

Policies on the Admission of Students from India

Concern over quality in institutions of higher education in India resulted in the creation by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in 1994. While the UGC retains overall control over recognition of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) at University and Deemed University level, an additional level of quality was desired by the UGC. NAAC formulated a ranking system for HEIs based on seven key factors:

Curricular Aspects

Teaching-Learning and Evaluation

Research, Innovations & Extension


Infrastructure & Learning Resources

Student Support & Progression

Governance, Leadership & Management

Institutional Values & Best Practices

A ranking 'grade range' was instituted based on review of HEIs using the above criteria which, since 2017 appears as follows:



3.51-4.00	A++
3.26-3.50	A+
3.01-3.25	A
2.76-3.00	B++
2.51-2.75	B+
2.01-2.50	B
1.51-2.00	C
>=1.50	D

The lowest range of D is an unaccredited status.

The NAAC accreditation system is voluntary and some institutions with well-established reputations for quality declined to participate. Examples would be the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) that have been declared Institutions of National Importance and the University of Delhi. At present approximately 568 of India's 900+ universities have been accredited by NAAC and 11,816 of the more than 30,000 affiliated colleges and institutes have been accredited. While NAAC accreditation is no guarantee that graduates of those HEIs are the best in India, a degree from a highly ranked HEI with a good GPA would tend to represent a higher quality applicant than from other schools.

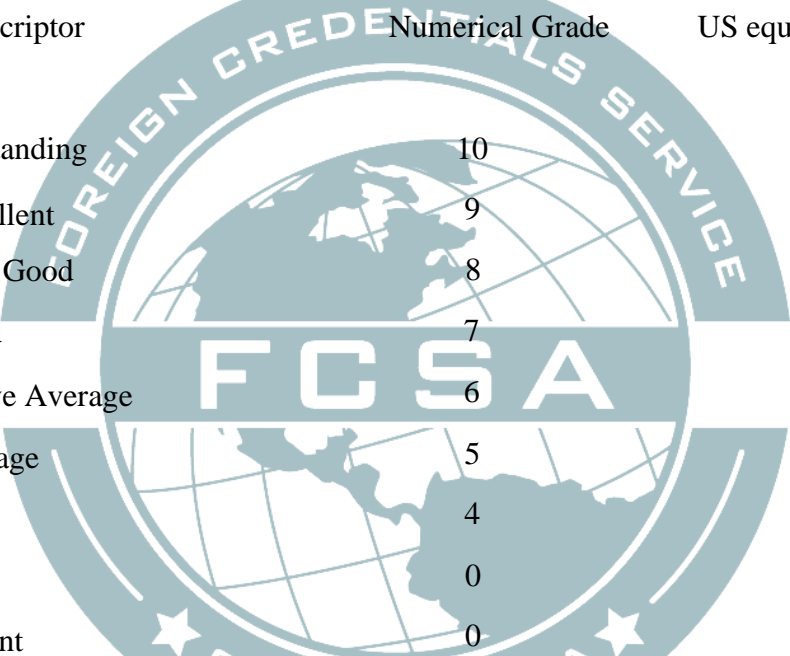
GRADING IN INDIA

Grading in India is not severe. While there are some schools, like the IITs and some of the older prestigious universities, that are more rigorous in their grading, the large majority of institutions are not severe in their grading practices. The traditional grading scale used by Indian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is on a 100-point scale where 70-100% is First Class with Distinction (US grade of A), 60-69% is First Class (again, A), 50-59% Second Class (B), and 40-49% Third or Pass Class (C). Depending on the institution, the lowest passing grade may in fact be as low as 33% and if so, it is still in the C range as there is no D concept. One traditionally defines a grade equivalent to the US grade of D as an unsatisfactory pass.

In 2015 the UGC mandated use of what is known as the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) that utilizes a 10-point scale and formulates a Semester GPA and a Cumulative GPA. Final degree classifications (such as First Class, Second Class, etc.), however, are based on the cumulative grades of the last 4 semesters of an 8-semester program or last six of a three-year degree. While the UGC mandated use of the scale it did NOT mandate how to use it and so practices vary between institutions. More confusing, the descriptors and letter grades associated with the number grades (usually in even number levels, e.g., 10, 8, 6, etc.) are not always helpful in accurately describing the final outcome in the form of the degree classification. For example, grades of B or Good may align with the percentage grades on the 100-point scale of 60% or higher. Therefore, that B range is actually a US grade of A because it results in a First-Class degree. Some schools may include a letter grade of D (variously found at 4 or 5 out of 10) that is described as 'Pass' but is not the US grade of D. Since it aligns with the 40-49% range on the traditional scale it results in a US equivalent grade of C. Finally, many schools will award First Class with Distinction, First Class or Second Class but no longer award a Third-Class degree. That does not elevate the US grade of C to the Second-Class range (50-59%) it merely means there is no C grade assessed at that school. FCSA always calls attention to these situations.

Included in the notes section of the evaluation is information on a school's NAAC rating if it has one and the indigenous cumulative grade on the 100 point or 10-point scale so that these can be matched against the US cumulative GPA routinely found in FCSA reports. With this Overview as a key, decision-makers reviewing applications will have some additional information to help better assess institutional quality and individual grade achievements.

CBCS Grading as provided by the UGC with FCSA recommended US equivalent grades:



CBCS Grade	Descriptor	Numerical Grade	US equivalent Grade
O	Outstanding	10	A
A+	Excellent	9	A
A	Very Good	8	A
B+	Good	7	A
B	Above Average	6	B
C	Average	5	C
P	Pass	4	C
F	Fail	0	F
Ab	Absent	0	

Given the multiplicity of institutional usage of the CBCS it is always important to measure the 10-point scale against the final degree classification outcome and the traditional 100-point scale.