

Accredited or Non-Accredited

>>> The Importance of Accreditation <<<

" That is the Question "

By Habib Al Souleiman

Each year, millions of people are asking the same question "WHAT AFTER A HIGH SCHOOL?", I remember 7 years ago when I finished my High School, I didn't know what I would do next...

“What are the downsides of Non-Accredited”???

The first time I heard the words non-accredited was 7 years ago. I didn't understand what it meant – until much later and when it was nearly too late! When it dawned on me finally what "Non-Accredited" meant, I had actually already signed-up at such a school. You may ask why? I did this because it was very easy to register (some of my marks were not too good), relatively cheap and of relatively short duration. But the main reason why I signed-up was, because of the slick school official that "sold" me the program - he was a very convincing sales man indeed. Only by chance, I met an alumni of the school one week before commencement, who told me his story and what non-accredited meant to him then and what pains he was suffering because of this.

In short, if you study at a non-accredited school or "university", you might not be able to:

- find a good job (because they do not recognize your degree)
- continue your studies at a reputable university (see comment above)
- you may have difficulties to find work in other countries (see comment above)

In addition, you may suffer ridicule from your working colleagues and friends and in some countries you may even contravene the law if you use a university title that is not genuine. On the really bad side - you may achieve a leading management position and then the word gets out about your education – just read the newspapers on how many top managers had to resign last year because of such matters. Also think of the money and years you may have wasted in pursuing a non-accredited degree - that will not help you in the future.

Needless to say – I managed to get out of my contract with the help of a lawyer and a kind

newspaper man who published a story about the school. And, I have just completed my study – needless to say - at a good and accredited university.

Take my advice and read the information below – you won't regret it!

Steps to follow when looking for a higher education:

- First, you should know what you want to be, Doctor, Lawyer, Manager...
- After you have decided that, think in which field you want to be,
- Then comes the most difficult question, where to study?

It's not enough to choose the right country, even in highly ranked countries like Switzerland, UK and USA you can find non-accredited Universities.

And - if you want more details about the above read on.....

“Accredited or Non-Accredited Degree?”

Benefits to students and graduates pursuing an accredited education

By enrolling in an externally accredited institution, as opposed to others that are not equally certified, or worse only self-certified, students can feel confident that they are being properly prepared for the business world of the twenty-first century. Equally important is the fact that students studying in an accredited institution are eligible for transfer considerations to other equivalently accredited Universities and Colleges.

Further, when applying for government or large company employment, graduates from non-accredited institutions may be excluded from the application process. To make matters worse, when applying for immigration or working permission consideration to certain countries, the educational credits from unaccredited institution may not be counted, thus losing important points needed to qualify for emigration or working permission in that country.

Why you should only study an accredited Bachelor, Master or MBA degree?

Accreditation is an external status granted to an educational institution or program that has

been found to meet or exceed stated standards of educational quality.

It is awarded based on an intensive multi-year process, both of internal self-study by faculty, administration and associated stakeholders on the one side; and students, alumni and industry stakeholders on the other. In this study, the institution must demonstrate continuous improvements in learning outcomes over minimum three or more years and it is culminated by a rigorous and extensive external peer-review process and audit by business stakeholders and experts from higher education. The entire process is designed to measure and validate the quality of the educational program the learning experience- and learning outcomes offered to students.

There's a lot of literature available online about higher education accreditation standards and students do well to read as much as possible about these before undertaking their studies. This to ensure, that they are not falling into the trap of a degree mill.

Prospective students are cautioned, that degree mills often spin a web of deceit, making the appearance of being "internationally accredited" by fellow institutions, that after some diligent research in the net turn out to be owned by the same organization. Or, are "accredited" by dubious privately owned accreditation organizations, that front groups of unaccredited schools, designed to make the appearance of being accreditation-granting bodies. Be warned, many of these schools are woefully underfinanced, offer only no-refund contracts to their students, making it near impossible for students to recover already paid fees when they realize that they have been falling prey to a degree mill.

Signs that indicate a degree mill are often born out by the fact that they are lacking typical campus facilities like libraries, dedicated teaching laboratories and other services expected from a school. They are often located in business- or trade centre sharing facilities with other businesses, or in office buildings where they rent just a few rooms, or for hotel schools, are located in small run-down hotels, often also in remote locations. Many times they are "Mamma and Papa" outfits, lacking a proper management set-up, have only a minimum of (often unskilled) administrative staff and part-time "faculty" with dubious academic qualifications from even more dubious or even unknown institutions. To this has to be said: A good school will be proud to give information of the quality and valid qualifications of their faculty; and that includes that they have relevant degrees, in relation of what they teach and they publish the name of the university from which they obtained their qualifications. Beware also of schools that have faculty that sport "industry only" experience, without accredited complimentary academic credentials.

To help prospective students wanting to study for in a school that offers a British or US degree we list below some key information that will ensure that "bad surprises" are kept to a minimum.

Regional Accreditation in the USA

Regional accreditation means that an institution has been accredited by an agency that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). In short, make sure that the institution offering a BA, Master or MBA program is accredited by one of the following six regional accreditation agencies:

- MSA: Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Higher Education
- NASC: Northwest Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities Commission on Colleges and Universities
- NCA: North Central Association of Schools and Colleges, The Higher Learning Commission
- NEASC: New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
- SACS: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges
- WASC: Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities

Professional Accreditation USA

In addition to regional accreditation, there are three professional accrediting bodies:

- The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) at www.aacsb.edu
- The International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE) at www.iacbe.org
- The Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) at <http://acbbsp.org>

A word of caution: Beware, that a number of private schools located in countries outside the USA and holding or IACBE and ACBSP accreditation are awarding degrees. However such degrees may not be recognized in these countries because that country has not granted "National" accreditation to that school. As a matter of fact, these schools take advantage of a legal grey zone and have circumvented the need to obtain "National" accreditation in that country. They are in this way creating the dishonest appearance to students that they are accredited. Consequently, degrees awarded by these schools are not recognized, nor accepted by those countries and the use of the awards like BA, MSc and MBA may be illegal and punishable by law. As a consequence, these awards may also not be accepted by some governments, large companies and may be ineligible for points under emigration requirements.

However, if a regionally accredited US university gives and awards their US degree in a

private school in a foreign country, the degree (at least in continental Europe) is considered valid and the award may be used.

Membership vs. Accreditation

Don't confuse the term "Membership" with accreditation status. An institution can say they that are a "member" of AACSB, IACBE and/or ACBSP and not be accredited by any of these professional accrediting bodies. The AACSB, IACBE and ACBSP list both accredited and members-only institutions accordingly on their websites.

Accreditation of Universities and Higher Educational Institutions in the UK

Bona fide universities in the UK are created in the following ways:-

- By Royal Charter – on the Recommendation of the Privy Council
- By an Act of Parliament – on the recommendation of the Privy Council
- By Registration as a Company Limited by Guarantee – which is approved by the Privy Council
- By Registration as a Private or Public Limited Company with Share Capital – which is approved by the Privy Council

Other Publicly Funded Educational Institutions and Listed Bodies

There are many other publicly funded higher educational colleges and institutions that are regulated by the Privy Council. They may not have degree awarding powers, but they can establish a partnership arrangement with a UK university to deliver courses that will lead to degree(s) awarded by the partner UK university. These institutions that have partnership arrangements with university degree awards are known as LISTED BODIES. Listed Bodies status is not restricted to publicly funded institutions. Private colleges that have degree awarding arrangements with UK degree awarding institutions are also classified as a LISTED BODIES.

In closing, before students sign-up at any school they should research their choice thoroughly.

Ask to talk to existing students and alumni at their working place and ask if the diploma/degree is granted by national government, or the above mentioned accreditation agencies.

Alas, even with all the above information easily available, many students still get caught every year in the webs that fraudulent schools are spinning. The caution of "Buyer Beware" cannot be told enough to prospective students.

Recommended School <http://www.bhms.ch/>