EXPLAINING OVERSEAS QUALIFICATIONS TO UK EMPLOYERS

WHAT SHOULD I WRITE ABOUT MY NON-UK QUALIFICATIONS?

ON YOUR CV OR AN APPLICATION FORM, LIST YOUR QUALIFICATIONS AND GRADES BRIEFLY AND IN CONTEXT: PROVIDE THE NAME OF YOUR QUALIFICATION ACCORDING TO THE COUNTRY’S EDUCATION SYSTEM.

UCAS provides a comprehensive guide at:

State that your qualifications are equivalent or comparable to the appropriate UK qualification (GCSE, A Level, Bachelor).

State your final score/grade as you were awarded according to the country’s grading system. For example, if full marks were out of 100 list your grades as a percentage; or “Achieved top grade 1 on scale of 1- 5”.

If you were in the top percentile of students from your school or region, mention that and any academic prizes you gained.

EXAMPLES

UNIVERSITY, BULGARIA 2011-2015
Bachelor: Computer Science & Telecommunication Engineering
Grade 9.40/10
Ranked 3rd among graduates in year 2015.
Relevant modules include:
Final year project:

SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL, NIGERIA 2013-2015
West African Senior School Certificate (WASSCE)
Grade B2 (Very Good)
Key subjects include: Maths, Physics, Chemistry, English & Electronics
Awarded prize for top score in Electronics.

MAKE SURE YOUR PAST ACHIEVEMENTS COUNT.
INCLUDE YOUR OVERSEAS QUALIFICATIONS ON YOUR CV AND IN APPLICATIONS FOR JOBS IN THE UK.
National Insurance Number (NINO)

All non-UK nationals should obtain a National Insurance Number (NINO) if intending to, or are already, working in the UK. National Insurance is the system of required contributions paid by workers towards certain state benefits, similar to other countries’ social security systems.

To apply for a NINO, call the Jobcentre National Insurance Number Allocation Service Team on 0345 6000 643 (lines are open Monday to Friday, 8am - 6pm).

You may apply for jobs and even start work without a National Insurance Number; however you must seek to obtain one as soon as possible after starting work and provide the number to your employer as soon as possible.

Working While Studying

You should make use of all resources available to you for looking for work in the UK:

- Essex CareerHub www.essex.ac.uk/see/careerhub
- Local resources www.essex.ac.uk/careers/job_hunting
- On-campus experience www.essex.ac.uk/careers/job_hunting/on_campus.aspx

Working in the UK After Study

- Essex CareerHub www.essex.ac.uk/see/careerhub
- Job vacancy websites www.essex.ac.uk/careers/job_hunting/vacancy_sites.aspx
- Graduate schemes offered by a large number of UK and international employers. Pick up copies of The Times Top 100, The Guardian 300, and other graduate employer directories available for free at the Employability and Careers Centre.

Returning to Your Home Country After Study?

Information about jobs and study outside of the UK can be found at www.essex.ac.uk/careers/international/work_study.aspx. A particularly useful resource is GoinGlobal, which contains a comprehensive world-wide job vacancy board https://online.goinglobal.com

UCAS Points

Sometimes UK application forms will ask for UCAS points. UCAS points are scores converted from qualifications taken at the school-leaving stage in the UK (A Levels, but also the International Baccalaureate).

Unfortunately, there is no official list that compares UK grades or calculates UCAS points against qualifications from other countries, although the UCAS guide at www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/2015-international-qualifications.pdf should help.

What Can I Do?

The National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) cannot convert your scores from your home country directly into UCAS points. However, they can provide you with a “Statement of Comparability” for a fee via www.naric.org.uk/naric/individuals

Some companies have academic qualification converters so you can get an idea of UK equivalence, for example KPMG’s list of European and Non-European Qualification Equivalencies at www.kpmgcareers.co.uk/graduates/how-to-apply/international-students

You could also contact the company’s recruitment team, explain that you are an international applicant with a non-UK qualification and ask how they would suggest you handle the application form.

If there’s a section on the form called “Additional Information” or “Notes”, use it to include a clear explanation of your qualifications.

Additional Things to Consider in Your Applications

Articulate your English Language and Mathematics qualifications to demonstrate they clearly meet the required minimum of GCSE English and Maths.

Provide details of your IELTS (International English Language Test System), including all the individual test elements if applicable, as well as your final score in line with the Common European Framework.

Spelling and grammar could ruin your application! Ask a friend to read through your application form, CV and letter before you send it.

Remember to refer to the CV Builder tool in the CareerHub+ resources.

Requirements for Working in the UK

EU nationals currently have the right to work in the UK. Students from outside the EU will likely have restrictions on the hours they are permitted to work whilst studying in the UK. Such conditions should be detailed on the Student Visa stamp in your passport or Biometric Residence Permit. If in doubt, you should check with the University’s International Services Team via www.essex.ac.uk/immigration/enquiry

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