

In this recording I will address Evaluating International Students Applying to ACEND Programs

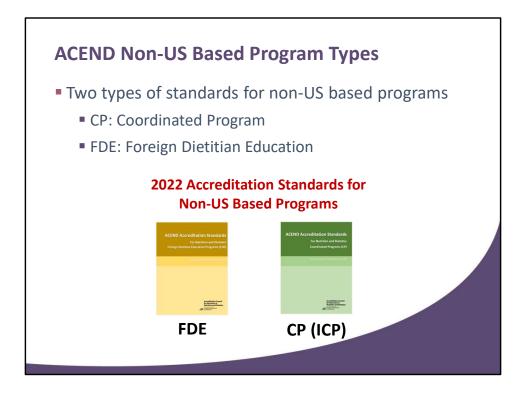


I am James Swain, Associate Professor, Director, Didactic Program, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio and am member of the ACEND Board and the co-chair of the Standards Committee.



ACEND often gets questions about ACEND-accredited international programs as well as how to handle admissions requests from international students who do not have a verification statement from an ACEND-accredited international program. In this brief video, I will explain the routes for accepting international students into US-based ACENDaccredited programs

First, I will review the 2022 Standards for non-US Based programs. Then I will discuss how to guide international students through the international student checklist, what role ACEND program directors play in these tasks, and good practices for communicating with potential applicants who have a degree from a non-accredited international university. Finally, I will explain how to evaluate transcripts of international students with some examples.



ACEND has two types of standards from non-US-based programs: CP which stands for Coordinated Program and FDE which stands for Foreign Dietitian Education. International programs who wish for their graduates to be eligible to take the CDR examination for the RDN credential when they complete the program should apply as a CP; they are referred to as International Coordinated Programs, or ICPs.



Both FDEs and ICPs are coordinated programs with supervised practice incorporated with the didactic coursework into one program.

Again, international programs who wish for their graduates to be eligible to take the CDR examination for the RDN credential when they complete the program should apply as an ICP. Students complete their degree with coursework that includes the ACEND knowledge requirements as well as a minimum of 1000 of supervised hours in the host country to attain the ACEND-required competencies.

FDEs are set up slightly differently than ICPs. In addition to dietetic coursework, FDE students must complete a minimum of 700 supervised hours in the host country to attain the ACEND-required competencies. FDE graduates are not eligible to sit for the CDR credentialing exam until they perform supervised practice in the United States. They are eligible to get accepted into U.S.-based ACEND-accredited Dietetic Internship programs or Graduate Programs (also known as GPs). Therefore, if you receive an application from an FDE graduate, they should be treated like DPD graduates. It is up to the DI or GP program director to establish a policy for giving prior assessed learning for this supervised experience for FDE graduates.



There are 7 international programs accredited by ACEND; 2 International Coordinated Program and 5 FDEs. The FDE programs are in Australia, Mexico, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and South Korea.

You can find a list of the Universities and programs on the ACEND website under the Accredited Program Directory section.



Here is a list from the ACEND website of the 2 International Coordinated Programs: The Universities are:

American University of Beirut

Lebanese American University

Graduates of these programs do not need to complete a US-based program in order to be eligible to sit for the RDN exam. They are eligible to sit for the exam as ICP graduates.



Here is a list from the ACEND website of the 5 FDE programs: The Universities are: United Arab Emirates University Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico Qatar University Kyung Hee University in South Korea and Bond University in Australia.

Again, as a dietetic internship director or Graduate Program program director, FDE graduates should be treated like any other DPD student if they apply to your program.

ACEND is regularly working with non-US based universities as we respond to their interest in securing accreditation from ACEND. Always be sure to check the list of international programs on the ACEND website to be sure you have the latest list of accredited programs.



ACEND accredited programs also often receive applications from international graduates who come from programs that are not accredited by ACEND. These could be from countries where ACEND has no accredited programs (for example China, France, or India) but also they could be from countries where ACEND has an accredited programs but the student graduated from a different university or a program that is not accredited by ACEND.

These individuals must complete ACEND accredited didactic work and supervised practice/experiential learning in order to be eligible to sit for the RDN exam.



If you receive a request from an international student with non-ACEND accredited education, you can refer them to the International Student Checklist as a starting point. This checklist can be found on ACEND's website under the Students and Advancing Education section for International Students. Program directors should be familiar with this checklist and the role they play in each step.



Step 1 in the international student checklist is to have the foreign degree evaluated by an approved Foreign Degree Evaluation agency. DPD, CP and GP program directors can all work with students at this step in the process. DI program directors should refer students to the ACEND program directory to find a DPD, CP or GP program to work with, as these graduates will not be eligible to enter a DI program until they receive a DPD verification statement.

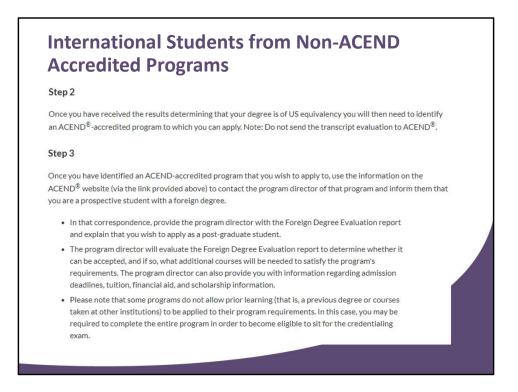
Upon receiving a request from an international student, the ACEND program director should:

- Investigate whether their university accepts evaluated foreign degrees,
- Identify what foreign degree evaluation agency reports are accepted by the university (if there are any restrictions), and then
- Communicate this information to the prospective international student.

Some students have already had their international transcripts evaluated by a Foreign Degree Evaluation Agency and will provide this information to you. If the student has not had their transcript evaluated, please direct them to do so prior to moving forward, with the information about whether the ACEND-accredited program can accept the evaluation and what agencies they can use. The student should choose an agency that both the university and CDR accept. We will include a link to a list of Foreign Degree Evaluation Agencies accepted by CDR on the next slide.

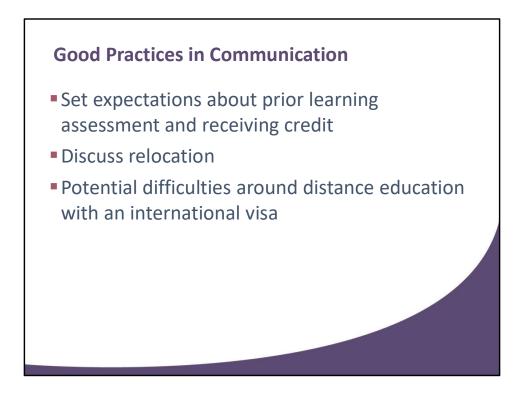


On the ACEND website under the Students and Advancing Education section, ACEND has a page for International Students. From here, in addition to the International Student Checklist, you can select Foreign Degree Evaluation Agencies on the left navigation pane to see a list of these agencies approved by CDR. You may only accept transcripts evaluated by the agencies approved by CDR.



Step 2 on the International Student checklist is for the student to reach out to an ACEND accredited program that they wish to apply to. If the student has already corresponded with you, this step is done.

In Step 3, the role of the ACEND program director is to assess the translated transcript for equivalency of courses and/or degrees according to the program's assessment of prior learning policies of evaluating coursework. Note that the evaluation must say the degree is equivalent to a bachelor's (or master's) degree from a US regionally accredited university—it should match the degree that your program requires to receive a verification statement. If the degree is not equivalent, the student will need to complete the degree in the US.



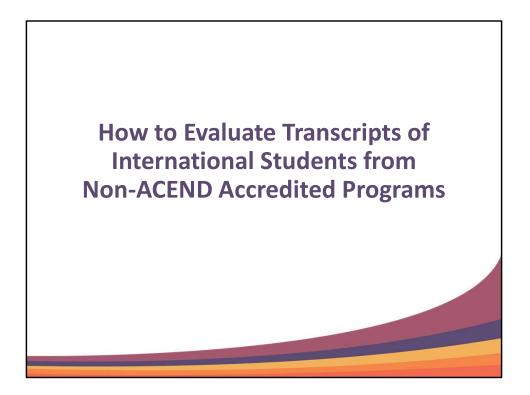
There are a few good practices that ACEND feels are helpful to program directors communicating with international students. We suggest you discuss this information with the application prior to doing the work of evaluating the applicant's transcript, so they confirm they are still interested in applying to the program.

First, it is helpful to be up front about your program's prior learning/experience assessment policy. International students may be expecting that some of their prior learning experiences, such as coursework, supervised practice experiences or work as an international dietitian, would apply to a program to help them complete the program more quickly. If your program's policy states that you will not accept prior learning, or your university requires that the student completes a minimum number of credit hours to receive a verification statement, it is helpful to provide this information early in the communication with the student.

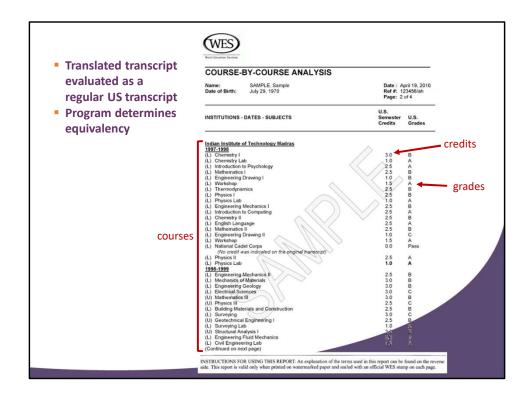
Second, international students may be restricted in where they can relocate in the US, depending on their resources here. If your program is local, you would want to ensure that the student is able to reside close to your institution and meet requirements for traveling to supervised practice, if this is part of your program.

Finally, if you have a distance program, there may be restrictions around how many hours

an international student may participate in distance learning to maintain their visa. Contact your university's international student department to find out what restrictions are in place and what options you may have to accommodate the student.

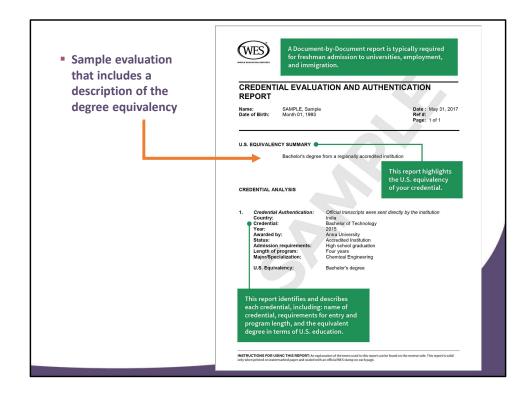


Programs often ask us how to evaluate international students who come from programs that are not accredited by ACEND.

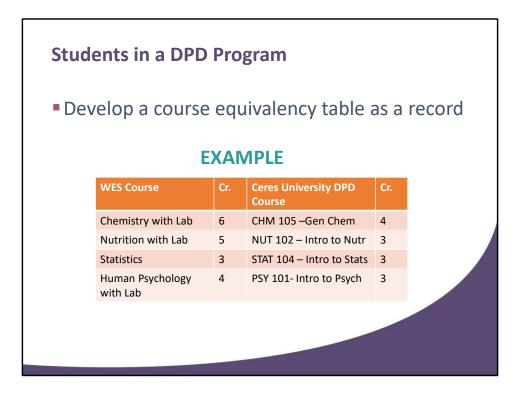


Here is an example of a transcript evaluated by The World Education Services (WES), one of the CDR approved foreign degree evaluation agencies. You will see in the first column the list of the courses; the second column lists the credits for each course; and the last column the grade the student received on that course.

Faculty should treat this translated transcript as a regular transcript, as if received from a US college or university. Then it is up to the program to determine the equivalency, which courses to accept, and what the student has left to complete according to the program's assessment of prior learning policies.



Here is another example showing the degree equivalency. As you see on the authentication report, this degree was determined to be equivalent to a Bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution.

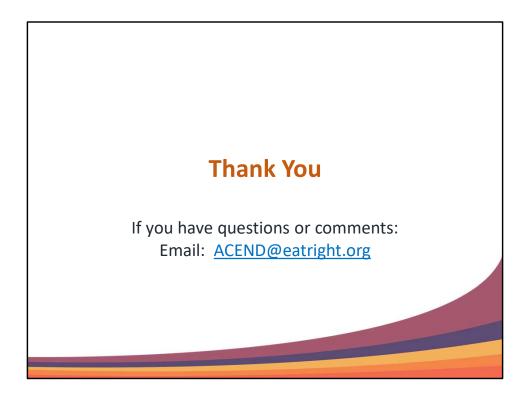


For international students from a non-ACEND accredited program entering a university degree program, such as a DPD, CP or GP, if the university does not provide a course-bycourse equivalency, ACEND highly recommends the program director develop a course equivalency table to help keep a record and ensure that the student meets all knowledge requirements and/or competencies. DPD directors may want to consider providing the students with this record, as it will be helpful for DPD graduates as they are applying to a dietetic internship or a GP.

Once you've determined what courses might be accepted for prior learning, discuss this with the international applicant and help them determine if this is the best program for them moving forward.



To learn more about the process for international students to becoming credentialed, please visit ACEND's FAQ page for these individuals. If you would like to access the list of Foreign Degree Evaluation Agencies for yourself or to provide to a potential international applicant, please visit the second link on the slide. Finally, you are always welcome to reach out to ACEND staff if you have any questions about the process of accepting international students into your program.



Thank you. If you have questions or comments, please contact the ACEND staff.