

Level 8: PhD level or equivalent

Level 7: Master's level, specialization or equivalent

Level 6: Degree in tertiary education or equivalent level

Level 5: Short cycle tertiary education.

Comparative table: educational levels in Russia and Colombia

* The time of preparation of dissertations to be a candidate and doctor of sciences are not regulated. The thesis is presented when the author produces a contribution to knowledge, necessary to meet requirements.

** As explained above, "Researcher" is a higher education degree which is awarded by a higher education institution, and is not equivalent to the Colombian doctor. A candidate or doctor of sciences are "academic degrees" awarded with the endorsement of a Dissertation Committee.

UNESCO - ISCED LEVELS	NAMING OF LEVELS RUSSIA	YEARS	NAMING OF LEVELS COLOMBIA	YEARS
NA	Doctor of Sciences	N/A	N/A	N/A
8	Science Candidate	N/A	Doctorate	4-5
7	N/A	N/A	Medical Surgical Specialization	1-5
7	Ordinature	2	Especialización Médica	2

7	Diploma of researcher / Completion of aspiration	3	N/A	N/A
7	Master	2	Master	2
6	Specialist	1-2	University Specialization	1
6	Bakalavr (Bachelor)	4	University degree	4

*original design

It is important to emphasize the measure of time corresponding to educational levels and their comparison with international standards:

a) The academic load of a student in a study program and each subject in particular, are defined in the Curriculum (Учебный план - which is part of the accreditation of the program, usually published on the institutional site), and are measured in academic hours (one academic hour = 45 minutes). As a counterpart of an academic credit, the "зачётная единица" is used (z.e.), being equal to 36 academic hours ($36 \times 45 = 27 \times 60$ minutes). An academic year typically corresponds to 60 z.e. This measure includes face-to-face activities, individual work and evaluation activities. For more information on the methodology for measuring the academic load, recommendations of the Federal Institute for the Development of Education can be consulted at <http://www.fgosvo.ru/uploadfiles/npo/20120511201121.pdf>.

Academic credit in Colombia: It is a unit of measurement of the student's academic work, indicating the effort to be made to achieve learning outcomes. It is equivalent to forty-eight (48) hours during an academic period. Institutions determine the ratio between the direct relationship with the teacher and independent practice of the student, justified according to the training process and the learning outcomes foreseen in the program. Institutions must express all training activities that are part of the curriculum in academic credits (Decree 1330 of 2019, article 2.5.3.2.4.1).

ISCED-UNESCO Levels: The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), proposed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), is a frame of reference for collecting, compiling and analyzing internationally comparable statistics in the field of education.

2. LEGALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AND INSTITUTIONS

A higher education institution is one of the types of educational institutions defined by law. There are state institutions (administered by different branches of government), private, religious communities, among other.

There are two aspects and two different procedures for the legality of higher education institutions: one is License and the other accreditation.

In order to complete the training process and admit applicants, a higher education institution must have a License (лицензия). Requirements for the License have to do with the availability of classrooms, health protection of teachers and students, and other administrative aspects, not with the content of educational programs. To consult the licensing requirements, the following Government Decree can be consulted: <http://government.ru/docs/all/130013/>.

The license is different from the Accreditation (аккредитация) of higher education programs by the State. A program without current accreditation can continue to operate and award diplomas. The law does not prohibit the use of diplomas from non-accredited programs, either for employment or for access to the next level of education but, in practice, it may be different. In addition, such diplomas cannot be apostilled. A diploma issued by a state-accredited program is called "диплом государственного образца" (Diploma of State Format), carrying the shield - the double-headed eagle). A diploma from an uncredited program is called "диплом установленного образца" (Diploma of a Determined Format). For more information on the two types of diplomas, Law 273ФЗ, articles 59 and 60 can be consulted. The description and samples of a diploma of state format can be consulted in the Order of the Ministry of Education at <https://rg.ru/2013/12/09/diplomy-dok.html>.

The academic history of a student, which contains the list of approved courses, the grades, topics of projects during the year, and the title, is contained in the Annex to the Diploma.

Typically, information on licensing and accreditation can be found on the higher education institution's website. For example, <https://mubint.ru/sveden/document/Akk.pdf> and a corresponding document on the page of the federal agency RosObrNadzo. In the same example, it would be http://obrnadzor.gov.ru/ron_doc/prikaz-rosobrnadzora-ot-01-08-2018-%E2%84%96-1100-o-pereoformlenii-svidetelstva-o-gosudarstvennoj-akkreditaczii-obrazovatelnoj-organizaczii-vysshego-obrazovaniya-chastnomu-uchrezhdeniyu/.

Each accredited program has a nationally unified name and code, which appear on the diplomas. For example, a program accredited with the code 02.03.01 "mathematics and computer science", has a highly uniform content in all institutions of the country that offers it.

3. QUALITY ASSURANCE

The responsibility for the administration of Russia's education system is divided among various levels of the state - federal, regional and municipal.

While different state agencies may be founders and administer educational institutions, in the area of quality assurance of higher education and of candidate and doctor of science degrees, the main role belongs to one or more federal ministries whose names and structure frequently change. For more information on the division of functions among different branches and levels of the State, Law 273ФЗ, Articles 7--9, (3) and Chapter 12 can be consulted at <http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102162745>.

The website of the ministry currently in charge is: <https://minobrnauki.gov.ru/>.

Within the structure of the Federal Ministry, the agency called RosObrNadzor (Superintendence of Education) operates, becoming the main authority for quality assurance of educational institutions. The Superintendence regulates education activities, carries out inspection and surveillance, and official recognition of training obtained outside the country. For more information, the official website of the agency (<https://obrnadzor.gov.ru/>) is available, and for a detailed description of its activities, the Government Decree: <https://rulaws.ru/goverment/Postanovlenie-Pravitelstva-RF-ot-28.07.2018-N-885/>.

Candidate and doctor of science degrees are operated out the education system. The quality assurance of these degrees is in charge of another body called the Higher Attestation Commission (VAK): <https://vak.minobrnauki.gov.ru/main>, currently subordinated to the Federal Ministry of Education.

The evaluation of the dissertation document and its support occurs in front of Dissertation Committees (диссертационный совет). Dissertation Committees are opened by decision of the Ministry of Finance, and are founded in higher education institutions or research centers, but their legality is independent of the accreditations of the institution, its structure or its academic programs. Each member of a committee must be endorsed by the ministry, and may be external to the institution where the committee is based.

For more information on the opening and organization of work at Dissertation Committees, the following Order of the Ministry can be visited at <https://base.garant.ru/71825906/53f89421bbdaf741eb2d1ecc4ddb4c33/>.

In the case of a successful support of a dissertation, the positive decision of the Dissertation Committee must be ratified by the VAK. If this happens, the diploma of candidate or doctor of science is awarded by the Federal Ministry. For more information on the process of granting academic degrees (candidate and doctor of science), the Decree of the Government, 30 January 2002 N 74 can be found at <http://www.psi-ras.ru/polozh.html>.

Certain universities and research centres have the right to appoint and administer their own Dissertation Committees, with internal institutional regulation and without the VAK oversight. For more information on which institutions have this privilege, Law 127Ф3, Art 4, part 3(1) can be consulted at <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/9973> as well as Order of the government at <https://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/71653210/>.

4. ASPECTS TO CONSIDER TO START THE PROCESS OF RECOGNITION OF HIGHER EDUCATION TITLES OBTAINED IN RUSSIA

Resolution 10687 of 2019 of the Ministry of National Education regulates the validation of higher education diplomas awarded abroad, recognizing the quality assurance systems of the countries where the diplomas were obtained.

The process of validation of higher education diplomas in Colombia is part of the Quality Assurance System for Higher Education, which allows society to guarantee that, as well as the national offer, from other countries is officially recognized by the States where the certificates were issued.

IMPORTANT: if an undergraduate degree is in law, accounting, education, or part of the health sciences, additional requirements must be verified, stipulated in chapters one and two of Resolution 10687 of 2019 of the Ministry of National Education, available at the following link: https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1759/articles-401316_archivo_pdf.pdf.

It is worth recalling that it is not obligatory to advance the process of validation of higher education diplomas obtained in other countries. Recognition is required in the following cases:

1. For regulated professions where recognition is required by professional bodies.
2. For persons wishing to work in the public sector as contractors or civil officers.
3. For participating in public tenders where specifications indicate it as necessary.
4. For teachers in public education institutions to be properly graded.

To study in Russia and, subsequently, obtain the title recognition in Colombia, the following must be considered:

1. Studies must have been advanced in an higher education institution recognized by the State of Russia.
2. Have the respective apostille or chain of legalization in the documents.
3. The application of apostille to diplomas is delegated to regional authorities, regardless of either the address of the applicant or location of the institution that

awarded the diploma. Specific structures are slightly different in each of the 85 regions of the country.

For apostille regulations on diplomas, the page of the Superintendence of Education can be visited at <http://obrnadzor.gov.ru/gosudarstvennye-uslugi-i-funkczii/7701537808-gosfunction/podtverzhdienie-dokumentov-ob-obrazovanii-apostil/>.

Contacts and requirements to apply for the apostille of a diploma can be found on the pages of regional authorities; for example, in the Yaroslavl region: <https://www.yarregion.ru/depts/dobr/Pages/%D0%90%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%BB%D1%8C.aspx>.

In practice, the apostille is requested in notaries or translation agencies, which act as intermediaries (at an additional cost). The apostille can be applied to a copy of the education document, also in the same notary.

The apostille applies only to state-format education documents.

Different recognition criteria must be considered, according to the program and the higher education institution granting it.

If you have a degree issued by a Russian higher education institution, and your recognition in Colombia is required, the following questions and answers can help understand the process:

1. When is it necessary to validate a foreign higher education degree? The answer to this question will be found at the following link:
<https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/portal/convalidaciones/Convalidaciones-Educacion-Superior/350670:Conozca-el-proceso>.
2. What is the difference between homologating and validating? The answer to this question can be found at the following link:
<https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/portal/convalidaciones/Convalidaciones-Educacion-Superior/355353:Preguntas-Frecuentes>.
3. In case of doubts, who can help? The answer to this question can be found at the following link:

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

4. What are the steps for the validation of higher education degrees? The answer to this question can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.co/ficha-tramites-y-servicios/T366>.
5. What are the costs of the process of validating higher education degrees? The answer to this question can be found at the following link:
<https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/portal/convalidaciones/Convalidaciones-Educacion-Superior/350995:Costo-y-duracion>.

For more information about the process, please enter the following link:

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

Sources Consulted

Law 273-Φ3 "On Education in the Russian Federation",
<http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102162745>

Law 127Φ3, 1996, "On Science and State Policy in Science and Technology"
<http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/9973>

List of universities and research institutes that can grant kandidat or Doktor science degrees, Government Order №23 Aug 2017 Nr 1792-p.

<https://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/71653210/>

Regulation of apostille for diplomas

<http://obrnadzor.gov.ru/gosudarstvennye-uslugi-i-funkczii/7701537808-gosfunction/podtverzhdenie-dokumentov-ob-obrazovanii-apostil/>

Government Decree 18.09.2020 No1490 on licenses for educational activities (in force until 31 Dec 2021)

<http://government.ru/docs/all/130013/>

Order of the Ministry of Education on the process of admission to higher education
(Приказ Минобрнауки 14 окт 2015 - <https://rg.ru/2015/11/16/obr-dok.html>).

Federal Institute for Education Development Recommendations on Measuring the
Academic Load: <http://www.fgosvo.ru/uploadfiles/npo/20120511201121.pdf>

Government decree regulating the Superintendence of Education

Постановление Правительства 885 (2018).

<https://rulaws.ru/goverment/Postanovlenie-Pravitelstva-RF-ot-28.07.2018-N-885/>

Order of the Ministry of Education on State Format Diplomas

<https://rg.ru/2013/12/09/diplomy-dok.html>

Order of the Ministry of Health 707н 2015 on training requirements for medical
professionals

https://edu.rosminzdrav.ru/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/mz/2012-2015/707n.pdf

Ministry Order Приказ Минобрнауки 10 Nov 2017. Nr.1093 regulating Dissertation

Committees: <https://base.garant.ru/71825906/53f89421bbdaf741eb2d1ecc4ddb4c33/>

Government Decree 30 January 2002 N 74 on the process of granting academic degrees
(candidate and doctor of sciences)

<http://www.psi-ras.ru/polozh.html>