

The Graduate School of WTAMU Statement on Three-Year Undergraduate Degrees

Globalization is, and will continue to be, one of the salient features of higher education in the 21st Century. Informed mutual recognition of higher education degrees is a corollary of globalization. The WTAMU Graduate School recognizes that with an increasingly global community, graduate admissions will increasingly confront student applicants who have a variety of credentials. The Bologna process is a European Union (EU) initiative supported by many international centers of higher education to develop quality assurance of academic standards so that earned international degrees will be more comparable and compatible throughout its current 47 participating countries. The objective of the Bologna Process is to restructure degree programs to better align credits to ‘bachelor’s, master’s, and Ph.D.’ degrees in addition to the learning outcomes students must demonstrate at the conclusion of each level of education. (*For more information on the Bologna Process, please see the notes below.)

To determine eligibility for admission to a graduate degree program at WTAMU, the Graduate School:

- Accepts 3-year **Bologna-compliant bachelor degrees** and recognizes them to be equivalent to US bachelor degrees.
- Welcomes submission of **non-Bologna 3-year degrees** for review on a case-by-case basis *utilizing the following constructs:*
 - o In-country specific accreditation.
 - o Best practices of peer institutions.
 - o Guidance by professional associations.
 - o U.S. accreditation entities (THECB, SACS).
 - o Credential evaluators and information sources, including CGS, AAU, NAFSA, EAIE, WES.
 - o The WTAMU International Student Office.
 - o WTAMU Graduate program faculty and advisors.
- All applicants to WTAMU graduate programs (regardless of origin of country of undergraduate degree) must meet the specific admission requirements of the WTAMU program being sought and acceptance will be based on achievement of these program or discipline specific admission standards. These standards can be found on the WTAMU Graduate School web site.
- Applicants must have completed all undergraduate requirements in an accredited, licensed, or recognized college or university and have appropriate undergraduate training to pursue the graduate degree of the applicant’s choice.
- Graduate program faculty and advisors, in conjunction with Graduate School, will fully develop, review, and determine acceptable standards of admission for each graduate program and monitor performance of all graduate students, including those entering with 3-Year bachelor’s degrees, to validate institutional graduate admission requirements.

*Note [1]: The **Bologna Process** is based on common instruments designed to promote transparency and the recognition of degrees and as a result, signatory countries have made substantial changes to their education systems. A key feature of the Bologna Process is the formulation of consistent and standardized quality assurance mechanisms at the program level, institutional level, national level, and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) level. Because of this system of checks and balances, there is assurance of the consistency and quality of education offered. If we acknowledge that the Bologna-compliant bachelor degree similarities of intent, content, and outcomes far outweigh the dissimilarities in the length of program, and if we recognize that "general education" is a component of the secondary school curricula throughout most of Europe, then the Bologna-compliant bachelor's degree should be deemed sufficient for direct consideration for admission to graduate study at WTAMU. Our focus is to determine that applicants are adequately prepared for graduate study in the specific discipline, not that the undergraduate degree is the same as the US undergraduate degree. Our focus has shifted from degree equivalency to academic readiness or preparedness.

Multiple US Universities are accepting the 3-year Bologna-compliant bachelor degrees as equivalent to US bachelor degrees for consideration to US graduate degree programs, to include: North Carolina State University, Oregon State University, Purdue University, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, University of California, Berkeley, Business Schools at University of Chicago, Columbia University, Wake Forest University, and University of Pennsylvania.

Note [2]: Non Bologna 3-year bachelor degrees are welcome and will be evaluated on a case by case basis. WTAMU recognizes that many international educational systems with 3-year degrees are accomplished after students spend a matriculation year between high school and college. The matriculation year consists of intense study post high school. The combined effect is a four year degree, even though the transcript may show only the 3 university years.