

## PRACTICAL TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

### Understanding & Evaluating Foreign Credentials

Based on many years of experience working with employers, Upwardly Global is aware of trends in which education and degrees can pose roadblocks to foreign-educated candidates and prevent employers from accessing highly skilled talent. Consider this [real-world example](#): after the US military withdrew from Afghanistan in 2021, the Taliban curtailed education for women and only days after completing requirements for a civil engineering program, one student had her degree withheld, leaving her with no documentation to demonstrate to a potential employer that she had indeed obtained a degree.

For candidates like this, this could pose a potential challenge in securing skill-aligned employment in the U.S., especially in regulated industries such as education or healthcare. Some companies require background checks, and for a candidate with a foreign credential or degree, a background check may come back unverified if a background check agency does not have wide enough data sets to encompass all foreign institutions and credentials.

#### What is a credential evaluation?

A credential evaluation is a report assessing a candidate's education which they earned outside the U.S. to determine the U.S. equivalent. Universities and colleges require credential evaluations from foreign student applicants who apply to college or graduate programs in the U.S. so the institutions can assess GPA, course credits, etc. and the US equivalent. Some employers require credential evaluations, usually for applicants who may need to meet certain licensure requirements for an occupation, especially for healthcare, law, or government roles.

#### PRACTICAL TIPS

1. **Share expectations early.** Share on the career page and job postings if a credential evaluation is required. Specify the type of credential evaluation and which organizations you accept from. This can help a candidate prepare - it takes weeks to obtain one and they have to pay.
2. **Maintain strong communication with the candidate.** Let them know what information will be collected and when. If a background check organization can't reach their educational institution, let them know, because perhaps the candidate could reach out directly or assist. If they need a credential evaluation for a role, don't currently have one, and are from a country that is experiencing political strife, they may be eligible for the WES Gateway Program (see resources below). You could share the program link with the candidate and encourage them to review their eligibility, noting the program helps candidates educated in certain countries who have limited proof of education.
3. **Reflect on any attitude or unconscious biases you may have towards education institutions from certain countries - or just outside the U.S. in general.** Unfamiliar with a university name? Check out [Times Higher Education](#) or [US News](#). See global school rankings, and look at region or country. You can also sort by subject and other criteria.
4. **Reconsider if a bachelor's degree is really required.** Consider a skills-based hiring approach that looks at a candidate's abilities and competencies rather than their educational institution or recognizable companies where they obtained previous experience.

## TOOLS TO EQUIP EMPLOYERS IN LEVERAGING FOREIGN TALENT



During Upwardly Global's July 2024 DEI Employer Working Group, we welcomed Debra Means-West, Director of Resource and Network Development, at [World Education Services](#), North America's trusted leader in credential evaluation services, and partner to Upwardly Global, to share additional tools available to employers to aid in this process.

### WES' Resources:

- **Evaluations & Fees**- Does your applicant know what kind of credential evaluation they need? Learn about options and [preview the potential cost](#) of an evaluation report.
- **Employer Playbook**- The [Employer Playbook](#) provides easy-to-implement strategies to help remove barriers, address unconscious bias, and create a culture of inclusion.
- **Degree Equivalency**- This free tool lets you see what your [credentials might be equivalent](#) to in the U.S. Discover the value of applying for an official report from WES.
- **Digital Badges**- [A WES Digital Badge](#) is a web-enabled version of your credential evaluation, which means that it can be verified online—instantly. This gives you maximum visibility and recognition.
- **AccessWES®** is the secure online delivery system we use to send WES Evaluation Reports to employers, academic institutions and other recognized organizations.
- **The [WES Gateway Program](#)** can help you assess a candidate's educational credentials if they have been displaced because of adverse circumstances and have limited proof of their academic credentials. You can direct candidates to the WES Gateway Program and encourage them to review the eligibility criteria and connect with a referral partner (Upwardly Global is a referral partner). Eligible individuals can receive a free credential evaluation report if they have limited proof of academic credentials. By bridging this gap, qualified talent can be considered for roles and your team will not miss a great candidate. Please note: This program is only available to individuals educated in Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Syria, Türkiye, Ukraine, and Venezuela who meet program requirements.

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### Upwardly Global's DEI Employer Working Group

Made up of over 100 corporations, Upwardly Global's DEI Employer Working Group aims to engage corporate America to better understand the roadblocks in hiring foreign talent and to co-create solutions. Upwardly Global's unique position working with many employers over the last 20 years gives special insight to trends, pain points, and best practices. This invite-only working group is a platform to engage with peers, share best practices and challenges, and co-create solutions and resources, such as these practical tips, to better integrate immigrant and refugee talent into our workforce.

Email [us](#) to learn more.