WES TRAINING

Our Expertise. Your Success.

November 28th, 2018

A GUIDE TO WES GRADE CONVERSION

Kevin F. Rolwing
Quality Assurance Director
World Education Services

WES Resources

As part of our mission as a non-profit, we provide valuable resources to the higher education community.

Our Research and Training includes:

- **World Education News & Reviews (WENR)**
  wenr.wes.org/
- **Research Reports**
  wes.org/partners/research/
- **Grade Conversion Guides**
  applications.wes.org/country-resources/
- **Webinars and Workshops**
  wes.org/partners/events

WES also offers customized research and training.

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Resources for Students and Skilled Immigrants

WES Global Talent Bridge

ESL Tool Kit, Pathways to Success Seminars
globaltalentbridge.org/

WES Advisor

wes.org/advisor-blog/

Free Degree Equivalency Tool

applications.wes.org/degree-equivalency-tool/

iGPA Calculator

applications.wes.org/igpa-calculator/

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Presenter

Kevin F. Rolwing

Quality Assurance Director

Kevin has over 20 years of experience in international education and credential evaluation. He specializes in the education systems of Latin America and Europe, and he gives frequent presentations at national and regional conferences. Kevin was a past participant in the Fulbright International Education Administrators Program in France, and the DAAD Germany Today program for U.S. and Canadian International Educators.

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Agenda

PART I: Introduction
PART II: Elements and Functions of Grading Scales and Grade Conversions
PART III: Sample Grade Conversions
PART IV: Q & A

Part I:
Introduction

What Purpose Do Grades Serve?

- Give an indication of the academic strength and performance of the student
- Reflect on effectiveness of the teacher and the school where a student has studied
- Serve as a gatekeeping function for further education and professional licensing
- May serve as inspiration (or may discourage students)

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Part II:

Elements and Functions of Grading Scales and Grade Conversions

Types of Grading Scales

- Criterion Referenced – grade is based on absolute academic performance standard
- Norm Referenced – grade is based on comparison to other students, "on the curve"
- Percentage Grading – often used in conjunction with exams that are graded on the basis of % of correct answers
- Letter Grades – grades are awarded in broad categories
- Pass/Fail
- Narrative Descriptions

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Converting Grades from Other Countries to U.S. Grades

- The first step is to understand the foreign grading system and to provide U.S. grade equivalents for the grades expressed on an international applicant's transcript.
- The final step is to create and calculate a U.S. equivalent cumulative GPA, in order to facilitate admissions decisions
- The ultimate objective is to assess for eligibility for undergraduate and graduate admissions

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Grades are Relative to the Standing of the HEI

- Grades are usually relative to the type and selectivity of the institution attended
- An “A” in English literature at a non-selective community college might denote a different level of academic performance when compared to an “A” in the same subject earned at a highly selective research university

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Grades and Statistics as Mark Twain Might Have Seen Them

“Figures often beguile me,
...There are three kinds of lies: lies,
damned lies, and statistics.”

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U.S. Undergraduate Grading System

Letter Grade	Percentage Grade	Quality Points	Verbal Descriptor
A+	97-100	4.0/4.3	Excellent
A	93-96	4.0	
A-	90-92	3.67	
B+	87-99	3.33	Good
B	83-86	3.0	
B-	80-82	2.67	
C+	77-79	2.33	Average
C	73-76	2.0	
C-	70-72	1.67	
D+	67-69	1.33	Marginal
D	63-66	1.0	
D-	60-62	0.67	
F	0-59	0.0	Fail

Note: Pass/Fail, S/U = Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

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How To Calculate GPAs

1. Multiply each course's credit value by the quality points of the grade earned
2. Add up the quality points of each subject studied
3. Divide by the total number of credits of all subjects studied

Example:

Subject	Credits	Grade	Grade QPs	Course QPs	GPA
History	5	A	4	20	
Biology	5	B	3	15	
English	5	C	2	10	
Total	**15**			**45**	**3.0**

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U.S. Grades, GPA, and Graduation Requirements

- At the **high school level**, generally students are just required to pass all of their courses – students can earn D's and still earn their diploma
- Most **bachelor's degree** programs require a minimum GPA of 2.0 for graduation – "C" average needed
- **Master's degrees** usually require a 3.0 – "B" average

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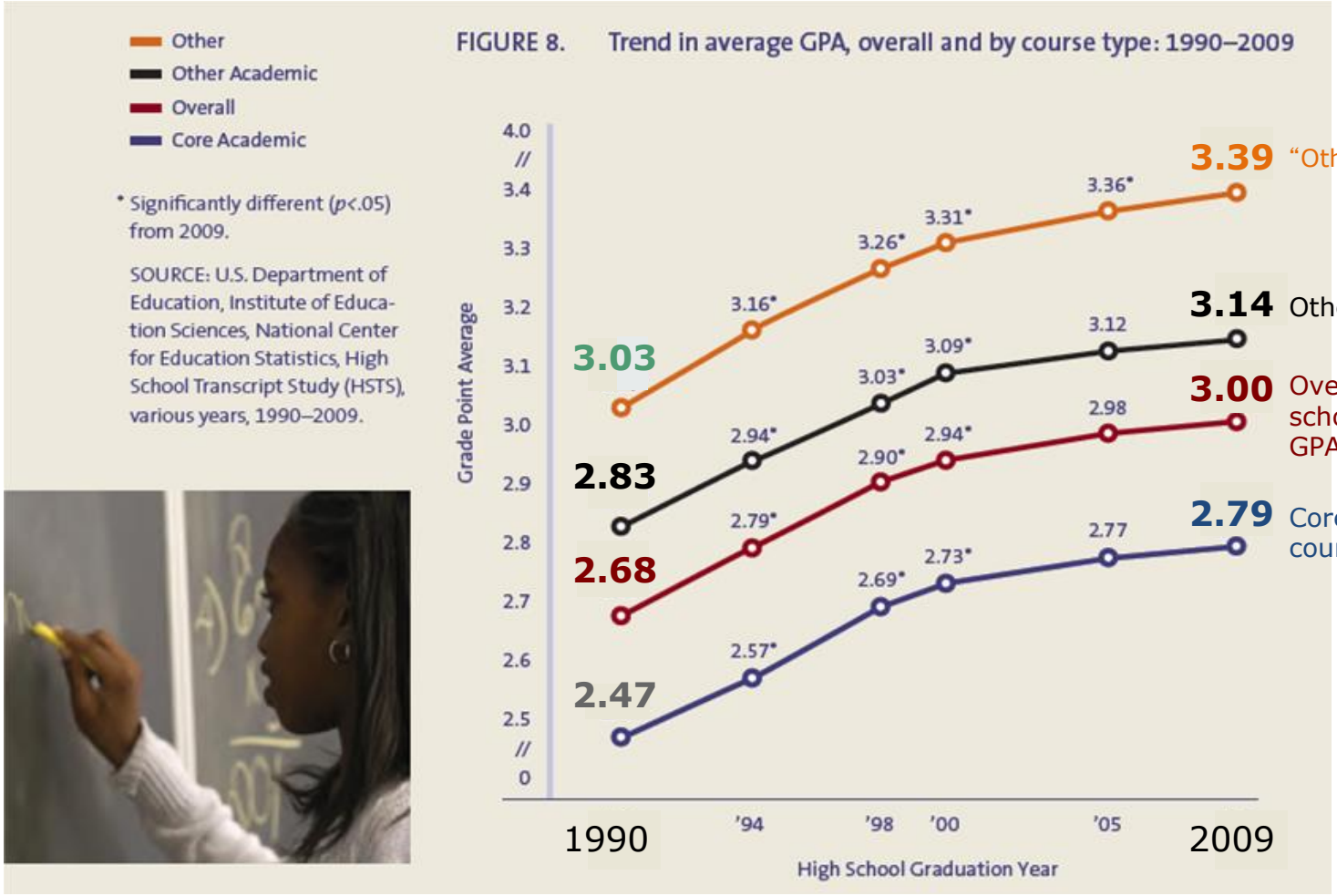
High School GPA's 1990 – 2009



Source: America's High School Graduates: Results from the 2009 NAEP High School Transcript Study at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pubs/studies/2011462.asp

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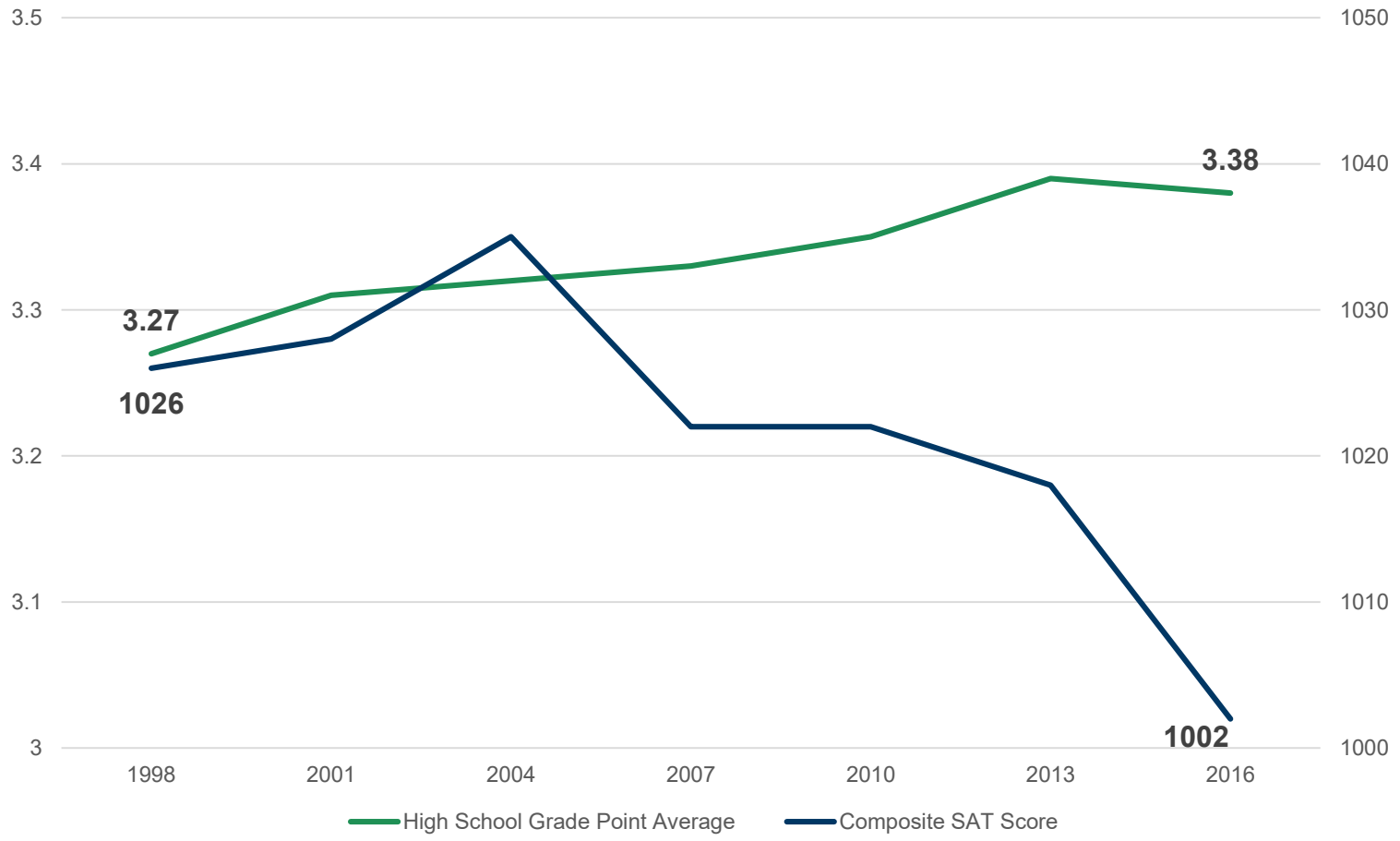
High School GPA and SAT Trends



Source: *Measuring Success: Testing, Grades and the Future of College Admissions*, Edited by: Jack Buckley, Lynn Letukas, and Ben Wildavsky
*Note: Not all data point have been plotted on this graph

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U.S. Undergraduate Grade Distributions

Type of HEI	Mostly A's (3.75 4.0) A- to A	A's and B's (3.25 3.74) B+ to A-	Mostly B's (2.75 3.24) B- to B+	B's and C's (2.25 2.74) C+ to B-	Mostly C's" (1.75 2.24) B- to C-	C's and D's or lower" (0 1.74) F to C	Avg. GPA
4-Year Public	11.6	23.6	27.5	19.8	9.2	8.2	2.85
4-Year Public Non-Doctorate	11.5	21.8	26.2	19.1	9.7	11.7	2.77
4-Year Public Doctorate	11.7	24.6	28.2	20.2	8.9	6.4	2.90
4-Year Private Not-for-Profit	18.7	32.2	24.1	13.7	6	5.2	3.08
4-Year Private Non-Doctorate	17.2	30.4	23.8	15.3	6.4	6.9	3.02
4-Year Private Doctorate	20.1	33.7	24.4	12.3	5.7	3.8	3.15
2-Year Public	14.8	17.7	20.7	15.7	10.4	20.8	2.60
Private For-Profit (0-4 year)	18.5	21.0	19.5	14.4	10.2	16.4	2.87
TOTAL	**15.6**	**22**	**23.2**	**16.1**	**9.1**	**13.8**	**2.78**

Chart compiled from data taken from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (average grades) 2011 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12), pages 48-51: "Undergraduate Average GPA's"

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U.S. Public 4-year HEIs Grade Distributions

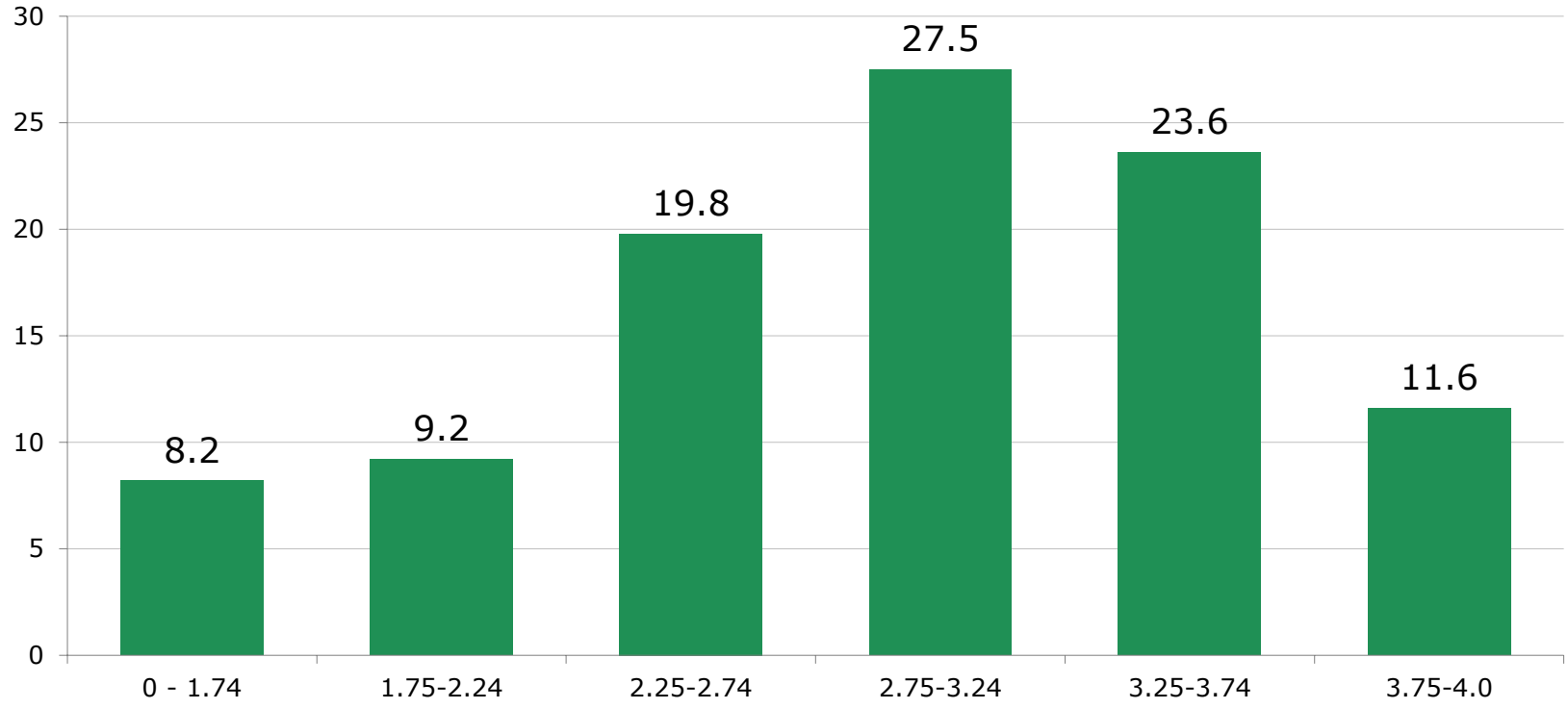

Chart compiled from data taken from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (average grades) 2011 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12), pages 48-51: "Undergraduate Average GPA's"

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U.S. Private 4-year HEIs Grade Distributions

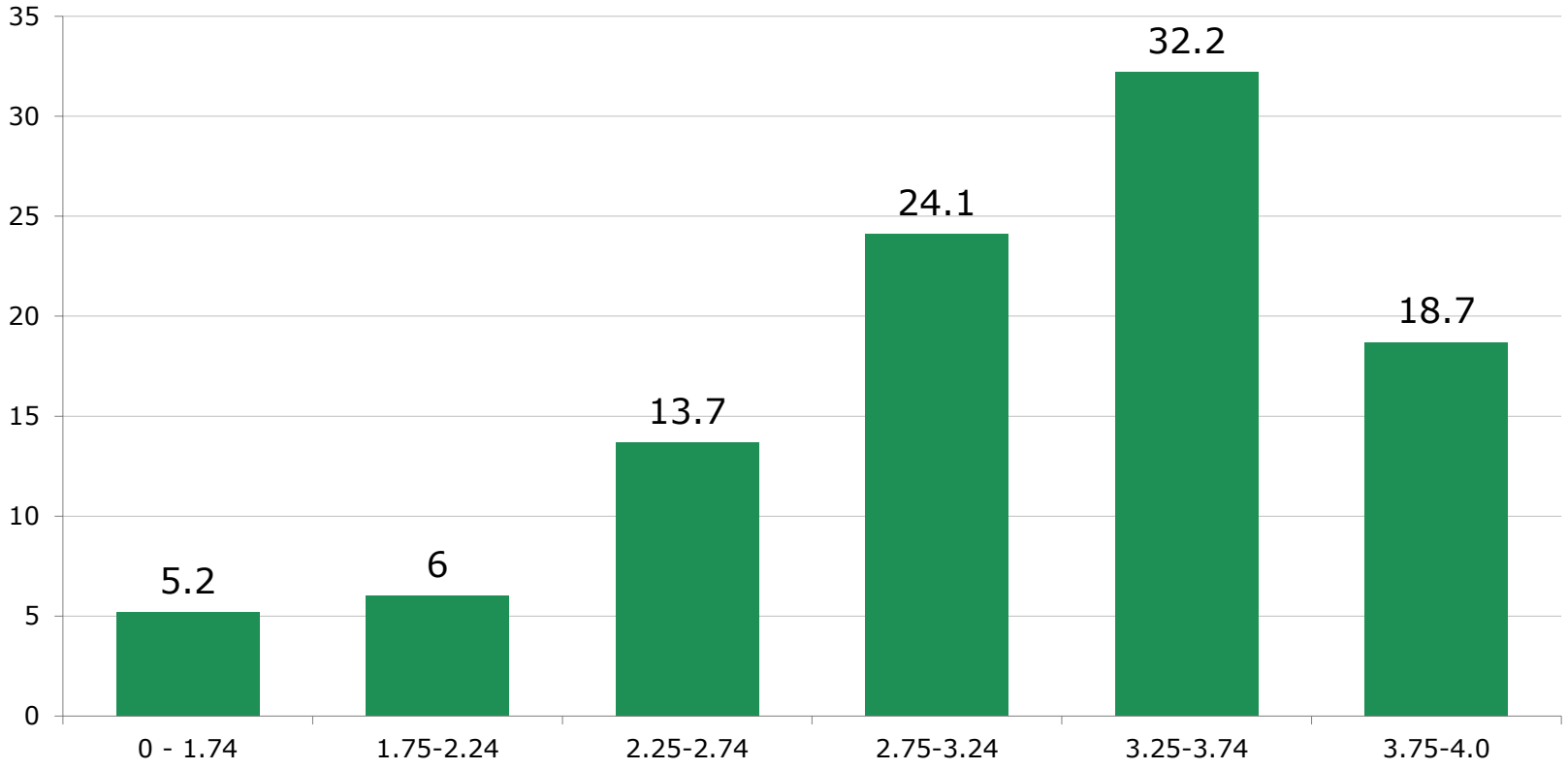

Chart compiled from data taken from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (average grades) 2011 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12), pages 48-51: "Undergraduate Average GPA's"

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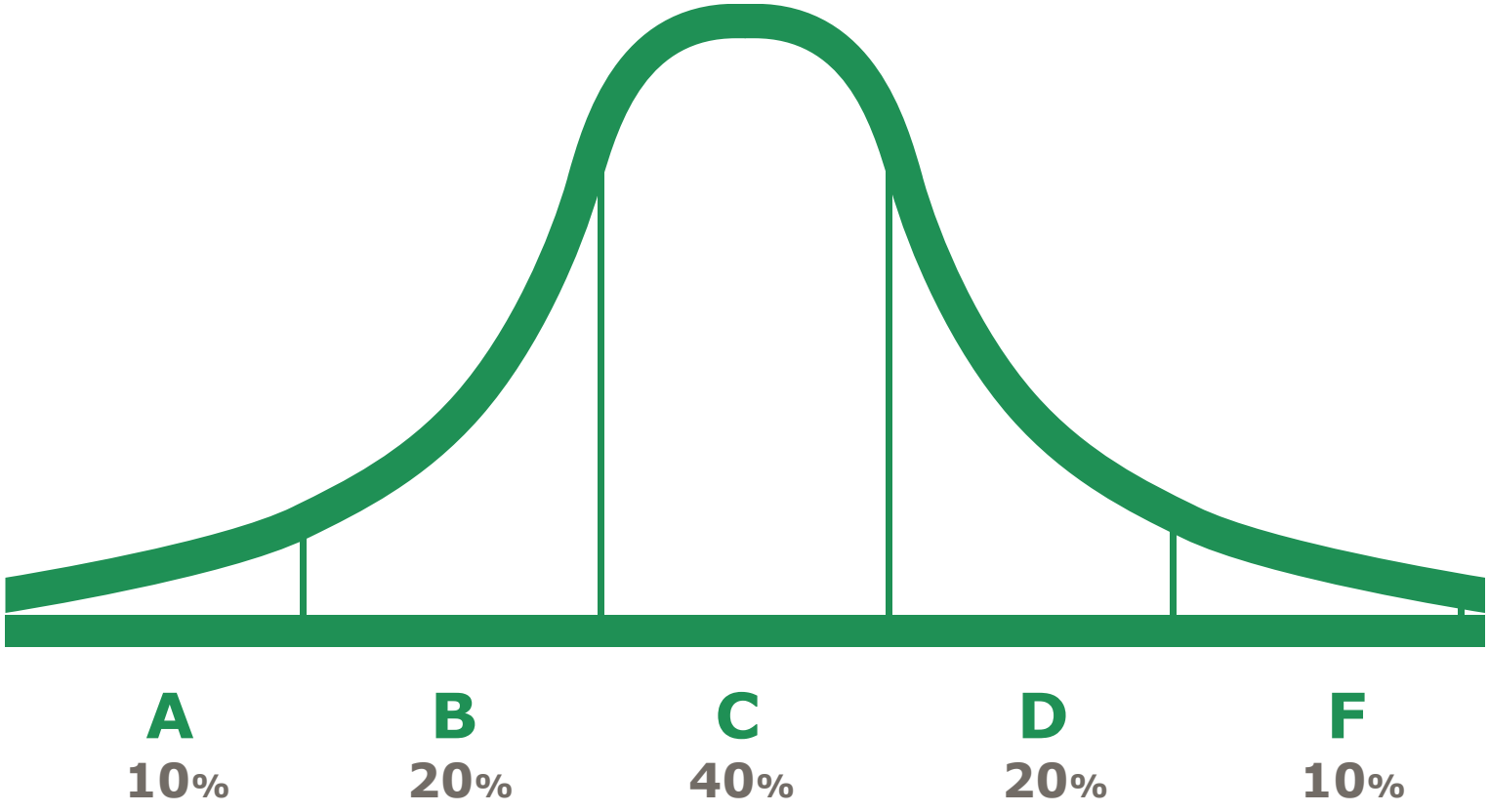
Model Bell Curve

Do your university's grading policies mirror the model bell curve grading pattern?



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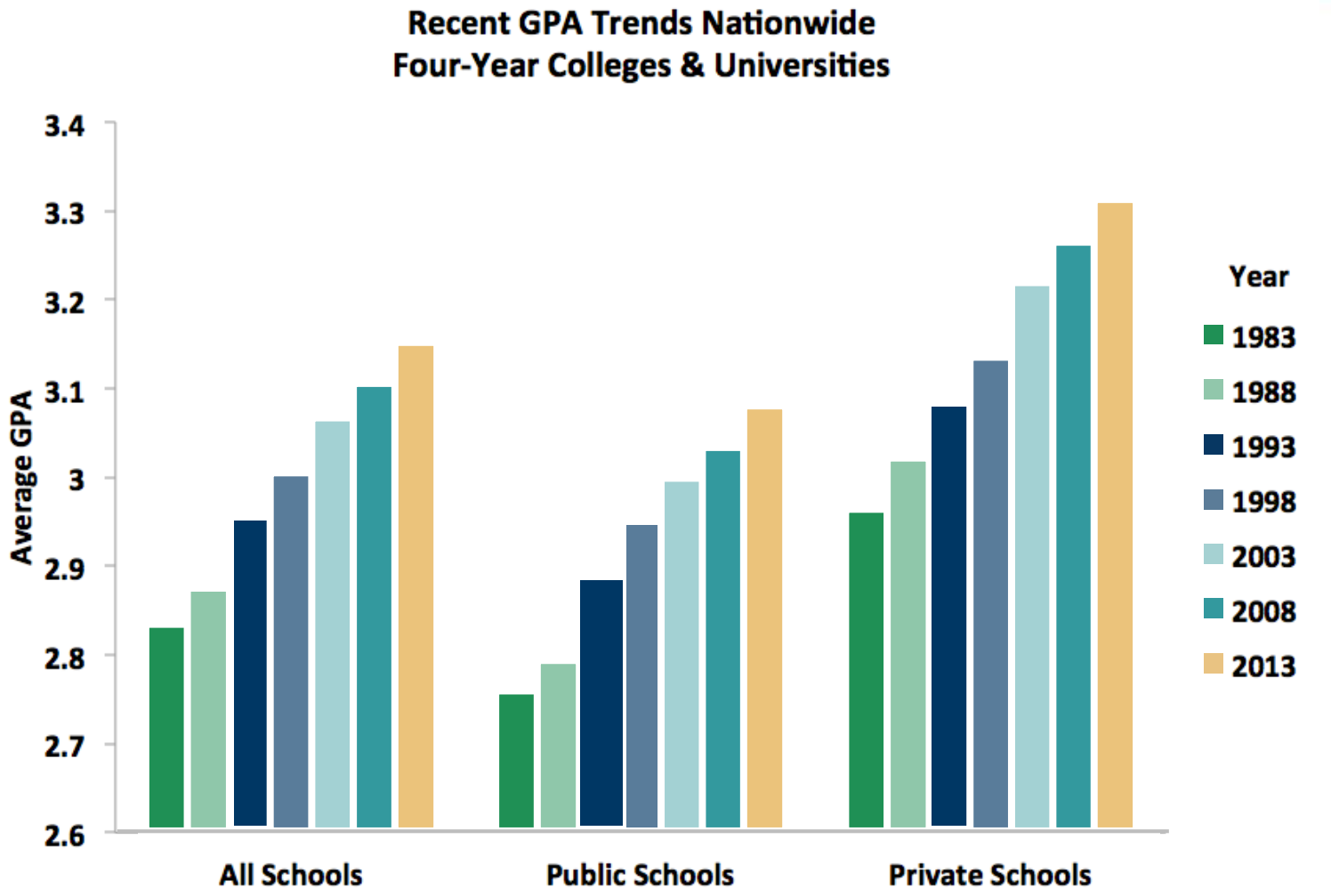
GradeInflation.com



Source: Stuart Rojstaczer, Gradeinflation.com.

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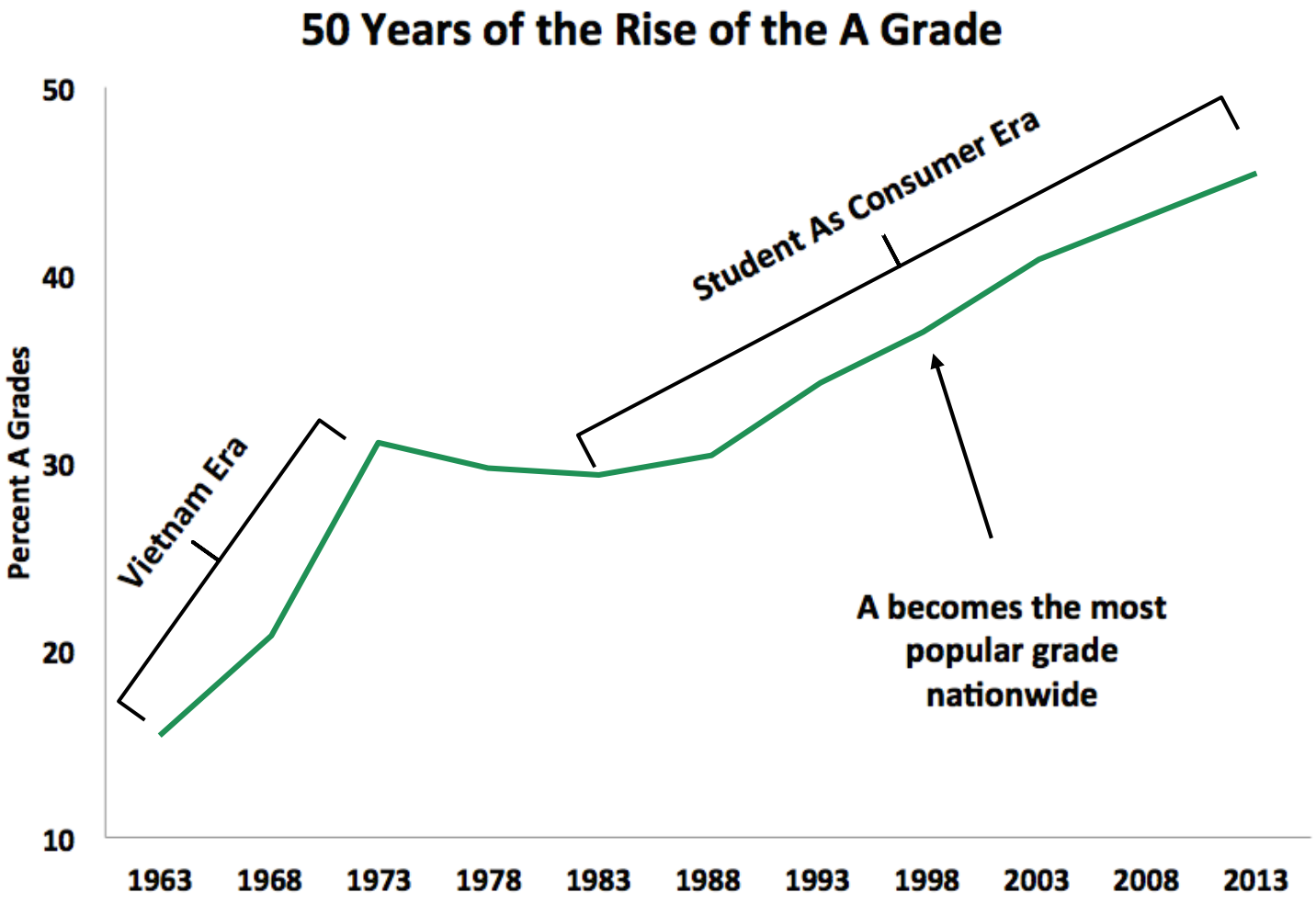
GradeInflation.com



Source: Stuart Rojstaczer, Gradeinflation.com.

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GradeInflation.com

List of HEIs with Reported Average GPAs

Adelphi	Colby	Fordham	Kent State	Norfolk State	Rice	The College of New Jersey	Western Michigan	**Newest additions:**
Alabama	Colorado	Francis Marion	Kentucky	North Carolina - Asheville	Roanoke College	Tufts	Western Washington	Drury
Albion	Colorado State	Furman	Kenyon	North Carolina - Greensboro	Rockhurst	U Miami	Westmont	Missouri Western
Allegheny	Columbia	Gardner-Webb	Knox	North Carolina State	Rutgers	U Southern California	Wheaton	Nevada-Las Vegas
Amherst	Columbia Chicago	George Washington	Lander	North Carolina-Chapel Hill	SAT Comparison	UC-Berkeley	Wheeling Jesuit	Southern Mississippi
Appalachian State	Community College of Philadelphia	Georgetown	Lehigh	North Carolina-Wilmington	Sam Houston State	UC-Irvine	Whitman	Towson
Arizona	Connecticut	Georgia	Louisiana State	North Dakota	Santa Barbara CC	UCLA	William and Mary	Western Carolina
Arkansas	Cornell	Georgia Tech	Los Angeles Mission	North Florida	Simon Fraser	UC-Riverside	Williams	
Auburn	CSU-East Bay	Gonzaga	Macalester	Northern Arizona	Smith	UC-San Diego	Winthrop	
Ball State	CSU-Fresno	Grand Valley State	Maryland Baltimore	Northern Iowa	South Carolina	UC-Santa Barbara	Wisconsin - Green Bay	
Bates	CSU-Fullerton	Grinnell	Maryland - College Park	Northern Michigan	South Carolina State	Utah	Wisconsin – La Crosse	
Boston College	CSU-Sacramento	Hampden-Sydney	Messiah	Northwestern	South Florida	Utah State	Wisconsin - Madison	
Boston University	CSU-San Bernardino	Harvard	Methodist	Ocean County	Southeastern Louisiana	Valdosta State	Wisconsin-Milwaukee	
Bowdoin	CSU-San Jose	Harvey Mudd	Miami-Oxford	Ohio State	Southern Connecticut State	Vanderbilt	Wisconsin - Oshkosh	
Bowling Green	Dartmouth	Haverford	Michigan-Ann Arbor	Ohio University	Southern Illinois	Vassar	Wright State	
Brown	Delaware	Hawaii-Hilo	Michigan-Flint	Oklahoma	Southern Methodist	Victoria	Wyoming	
Bucknell	DePauw	Hawaii-Manoa	Michigan Tech	Old Dominion	Southern Polytechnic State	Virginia	Yale	

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GradeInflation.com

List of HEIs with Reported Average GPAs

Butler	Dixie State	Hope	Middlebury	Oregon	Southern Utah	Villanova
California CC's: System Wide Average	Duke	Houston	Minnesota	Oregon State	Spelman	Virginia Commonwealth
Carleton	East Carolina	Idaho	Minot State University	Pacific Lutheran	St. Olaf	Virginia Tech
Case Western	Eastern Oregon	Illinois	Missouri	Penn State	Stanford	Wake Forest
Central Florida	Elon	Indiana	Missouri State	Pennsylvania	Stetson	Washington - Seattle
Central Michigan	Emory	Iowa	Missouri Science and Technology	Pomona	SUNY-Geneseo	Washington and Lee
Central Piedmont CC	Fairfield	Iowa State	MIT	Portland State	SUNY-Oswego	Washington State
Centre	Florida	Ithaca	Monmouth	Princeton	Swarthmore	Washington University
Charleston	Florida Atlantic	James Madison	Montana State	Purdue	Syracuse	Waterloo
Chicago	Florida Gulf Coast	Johns Hopkins	Nebraska-Kearney	Queensborough CC	Texas	Wellesley
Clarion	Florida International	Kansas	Nebraska-Lincoln	Reed	Texas A&M	Wesleyan
Clemson	Florida State	Kennesaw State	Nevada-Reno	Rensselaer Polytechnic	Texas A&M - Kingsville	West Florida
Coastal Carolina			New York University		Texas State	West Georgia

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Understanding and Converting Grading Scales

- Establish the grading scale: maximum and minimum grades
- Establish minimum passing grade for an individual subject and the minimum grade average
- Establish verbal descriptors for each grade: excellent, good, average etc.
- Obtain information on grading patterns (distributions) when possible
- Look for clues such as class rank or degree classification
- Consider the function of individual grades ("D" grade) or a compensated pass

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Part III:
Sample Grading Scales

European Credit and Transfer System -- ECTS Grading Scale Norm-Based (on the curve)

ECTS Grade	Verbal Description	Percentage
A	outstanding performance with only minor errors	10
B	above the average standard but with some errors	25
C	generally sound work with a number of notable errors	30
D	fair but with significant shortcomings	25
E	performance meets the minimum criteria	10
Fx	Fail – some more work required before the credit can be awarded	N.A.
F	Fail – considerable further work is required	N.A.

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ECTS Grade Conversion

“Letter for Letter”

ECTS Grades	Percentage	“Letter for Letter”	Quality Points	"Credit"	Sum QP	Avg. GPA
A	10	A	4	1	4	
B	25	B	3	2.5	7.5	
C	30	C	2	3	6	
D	25	D	1	2.5	2.5	
E	10	D	1	1	1	
Fx	N.A.	F				
F	N.A.	F				
					21.00	**2.10**

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WES ECTS Grade Conversion

ECTS Grades	Percentage	WES	Quality Points	"Credit"	Sum QP	Avg. GPA
A	10	A	4	1	4	
B	25	B+	3.33	2.5	8.325	
C	30	B	3	3	9	
D	25	C+	2.33	2.5	5.825	
E	10	C	2	1	2	
Fx	N.A.	F				
F	N.A.	F				
					29.15	**2.92**

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Universidad de Sevilla Industrial Engineering Grade Distributions

- *La distribución de las calificaciones en el conjunto de las asignaturas conducentes a la obtención del título de Ingeniero Industrial en la Universidad de Sevilla en los últimos dos años ha sido:*
  - *Aprobado 59,26%*
  - *Notable 30,64%*
  - *Sobresaliente 7,53%*
  - *Matrícula de Honor 2,57%*
- The grade distribution of subjects in the last two years at the *Universidad de Sevilla* leading to an academic degree of *Ingeniero Industrial* has been:
  - *Aprobado* 59.26%
  - *Notable* 30.64%
  - *Sobresaliente* 7.53%
  - *Matrícula de Honor* 2.57%

Grade distribution explanation taken from 2014 *Universidad de Sevilla* transcript

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Spanish University Grading Scale

Numerical Grade	Verbal Grade	% of Students
9.0 - 10	*Matrícula de Honor* (Honors)	2.57%
9.0 - 10	*Sobresaliente* (Outstanding)	7.53%
7.0 - 8.9	*Notable* (Notable)	30.64%
5.0 - 6.9	*Aprobado* (Pass)	59.26%
0 – 4.9	*Suspenso* (Fail)	Not indicated

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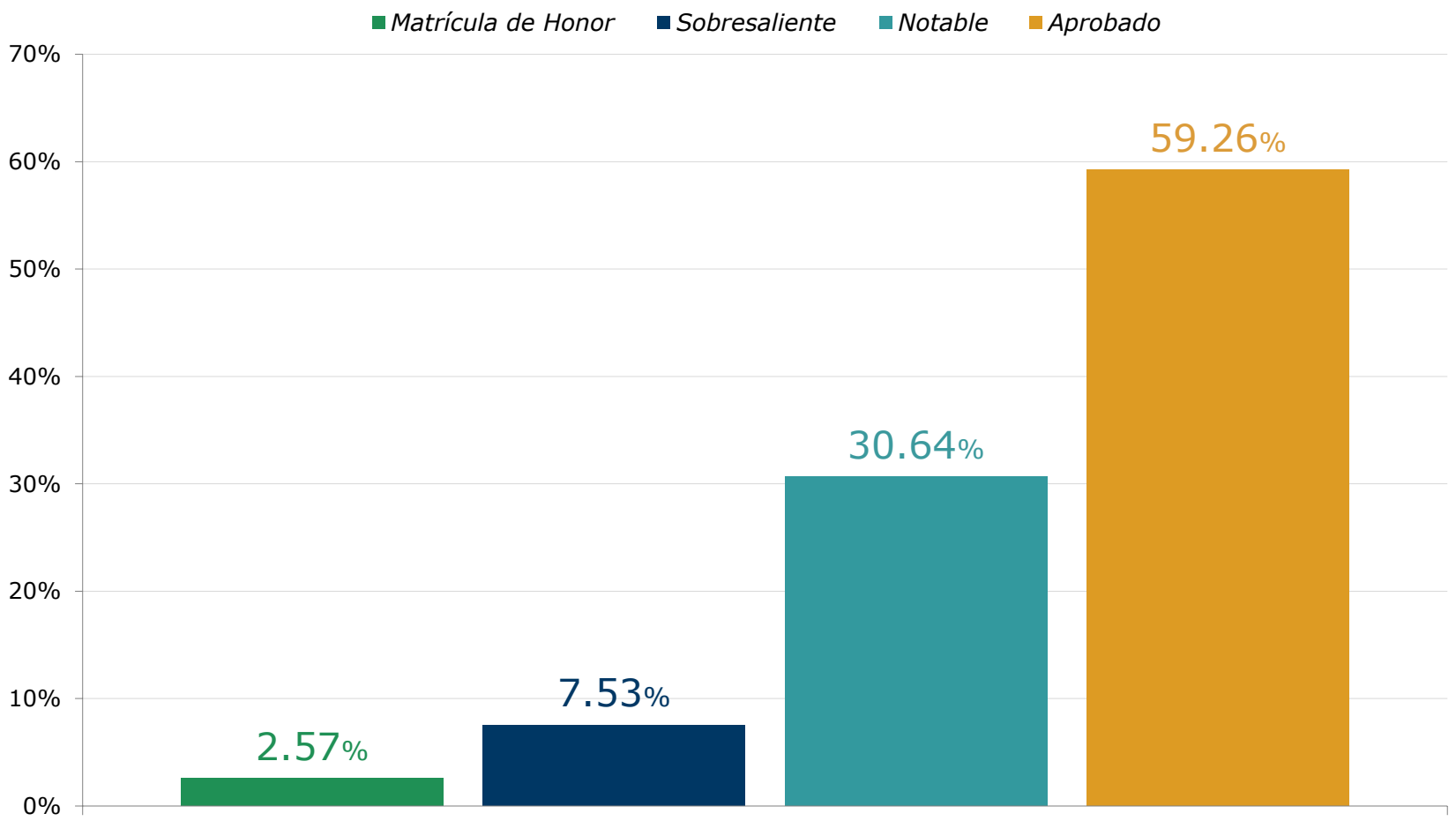
Spanish Grade Distributions



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Spanish University Grading Scale

Numerical Grade	Verbal Grade	% of Students	WES Equivalent
9.0 - 10	*Matrícula de Honor* (Honors)	2.57%	A
9.0 - 10	*Sobresaliente* (Outstanding)	7.53%	A
7.0 - 8.9	*Notable* (Notable)	30.64%	B+
5.0 - 6.9	*Aprobado* (Pass)	59.26%	B-
0 - 4.9	*Suspenso* (Fail)	Not indicated	F

With only the verbal grades indicated on the AT, we can only convert these 4 grades

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Spanish Verbal Grading Scale Conversions

Numerical Grade	Verbal Grade	Percentage	WES Grade	Quality Points	Total Quality Points	GPA
9.0 - 10	*Matrícula de Honor* (Honors) / *Sobresaliente* (Outstanding)	2.57	A	4	10.28	
9.0 - 10	*Notable* (Notable)	7.53	A	4	30.12	
7.0 - 8.9	*Notable* (Notable)	30.64	B+	3.33	102.0312	
5.0 - 6.9	*Aprobado* (Pass)	59.26	B-	2.67	158.2242	
0 - 4.9	*Suspenso* (Fail)	N.A	F	0	0	
					300.6554	**3.01**

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Current Spanish Numerical Scale Conversions

Numerical Grade	Verbal Grade	Percentage	WES Grade	Quality Points	Total Quality Points	GPA
9 - 10	*Matrícula de Honor* (Honors) / *Sobresaliente* (Outstanding)	10.1	A	4	40.4	
8 - 8.9	*Notable* (Notable)	15.32	A-	3.67	56.2244	
7 - 7.9	*Notable* (Notable)	15.32	B+	3.33	51.0156	
6 - 6.9	*Aprobado* (Pass)	29.63	B	3	88.89	
5.5 - 5.9	*Aprobado* (Pass)	14.82	B-	2.67	39.5694	
5 - 5.4	*Aprobado* (Pass)	14.82	C	2	29.64	
0 - 4.9	Suspenso (Fail)	N.A	F	0	0	
					305.7394	**3.06**

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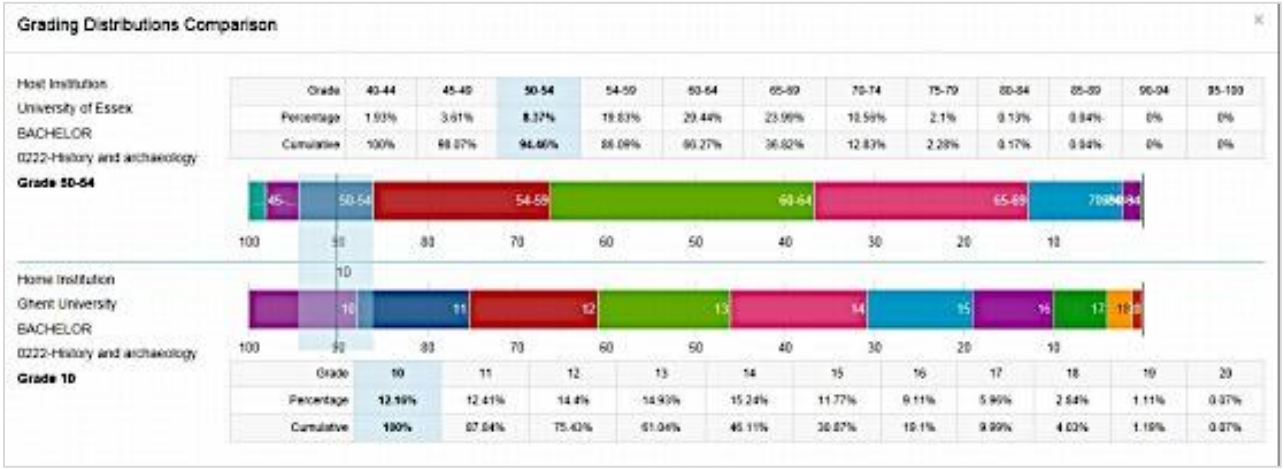
EGRACONS European Grade Conversion System

- European Union funded project to promote rational grade conversions across the European landscape and beyond
- Offer a user-friendly web-based tool for grade conversion (**https://tool.egracons.eu**) that is based on comparable grade distributions
- Ingenious design—like a slide rule with a cursor and cursor line to align grades between two different HEIs



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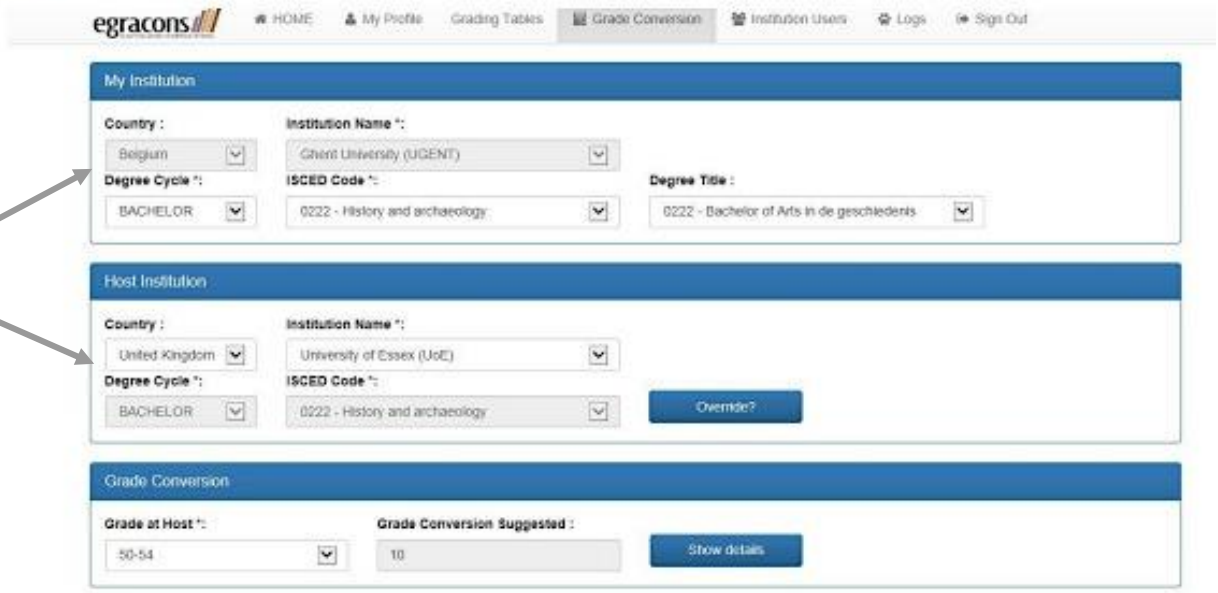
Grading Data entered by two different HEIs and then compared

2)



3)

https://tool.egracons.eu

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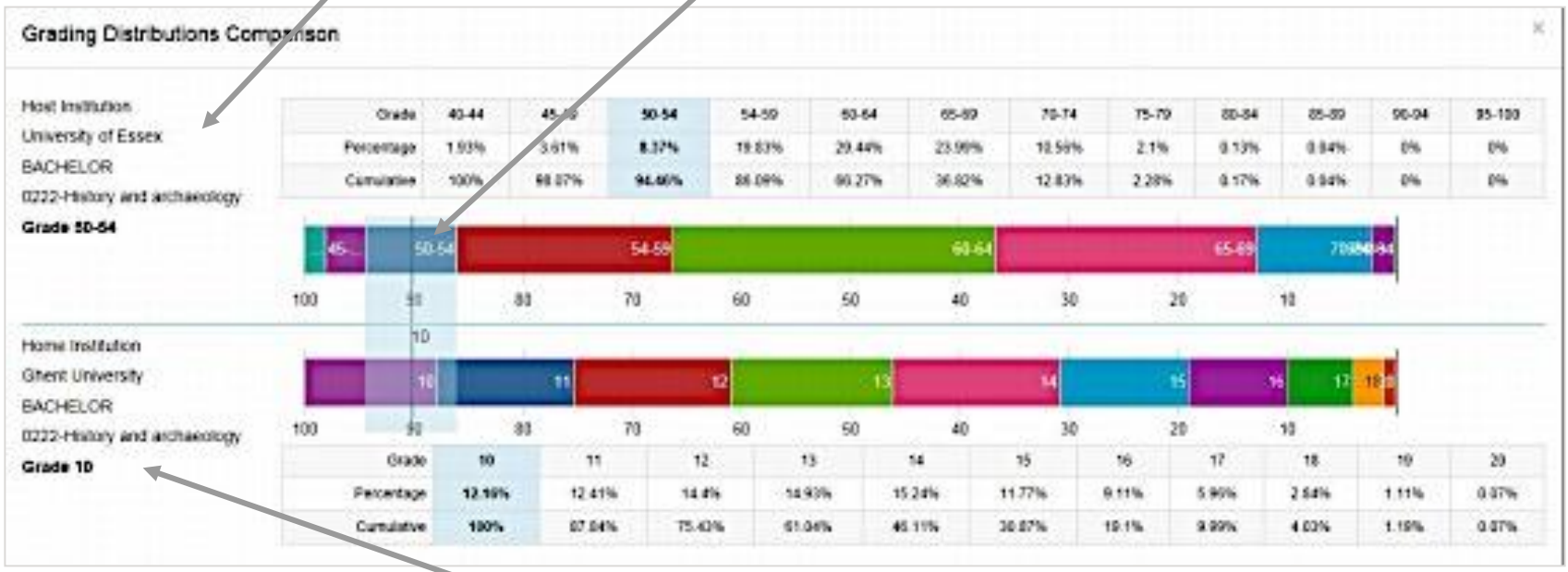
EGRACONS European Grade Converter

Univ. of Essex, BA History and Archeology

Cursor resting in the 50-54 UK range and the 10-11 BEL range



Ghent Univ.
BA History and Archeology

Source: https://tool.egracons.eu

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Common Indian University
Grading Scale

Marks	Degree Classification	WES Equivalent
70-100	First Class with Distinction	A
60-69	First Class	B
50-59	Second Class	B
35-49	Third/Pass Class	C
0-34	Fail	F

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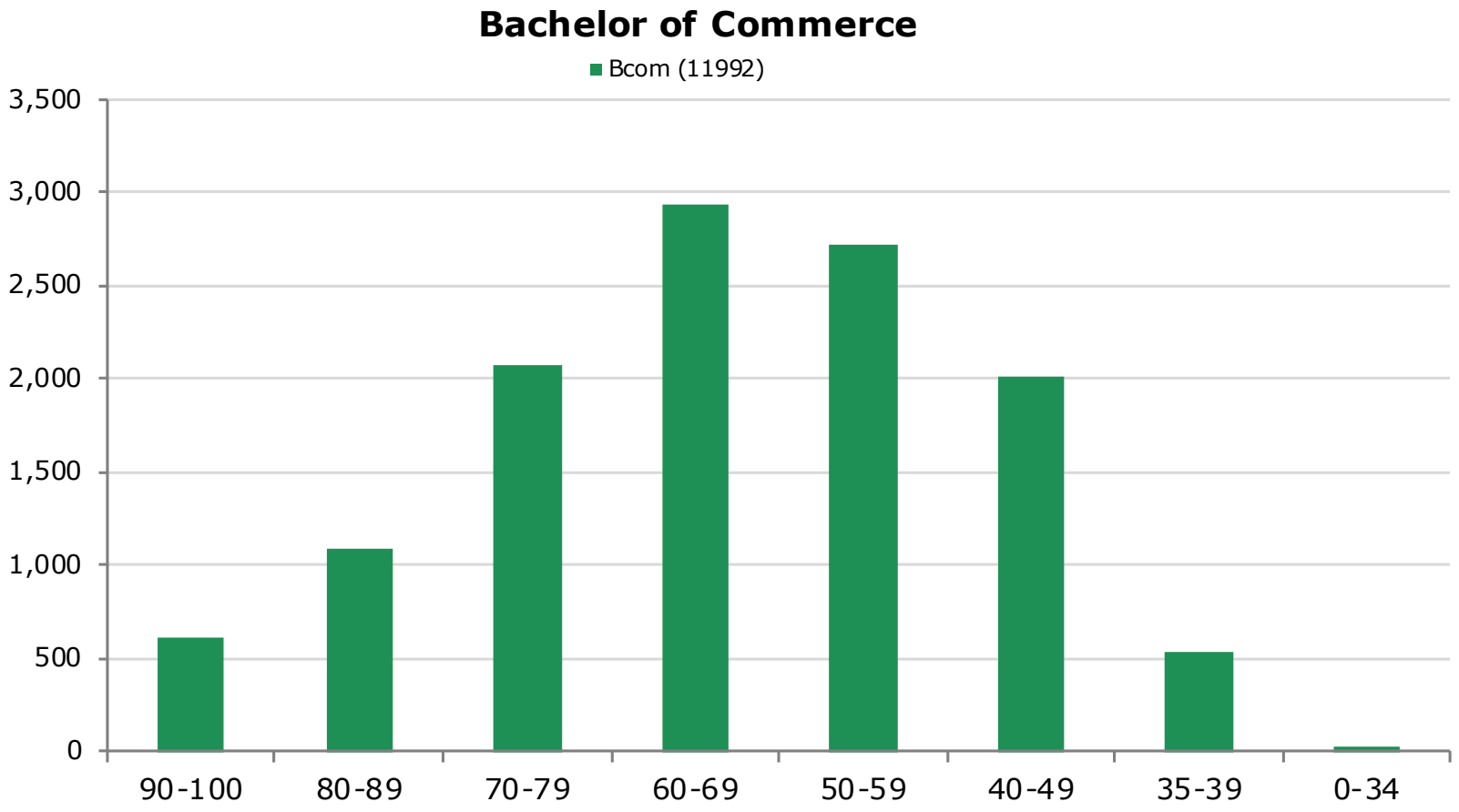
Osmania University

Grade Distribution



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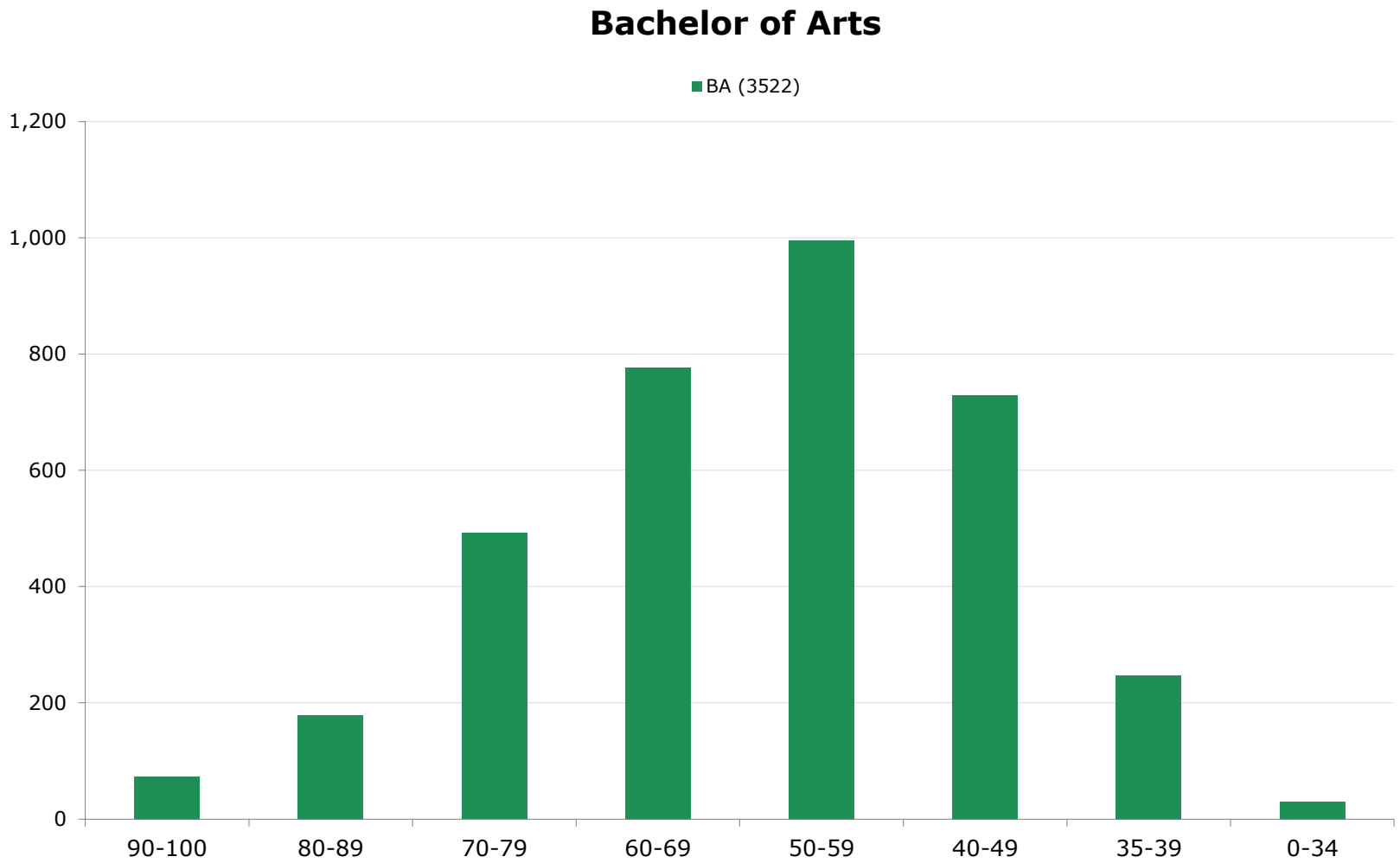
Osmania University

Grade Distributions from WES Data



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Grade Conversions and Admissions

- Grade conversions are just one criterion among many that ought to be considered in the admissions process
- Grade conversions are not a mathematically precise method to judge academic ability
- You certainly will also want to consider the academic standing, selectivity and prestige of the HEI
- There may well be other factors that influence your decision to admit a student such as creating a truly internationalized campus
- You may have your own experience to help guide you in making your admissions decisions

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Online Resources

- Evaluation and the Academy: Are We Doing the Right Thing? Grade Inflation and Letters of Recommendation: Henry Rosovsky and Matthew Hartley
- National Center for Education Statistics
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (average grades) 2011 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12), pages 48-51: "Undergraduate Average GPA's"
- Evaluation and the Academy: Are We Doing the Right Thing? (American Academy of Arts and Sciences)
- WES Grade Calculator
- Current Trends in Grades and Grading Practices in Higher Education: Results of the 2004 AACRAO Survey: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
- http://egracons.eu/ European Grade Conversion System

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Connect with our Thought Leaders

Conferences

CGS | CAPLA | Education and Skills Symposium

Free WES Webinars – Fall 2018:

- The Education System of Germany and Student Mobility Trends
- Obtaining and Verifying Post-Secondary Documents from China: The New Process

wes.org/partners/events/

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Next Steps

Workshops:

- Working with Sponsoring Organizations and Embassies
  - Washington, D.C.: February 7-8, 2019
- Strategic IEM 101: A Toolbox for Success
  - Washington, D.C.: February 8, 2019

Read this next:

- WES Policy on Selected Three-Year Bachelor's Degrees from India
- Academic Fraud, Corruption, and Implications for Credential Assessment

Listen to this next:

- The 3-year Degree Conundrum: India and Countries Participating in the Bologna Process
- Safeguarding Against Fraud in the Admissions Process
- How to Obtain International Credentials for Undergraduate Admissions

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For support or more information, please contact your WES Regional Director

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WES Facts

Did you know?

- Over 10,000 participants attend WES webinars and training yearly.
- In 2017 WES completed more than 244,000 evaluations.
- More than 1.5 million credential evaluation reports have been provided to international students and skilled immigrants.
- Our database contains more than 40 years of WES research including data on more than 200 countries and jurisdictions, 45,000 educational institutions, 20,000 credentials and equivalencies, and 1,600 grading scales.
- 37 languages are spoken by WES staff.

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