

## **Three Year Degrees for Admission to Graduate Programs**

### **Overview**

Admission to ASU graduate programs requires the applicant to have earned a four year U.S. bachelors degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution or international equivalent. While most three year bachelor's degrees are not considered equivalent to a U.S. four year bachelor's degree, we will evaluate three year bachelor's degrees for acceptability for admission review. Those evaluated as acceptable for admission review will move forward to the department for an admission decision.

Acceptable three year programs must be considered to be bachelor's degrees in the country in which the degree was awarded. We do not consider three year diploma programs to be acceptable for admission review.

Three year degrees are awarded in many regions, most notably, but not exclusively, in the Bologna region of Europe, francophone Africa, India, Canada, and Australia.

Where the student's credential is considered acceptable for admission review but not equivalent to a four year U.S. bachelor's degree, the ADAQ student group will be added to the student's file.

### **Bologna compliant degrees**

Most Bologna agreement countries operate the 3+2 system (3 year undergraduate program and a 2 year graduate program). The Bologna framework was designed and developed to allow transparency for students applying to programs between the Bologna member countries. Bachelor's degrees require 180 ECTS credits over 3 years, Master's degrees require 60-120 credits over 1-2 years, and the Doctorate requires 180+ credits over 3 years.

Bachelor's degrees awarded as part of this system are typically focused on intensive study on the chosen subject. For this reason it is increasingly considered that international applicants holding bachelor's degrees from the Bologna regions may be prepared to study graduate level programs in the United States, taking the following into consideration:

1. Undergraduate degree should be in similar subject field
2. Students should be admissible to the next level of study within the same country upon award of their undergraduate degree. i.e. Bachelor > Master
3. Must be awarded by institutions permitted by the government to award degrees in the country in which the institution is located.
4. Two year Master's degrees awarded within the Bologna process framework, within the same country, are considered to be equivalent to U.S. Master's degrees.

#### Further Information

1. List of Bologna process member countries may be found at the following location:  
[http://ehea.info/page-full\\_members](http://ehea.info/page-full_members)
2. Further information concerning the Bologna process:  
<https://www.enic-naric.net/page-bologna-process>

#### **Francophone Africa: The License - Master - Doctorate (LMD system)**

The systems of higher education in Africa have been heavily influenced by the English and French systems. Traditionally, Francophone countries have traditionally mirrored the French system of four year undergraduate degrees, while Anglophone countries have worked to the English system of A-Levels for admission to a three or four year bachelor's degree programs.

The adoption of the Bologna Process within Europe, which has seen most European higher education systems move to a three year undergraduate degree, two year master’s degree and a three year doctoral degree, has influenced similar reforms within Francophone Africa. The aim of such reform is to encourage the mobility of students, tailor higher education to the needs of the workplace, and to harmonize the quality assurance across participating nations. Reforms were required to be implemented regionally, nationally and institutionally. LMD systems have been in place since 2016.

Credentials issued within the LMD system consist of credits which mirror Bologna compliant degrees; therefore, bachelor’s degrees are completed in 180 credits over 3 years, Master’s degrees in 60-120 credits over 1-2 years, and Doctorate degrees in of 180+ credits over 3 years.

The widespread implementation of LMD has been challenging with resistance to reform at the institutional level being reported by [Conseil Africain et Malgache pour L'enseignement Supérieur \(CAMES\)](#)

**Table 1 Francophone Countries**

Cameroon	Chad	Central African Republic
DR Congo	Republic of Congo	Gabon
Guinea	Benin	Burkina Faso
Côte d'Ivoire	Guinea	Mali
Niger	Senegal	Togo
Burundi	Madagascar	Rwanda (opted out of LMD reforms)

**Further Information**

[Conseil Africain et Malgache pour L'enseignement Supérieur \(CAMES\)](#) was created in 1968 and is primarily responsible for coordinating member countries in their implementation and standardization of the LMD reforms in higher education. CAMES also provides programmatic recognition of degrees issued by institutions located within member countries.

## **India**

Students complete their secondary education after year 12, which is equivalent to a U.S. high school diploma. Traditionally, following a system modeled on the English system of higher education, BA, BSc., or B.Com., degrees awarded by Indian institutions are of three years duration. Like Bologna compliant degrees, Indian three year degrees typically feature intensive study in the major subject and as such students may be considered to be prepared to successfully complete graduate level studies in the United States.

Engineering degrees, such as Bachelor of Engineering and Bachelor of Technology are four year programs, which give access to Master of Engineering and Master of Technology programs in India.

Higher education reforms in India by the government mean that the system of education is changing; therefore, we will expect to see students complete four year B.S. and B.A. degree programs. Some institutions have already launched such programs, with successful graduates already applying to graduate programs in the United States.

## **England and Wales**

Students who receive their bachelor's degree from English or Welsh universities typically complete their degree in three years. These degrees are differentiated from most other three year degrees as the student will have been required to complete A-Levels for admission to the program. A-levels are intensive two year programs which once completed can be considered to hold college credit in the United States.

Degrees from Scotland are typically of four years duration with a broader educational focus than the English/Welsh degree.

### **Canada/Australia/New Zealand South Africa**

Generally students with three year bachelor's degrees from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa are not programs which give access to graduate study in these countries. To be eligible for admission to a graduate program students need to enroll in and complete an 'honours degree', which is usually a one year program following the completion of the three year bachelors. Alternatively students can be admitted to extended masters degree programs, with an additional year of study.

ASU Admission Services will accept three year programs from Canada/Australia/New Zealand and South Africa as acceptable for admission review, even in such cases where they may not be eligible in the awarding country.

### **Advisory**

**The above information is intended to be used as a guide only and is not a complete list of all possible three year credentials. All transcripts and credentials will be evaluated for equivalency at the time of admission review, by ASU Admission Services.**

## Appendix 1. Annotations noted on applications by ASU Admission Services

Annotations are marked on the application file and the transcripts evaluated at the time of application review by ASU Admission Services. Additional case specific annotations may also be present where appropriate for clarification purposes.

Duration of Program	Name of credential	Equivalency Decision	Annotation Text	Additional Information
1-2 Years				
1 year	1 year of completed undergraduate study	1 Year of undergraduate study in the U.S.	Equivalent to 1 year of UG study in the U.S.	Not acceptable for admissions review as a standalone credential
2 years	2 years of completed undergraduate study	2 years of undergraduate study in the U.S.	Equivalent to 2 years of UG study in the U.S.	Not acceptable for admissions review as a standalone credential
2 Years	Certificate or Diploma	2 years of undergraduate study in the U.S.	Equivalent to 2 years of UG study in the U.S. - Associates Degree	Not acceptable for admissions review as a standalone credential - accept for MS Nursing AA to MS pathway
2 Years	Certificate or Diploma	2 years of undergraduate study in the U.S.	Equivalent to 2 years of UG study in the U.S.	Not acceptable for admissions review as a standalone credential
2 Years	Zhuanke (pertains to China only)	2 years of undergraduate study in the U.S.	Not acceptable for admissions review as a standalone program- Equivalent to 2 years of UG study in the U.S. - not bachelors program	Students are not admissible with a Zhuanke program alone - must complete Bachelors top up.
2 Years	Benke // Bachelors top up (pertains to China only)	2 years of undergraduate study in the U.S.	Acceptable for admissions review - 2 year bachelors top up program - equivalent to U.S. 4 year bachelors degree	Student must submit their Zhuanke AND Benke transcripts AND their Zhuanke graduation certificate

<b>3 Years</b>				
3 Years	3 years of completed undergraduate study	3 years of undergraduate study in the U.S.	Equivalent to 3 years of UG study in the U.S.	No degree awarded - not acceptable for admissions review as a standalone credential
3 Years	Bachelors Degree	3 years of undergraduate study in the U.S.	Acceptable for admission review - 3 year bachelors degree - not equivalent to U.S. 4 Year UG degree	Used for programs outside of Bologna and LMD regions
3 Years	Bachelors Degree	3 years of undergraduate study in the U.S.	Acceptable for admission review - 3 year bachelors degree - not equivalent to U.S. 4 Year UG degree - degree does not provide eligibility to graduate level study within issuing country	For 3 year bachelors programs issued in Australia, South Africa or any 3 year bachelors program where a 4 year degree is required in country for higher level study
3 Years	Bachelors Degree - Bologna compliant	3 years of undergraduate study in the U.S.	Acceptable for admission review - Bologna compliant 3 year bachelors degree - not equivalent to U.S. 4 Year UG degree	For programs which are completed within Bologna regions and are Bologna process compliant
3 Years	Zhuanke	3 years of undergraduate study in the U.S.	Not acceptable for admissions review as a standalone program - Equivalent to 3 years of UG study in the U.S. - not bachelors program	Students are not admissible with a Zhuanke program alone - must complete Bachelors top up.
3 Years	Bachelors Degree - LMD compliant	3 years of undergraduate study in the U.S.	Acceptable for admission review - LMD compliant 3 year bachelors degree - not equivalent to U.S. 4 Year UG degree	For programs which are completed within the LMD system in Francophone Africa
<b>Over 4 years</b>				
4 Years	Bachelors degree	4 Year U.S. bachelors degree	Acceptable for admission review - Equivalent to 4 Year U.S. bachelor's degree.	Used for all 4 year bachelors degrees
4 Years	Bachelors degree + PG Diploma	5 Year U.S. bachelors degree	Acceptable for admission review - 3+1 - Equivalent to 4 Year U.S. bachelor's degree	Used for all cases of 3 year bachelors + 1 year PG Diploma

4 Years	ND+HND	4 Year U.S. bachelors degree	Acceptable for admission review - ND + HND - Equivalent to 4 Year U.S. bachelor's degree.	Used where the application hold a National Diploma + Higher National Diploma from Nigerian Institution
5 Years	Bachelors Degree	4 Year U.S. bachelors degree	Acceptable for admission review - Equivalent to 4 Year U.S. bachelors degree	Used for all 5 year bachelors degrees
5 Years	3 year Bachelors Degree + 2 Year Masters	4 Year U.S. bachelors degree + 1 year grad level coursework	Acceptable for admission review - 3+2 - Equivalent to 4 Year U.S. bachelors degree + 1 year of grad level coursework.	Used for all cases of 3 year bachelors + 2 year masters
5 Years	Integrated MTech	Integrated US Masters Degree	Acceptable for admission review - Equivalent to 5 year integrated Masters degree	Integrated BTech and MTech completed in India as part of 5 year program



## Glossary of Terms

Term Used on Annotation	What it means	Helpful information
<b>Bologna</b>	The Bologna process is a system to enhance the transferability of credentials between participating countries in Europe. Post secondary education is formatted into a 3 year UG degree, 2 year masters and 3 year doctorate.	<a href="#">The Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area</a>
<b>LMD</b>	The Licence / Master / Doctorate system is modeled upon the Bologna process but is applied with Francophone Africa	<a href="#">CAMES, A FRAMEWORK FOR THE HARMONISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH POLICIES</a>
<b>Zhuanke</b>	A 2-3 year academic or vocational credential which may precede a 2 year top up program to the bachelor level in China	<a href="#">Qualifications and Degrees: Understanding the Chinese Dual-Credential System</a>
<b>Benke</b>	A bachelors degree with a total duration of 4 years, years 1-2 may be taken as part of a Zhuanke program	<a href="#">Qualifications and Degrees: Understanding the Chinese Dual-Credential System</a>
<b>3+1</b>	A term used when a student completes a 3 year bachelors program and then a 1 year diploma program which requires a bachelors degree for admission. Both credentials together are considered equivalent to a US 4 year bachelors program.	Most commonly applied with credentials awarded in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan.
<b>3+2</b>	A term used when a student completes a 3 year bachelors program and then a 2 year masters program which requires a bachelors degree for admission. Both credentials together are considered equivalent to a US 4 year bachelors program and 1 year of masters level coursework.	Most commonly applied with credentials awarded in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan.