Making Your Foreign Education Count in The U.S.

www.nvcc.edu

www.sunywcc.edu/cccie

www.wes.org/info
Today’s Agenda

• Welcome and Introductions
• The Recognition of Foreign Credentials
• Using Your WES Evaluation
  ▪ Employment
  ▪ Professional Licensing and Certification
  ▪ Education
• NOVA Programs
  ▪ Admission Requirements: Dr. Elizabeth Harper
  ▪ Financial Aid: Ms. Joan Zanders
  ▪ ESL Classes: Ms. Heidi Adamson
About World Education Services (WES)

- Non-profit organization (NGO), founded in 1974. Has served 750,000 individuals, about 50,000 each year, from all countries.

- **WES Mission**: To foster the integration of individuals educated outside the U.S. into academic and professional settings.

- **Primary Service**: Providing evaluation reports so that legitimate academic credentials earned abroad are understood and fully recognized.

- WES reports are widely accepted by universities, licensing boards, employers, government agencies.
More than 1.3 million college-educated immigrants in the U.S. are unemployed or working in unskilled jobs. Many others also work well below their skill and educational level – Migration Policy Institute, Uneven Progress, 2008

WHY IS THIS?

- Not familiar with U.S. employment culture and skills, lack professional networks, lack of U.S. work experience
- Limited English skills
- Academic credentials and professional skills/experience are not recognized
First of all…

Your foreign education does have value in the U.S.!

- Each institution/agency sets its own rules regarding recognition and acceptance
  - No government agency or single standard
  - Some institutions do their own evaluations, but most designate external evaluation services

- Evaluation services (like WES)
  - Operate independently
  - Charge fees – $75-125 (General) $150-350 (Detailed)
Document-by-Document Report  $100

- Identifies and describes each diploma or certificate

- Indicates periods of education,

- Provides an equivalency for each document.

This is the report you should generally order for:

**Employment**  
*(when Licensing or Certification is not required)*

**Immigration**

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**CREDENTIAL EVALUATION AND AUTHENTICATION REPORT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: SAMPLE, Accessives</th>
<th>Date: May 29, 2007</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Security #:</td>
<td>Refer#: 5410300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page: 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**U.S. EQUIVALENCY SUMMARY**

High school diploma and bachelor’s degree in business administration from a regionally accredited institution

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**CREDENTIAL ANALYSIS**

1. **Credential Authentication**: Official transcripts were sent directly by the institution  
   **Country**: India  
   **Credential**: Higher Secondary Certificate  
   **Year**: 2000  
   **Awarded by**: Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education  
   **Admission requirements**: Secondary School Certificate  
   **Length of program**: Two years  
   **Major/Specialization**: Science Stream  
   **U.S. Equivalency**: High school diploma

2. **Credential Authentication**: Official transcripts were sent directly by the institution  
   **Country**: India  
   **Credential**: Bachelor of Commerce  
   **Year**: 2004  
   **Awarded by**: University of Pune  
   **Admission requirements**: High school graduation  
   **Length of program**: Three years  
   **Major/Specialization**: Business Administration  
   **U.S. Equivalency**: Bachelor’s degree

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THIS REPORT: An explanation of the items used in this report can be found on the reverse side. This report is valid only when printed on watermarked paper and sealed with an official WES stamp on each page.
Comprehensive Course-by-Course Report
$160

Document-by-Document report, PLUS:

- Lists all subjects completed at the post-secondary level
- Provides a U.S. semester credit and grade equivalent for each course
- Provides a U.S. grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale

This is the report you should order for:
- Education
- Professional licensing
- Professional certification

### COURSE-BY-COURSE ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTIONS, DATES, SUBJECTS</th>
<th>U.S. Semester Credits</th>
<th>U.S. Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>University of Pune</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(L) English Language I</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(L) Accounting</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(L) Microeconomics</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(L) Commercial Mathematics and Statistics</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(L) Business Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(L) Finance and Insurance</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(L) English Language II</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(L) Business Management</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(L) Advanced Accounting I</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(L) Business Economics II</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(L) Microeconomics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(L) Accounting</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(L) Business Communication</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(L) Marketing and Advertising</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(U) Mercantile and Industrial Law</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(U) Advanced Accounting II</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(U) Indian and Global Economy Development</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(U) Business Taxation and Auditing</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(U) Marketing and Advertising I</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(U) Marketing and Advertising II</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SUMMARY

Level of Study: Undergraduate

| US Semester Credits: 120.0 | GPA: 3.68 |

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Choosing a Service

• Always check with the institution or agency re:
  ▪ What type of report they require
  ▪ What services they accept or recommend

• When given a choice - choose wisely
  ▪ Recognition – Are reports widely accepted?
  ▪ Fees – check the total cost, watch for hidden fees
  ▪ Be careful of “sponsored links” found through web searches

• National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) – www.naces.org
WES Document Requirements

WES authenticates **ALL documents**

**Why?**
- Adds credibility and gives confidence to recipient
- Addresses concerns about fraud and diploma mills
- Helps U.S. employers verify foreign degrees

**Obtaining Documents**
- **Country-specific instructions**
- Getting official documents takes time, but easier than you think

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**Brazil**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to Submit</th>
<th>How to Submit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Clear, legible photocopies of all graduation certificates issued by the</td>
<td>To be submitted to WES by applicant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>institutions attended e.g. Título Profissional, Bacharel or Licenciado,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doutorado</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AND</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Histórico Escolar</strong> (academic transcripts) for all programs of post-</td>
<td>To be sent directly to WES by the institutions attended in an envelope bearing the institution’s seal or stamp and/or an appropriate signature across the sealed flap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secondary study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please <a href="#">click here</a> to download an academic transcript request form.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. For completed doctoral programs, a letter confirming the awarding of the</td>
<td>To be sent directly to WES by the institutions attended in an envelope bearing the institution’s seal or stamp and/or an appropriate signature across the sealed flap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>degree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please <a href="#">click here</a> to download degree conferral request form.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Precise, word-for-word, English translations are required for all foreign language documents.
Online Evaluation Tools

Tells you how your degrees and grades are viewed in the U.S.

For unofficial purposes and guidance only

Enable you to focus your employment search or academic application at the appropriate level

- International Degree Preview ($30)
  $20 credit back on evaluation fee

- iGPA Calculator ($8)
How to Use Your Evaluation

• Reports can be used for different purposes
  ▪ Education & Professional Licensing/Certification (Detailed)
  ▪ Employment & Immigration (General)

• Presenting Your Evaluation
  ▪ Include your WES equivalency, GPA, etc. on your resume and in your cover letter
  ▪ Bring copies to interviews
  ▪ Offer to have official report sent directly

• Limits of an Evaluation
  ▪ Not binding on recipient institution
  ▪ Each institution or agency decides how to use
For Employment

• Employer Familiarity / Recognition
  • Most government agencies - Federal and State – and large companies accept WES evaluations
    ▪ Smaller businesses may not be familiar with evaluations
  
• Concerns about fraud
  ▪ Companies can easily and quickly verify U.S. degrees, but foreign degrees not easily checked by non-experts

• “Sell” (explain) your WES evaluation
  ▪ Mention in resume, cover letter, interview
  ▪ Employers can call WES to verify report, ask questions

WES has Employment Resources at www.wes.org/info
Gaining U.S. Experience / Service Learning

• Volunteering or Internships – allows you to find opportunities to re-enter your career field or try a new field of interest
  ▪ Gain experience in U.S. workplace
  ▪ Utilize, demonstrate and update your skills
  ▪ Build your network
  ▪ Develop references (and maybe a mentor)
  ▪ Strengthen your resume
  ▪ Improve your English

• Taking Courses - Even if you have strong academic credentials from overseas, it can be useful to update your skills, gain new skills, or improve your English to improve your chances of finding employment.
For Professional Licensing

• License is required for some professional activities (e.g. Health-related, Teaching, Accounting)
  ▪ Process is complicated, time-consuming, expensive

• BUT: Licensing is not always necessary
  ▪ Related fields may be more easily accessible

• Licensing is State-Regulated
  ▪ Each state has separate boards for various professions
  ▪ National certifications are sometimes required
For Professional Licensing

• Credential Evaluation Usually Required
  ▪ For authentication and coursework
  ▪ Lists and links are provided on:
    ▪ www.wes.org/info
    ▪ www.careersfornewamericans.org

• Licensing Boards that accept WES evaluation:
  ▪ Virginia State Board of Accountancy
  ▪ Virginia State Department of Education
  ▪ Maryland State Board of Public Accountancy
  ▪ Maryland State Department of Education
  ▪ Maryland State Board of Professional Engineering
For Professional Certification

- Professional Certification
  - Voluntary credentialing process
  - Granted by a non-governmental, private association
  - Find your professional association at www.noca.org/GeneralInformation/MemberOrganizations
  - Sometimes a prerequisite for state licensing

- Professional Associations that accept WES evaluation:
  - American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE)
  - American Dental Education Association (ADEA)
  - American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
• Undergraduate Admission / Transfer Credit
  - Helps college staff determine eligibility
  - Determine advanced standing/transfer credit

• Graduate and Professional Degrees

• Course-by-Course Evaluations w-GPA - if college credits are involved

More information - www.wes.org/students
Credit Transfer

• Each institution decides whether to recognize your non-U.S. academic work.

• Most will recognize a *limited amount* of credit toward a degree at their institution.

• Issues that institutions consider in awarding credit:
  - Is your university or college recognized by the ministry of education in your country?
  - How applicable are your courses toward the degree that you wish to pursue?
  - What is the maximum number of credits that the school allows you to transfer?
### Local Institutions that Accept WES Reports

Partial List – *Always check with the Institution*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Virginia</th>
<th>Washington, DC &amp; Maryland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Mason University</td>
<td>American University – School of Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Madison University</td>
<td>Georgetown University – School of Nursing and Health Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberty University</td>
<td>University of the District of Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Virginia Community College</td>
<td>Howard University - Graduate School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regent University</td>
<td>Hood College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shenandoah University</td>
<td>Johns Hopkins University – Business, Nursing, Education, Grad A&amp;S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Virginia – Nursing, Graduate Programs</td>
<td>Loyola University Maryland – Undergraduate Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Virginia's College at Wise</td>
<td>Montgomery College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Commonwealth University - School of Pharmacy</td>
<td>Morgan State University – School of Business and Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia State University - Undergraduate Studies</td>
<td>University of Baltimore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thank you!

Questions and Information Handouts at the WES Information Table and [www.wes.org/info](http://www.wes.org/info)

More about academic programs and further education at NOVA

- Admission Requirements: Dr. Elizabeth Harper
- Financial Aid: Ms. Joan Zanders
- ESL Classes: Ms. Heidi Adamson
Overview and Admission Requirements

NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE (NOVA)
Associate Degrees

• Two-year degree equivalent to the first two years of a bachelor’s degree
• AA and AS degrees are designed to transfer to four-year colleges and universities
• AAS and AAA degrees are designed for immediate employment, though some may transfer
Examples

AA/AS Degrees
- Liberal Arts
- Science
- Business Administration
- Computer Science
- General Studies
- Social Sciences
- Engineering
- Fine Arts

AAS/AAA Degrees
- Accounting
- Biotechnology
- Nursing
- Dental Hygiene
- Administration of Justice
- Automotive Technology
- Engineering Technology
- Early Childhood Development
Certificate Programs

• Shorter than degree programs
• Designed for immediate employment or to enhance skills
• Can earn a certificate and then go on to an associate degree
Examples

• Bookkeeping
• Contract Management
• Culinary Arts
• Food Service Management
• Real Estate Brokerage
• Small Business Management
• Travel and Tourism
Campuses and Centers

- Alexandria
  - Arlington
- Annandale
- Manassas
- Loudoun (Sterling)
  - Reston
- Springfield (Medical Education)
- Woodbridge
- Extended Learning Institute
Class Schedule

- Days
- Evenings
- Weekends
- Online 24/7
Admission to NOVA

• Open Enrollment
• Online Application
• Admission of non-citizens
## Tuition and Fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>In-state</th>
<th>Out-of-state</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>$105.85</td>
<td>$280.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Fee</td>
<td>$5.50</td>
<td>$5.50</td>
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<td>Student Activities Fee</td>
<td>$1.10</td>
<td>$1.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilities Fee</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Per Credit</strong></td>
<td>$112.45</td>
<td>$297.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students who have non-immigrant visas or who are undocumented must pay out-of-state tuition.
Transferring Credit to NOVA

- Register for at least one class at NOVA
- Submit credentials to evaluation agency
- Have a transcript sent to your NOVA campus student Services Center
- Complete a Request for Evaluation and submit to campus Student Services Center
- Watch your NOVA email
- Credit will be posted to your NOVA record
To apply for federal and state financial aid:

• You must be a U.S. citizen, eligible non-citizen, or permanent resident.
• The first step is completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
• If you have a bachelor’s degree or higher-level professional degree, you will not be eligible for a Pell Grant, but you might qualify for some other assistance.
• If you don’t tell us about the bachelor’s degree – but we find out later – you could need to pay back a lot of money.
Points to remember:

• If you have the equivalent of a U. S. bachelor’s degree—or a higher-level professional degree from another country – you MUST declare it.
• Ask for an official transcript from schools attended and have the transcript(s) evaluated.
• Whether you can use the degree in the U. S. or not, you must tell us you have the degree.
• You could benefit by having credits transfer to NOVA and apply to your new program of study. Transfer credits are money in the bank!
If you are not eligible for federal or state aid:

- Apply for scholarships—
  - [www.nvcc.edu/current-students/paying-for-college/financial-assistance/index.html](http://www.nvcc.edu/current-students/paying-for-college/financial-assistance/index.html) (NOVA website - free)
  - [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) (free)
  - [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) (free)
  - [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org) (free)

*Never pay for a scholarship search or a financial aid advisor!!*
Some alternative education loans might be available, but be careful not to accept a loan with a high interest rate.

Credit cards can also have very high interest rates.
NOVA’s special programs could also provide funding:

- Training Futures
- Year Up

*Talk to a counselor!*
The financial aid representatives on each campus can assist you, or you can email finaidhelp@nvcc.edu with your questions.

Information and brochures will be available at the financial aid table after the presentations!