Understanding Spain's University Access System

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Who We Are

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Why Spain?

Spain is a popular choice for foreign students seeking high-quality universities at a very reasonable price. Spain offers study options in English for Bachelors, Masters and Doctorates

Spain is different...

- ☐ Independence- academic & personal
- Maturity, open-mindedness
- Open to learning the language(s)
- ☐ Ability to deal with ambiguity and bureaucracy
- ☐ Public v. Private

Public University Fit

- Who Should Apply to Spanish Public Universities?
 - Spanish nationals in the Spanish school system
- Who Can Apply to Spanish Public Universities?
 - Spanish nationals in international schools
 - ☐ Fluent or native Spanish speakers who have had experience studying in Spanish or in Spain
 - □ IB Diploma students
- Who Probably Shouldn't?
 - International students who speak little or no Spanish or have not studied in Spanish at a high academic level

Private University Fit

- □ Some have a more international fit/feel
- Need to become familiar with the Spanish way of doing things
- □ Do your research on the makeup of the student body and the intricacies and methodology of instruction.
- Religious affiliations

Different Autonomous Regions Different Requirements







- https://accesoextranjeros.uned.es/recursos/archivos/Tabla_criterios_admision.pdf

The Spanish University Access System

How Spanish Bachillerato students get into university

Public System

- GPA of Spanish Bachillerato (60%) + EBAU score (40%) = score out of 10 points
- EBAU or EVAU = Evaluación de Bachillerato para Accesso a la Universidad. Consists of 4 obligatory subjects (English, Spanish Lang and Lit, Maths and History or Philosophy.
- Can take 4 additional exams (Específicas)
 in specific subjects to gain up to four
 additional points for a university access
 score out of 14 points.

Private System

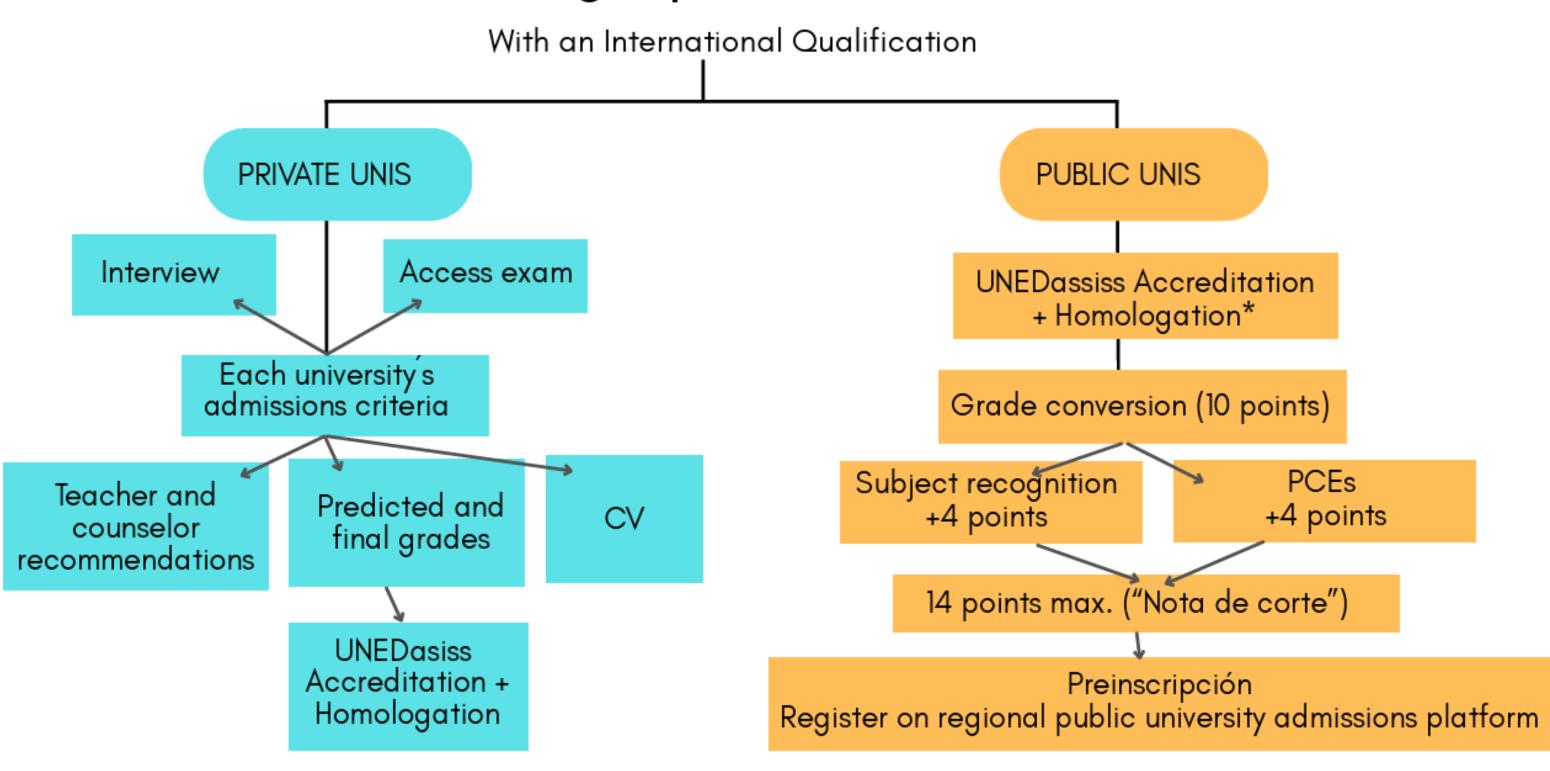
- GPA of Spanish Bachillerato + individual university entrance exams + passing grade at EBAU (overall 5/10)
- Individual admissions exams for each university
- Possible interviews, motivation letters, recommendation letters, etc. A more holistic admissions process depending on the degrees and institutions.

How does an international student access Spanish university?

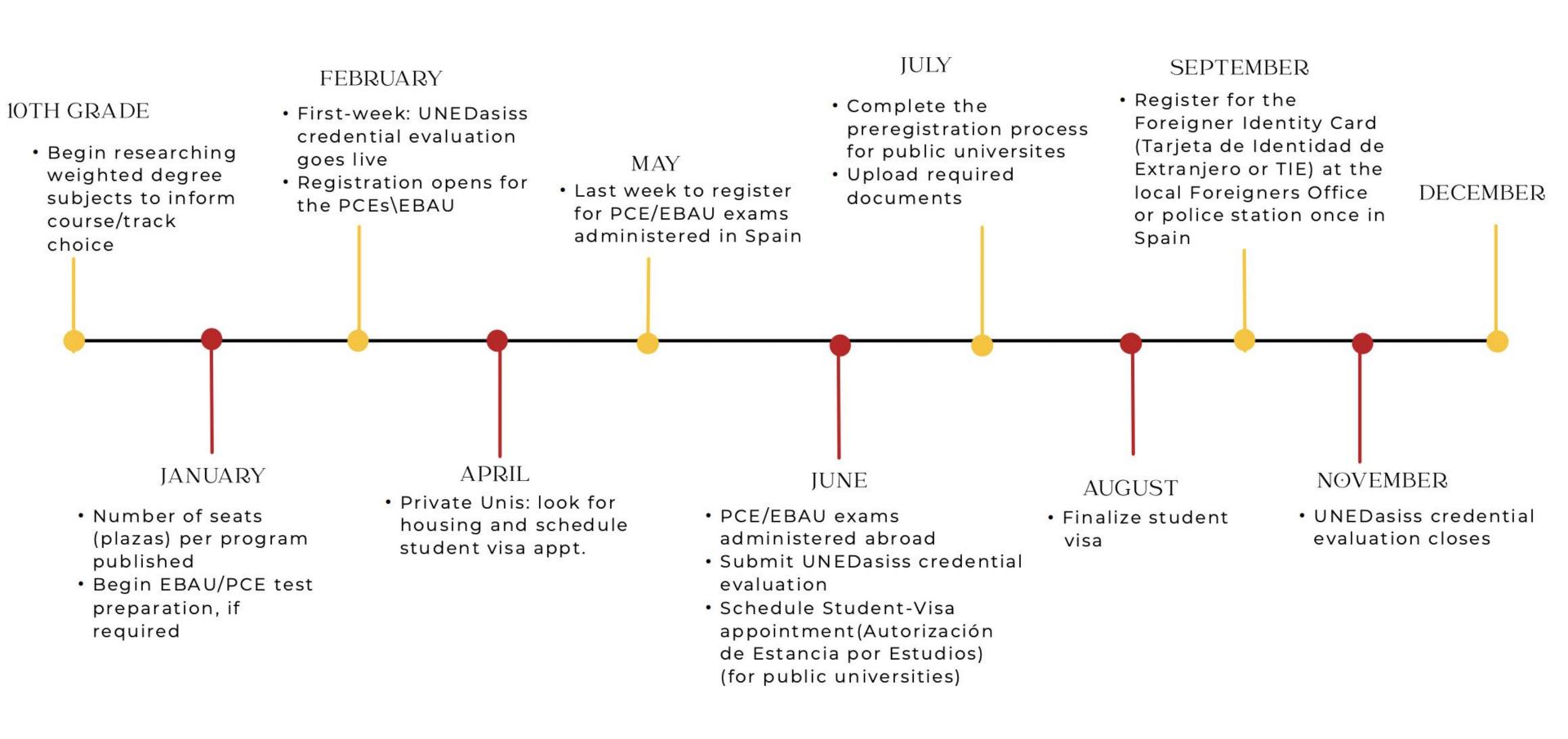
A student with a foreign high school diploma or qualification (IB Diploma, American High School Diploma, A-levels, French Baccalaureate, etc.) will need to do the following:

- 1. Recognition (Annex I countries) or legalization (homologación- other countries) of their qualification to the Spanish system
- 2. Conversion of their overall qualification to the Spanish 10-point scale
- 3. Possible specific competency exams (PCE) to raise their score above 10 points
- 4. Any individual entrance exams required by private universities, interviews, motivational letters, etc.
- 5. Prove a B2 level of Spanish if they do not hold a passport from a Spanish speaking country

Accessing Spanish Universities



APPLICATION TIMELINE



How do I know what I can apply for?

- ☐ In the Spanish Public System, you need to know the "nota de corte" or "cut- off mark"
- ☐ This is the total access score a student should aim for. The published "nota de corte" is the score of the last person to be admitted to that degree in the last admissions cycle.

IMPORTANT!!!

- ☐ We can expect the nota de corte to go up from year to year, sometimes by as much as 0,5
- ☐ The published nota de corte does not include students who were admitted via waitlist, so if your student is close and doesn't get a spot, there is hope.
- ☐ You must know the nota de corte to estimate how competitive your converted score will be and what your realistic chances of admission are for a particular degree.

Notas de Corte

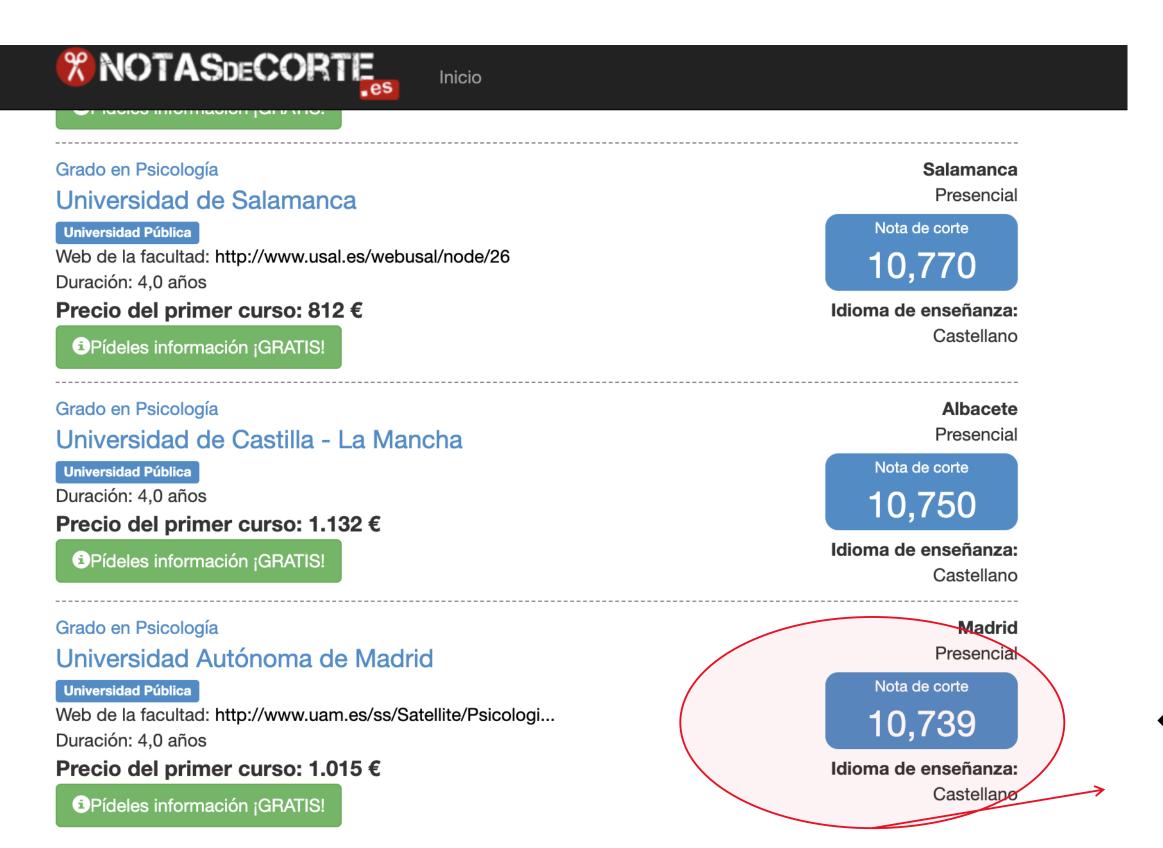
UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE DE MADRID

CURSO 2024/2025

Cádigo	TITULACIONES DE CRADO		Grupo 1			Gruj	оо 3	Gru	іро 4	Grupo 5		
Código	TITULACIONES DE GRADO	Ordinaria	Extraord.	Ord.	Ext.	Ord.	Ext.	Ord.	Ext.	Ord.	Ext.	
		Ciencias	Sociales	y Jurídio	cas							
0100	Administración y Dirección de Empresas	10,385		7,65		5,000		5,00		5,00		
0128	Administración y Dirección de Empresas (en inglés)	11,157		5,00		5,000		5,00		5,00		
0101	Antropología Social y Cultural	5,000		5,00		5,000		5,00		5,00		
0125	Ciencia de los Datos Aplicada	11,304		7,32		5,000		5,00		5,00		
0102	Ciencias Políticas	5,000		5,00		5,000		5,00		5,00		
0103	Comercio	8,261		5,00		5,000		5,00		5,00		
0104	Comunicación Audiovisual	10,486		8,04		5,000		5,00		5,00		
0126	Criminología	11,599		8,50		7,510 (10)		7,13		5,00		
0106	Derecho	8,875		8,22		5,000		5,00		5,00		
0108	Economía	9,211		7,07		5,000		5,00		5,00		
0129	Economía (en inglés)	10,250		5,00		5,000		5,00		5,00		
0109	Educación Social	8,939		8,30		5,000		8,75		5,00		
0110	Estadística Aplicada	9,111		8,64		5,000		5,00		5,00		
0127	Finanzas, Banca y Seguros	9,828		8,33		5,000		5,00		5,00		
0111	Geografía y Ordenación del Territorio	5,000		5,00		5,000		5,00		5,00		
0112	Gestión y Administración Pública	5,011		5,00		5,000		5,00		5,00		

https://www.comunidad.madrid/sites/default/files/doc/educacion/univ/notas de corte 2024-25 ordinaria.pdf

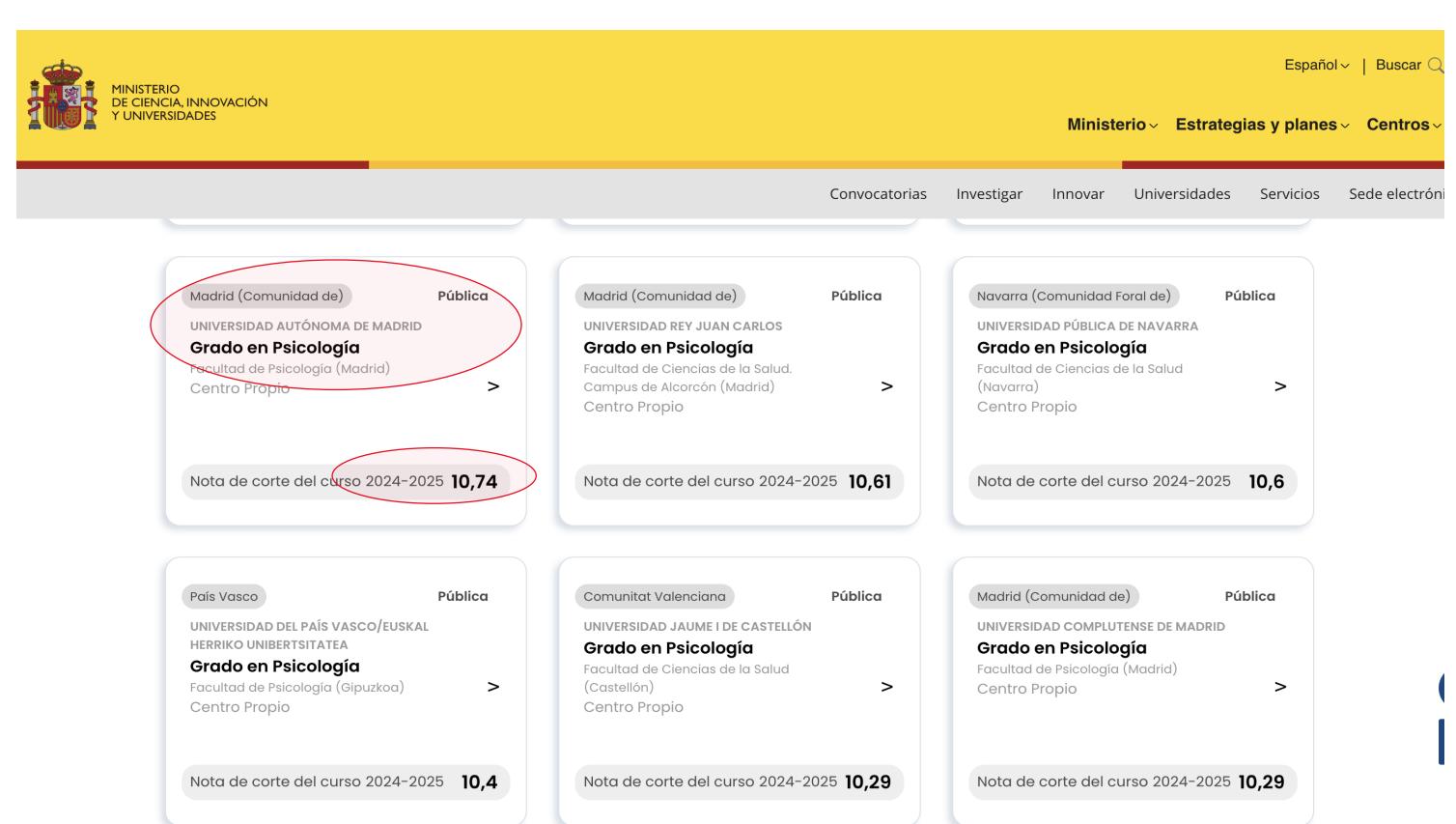
https://notasdecorte.es/



- Example for Psychology
- ❖In Spanish "Psicología"

Language of instruction

https://www.ciencia.b.es/qedu.html



- QEDU...Qué Estudiar y Donde en la Universidad = What to study and where at university
- Official Ministry of Education search engine for degrees in Spain.

5/23/2025

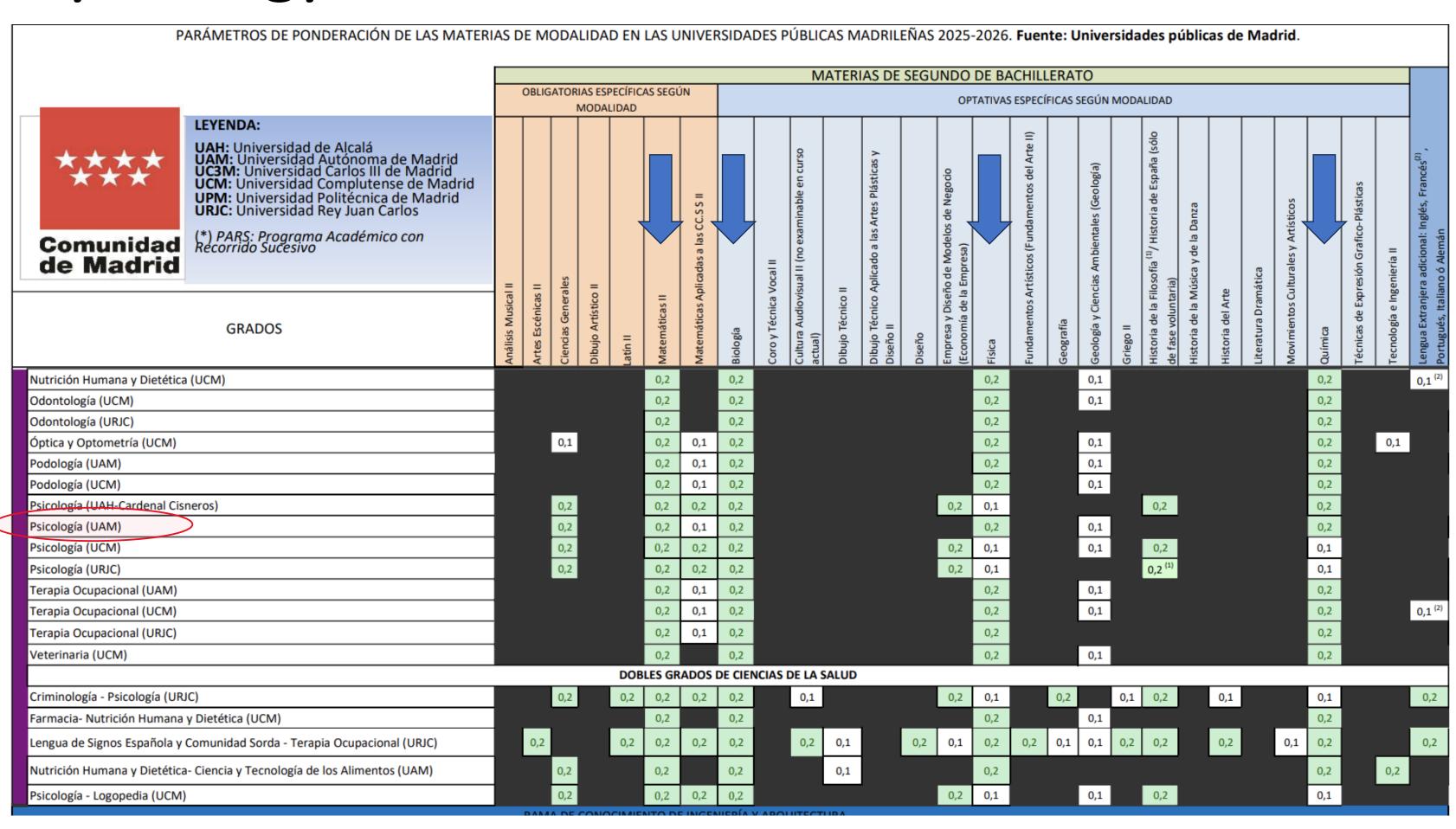
How do I get to that mark?

- □ Score out of 10 + extra points for weighted subjects
- ☐ Ponderación = Subjects that are weighted for specific degrees
- □ Students need to consult what subjects "count" or are weighted for a particular degree (0,2 weighting)
- https://www.comunidad.madrid/sites/default/files/doc/educacion/univ/ponderaciones 25-26 10-04-25.pdf

Business Administration - UCM

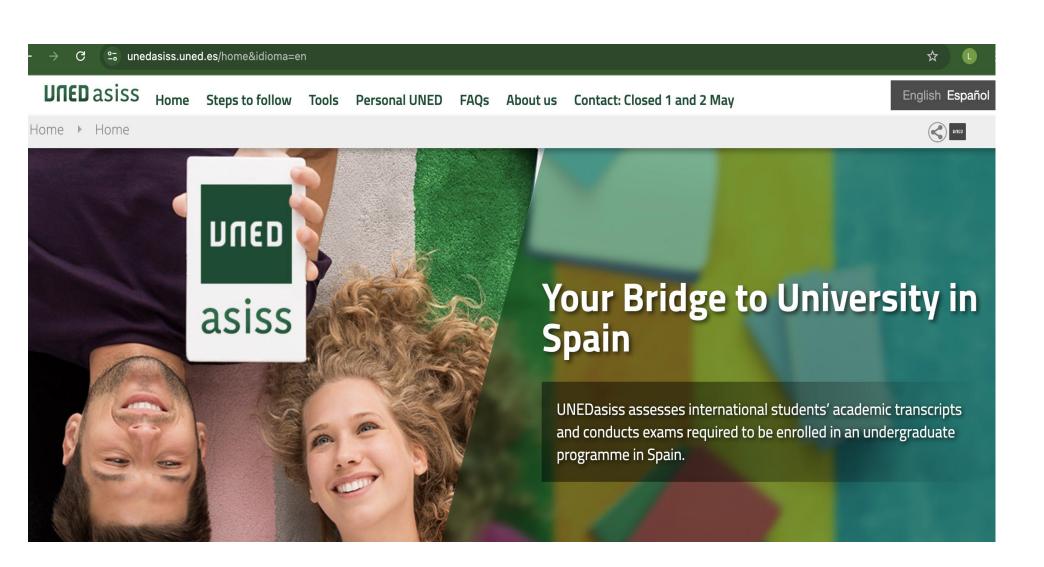
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			OBLIG	SATOR	IAS ESP	PECÍFIC	AS SEGÚ	JN .			IV	ATER	IAS DE	SEGL	JNDO													
			022		MODAL										OP	TATIVAS	ESPECÍ	FICAS S	SEGÚN	MODA	LIDAD							
****	UAH: Universidad de Alcalá UAM: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid UC3M: Universidad Carlos III de Madrid UC3M: Universidad Complutense de Madrid UCM: Universidad Politécnica de Madrid UPM: Universidad Politécnica de Madrid URJC: Universidad Rey Juan Carlos (*) PARS: Programa Académico con Recorrido Sucesivo	=	=	les				Aplicadas a las CC.S S II		/ocal II	sual II (no examinable en curso	=	Aplicado a las Artes Plásticas y		Diseño de Modelos de Negocio de la Empresa)		Artísticos (Fundamentos del Arte II)		Ciencias Ambientales (Geología)		Filosofía ⁽¹⁾ / Historia de España (sólo taria)	Música y de la Danza		ática Ithrealogy Artísticos	5	Expresión Grafico-Plásticas	Ingeniería II	Lengua Extranjera adicional: Inglés, Francés ⁽²⁾ ,
	GRADOS	Análisis Musical	Artes Escénicas	Ciencias Generales	Dibujo Artístico	Latín II	Matemáticas II	Matemáticas Ap	Biología	Coro y Técnica Vocal II	Cultura Audiovisual II (no actual)	Dibujo Técnico I	Dibujo Técnico A Diseño II	Diseño	Empresa y Diseñ (Economía de la	Física	Fundamentos A	Geografía	Geología y Cieno	Griego II	Historia de la Filde de fase voluntar		Historia del Arte	Literatura Dramática Movimientos Culturale	Química	Técnicas de Exp	Tecnología e Ing	Lengua Extranjera adicional:
			_	DE C	ONOC	IMIEN	TO DE	CIENCI	AS SOC	IALES	Y JURÍC	DICAS																
Administración y Dirección de E			0,1			0,1	0,2	0,2	0,1		0,1	0,1		0,1	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,2		0,1		0,2			0,1
Administración y Dirección de E			0,1			0,1	0,2	0,2	0,1		0,1	0,1		0,1	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,2		0,1		0,2			0,1
Administración y Dirección de E	Empresas (UCM) (Opción inglés)		9,1			0,1	0,2	0,2	0,1		0,1	0,1		0,1	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,2	ļ.	0,1		0,2			0,1
Administración y Dirección de E	Empresas (UCM-HWR Berlín- Título Internacional)		0,1			0,1	0,2	0,2	0,1		0,1	0,1		0,1	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,2		0,1		0,2			0,1
Administración y Dirección de E Inglés)	Empresas (URJC) (Presencial/ A distancia) (Opción					0,1	0,2	0,2	0,1		0,1				0,2	0,2		0,2	0,1	0,1	0,2		0,1		0,1			0,1
Administración de Empresas (U	JC3M)		0,1			0,1	0,2	0,2	0,1		0,1	0,1		0,1	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,1		0,1		0,2			0,1
Análisis de Datos en la Empresa	a/ Business Analytics (UAM)			0,1		0,1	0,2	0,2	0,1			0,1			0,2	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,1		0,1				0,2		0,1	0,1
Análisis de Datos para la Empre	esa (UC3M)		0,1			0,1	0,2	0,2	0,1		0,1	0,1		0,1	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,1		0,1		0,2			0,1
Antropología Social y Cultural ((UAM)		0,2			0,2	0,2	0,2			0,1	0,1		0,2	0,2		0,2	0,2		0,2	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,	2			0,2
Antropología Social y Cultural (UCM)		0,1			0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2		0,1	0,1		0,1	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,	2 0,1			0,2
Ciencia de los Datos Aplicada (L	UCM)			0,2			0,2	0,2	0,1		0,1	0,1		0,1	0,2	0,2		0,2	0,1		0,2				0,2		0,2	0,1
Ciencia Política y Administració	on Pública (UAM)		0,1			0,2	0,2	0,2	0,2		0,1	0,1		0,1	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,2		0,2	0,				0,2
Ciencia Política y Gestión Públic	ca (URJC)					0,2	0,2	0,2			0,1				0,2			0,2		0,2	0,2		0,1	0,	1			0,2
Ciencia, Gestión e Ingeniería de	e Servicios (URJC) (Presencial/ Semipresencial)		0,1			0,1	0,2	0,2	0,1		0,1	0,1		0,1	0,2	0,2		0,2	0,1	0,1	0,2		0,1		0,1			0,1
Ciencias de la Actividad Física y	del Deporte (UAM)	0,1	0,1	0,2		0,1	0,2	0,2	0,2		0,1	0,1		0,1	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,2	0,1	0,1		0,2			0,1
Ciencias de la Actividad Física y	del Deporte (URJC)	0,1	0,2	0,2		0,1	0,2	0,2	0,2		0,1				0,2	0,2		0,2		0,1	0,2	0,1	0,1		0,2			0,1

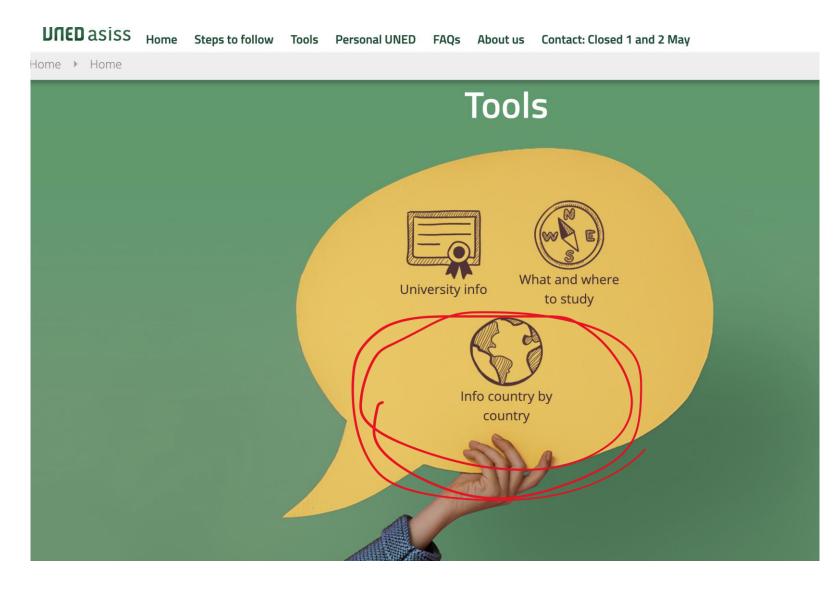
Psychology - UAM



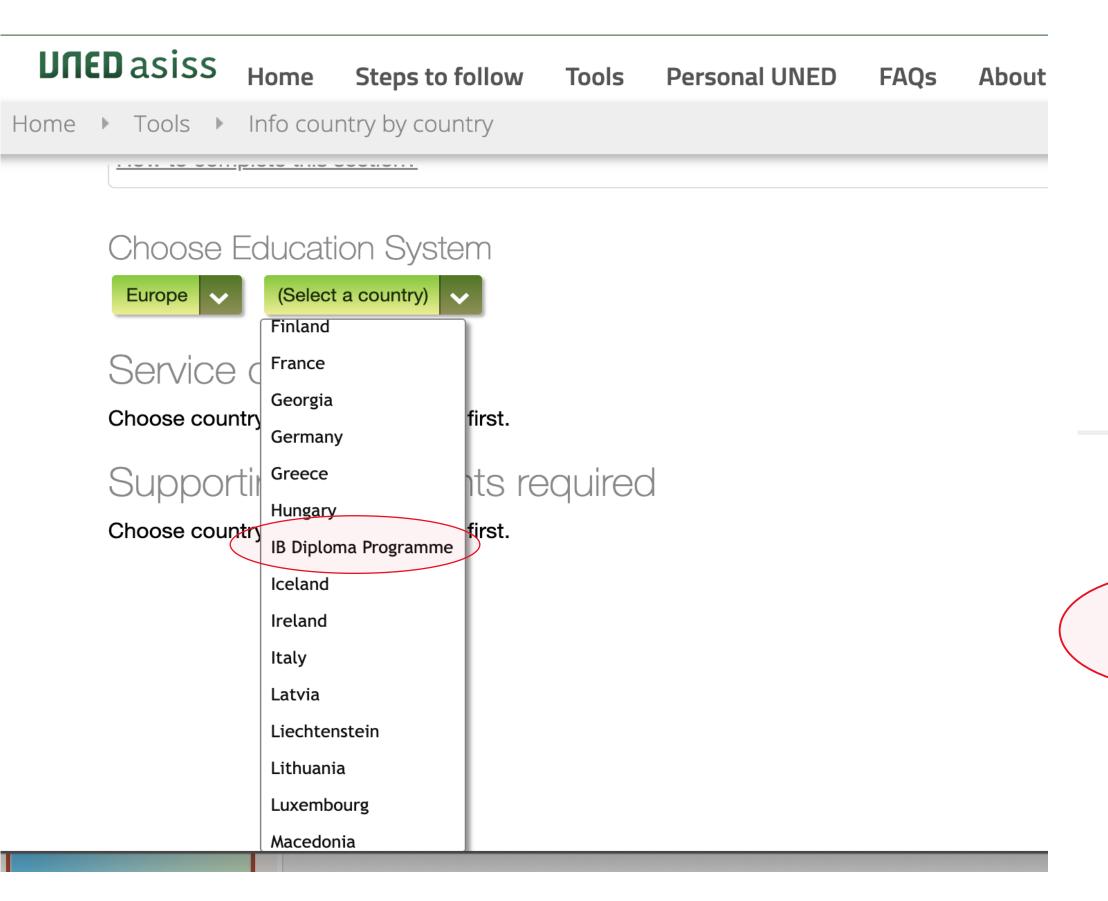
How to access Spain's public university system with my secondary school qualification

- ☐ UNEDassis The website with all the information about grade conversion and university access for students from different educational systems.
- https://unedasiss.uned.es/home&idioma=en





UNED asiss



Home ▶ Tools ▶ Info country by country





Service offer

Service offer

As a general rule, your accreditation must feature a admission score for the Spanish university. Depending on your area of interest, you may have to take Specific Competency Tests (PCE) and/or request the recognition of subjects in your upper secondary studies. In some cases, you may also be required to produce accreditation of language proficiency.

Whatever the case, it is always a good idea to check with the universities of your choice to know what is expected of you.

University
Access
Score
(Calculated with the academic

Bachillerato modality

(It depends on your academic record and/or the exams you pass)

Specific competency tests (PCE)

(Tests offered by the UNED) Recognition of subjects

(Subjects taken or examined and passed in your education system equivalent to a Spanish subject) Language accreditation

(Language level required by some universities)

Supporting documents required

Choose a UNEDasiss service and find the documents you need to provide

University Access Score

Bachillerato modality

Recognition of subjects

Specific competency tests (PCE)

Language accreditation

Biología NM (Biology SL)	Biología
Biología NS (Biology HL)	Biología
Computer Science SL/NM	Tecnología e Ingeniería
Economía NM (Economics SL)	Empresa y Diseño de Modelos de Negocio
Economía NS (Economics HL)	Empresa y Diseño de Modelos de Negocio
Filosofía NM (Philosophy SL)	Historia de la Filosofía
Filosofía NS (Philosophy HL)	Historia de la Filosofía
Física NM (Physics SL)	Física
Física NS (Physics HL)	Física
Francés B NS (Language B French HL)	Francés
Francés B/ab initio - NM (Anguage B French/ French ab initio SL)	A ancés
Geografía NM (Geograph SL)	Geo vrafía
Geografía NS (Geograp / HL)	Geogl Ifía
Gestión Empresarial N (Business Management SL)	Empres y Diseño de Modelos de Negocio
Gestión Empresarial (Business Management HL)	Empresa y Diseño de Modelos de Negocio

Sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) are recognized regardless of SL or HL

Economics is NOT recognized, Business Management is

Maths A&A at SL is NOT recognized in Spain for extra points

Lenguas Clásicas NS (Classical Langus res HL)	Latín II	V	
Matemáticas: Análisis y Enfoques NM (Mathematics: Analysis and Approaches SL)	Matemáticas II		×
Matemáticas: Análisis y Enfoques NM (Mathematics: Analysis and Approaches SL)	Matemáticas Aplicadas a las Ciencias Sociales II		×
Matemáticas: Análisis y Enfoques NS (Mathematics: Analysis and Approaches HL)	Matemáticas II	V	
Matemáticas: Análisis y Enfoques NS (Mathematics: Analysis and Approaches HL)	Matemáticas Aplicadas a las Ciencias Sociales II		×
Matemáticas: Aplicaciones e Interpretación NM (Mathematics: Applications and Interpretation SL)	Matemáticas Aplicadas a las Ciencias Sociales II	V	
Matemáticas: Aplicaciones e Interpretación NS (Mathematics: Applications and Interpretation HL)	Matemáticas II		×
Matemáticas: Aplicaciones e Interpretación NS (Mathematics: Applications and Interpretation HL)	Matemáticas Aplicadas a las Ciencias Sociales II	V	
Portugués B NS (Language B Portuguese HL)	Portugués	V	
 Química NM (Chemistry SL)	Química	V	
Química NS (Chemistry HL)	Química	V	
Sistemas Ambientales y Sociedades NM (Environmental systems and societies SL)	Geología y Ciencias Ambientales	V	
Tecnología del Diseño NM (Design Technology SL)	Diseño		×
Tecnología del Diseño NS (Design Technology HL)	Diseño		×

IB Diploma Example – Psychology at UAM

- Student taking full IB Diploma with an overall score of 34 points (TOK and EE bonus points are not used in the calculation)
- Student will have a university access score of 8,666 / 10
- HL Biology $6 = 9 \times 0.2 = 1.8$
- SL Chemistry $4 = 7 \times 0.2 = 1.4$
- Student will have an overall score of 11,886

The conversion formula used to convert IB grades to a Spanish grade is:

(5 + (IB grade - 2))*5 / 5=

IB grade	Spanish grade
7	10
6	9
5	8
4	7
3	6
2	5

These requirements may be subject to change. Counselors should consult with UNEDassis for the most up-to-date information.



US HS Diploma



US High School Diploma students must obtain <u>homologación</u> of their diploma from the Ministry of Education as well as do the <u>accreditation process</u> through UNEDasiss.

Students will receive a university access score as follows:

- □ 60% comes from their GPA in 11th and 12th grade with the highest converted score possible being in the range of 5-6.
- □ 40% comes from the scores achieved on up to 4 PCE exams. Students can sit these exams over multiple sessions, but only the 4 highest scores will be considered.
- ☐ Students can receive up to 4 additional points from these PCE exams to obtain up to 10 points for university access
- ☐ AP Exams are NOT considered or part of the calculation for admission in Spain

Formula used:

Overall Score = $(0,2 \times GPA + 4) + 0,1 \times PCE1 + 0,1 \times PCE2 + 0,1 \times PCE3 + 0,1 \times PCE4$



US High School Diploma Example

A student with an overall GPA of 8/10 after conversion of scores, will achieve a 5,6 GPA for the 60% portion of the access mark. $0,2 \times GPA + 4 = a GPA$ between 5 and 6 points.

- The GPA is calculated with tables and formulas used by the Secretary of State for Education and Vocational Training
- Universities can also consider the weighted PCE scores to achieve 4 additional points for a mark out of 14 points

US High School Example Continued

The student took 4 PCE exams with the following scores:

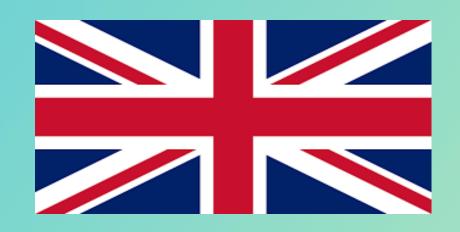
Geology - 9 Physics - 8 English - 6,5 Biology - 5,5

After applying the formula, student will have an 8,5/10 university access mark

$$(0.2 \times 8 + 4) + 0.1 \times 9 + 0.1 \times 8 + 0.1 \times 6.5 + 0.1 \times 5.5 = 8.5$$

- Students must submit their final legalized transcript from 11th grade and 12th grade. If they do not have the final 12th grade transcript, they can submit term grades.
- In this case UNEDasiss will automatically assign students a GPA of 5 which can be revised when a final transcript is submitted.

A-levels



The UK requirements have changed post B.... More requirements must be met.

- UNEDasiss tells us A-Level students need to have at least 5 I/GCSE with A*, A, B or C to be able to have equivalency to Spanish Bachillerato, if they did not do another secondary school qualification.
- ☐ To achieve the accreditation students must have at least 3 A-Levels with A*, A, B, C, D or E and at least 48 UCAS Tariff points in the 4 best AL or AS scores.
- ☐ Predicted grades for the year if studies are not complete.

Student can receive between 5-10 points calculated directly from their academic transcripts using the formula in Annex II based on UCAS Tariff points. (48-224)

A-Levels Example for Business Administration at UCM

- Student with 3 A–Levels, A*, A, B
- 1. This student would have 144 UCAS Tariff points from A-Level scores above.
- 2. After applying the formula, the student achieves a 7,727 in the Spanish system.

Equivalent mark = 5 + ((UCAS points - 48) x 5 / 176)

3. There is no subject recognition agreement in place for UK qualifications. Students must take Specific Competency Exams (PCE) if they need a score higher than 10. What subjects to take? Refer to "ponderaciones"

Resources

Finding degrees and cut off marks (nota de corte)
☐ Official Ministry of Education website - QEDU: https://www.ciencia.b.es/qedu.html
□ In Madrid public universities: <a "="" href="https://www.comunidad.madrid/sites/default/files/doc/educacion/univ/notas-de-corte-2024-25</th></tr><tr><td>□ All over Spain (public and private): https://notasdecorte.es/
□ Search engine for degrees taught in English (shows % of credits taught in English, does not include a universities) https://spaincollegedegrees.com/
Weighted subjects for each degree (ponderaciones)

https://www.comunidad.madrid/sites/default/files/doc/educacion/univ/ponderaciones 25-26 10-04-25.pdf

region of

Spain):

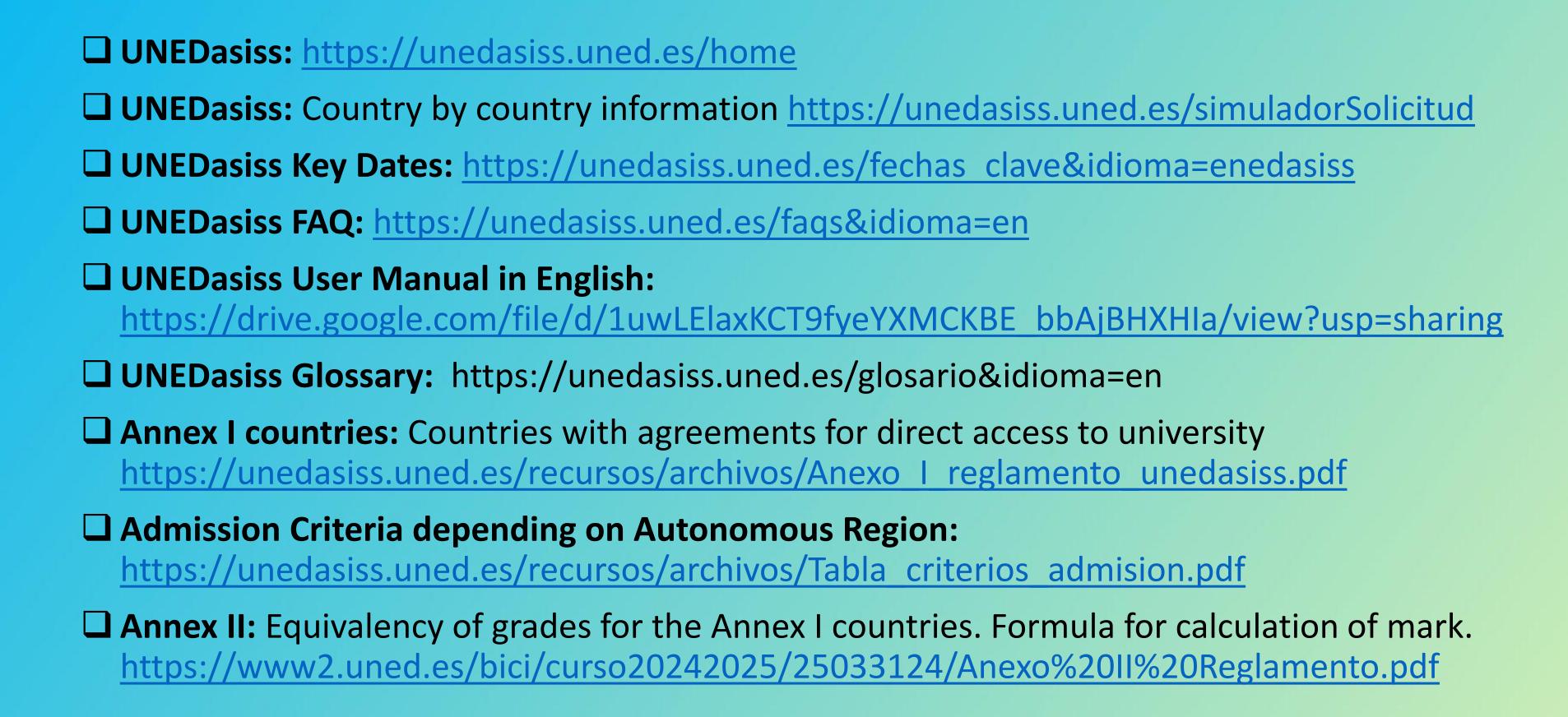
rest of Spain (downloadable weighting table for each autonomous

https://yaq.es/reportajes/parametros-ponderacion-selectividad-asignaturas-fase-especifica

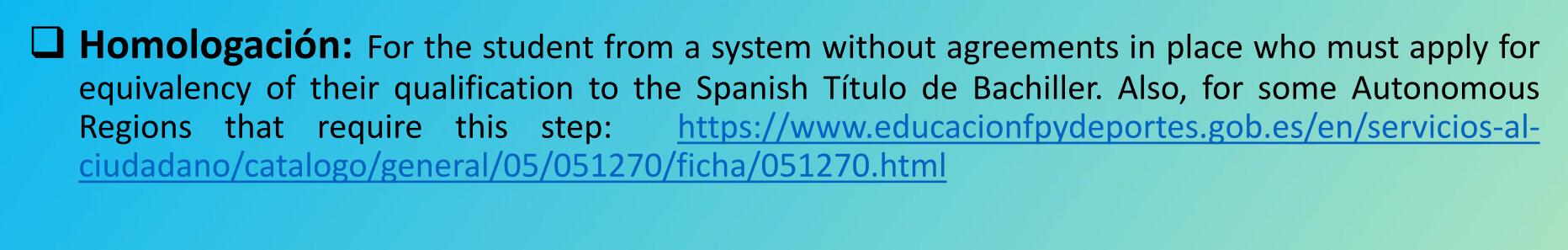
For Madrid public universities:

For

Resources continued...



Resources continued...



- PCE Exams: Subjects available, exam sessions and centers, registration, regulations, etc. https://accesoextranjeros.uned.es/examenes&idioma=en
- ☐ Recognised Language Certificates: Use as a general reference, check with each university to be sure. Spanish on page. 11, English on page 17.

https://www.uam.es/uam/media/doc/1606959356654/t45-tabla-cert-credymovil-v45.pdf

Tutorial: Pre-Inscription process Madrid public universities. https://www.ucm.es/file/tutorial-preinscripcion-grado-seex

Resources continued...

- Most public university websites do have information on admissions for international students. It might just be difficult to find. The "international student" section often refers to mobility programs, Erasmus exchange, etc. Try switching the website to English and you may find entire new sections and information. Some examples:
- https://www.ucm.es/english/non-exchange-students
- https://www.uam.es/uam/estudios/sistemas-educativos-extranjeros
- https://uah.es/en/internacional/movilidad-entrante-incoming-mobility/admision-y-matricula/

Glossary

Bachillerato: The final two years of high school in the Spanish system. The qualification is called Título de Bachiller and is scored on a 10-point scale.
EBAU or EVAU: Evaluación de Bachillerato para Acceso a la Universidad or Evaluation of Bachillerato for University Access. The exam all Spanish Bachillerato students must take and pass to access HE in Spain. Consists of an obligatory block (Spanish Lang and Lit, Maths, English and History or Philosophy). Maximum score 10/10. Students can then take specific subject exams to raise their score to 14.
PCE: Prueba de Competencia Especifica or Specific Subject Competency Exams. These are the additional exams international students take (if required) to raise their overall university access score above 10 points to a maximum score of 14 points. Students can take up to 4 PCEs and the best two scores will count for extra points for a maximum of 4 points.
Grado: Bachelor's degree
Homologación: Official equivalency of a foreign secondary school qualification to that of a Spanish Título de Bachiller. Only applicants with credentials from school systems with no prior signed agreement need to apply for equivalency.
Reconocimiento de asignaturas: Recognition of specific subjects for more points. This recognition depends on the agreements in place and is issued by the UNED. IB subjects are recognized without the need to take additional PCE exams.
UNED: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia or the National University for Distance Learning. This is the official organization that issues a credential (accreditation document) for students with foreign qualifications to access university. They are also the body that runs the PCE exams for foreigners.
Credencial de la UNED: The UNED accreditation. This is the piece of paper students with foreign qualifications need. It shows their university access score out of 14 points once their official scores have been converted to a Spanish scale + any PCE exams or recognition of specific subjects (if needed).
Preinscripción: The application process students must do for public university in Spain. Each Autonomous Region has its own process. Like the Irish CAO, students can list up to 12 options in ORDER OF PREFERENCE. Students will be admitted to the first degree they have enough points to enter. They can stay on the waitlist for "higher" options but cannot change to a "lower" option. Thus, the importance of ORDER OF PREFERENCE when filling in the choices.