

INDIAN THREE YEAR DEGREES AND ITS COMPATABILITY TO US BACHELOR'S DEGREES

Past Scenario:

Institutions were only recognized by the State Governments and University Grant's Commission (UGC) and Association of Indian Universities (AIU) played some role in the quality of education but not a significant role

Present:

State Government, UGC, and AIU continue to play significant role in the quality of higher education. However, there are two new bodies that play a major role - The National Assessment & Accreditation Council (NAAC) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)

How has the quality of education and its assessment changed in the Indian Higher Education?

- Fewer affiliated colleges under the umbrella of Universities
- Autonomous Colleges and Departments
- Constituent Colleges
- Deemed Universities
- Entrance Examinations for almost all undergraduate admissions
- Combined degrees (Like five year Law Degree, Bachelor of Science and Master of Science, Bachelor of Arts/Science and Education etc.)
- Demand for better higher education which is being directly tied to the employment opportunities in the country

The impact of changes in higher education in other parts of the world:

- Bologna Process

What changes should the U.S. higher education institutions consider?

- US higher education institutions have considered other three year degrees from Israel, UK, Australia, Canada etc., for admission to US Graduate Programs
- Graduate admission does not mean that the students are admitted without any pre-requisites
- Graduate admission does not comprise of admission solely based on undergraduate education credentials

Indian Three Year Degree holders and what criteria might be used to consider them for graduate admission:

- Recognition and Accreditation Status of the institution
- High School Preparation (State, Central schemes)

Session Number: GS-084

Dr. Ravi Kallur

University of Missouri. Kansas City

- Performance at High School level and undergraduate degree level
- Other factors like GRE/GMAT scores, reference letters, essays etc.
- Historical review of performance of Indian Students at the institution
- Fairness (is it fair to ask an Indian student to do one additional year of something either in the US or in India so that we can say that number 16 has been derived)
- When we admit students with a Master's degree to graduate admission have they met the curricular requirements of US Bachelor's degree (is there a consistent curricular requirement in the US to obtain a bachelor's degree?)

Minimum qualifications to be considered:

1. Applicant must have completed Secondary School (Grade XII) in the CBSE or CISCE scheme with above average performance and
2. Completion of Bachelor's Degree with at least a first class (60%) from an accredited college or university of B or better grade (four or higher star rating).

WES recommendation:

1. Completion of Bachelor's degree with First or Second Class/Division from an NAAC accredited institution of grade A or higher (Five Star).

Ravi Kallur

kallurr@umkc.edu

Session Number	GS-084
Presenter's/Author's Name	Dr. Jim Frey
Presenter's Institution or City, State, Country	ECE

THREE-YEAR BACHELOR'S DEGREES FROM INDIA PLACEMENT PERSPECTIVES

James S. Frey, Ed.D.

NAFSA - Montreal
23 May 2006

I. Time Dimension

A degree is a document. It has no time dimension. Thus logically there cannot be an entity called a *three-year degree*.

A degree program does have a time dimension. In my judgment we should be discussing *bachelor's degrees that represent completion of a three-year program of full-time university study* in India.

II. Bachelor's Degree Programs

There are no three-year bachelor's degree programs in the United States. Most bachelor's degree programs require four years of full-time study (or the part-time equivalent). Some bachelor's degree programs require five years of full-time study: all bachelor's degree programs in architecture, and some bachelor's degree programs in accounting and engineering.

It is possible for a student to complete a four-year bachelor's degree program in the United States in fewer than four academic years, by obtaining credit by examination, by enrolling in a credit overload, and/or by enrolling in optional short academic sessions (interim, winterim, summer session, etc.). But a four-year degree program is still a four-year degree program.

III. Quantity vs. Quality

A degree represents completion of a quantity of education, without regard to the quality of an individual student's performance or the perceived quality of the educational institution that awarded it.

From the point of view of logic, quality does affect quantity. The higher the quality of my performance in an

Session Number	GS-084
Presenter's/Author's Name	Dr. Jim Frey
Presenter's Institution or City, State, Country	ECE

academic course (which is reflected in the grade I receive), the more academic material in that course I have learned.

Session Number	GS-084
Presenter's/Author's Name	Dr. Jim Frey
Presenter's Institution or City, State, Country	ECE

James S. Frey

2

Similarly, an educational institution that has high standards for admission and high standards for passing an individual course requires me to know more in order to qualify for a degree than does an institution with lower standards for admission and lower standards for passing a course.

However, from the point of view of recording educational achievement, quantity and quality are separate and distinct measurements. A student who receives a grade of *A* in a given course logically has learned more than a student who receives a grade of *C* in the same course, but each student receives the same quantity of credit for that course. Credits, which measure the quantity of learning, are not affected by grades, which measure the quality of learning.

Similarly, the academic standards of an educational institution and of its professors do not affect the quantity of credit granted for an individual course when that course is submitted for transfer of credit to another educational institution. For example:

There are two MITs in the United States: Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Morrison Institute of Technology (in Morrison IL).

If a student completes a four-credit course in mathematics at the MIT in Massachusetts and applies to another institution for transfer of credit, the receiving institution would not increase the credit value of the course on the basis that the MIT in Massachusetts has stronger academic requirements than it does.

Similarly, the receiving institution would not decrease the credit value of a course completed at the MIT in Illinois, even though that MIT might have weaker academic requirements than it does.

If the receiving institution judges a course to be acceptable for transfer of credit, it transfers the number of credits awarded by the institution that taught the course. It does not matter if there are qualitative differences between the two institutions

IV. Consistent vs. Arbitrary and Capricious

Some people believe the quantity of recognition given to a bachelor's degree from India should be affected by

Session Number	GS-084
Presenter's/Author's Name	Dr. Jim Frey
Presenter's Institution or City, State, Country	ECE

the quality of secondary education a student had completed, using as evidence for quality of secondary school education the examinations administered by the Central Board of Secondary Education [CBSE] and the Council for Indian School Certificate Examinations [CISCE].

Session Number	GS-084
Presenter's/Author's Name	Dr. Jim Frey
Presenter's Institution or City, State, Country	ECE

James S. Frey

3

But we have university-preparatory high schools in the United States that are at least as excellent as those secondary schools in India whose students take the CBSE Senior Secondary School Certificate examinations or the CISCE Indian School Certificate examinations. We do not combine graduation from a high school of such quality with three years of university study in the United States and consider the combination to represent completion of the equivalent of four years of university study.

We do offer some of our excellent high school students an opportunity to take university-level courses while enrolled in high school, through the College Board Advanced Placement Program [AP]. But that is a different situation. AP examinations are university-level examinations. CBSE and CISCE examinations are secondary-level examinations.

In addition, the top 3% of U.S. high school graduates receive an average of only 8 semester hours of credit (i.e., one-fourth of one year of university study) on the basis of AP examinations, not a full year of credit.

Some people believe receipt of a ranking of **B** or better from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council [NAAC] indicates an Indian university of exceptional quality whose degrees merit exceptional recognition if followed by a Postgraduate Diploma [PGD] from an institution accredited or recognized by the NAAC or the All India Council for Technical Education [AICTE].

But we have universities in the United States that are at least as excellent as those in India that receive a grade of **B** or better from the NAAC. We do not combine three years of study at a university of such quality with one year of unrelated study and consider the combination to represent completion of a four-year program.

In my judgment, NAAC and AICTE do not confer official degree-granting recognition upon universities. UGC does. NAAC assesses the quality of universities and programs of study previously recognized as degree-granting by UGC. NAAC's role is similar to that of program accrediting organizations in the United States.

AICTE also assesses the quality of universities and programs of study previously recognized as degree-granting by UGC. AICTE also accredits programs in non-university technical education, a role similar to that of the Council on Occupational Education in the United States.

Session Number	GS-084
Presenter's/Author's Name	Dr. Jim Frey
Presenter's Institution or City, State, Country	ECE

Session Number	GS-084
Presenter's/Author's Name	Dr. Jim Frey
Presenter's Institution or City, State, Country	ECE

James S. Frey

4

In my experience, the majority of postgraduate diploma [PGD] programs in India are offered by organizations that are not officially recognized as degree-granting institutions by the University Grants Commission [UGC] and not recognized by the Association of Indian Universities [AIU] as an organization whose qualifications are considered to be degree-equivalent by the universities in India. Without official recognition from UGC or AIU, it seems to me that logically a PGD program should not be considered to be the equivalent of the senior year of study in a bachelor's degree program at a university in the United States.

Some PGD programs are offered by institutions officially recognized as degree-granting by UGC or AIU. However, in most cases the PGD programs involve a field of study totally unrelated to an applicant's Indian bachelor's degree program. In my judgment, a student who spends one year in a PGD program studying business management, computer applications, international trade, journalism, marketing management, or personnel management cannot logically be considered to have completed the equivalent of a senior year of university study if the bachelor's degree was in history or zoology.

In those cases where the field of study of a university-offered PGD program actually builds upon the field of study of the preceding bachelor's degree program, then I believe completion of the combination of an Indian bachelor's degree program and the related PGD program can be considered to represent completion of the equivalent of a bachelor's degree program in the United States. However, in my experience this type of degree and PGD combination is not common.

In cases where a student has completed a Bachelor of Arts [B.A.], Bachelor of Commerce [B.Com.], or Bachelor of Science [B.Sc.] degree program in India followed by completion of the first year of a master's degree program (M.A., M.Com., or M.Sc., respectively) in the same field of study, I believe the combination can be considered to represent completion of the equivalent of a bachelor's degree program in the United States because the year in the master's degree program does represent relevant advanced level study.

Session Number	GS-084
Presenter's/Author's Name	Dr. Jim Frey
Presenter's Institution or City, State, Country	ECE

JSF/NAFSA-Montreal

Session Number	GS-084
Presenter's/Author's Name	Deborah Hefferon
Presenter's Institution or City, State, Country	Independent Consultant, Washington, DC

3-year Bachelor's Degree Programs from India: Placement Perspectives Survey Results – May 2006

Results are based on 53 full responses, approximately half of which were public institutions, and included 7 Canadian universities and 7 business schools.

1. Is your institution currently reviewing your policy on accepting 3-year Indian bachelor's degree candidates to graduate programs?

Yes 39% No 61%

- Actually reviewed last year [mentioned 2 times]
- It was set 5 years ago

If yes, who is driving this discussion?

10% a. faculty 10% b. deans
85% c. admissions office 30% d. other

- Other:

International Services Office staff that assist with international admissions

Grad Education Department

Myself

VP of Enrollment Mgmt and Interim Director of Division of Graduate Studies

Academic VP

Graduate School

2. Does your institution generally use the placement recommendations of the National Council on the Evaluation of Foreign Education Credentials (the Council) regarding academic documents from India?

Yes 26%

Yes, but only as a starting point in conjunction with other factors 28%

- Other factors:

Exam scores

Input from Indian faculty, GMAT, track record of grads from particular institutions, etc.

Still up to individual grad depts. to make their own admissions decisions. They consider the academic, professional, language qualifications of student in addition to recommendation I make based on Council recommendations.

WES and NAFSA

Curriculum, institution

Reputation of the country's education system and individual institutional reputation; performance of the individual student; work experience when appropriate/required; standardized test scores

Test scores, recommendations, academic profile of institution

No 46%

Session Number	GS-084
Presenter's/Author's Name	Deborah Hefferon
Presenter's Institution or City, State, Country	Independent Consultant, Washington, DC

We use PIER Workshop report on South Asia
We use WES

3. Do you admit holders of 3-year Indian bachelor's degrees (15 years of education) directly to graduate studies at your institution?

Yes 34%

No 66%

- But on a case by case basis for all but BCom, Economics, Computer Application/Science
- Our new policy is stated in our 05/06 catalog (Webster University)
- Some: following extensive research and analysis (including consultation with other universities and credential evaluation services), we developed a "short list" of Indian universities from which we will accept 3-year degrees into SOME of our graduate programs. We require 4-year degrees from all Indian universities not on our short list and for all engineering, science and health professional programs.
- A stronger candidate would have additional education such as an M Com or CFA, CPA certification

If you answered Yes to question 3, please continue, but do not answer question 7. If you answered No, skip to question 7.

4. Is your position to admit holders of the 3-year Indian bachelor's degree based on (please check all that apply):

61% a. analysis of curricula

61% b. analysis of individual universities

66% c. reputation of individual universities

39% d. review of Indian degree requirements

28% e. information/opinions shared by private or public educational agencies in India

72% f. applicant's GPA

66% g. other applicant factors, e.g., work experience, recommendations, etc.

39% h. other factors:

GMAT score [mentioned 6 times]

GRE score

NAAC Institutional Accreditation Score, University Graduate Council

Only when there is additional education: CFA, CPA, MCom

5. Do you find that students with 3-year degrees from India have the proper preparation for your graduate programs? Please feel free to elaborate.

89% Yes

- With some deficiencies
- In most areas; in some cases a bridge semester may be necessary
- Some candidates do and others don't
- If they meet the GPA and GMAT requirements

Session Number	GS-084
Presenter's/Author's Name	Deborah Hefferon
Presenter's Institution or City, State, Country	Independent Consultant, Washington, DC

- Given consideration to other factors in #4 as well.
- Academically very well prepared. Our applicants tend to not have the work experience component we would like.
- Thus far, average GPA of students admitted under this new policy (one year of data, relative small sample) is 3.48 which compares very favorably to domestic student average.
- In general. Engineering, science and health profession programs are excluded and they account for 80% of Indian applicants. So accepting 3-year degrees has a relatively small impact on us and the students. The two programs that get asked about this the most are MBA and economics. The MBA has other criteria that they take into account so the few students with 3-year degrees and meeting those criteria is an even smaller number.
- They are best prepared with additional education.

11% No

- Not sure as we have just admitted 3 students to begin this fall

6. Has your institution done any internal studies on the success of Indian students admitted with 3-year degrees into your graduate programs? If yes, what were the results?

44% Yes

- In process [mentioned 2 times]
- They were able to graduate on time usually above the required GPA minimums
- Highly successful if admitted with good GPAs
- These students perform at least as well as Indian students with 4 year degrees and as well or better than US educated students. With very few exceptions, they maintain at least a 3.0 GPA and complete their programs in the specified time.
- We have had only a handful 6-8 per year and they perform well.

56% No

- We are a small enough university to know our students from India by name. These students generally pursue the MBA or MS Info Tech degrees and are some of our finest students. Many hold graduate assistantships.
- Not in recent years. We had a Dean several years ago who had lived and worked in India for much of his career. He was integral in putting in place policies we still use for admitting Indian students with 3 year degrees.
- No, but it's a good idea.

7. Is your position NOT to admit holders of the 3-year Indian bachelor's degree based on (please check all that apply):

51% a. we have always done it this way

23% b. analysis of curricula

17% c. quality of the institution in India

17% d. faculty input

14% e. lack of preparation in previously admitted students

40% f. absence of a substantial liberal arts component in the 3-year degree program

Session Number	GS-084
Presenter's/Author's Name	Deborah Hefferon
Presenter's Institution or City, State, Country	Independent Consultant, Washington, DC

40% g. other (please specify)

Other factors:

- Lack of 16 years of education [mentioned 3 times]
- Recommendations of Council member credential evaluation services [mentioned 2 times]
- Recommendations found in *Intl Guide to Qual in Educ* from NARIC, UK
- Students switching from an unrelated major to a new Graduate program
- The reasoning is not always clear because institutional memory has been lost, but I believe our stance is substantially based on the fact that it was done this way by so many Universities, both here and across the country. Many of the recommendations for India applicants were taken from publications that are now 20 years old, documenting a system that no longer exist. Even the excellent Pier World Education Series publication by Leo Sweeney and Ravi Kallur, which I use now is from 1999, so 7 years old.
- In our history, due to limited reference resources we used the British council recommendations extensively, which were definitely "Colonial" in their approach. Their differentiation between equivalents to Ordinary and Honours degrees was used as an indicator of academic potential in both a qualitative and quantitative sense because of the comparison of Canadian 4 year degrees to the "Honours" degrees.
- Recommendations of experts in the field
- Number of years spent in secondary school
- Not considered comparable to US bachelor's – one year short
- Based on what we were told by NAFSA, Ministry of Education did not approve
- Review of Indian Degree requirements
- University approved policy after a review of academic programs. This policy has been in place for a long time and will be reviewed but at present the regulations do not allow for three year graduates. Students must have equivalent of 4 years.

8. Do you consider the 3-year bachelor's degree to be equivalent to the 4-year degree in combination with anything else, e.g., a bachelor honors degree, an accredited post graduate diploma, the first year of the Master's degree, etc.? If yes, please specify.

86% Yes

- First year of Master's [mentioned 14 times]
- PGD [mentioned 10 times]

Accredited PGD [5]

PG diploma in the same field [3]

PGD from a recognized university

PGD from a university or equivalent as recognized by GOI or AIU

- Full Masters [5]
- Bachelors Honors Degree [4]
- As per recommendations of some credential evaluation services
- Bridge semester or entrance test scores as required

Session Number	GS-084
Presenter's/Author's Name	Deborah Hefferon
Presenter's Institution or City, State, Country	Independent Consultant, Washington, DC

- We would consider the degree not necessarily equivalent but rather “functionally equivalent”. This is an important distinction. Are any two bachelor degrees earned from any two universities located in the US truly equivalent?
- In cases of countries just beginning to offer three year degrees, such as Pakistan, we require additional work to equal four years
- In cases where there is exceptional academic record, we may consider the applicant via faculty appeal if they have a PGD
- Bachelor + Masters; + one year of post Bachelor's study from an accredited/recognized institution; +post Bachelor's level of certain Boards (ACCCA, LCCI, etc.)
- Equivalent to a US BA or BS based on internal review
- All of the above strengthen the student's chance of admission
- Must have 3 year + MS or post grad diploma in same field as 3 year degree and approved by university
- 30-credit pre MBA program
- Faculty may at their discretion accept a PGD
- 4 years of academic work from accredited institutions, usually a IIM/IIT or Masters degree

14% No

9. Do you accept 3-year bachelor's degrees from countries other than India for admission into a graduate program? If yes, please specify which countries.

73% Yes

- Most frequent responses in order: UK [>50%]; honors degree from British-based systems; Canada; Italy; Sri Lanka; Hong Kong; Bangladesh; Nepal; Germany; Malaysia
- “case by case basis” mentioned multiple times
- From countries that have done 3 A levels at C or better, 16 years of education, the university is accredited, and it is on a case by case basis
- I can't think of others but it doesn't mean we have a policy preventing us from doing so. Still, a three year degree by itself will not make a strong applicant.
- 3-year engineering degree from India and any other country where we have been given approval from NAFSA. It is not common so I cannot recall countries.
- Any country where the 3 years added to other education totals 16 years
- Any country for which the degree prepares students for graduate level studies in the native system of education

27% No

10. Has your institution developed and marketed a bridge program, or qualifying year, for holders of 3-year Indian bachelor's degrees applying to your graduate program?

31% Yes

- For holders of BCom going into MBA program only

Session Number	GS-084
Presenter's/Author's Name	Deborah Hefferon
Presenter's Institution or City, State, Country	Independent Consultant, Washington, DC

- I tried to develop one but found that faculty refused to support it and also found that given the cost of attending AU, we would get no takers (90% of our Indian students are on assistantships, etc. and the bridge program could not be covered by assistantship)
- Students take UG courses prior to beginning MBA program (15-25 hours)
- Our bridge programs are on a case by case basis. We send the file for a graduate admission review with the dept to see if student will even be offered admission and to identify prerequisite courses recommended by faculty. If recommendation is to accept student with few prereqs we customize a bridge program of 9-12 courses, generally 45-60 quarter credit hours, that student must complete before beginning regular grad work.
- This program is outlined individually by the business school to each applicant depending on the applicant's materials and the degree sought. The MBA in Accounting, for example, requires sequential work prior to commencement of the degree. No concurrent work is possible.
- The Indian students we accept with 3-year BCom degrees begin in our Phase I MBA program (Foundations) classes, but often they do so well after 3 classes that the rest are waived by the MBA Director
- MBA only, 30 credits must be taken; some liberal arts classes mixed in with business deficiencies
- For MBA applicants who do not have specific business courses in background, we require bridge courses. For environmental mgmt applicants, a bridge program is developed as well.
- Our Bridge Program has 12 additional graduate hours.
- We offer a bridge for MBA, Computer Science and MIS. All require 30 credits of UG work which are completed prior to enrollment in the grad level classes.
- Yes, did that in the past and it failed.
- Only for MBA now, other departments may look at it
- We have developed the Post Bac diploma programs and the pre-MBA program
- Individual basis, the faculty works with the student to create a suitable qualifying year that would satisfy their outstanding requirements. So far only available with the Master of Information Technology Security program

http://www.ggu.edu/admissions_and_costs/admissions/graduate/bridge_program

http://www.ritmba.com/admissions_mbabridge.html

69% No

- There has been talk, but nothing yet.