

GRADING SYSTEM IN THE NETHERLANDS AND MEXICO

SUGGESTIONS FOR GRADE CONVERSION

The Dutch grading system is different from the system in Mexico. This document will give an explanation of the differences and a suggestion for comparison of the grades between both countries.

The research was done by Nuffic Neso Mexico in cooperation with the Department of International Recognition at Nuffic, the Dutch organization for international cooperation in higher education. The original research was carried out to compare grading in The Netherlands and abroad. The results are published on the Nuffic website.

Although it is not possible to make a definite comparison because of the different methods used to grade students, the goal of this document is to help international institutions, companies and students to evaluate Dutch grades.

Dutch grading system

In The Netherlands a grading system is used from 1 (very bad) to 10 (excellent), of which grades from 1 until 3 and 9 and 10 are hardly ever given to students. The minimal grade for passing a subject is 6. The average grade on the highest level of secondary education in The Netherlands (“gymnasium”) in 2009 was 6.4.

Grade conversion

To be able to make a comparison between Dutch grades and grades in other countries it is important to know the percentages of awarded grades. For example in The Netherlands an 8 is among the best 20%. Therefore it is important which grades are among the best 20% in other countries to know what grade would be comparable to a Dutch 8.

	4.0	4.5 / 5.0	5.5 / 6.0	6.5 / 7.0	7.5 / 8.0	8.5 / 9.0	9.5 / 10
Research Universities	0.0%	0.5%	30.5%	33.7%	28.4%	6.2%	0.6%
Universities of Applied Sciences	0.0%	1.5%	31.6%	32.2%	30.0%	4.1%	0.6%

Table 1: Grade distribution in Dutch higher education. The data comes from 50 diplomas from Dutch Universities of Applied Sciences and 50 diplomas of Dutch Research Universities from the Nuffic archives.

Grade comparison

To obtain more insight in the value of Dutch grades, Nuffic has made a comparison between The Netherlands, USA/Canada and England. The following table shows equivalent grades in these countries.

The Netherlands	USA / Canada	United Kingdom
10	No equivalent (A++)	96 – 100%
9.5	No equivalent (A++)	90 – 95%
9	A +	80 – 89%
8.5	A +	70 – 79%
8	A / A -	60 – 69%
7.5	A / A -	54 – 59%
7	A - / B +	50 – 53%
6.5	B + / B	45 – 49%
6	B / B - / C	40 – 44%
5.5	D	35 – 39%
5	F	30 – 34%
4	F	≤ 29%
3	F	< 29%
2	F	< 29%
1	F	< 29%

Table 2: Recommendation by Nuffic for comparison of Dutch grades with the systems used in USA/Canada and the United Kingdom.

ANUIES, the Mexican Association for Higher Education Institutions, has made a similar comparison between Mexican grades and these countries.

Mexico	USA / Canada	United Kingdom
10	A+ / A	> 70% distinction
9.5	A	
9	A- / B+	60 – 70% good
8.5		
8	B+ / B / B-	50 – 60% satisfactory
7.5	C+	
7	C	
6.5	C-	
6	D	40 – 50% improvement needed
5.9 or less	F	< 40% fail

Table 3: Recommendation by ANUIES for comparison of Mexican grades with the systems used in USA/Canada and the United Kingdom.

Conclusion

Based on the comparison tables provided by Nuffic and ANUIES, the comparison between Dutch and Mexican grades would be as follows:

The Netherlands	Mexico
10	No equivalent
9.5	No equivalent
9	10
8.5	10
8	9.5 / 9.0
7.5	9.5 / 9.0
7	9.0 / 8.0
6.5	8
6	8 / 7.5 / 7
5.5	6
5	5.9 or less
4	5.9 or less
3	5.9 or less
2	4.9 or less
1	4.9 or less

Table 3: Recommendation by Nuffic Neso Mexico for comparison of Dutch grades with the system used in Mexico.

There is no equivalent for the grades of 9.5 and 10 between Mexico and The Netherlands. This is because the probability of obtaining these grades in The Netherlands, whereas in Mexico obtaining a 10 is a lot easier. It is important to take notice that a Dutch 8 is the equivalent of the best grades in other countries.

If you have any question about the Dutch and Mexican grading systems, Dutch higher education in general or about the profiles of scholarship candidates, please do not hesitate to contact Nuffic Neso Mexico.

Sources:

- "*Grading systems in the Netherlands, the USA and the UK*", written by the International Recognition Department of Nuffic, 2009, www.nuffic.nl/international-organizations/information/publication/grading-systems-in-the-netherlands-the-usa-and-the-uk
- "*Education report 2008-2009*", publish by the Education Inspection of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2009, www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/onderwerpen/Onderwijsverslag
- "*Tabla comparativa de calificaciones entre países*", published by ANUIES, www.anuies.mx/c_internacional/pdf/calificaciones_otros_paises.pdf

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