Foreign Degrees and the EDGE Database

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Recently U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has begun to rely consistently on the AACRAO Electronic Database for Global Education (EDGE) related to foreign degree-equivalency regulations to determine the U.S. equivalent to a foreign degree. Historically there has not been an identifiable uniform approach to foreign degree-equivalency regulations and policies for H-1B, PERM, EB-2 and EB-3 petitions and thus the government's reliance on EDGE has brought more stability and predictability to case adjudications.

What is AACRAO EDGE?

AACRAO is a nonprofit, voluntary, professional association of more than 11,000 higher education admissions and registration professionals who represent more than 2,600 institutions and agencies in the United States and in over 40 countries around the world.

The EDGE is a web-based resource for the evaluation of foreign educational credentials. The database currently includes 232 country profiles, with the capability to be expanded and updated as educational systems change. USCIS has been using the EDGE database to verify and corroborate commercial credentials evaluations.

Each EDGE country profile includes among others:
- An overview describing the educational history of the country
- An educational ladder or ladders to reflect changes in the educational structure
- Grading systems
- List of postsecondary institutions
- Resources used to develop the profile

USCIS views EDGE as being objective and "peer reviewed" and therefore favors it to commercially prepared credential evaluations, even where multiple evaluations and course-by-course evaluations are being submitted.
To augment our case success, the Global Immigration & Mobility Practice at Baker & McKenzie ensures that available EDGE data is incorporated into the case strategy and presentations to both USCIS and U.S. Department of Labor.

**New H-1B Visa Petitions Remain Available**

As of April 25, 2012, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services received a reported 25,000 H-1B petitions counting toward the 65,000 cap and 10,900 towards the 20,000 US advanced degree cap. This means that employers can continue to petition for new H-1B workers.