

Certification of Programs for US Baccalaureate Degree Equivalence Policy

Definitions of Student Classification

Post Baccalaureate:

A University of Houston (UH) student with **post-baccalaureate** status is an individual possessing a baccalaureate degree who has not gained admission to any UH graduate program.

Master's:

In order to be classified as a **master's** degree-seeking student at the University of Houston, the student must:

1. be officially admitted to a master's degree program at UH **and**
 2. possess a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution (or the equivalent).
- Students must provide proof of these credentials by submitting official transcript(s) from all prior institutions attended.

Doctoral:

In order to be classified as a **doctoral** degree-seeking student at the University of Houston, the student must:

1. be officially admitted to a doctoral degree program at UH **and**
2. have completed a master's degree from an accredited institution, in which the degree is recognized by UH as the equivalent of one year's work toward the doctoral degree in the student's proposed discipline (or the equivalent), **or**
3. have earned at least 30 semester credit hours at an accredited institution toward the proposed doctoral degree (or the equivalent).

Students must provide proof of the above by submitting official transcript(s) from all prior institutions attended.

Certification Issue

UH departments or programs, believing an applicant's foreign credentials to be equivalent to a US baccalaureate degree, must follow the procedures noted below if standardized foreign placement recommendations* or generally accepted foreign accreditation standards* do not indicate US baccalaureate degree equivalence.

Procedure for Obtaining US Baccalaureate Degree Equivalency

The requesting UH department/program must petition the Graduate & Professional Studies Council (GPSC) to certify the foreign institution's program as offering the equivalent of a US baccalaureate degree. (Such certification would only apply to a specific foreign program and not to the foreign institution as a whole.) The request from the UH department/program must include a rationale for the request and other information including foreign credentials and placement recommendations.*

Upon receipt of requests, GPSC (or a committee thereof) shall review the submitted documentation and recommend to the Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies one of the conditions below. (Recommendations to the Dean will be accompanied by a rationale for the decisions.)

- **Certification Approved** (The graduates, or students, of the program have the equivalent of a US baccalaureate degree for purposes of admission and student classification.) Once approved by the Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies, certification will remain in effect until GPSC and the Dean subsequently re-review and deny certification.
- **Certification Denied** (The graduates, or students, of the program do not have the equivalent of a US baccalaureate degree.)

Reviews of such requests will be made annually each fall semester. The Dean of Graduate & Professional Studies shall set the deadline for submission.

Special Graduate Admission

In addition, the **Special Graduate Admission**** procedure is available for applicants from foreign programs that have not been submitted to GPSC by the certification process deadline outlined above. Subsequent applicants from these programs will be considered only until the next certification deadline, after which the foreign program must undergo the certification process in order to have its students admitted to graduate studies and classified as graduate students.

Final approval for certification of US baccalaureate degree equivalency and final approval of Special Graduate Admission lies with the Dean of Graduate & Professional Studies. The Dean's approval relates to both admission to, and student classification in, UH graduate programs.

*Information concerning placement recommendations for a particular country can be found in publications such as the World Education Series and Projects in International Research (PIER) series published by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Offices (AACRAO). In addition, organizations such as the NAFSA: National Association of International Educators and AACRAO host workshops and conferences on foreign credentials evaluation to keep credentials evaluators updated on new placement recommendations. Foreign institutions are considered "accredited" if they are recognized by the Ministry of Education or other appropriate agency of the country in which the institution is located.

**A Special Graduate Admission is an individual exception that must be approved by the Department Chair, College Dean and the Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies.