

EducationUSA: Guide to Planning U.S. College & University Admissions

EducationUSA is a global network of more than 400 advising centers supported by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State. The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) fosters mutual understanding between the United States and other countries by promoting personal, professional, and institutional ties between private citizens and organizations in the United States and abroad, as well as by presenting U.S. history, society, art and culture in all of its diversity to overseas audiences. The foreign students of yesterday are becoming the world leaders today.

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What admission offices want:

What are Your Strengths?

I. A Holistic Perspective

Admissions officers look at a variety of factors when evaluating your application:

- Personal essays
- Academic grades
- Standardized testing scores
- Prizes
- Community service
- Work experience
- Letters of recommendation
- Hobbies
- Special talents, as they review applications to try to determine your potential for success at their institutions.



Essential factors:

- Ultra-careful selection of schools where you have a realistic chance for successful competition for admission with aid
- Distinguished academic record, excellent admission testing scores
- Leadership and extra-curricular or research interests
- Great statement of purpose
- Neat and complete application sent before the deadline.

Keep in mind that U.S. undergraduate education is based on the concept of liberal arts, with the goal of providing a well-rounded academic education that develops students' verbal, written, and reasoning skills.

The United States offers an exciting variety of higher education institutions, with over 4,300 accredited ones, and there is one that's right for you.

Your EducationUSA adviser can help you create a manageable list of 10-20 colleges that match your needs. Start your school search here: <http://www.educationusa.info/pages/students/search.php>.

Look online:

Funding for U.S. Study Online is a database of scholarships, fellowships and grants organized and maintained by The Institute of International Education (IIE)

www.fundingUSstudy.org

II. Financial Planning

Lower Your Tuition Bill - Funding for U.S. Study

A wide range of tuition fees and living costs, plus some financial help from colleges, make study in the United States affordable for hundreds of thousands of international students each year.

Distinguish yourself in a highly competitive applicant pool by researching opportunities and enhancing your application.

Undergraduate Applicants:

- [How to Compete for Financial Assistance](#)
- [Funding for U.S. Study Online](#)

Graduate Applicants:

As a general rule, "the best grad program is the one that gives you money". Researching graduate departments is critically important for the application process.

- [Find a Graduate Program](#)
- [Checklist to use in searching for the right program\(s\)](#)
- [Financing Graduate Education in the USA](#)

See [External Financial Aid Resources](#) edited by EducationUSA.

Studying at a U.S. institution is an expensive investment, but one we are sure you will find worthwhile. Talk to an EducationUSA adviser about your financial situation and plans for study in the US: [www.http://www.educationusa.info/centers.php](http://www.educationusa.info/centers.php).

III. Secondary School

What Characteristics Matter?

Academics are the primary focal point of assessment, with an emphasis placed on students' previous academic achievements and the academic rigor of their prior studies. In addition to considering standardized test results, admissions officers look favorably upon strong letters of recommendation, significant involvement in extra-curricular activities and engaging essay responses.

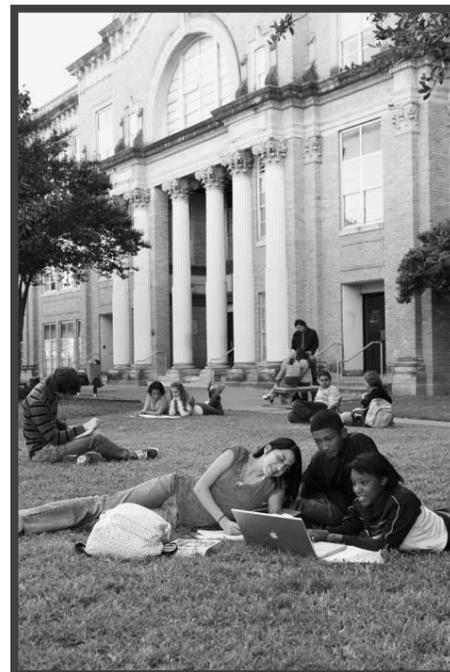
- Michael Elgarico, Associate Director of Admission, Stanford University

Community Colleges in the USA

There are more than 1,200 public and independent community colleges to choose from. Most community colleges have agreements with 4-year colleges and universities (called articulation or "2 + 2" transfer agreements) which allow students to transfer their community college credits toward a university degree. Thus, students first go to a community college for 2 years of study, obtain an associate degree, and then complete 2 years at a university to obtain a bachelor's degree.

Learn about vocational/career programs, English as a second language, or find a two-year college that's right for you:

www.communitycollegeUSA.com.



IV. Testing

Getting In

The main requirements for admission to educational institutions in the United States are:

- A strong academic background
- Demonstrated command of the English language through tests such as TOEFL iBT or IELTS
- For many undergraduate programs, scores on one or more standardized admissions tests such as the SAT or ACT
- Adequate financial resources.

The Ultimate Guide to the SAT:

100 Helpful Sites for Undergraduates

<http://satguide.weebly.com>

Graduate

Most graduate departments require scores from either a general aptitude test such as the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test, a demonstration of proficiency in a specific field such as a GRE Subject Test, or both. See graduate admission tests for additional exams.

V. Activities

Get Positively Noticed as an Applicant

- Ask questions that demonstrate you did your homework and are really interested in this institution.
- Be creative, but not silly or outlandish.
- Include a succinct, upbeat cover letter with your application, stating why you are interested in the institution and why you hope they will decide to admit you.

Your Personal Statement

Don't be afraid to pour your heart out. If something is really important to you, talk about it, because that is what the admissions officers want to know about you. The important thing, however, is to be positive: reflect on what experiences meant for you, how they changed you, what you learned.

- Molecular biology and genetics student from Romania

Campus Life

U.S. colleges offer students a variety of social, cultural, and sports activities in addition to their academic programs. You may find student-run radio and TV stations, newspapers, sports teams, and social clubs that are looking for new members.

If you have a definite interest, there may be a student society that caters to it; don't forget, though, that if there isn't, you can always start one.

VI. Find a school that fits

Beyond the Ivy League - Find the right fit for you

What campus features and opportunities are important to you?

Graduate Applicants:

Professors and/or graduate departments control teaching and research assistantships and it is in your best interest to communicate with them and make them understand what you will contribute to their research. From the university's website, and websites such as www.scholar.google.com and www.scholarly-societies.org, you can learn about professors and their research.

Sample questions to ask the departmental coordinator:

- How many first-year international grad students received financial assistance?
- What are some common factors demonstrated by students who are selected for admission with full funding?

Tip:

Keep an open mind when using the search engines below to develop your list of 10-20 institutions. You may discover new opportunities.

College search engines:

- [Peterson's](#)
- [The College Board](#)
- [U.S. News](#)
- [The Princeton Review](#)
- and many others found in our [related links](#) page.



VII. Enhance Your Search

U.S. College Fairs and Visits

If you cannot visit the United States, colleges may come to visit you. Your nearest EducationUSA Advising Center can tell you about any upcoming U.S. college fairs or other types of visits where you can have the opportunity to talk to admissions officers face-to-face. Many of these take place in the spring or fall of the year before you intend to start your studies, so it is important to start your research early.

Visiting Campuses

A visit to the school you are considering helps a lot - whether during an exchange year, a vacation trip, or a sports contest.

- Theater performance student from Finland

Search engines

- [College Board](#)
- [Peterson's Find-a-School Website](#)
- [College Opportunities On-line \(COOL\)](#)
- [Princeton Review](#)
- [College View](#)

VIII. Diversity on Campus

"In actuality, admissions officers aim to admit unique individuals, not students who fit some standardized template."

- Michael Elgarico, Associate Director of Admission, Stanford University

Campuses with many international students may provide a built-in support group who can share your experiences, but it may require extra effort on your part to make sure you meet and interact with U.S. students as well as with students from other parts of the world.

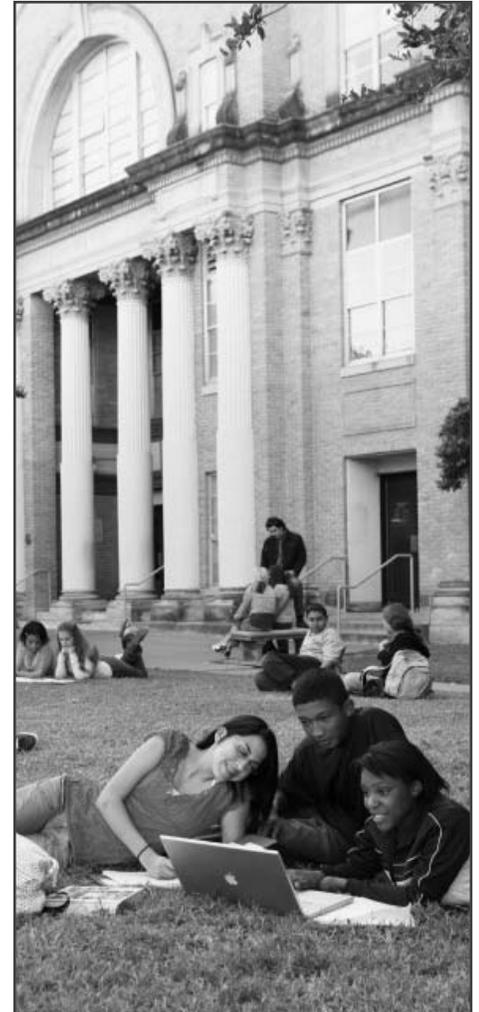
Once you have identified a short list of programs that offer your subject area and specialization(s), make comparisons between the programs in terms of financial costs and assistance available, admission and degree requirements, the composition of the faculty and student body, and campus services and facilities.

IX. Show Yourself

Admissions officers can learn a great deal from reading a transcript, application essay, and list of achievements and activities, but what often ultimately pulls the entire picture together are recommendation letters from counselors and teachers.

"Recommendation letters are more important in the college admissions process than many students realize. The letters provide evidence that a student's achievements make an impact upon the outside world."

-Alice Huang, Columbia University



See Ten Tips for Recommendation Letters by Alice Huang, Senior Assistant Director of Admission and Director of Engineering Recruitment at Columbia University.

EducationUSA: Guide to Planning U.S. College & University Admissions (Continued)

X. Apply and enroll

The [Common Application](#) serves students and member institutions by providing an admission application online and in print that students may submit to any of the over [340 members](#).

Last year almost 1.4 million applications were submitted via the Common App Online.

For the great majority of accredited institutions (nearly 4,000) that are not part of the Common Application, please visit the individual university or college website and look for either a printable or online version of that institution's student application.

Find a School

Once you have been accepted and decided on which institution to attend, we recommend getting back in touch with your local EducationUSA Advising Center. Most EducationUSA Advising Centers conduct pre-departure orientation presentations in the summer, and some may also offer sessions mid-year. Contact your nearest center for their schedule and to reserve space for these popular events.

Enjoy!



Getting Started: Choosing an accredited institution



The United States offers an exciting variety of higher education institutions and there is one that's right for you. There is no official ranking system for the 4,000+ colleges and universities in the U.S. When choosing a school, it is important to consider many factors, including size, location, price, academics, financial aid, and international student services. There are useful search engines below and professional EducationUSA advisers to help you "find the right fit".

College Search Engines:

- [College Board](#)
- [Peterson's Find-a-School Website](#)
- [College Opportunities On-line \(COOL\)](#)
- [Princeton Review](#)
- [College View](#)

Search beyond the Ivy League: Find the right fit for you

Don't confine yourself to the "Ivies". Investigate all options carefully to make sure you give yourself the best chance to find institutions that suit your needs and interests.

"I'd recommend to other students to not just to go for the Ivy League, because there's so much more that other universities can offer. My school was not equipped with the information and resources to assist me in applying and preparing to go abroad. This was only made possible with the support I received from EducationUSA/Fulbright."

-Joel Semakula

EducationUSA UK student, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (August, 2008 – present)

What campus features and opportunities are important to you?

Keep an open mind when using the search engines above to develop your list of 10-20 institutions.

Financing your college education consists of four key elements, which are addressed under Lower Your Tuition Bill-Funding for U.S. study.

- Compiling Effective Applications
- Assessing Personal Funds
 - If students/families can pay \$15,000 or more per year, admission with partial aid is not difficult.
 - *Keep in mind:* Talk to an EducationUSA adviser about the full range of opportunities that may be available to you.
- Identifying Sources of Financial Assistance
- Reducing Educational Costs

TIP: Find out about any opportunities to meet U.S. college representatives and have your questions answered, or use e-mail to correspond with college staff and students.

Quality:

U.S. colleges are known worldwide for the quality of their facilities, resources, and faculty. Accreditation systems ensure that institutions continue to maintain these standards. Learn more about institutional quality under [resources](#) or from EducationUSA.

Choice:

The U.S. education system features many types of institutions, academic and social environments, entry requirements, degree programs, and subjects in which you can specialize.

Value:

A U.S. degree offers excellent value for the money. A wide range of tuition fees and living costs, plus some financial help from colleges, make study in the United States affordable for hundreds of thousands of international students each year.

Flexibility:

U.S. universities and colleges offer flexibility in choice of courses, but more importantly there is also the option for students to move from one institution to another. Completing the first two years of a degree at one institution, usually a community college, and then moving to another, is very common.

IIE Funding for U.S. Study Online
[External Financial Aid Resources](#)



Getting Started: Choosing an accredited institution (Continued)

The Application Process: A timetable and checklist

Planning ahead will give you sufficient time to make successful applications to the colleges of your choice.

12 to 18 months prior to the academic year in which you hope to enroll, begin to consider, research, and do the following:

- What are your reasons for wanting to study in the United States?
- Which universities will meet your needs?
- Will you need financial assistance?
- Find out application and financial aid deadlines. This will affect when you take the standardized tests required for admission since test results must reach admissions offices no later than these deadlines. The tests should be taken in advance of submitting university application forms.
- Register to take standardized tests if required by the universities to which you are applying.
- Begin narrowing down your choices of schools to approximately 10 to 20 institutions.

12 months prior to enrollment, complete the following (months indicated are estimates, based on fall enrollment):

August

- Contact universities for application and financial aid forms and catalogs.
- Obtain test registration forms or register on the web to take the TOEFL, the ACT, and SAT I and SAT II, if necessary.

September–December

- Continue narrowing down your choice of schools. While some students apply to more, 5 to 10 well-researched choices are sufficient.
- Request official transcripts of your academic performance from your school(s).
- Request letters of recommendation from your teachers / professors.
- Submit completed application forms (for admission as well as financial aid, if available).
- Double check that transcripts and references have been sent.
- Take the necessary admissions tests.

January–April

- University application deadlines must be met; note that these are for regular admission - early admission deadlines will be sooner.

Getting Started: Choosing an accredited institution (Continued)



The Application Process: A timetable and checklist (Continued)

April–June

- Letters of acceptance or rejection arrive. Decide which university to attend, notify the admissions office of your decision, complete and return any forms they require.
- Send letters of regret to those universities you turn down.
- Organize finances: arrange to transfer funds to a U.S. bank; make sure you have funds for travel and expenses on arrival.
- Finalize arrangements for housing and medical insurance with your university.

June–August

- Use information from your Form I-20 or DS-2019 to fill out the SEVIS Form I-901 and pay the \$200 required SEVIS fee (see [SEVIS information](#) for description of SEVIS form and fee).
- Upon receipt of your I-20 and SEVIS I-901 payment receipt, apply to your nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for a visa. This should be as far in advance of your departure date as possible (see [Visas](#)).
- Make travel arrangements.
- Contact the international student office at your university with details of your arrival plans, and confirm details of any orientation for new students held by the university.



Most EducationUSA Advising Centers conduct predeparture orientation presentations in the summer, and some may also offer sessions mid-year. Contact your [nearest center](#) for their schedule and to reserve space for these popular events.

Getting Ready to Go

Once you know that you are going to study in the United States, you will probably have many questions about visas, accommodation, health insurance, banking, how to study, and other “predeparture” information. See ‘Predeparture Information’ and contact your EducationUSA adviser.

EducationUSA advisers in 170 countries provide accurate, unbiased information about all accredited U.S. higher education institutions. Find your EducationUSA center at: [www.http://www.educationusa.info/centers.php](http://www.educationusa.info/centers.php).



Community Colleges in the USA:

2 years of community college + 2 years of University study = Bachelor's Degree

What do Arnold Schwarzenegger, Calvin Kline, Tom Hanks, and NASA Space Shuttle Commander Eileen Collins have in common? They all attended community college. Community colleges are the fastest growing institutional type in the United States. There are now more than 1,200 public and independent community colleges to choose from.

The top ten benefits of attending a U.S. Community College

Community Colleges are the gateway to higher education in the United States for the following reasons:

- 1 Lower Cost**
Community college tuition and fees average \$6,500 per year, which is significantly lower than at 4-year colleges and universities. Students can lower the overall cost of a bachelor's degree by taking the first 2 years of course credits at a community college.
- 2 Excellent Transfer Opportunities**
Most community colleges have agreements with 4-year colleges and universities (called articulation or "2 + 2" transfer agreements) which allow students to transfer their community college credits toward a university degree. Thus, students first go to a community college for 2 years of study, obtain an associate degree, and then complete 2 years at a university to obtain a bachelor's degree.
Good to Know: Many state universities give preference to qualified students who transfer from a community college in that state.
- 3 Flexible English Proficiency Requirements**
Because community colleges provide their own assessment and offer Intensive English Programs (IEPs) to students who require additional English proficiency, TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores are not always critical to the admissions process. Further, some community colleges will accept an IELTS (International English Language Testing System) score in place of the TOEFL score.
- 4 Focus on Teaching and Student Success**
Community college students enjoy a great deal of personal attention from their professors. Additionally, community colleges seek out faculty with work experience in their subject area, adding a real-world perspective to students' studies.
- 5 Small Class Sizes**
The average community college class size is between 15 and 20 students which allows professors to devote more time to individual students and for students to interact with each other. Small classes are highly beneficial for international students who may need to adjust to the pace of U.S. academic life and practice their English-language skills.

Learn about vocational/career programs, English as a second language, or find a two-year college that's right for you:
www.communitycollegeUSA.com

- 6 **Additional Practical Training Opportunity**
International students with F-1 visa status are eligible to do one year of Optional Practical Training (OPT) in their field of study immediately following completion of an associate degree, and a second year of OPT immediately following completion of a bachelor's degree.
- 7 **Use of the Latest Technologies**
Because of their strong ties with business and industry, most community colleges are equipped with state-of-the-art technologies, classrooms, and facilities. Community colleges lead the nation in educating students in cutting-edge fields such as biomedical engineering, biotechnology, robotics, laser optics, Internet and computer technologies, and geographic information systems.
- 8 **Hundreds of Programs to Choose From**
Community colleges offer programs in all major fields of study which can transfer to 4-year colleges and universities. Majors range from art to political science to zoology. Programs especially popular among international students currently include business, engineering, computer science, computer graphics, Internet technology, multimedia, hotel management, restaurant management, psychology, accounting, early childhood education, and environmental conservation.
- 9 **Opportunities to Experience U.S. Culture**
Because community colleges have strong ties to their surrounding communities, they offer international students both a rich academic environment and a unique opportunity to experience many aspects of life in the United States - both on and off campus.
- 10 **Excellent Student Support Services**
Community colleges are committed to attracting a diverse student population and ensuring that all students succeed. The colleges offer a variety of support services and cross-cultural programs, including tutoring, advising, career planning, study skills and counseling - many of which are designed specifically for international students.

Articles on International Students with Disabilities at Community Colleges

- Providing Services Through Disability Offices
- Accessing Health Care and Insurance Issues
- Resources: [Mobility International USA](#)



Visit Intensive English
USA Online, a leading global
resource guide to intensive
English programs in the US:
www.IntensiveEnglishUSA.org

Community Colleges in the USA (Continued)

Intensive English Programs

Intensive English Programs (IEPs) Offer Concentrated English language training to nonnative speakers.

Many international students attend IEPs in the United States to acquire the English skills necessary to gain admission to U.S. undergraduate or graduate programs. Others aim to improve their English to meet professional or personal goals.

- **Affiliation:** A program is not necessarily better or worse because it is affiliated with a university. Instead, consider indicators such as class size, faculty (% with TESOL, ESL or related certification), location, program size, class size, diversity of student population, price, length of study, and levels of study offered.
- **Accreditation:** Intensive English Programs obtain accreditation through various regional accrediting bodies. IEPs housed within colleges or universities receive accreditation when their college or university is accredited.
- **Extras:** Some programs offer special services such as airport pickup, housing assistance, academic counseling, visa/tax counseling, conversation partners, field trips, home stays, host families, student parties, and coffee hours.

Here are some questions that you should ask about community colleges:

- 1 **Is the community college accredited?**
The accreditation process for community colleges follows the same standards as a four-year institution, as set by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of State. For more information, contact your EducationUSA adviser or visit: www.ope.ed.gov/accreditation.
- 2 **What is the transfer rate to selective four-year universities?**
Many community colleges are a part of a statewide system that allows transfer to third-year standing to four-year colleges and universities. Some community colleges focus on delivering high academic programs for this purpose, while others focus on short-term certificate and vocational programs.
- 3 **How successful are the graduates from the community college?**
Transfer and employment data about alumni are available from community college counseling and international centers as well as alumni offices.
- 4 **What is the average class size? What is the average teacher/student ratio?**
Community colleges, which focus on teaching rather than research, often have smaller classes, especially in the introductory courses in the sciences and math, taught by faculty rather than by graduate teaching assistants.



Community Colleges in the USA (Continued)



- 5 **Can you study your major at this school?**
Community colleges provide a comprehensive curriculum that covers the first two years of university study: General Studies or General Education. The concept of studying these foundation courses the first two years is new to many prospects who are more familiar with other educational systems.
- 6 **What will be the cost of your education?**
Community colleges charge additional tuition and fees for international students.
- 7 **Do I have to take English? Do you require a TOEFL or IELTS score?**
Most community colleges require a TOEFL or IELTS score primarily for admission purposes.
- 8 **Where will I live? Do you have housing on campus?**
Few community colleges have dormitories. Most have housing recommendations for home stays, off campus apartments, and sharing with current students.
- 9 **Do you have scholarships?**
Some community colleges offer incentives such as a reduction in in-state tuition or may be willing to waive an application fee. Others offer scholarship cash awards based on academic achievement to prospects or only after the first year of study.
- 10 **Can I work on or off campus? Can I get a social security card?**
Depending upon the institution, international students can work on campus for limited hours. They are required to obtain a social security card in order to be employed on campus. Each school has its own way to assist in this process. After completing a full course of study, they may file for Practical Training and work full time in a field related to their major.
- 11 **Can I attend before I turn 18? Can I attend without finishing high school?**
Community colleges vary in their requirements for admission. Many, however, require the students to be high school (or equivalent) graduates and be 18 years of age.
- 12 **Can I apply online?**
Many community colleges offer online applications for domestic students, yet not for international students due to the number of original documents required for admission.
- 13 **Can I transfer credits from my current school?**
Community colleges have academic relationships with other accredited colleges and universities. Many community colleges will accept some credits from other U.S. schools. Few community colleges accept coursework from foreign schools unless there is a formal agreement between these two institutions.
- 14 **Do I need to take the SAT?**
Community colleges admit students in an Open Enrollment System, based on high school graduation and age. The SAT is not required.

EducationUSA advisers in 170 countries provide accurate, unbiased information about all accredited U.S. higher education institutions. Find your EducationUSA center at: www.educationusa.info/centers.php

Articles for this handout were originally published in EducationUSA Connections (July, 2007).



Lower Your Tuition Bill: Funding for U.S. Study

You can do it - A wide range of tuition fees and living costs, plus some financial help from colleges, make study in the United States affordable for hundreds of thousands of international students each year.

How to Compete for Financial Assistance

Studying at a U.S. institution is an expensive investment, but one we are sure you will find worthwhile.

- Start the application process early and talk to your EducationUSA adviser about your progress. Calculate your financial need at the beginning of the research process.
 - *How much can your family afford to pay, per year for four years?*
Keep in mind that you cannot select suitable universities or qualify for need-based aid unless you know the answer to this question, because financial aid calculations are based on bridging the gap between the university's cost and what your family can afford to pay.
- Research options by careful selection of 10 - 20 schools that match your needs and potential.
Remember: Don't ask for more than you genuinely need.
- Each school has its own budget and policy. After extensive online research, contact your top schools directly about financial assistance.
- Distinguish yourself in a highly competitive applicant pool with:
 - Ultra-careful selection of schools where you have a realistic chance for successful competition for admission with aid
 - distinguished academic record, excellent SAT/ACT and TOEFL/IELTS scores, if required
 - Leadership and extra-curricular interests
 - Great essays
 - Neat and complete application
 - The early bird gets the worm!
- Your EducationUSA adviser can teach you how to select schools and research sources of financial aid.
Ask: What else can I do to strengthen my application?

"Don't try to match yourself to a university, rather try to pick a university that matches you."

- Joel Semakula
EducationUSA UK student,
University of North Carolina,
Chapel Hill (August, 2008-present)



Lower Your Tuition Bill (Continued)



For the 2008–2009 academic year, The College Board reported the following average annual tuition costs by type of institution:

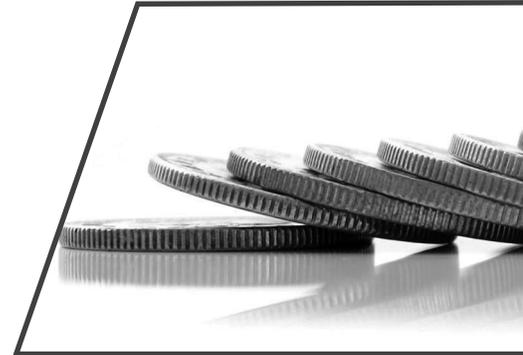
- Two-year, Public Community Colleges: \$6,500
- Four-year, Public Institutions (out-of-state students): \$17,452
- Four-year, Private Institutions: \$25,143

These costs represent the cost of studies alone; when lodging, personal expenses, transportation, and other expenses are taken into account, The College Board suggests the following annual student budgets:

- Two-year, Public Community Colleges (commuter students): \$14,054
- Four-year, Public Institutions (state residents; on-campus): \$18,326
- Four-year, Public Institutions (out-of-state students; on-campus): \$29,193
- Four-year, Private Institutions (on-campus): \$37,390

Financing your college education consists of:

- **Compiling Effective Applications**
 - Careful advance research and realistic expectations are more likely to result in success.
 - Do not assume that all colleges award financial aid.
 - See Getting Started for useful search engines or talk with an EducationUSA adviser to develop a list of 10 -20 schools that offer financial aid at the levels you need.
- **Assessing Personal Funds**
 - *"Be realistic about how much you need and what you can really afford."* -International studies and sociology student from Ghana.
 - *How much can your family afford to pay, per year for four years?*
The more financial aid you need, the more competition you will face. Consult your parents and other family sponsors to find out how much money they can commit each year to your education.
 - *The Family Contribution: How Much?*
Calculated from parents' income, assets, living costs, siblings in college, and special circumstances (illness, rich uncle...).
- **Identifying Sources of Financial Assistance**
 - Click here to learn about sports scholarships or merit and need-based aid or see www.fundingUSstudy.org.
- **Reducing Educational Costs**
 - **TIP:** Did you consider accelerated programs by earning credit over the summer or taking additional courses each semester? This approach could reduce tuition costs.
 - Two-year and Community Colleges: Many students save thousands of dollars in tuition by attending community colleges for their first two years and then transferring to four-year institutions to complete their degree. For more information on community colleges, please visit Community Colleges USA, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) official resource for international students: www.communitycollegeUSA.com.

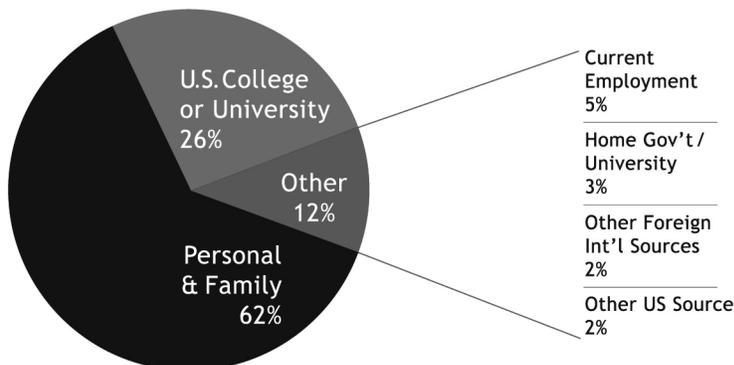




Lower Your Tuition Bill: (Continued)

Almost two-thirds of international undergraduate and graduate students rely primarily upon personal and family funds to pay for their studies. At undergraduate level, approximately 85% of students pay for their U.S. education using personal and family funds. If students/families can pay \$15,000 or more per year, admission with partial aid is not difficult.

As a nation of immigrants, the United States has always welcomed visitors. We will continue to work hard to ensure that our doors remain wide open to qualified students from around the world. Talk to an EducationUSA adviser about your financial situation and plan for study in the U.S.



(IIE Open Doors, 2008)

“Show the college that you are committed to your own work and that you are proud of who and what you are. They love dedication and determination. Therefore, DO tell them what aspect made you choose that particular school. For instance, I am very interested in foreign languages and went to Middlebury precisely for this reason: they have the best language school in the U.S.”

– Student advisee, EducationUSA Romania

What Can EducationUSA Advisers Do?

- Talk to your adviser about school selection, writing essays, taking the SAT, and how to get good teacher recommendations.
- EducationUSA advisers build relationships with admissions officers, and can help you find the best fit and program for you.
- Advisers have access to unpublished financial aid tables and the EducationUSA Weekly Update, a unique resource to help you learn about scholarships and new programs. Most importantly, they share unbiased information about aid opportunities, so that you are aware of every possible opportunity.

EducationUSA advisers in 170 countries provide accurate, unbiased information about all accredited U.S. higher education institutions. Find your EducationUSA center at: www.EducationUSA.info/centers.php.

Special thanks to EducationUSA’s Nancy Keteku for her contributions to this article.

Athletic Scholarships



EducationUSA Advises International Student-Athletes

There are over 380,000 student-athletes in the United States. Over one thousand U.S. colleges and universities offer opportunities for talented students to play for the college team as a means of paying for their education. Are you ready to compete?

“There is no better way to earn a degree in whatever field you please, than by doing what you love most - in my case it is running and jumping over hurdles.”

-Track athlete from South Africa, studying at a community college

Question: What do I need to do?

- 1 **Start early.** The application process is competitive and requires careful planning. Start your research approximately 18 to 24 months prior to your anticipated date of attendance at a university in the United States.
Tip: Use the do-it-yourself promotion websites at the end of this guide to help you assess your level of athletic skill. EducationUSA advisers can help student-athletes 'find the right fit'.
2. **Graduate from secondary school** - “high school”. Find your country in the [Academic Guide for International Student-Athletes](#) and review the graduation requirements and minimum grade point average (GPA) applicable to you.
- 3 **Find a school:**
 - a. See the [National Collegiate Athletic Association \(NCAA\) Sport Listing](#) to find participating U.S. institutions. Division I schools are highly competitive and have the most scholarships available.
Explore these options:
 - Athletic scholarships are offered in most sponsored sports at the majority of NCAA Division II institutions (see link above)
 - Over 350 small college athletics programs in the [National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics \(NAIA\)](#) also offer financial support for student-athletes
 - Some of the 510 junior colleges in the [National Junior College Athletic Association \(NJCA\)](#) offer support for student-athletes.
 - b. **Find a school:** Consider your academic and athletic goals.
 - c. Ask your coach or other student-athletes for recommendations and contacts.
- 4 **Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center** (or see the [resource section](#) below for NAIA and NJCA institutions and certification). Fill out the “[Student Release Form](#)” for international students. For most international students, your certification status will be evaluated after your final academic records are completed and forwarded to the eligibility center. The cost to register is \$85.
 - a. It is critically important to fulfill the NCAA’s secondary school “[core courses](#)” requirement.
 - b. **Deadline:** There are no deadlines to register. However, students must be certified before receiving an athletics scholarship or practicing/competing with an NCAA Division I or II school.



Above:
2007–08 NCAA Champions:
The University of Arizona wins
their first national title in women's
swimming.
Photographed by: AP

Tip: Search by academics and sports. Search broadly before adding additional points of interest to you.



tip: Include a reference from a current or former coach in your correspondence with university coaches.

Keep in Mind:

NCAA Division I and II

- Students must register with the NCAA Eligibility center
- Athletic scholarships may be available
- Scholarships may cover all or part of the cost of tuition and living costs for attending a U.S. college / university

NCAA Division III

- Each institution sets its own standards
- Athletic talent can attract other forms of scholarships & financial aid

Other Opportunities:

the national Junior college athletic association (NJCAA) has their “Eligibility Affidavit” and “Amateurism Questionnaire” available online as well.

- 5 **Take the SAT or ACT** (required for NCAA certification; may be required by NAIA member institutions depending on your secondary school grade point average and if you graduated in the top half of your school).
 - a. NCAA Division I: please see the [Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete](#) and minimum test-score requirements.
 - b. NCAA Division II: a minimum 820 combined score on the SAT verbal and math sections, or a minimum sum score of 68 on the ACT is required.
 - c. When taking the ACT or SAT, send your test scores to the eligibility center (the code is “9999”). In addition, most international students will be required to take an English language proficiency exam such as [TOEFL](#) or [IEITS](#) during the college/university application process.
- 6 **Draft a sports cv that includes your accomplishments within your sport.**
 - a. How to create a sports resume for specific coaches: The CV should be 1-2 pages and to the point, preferably in bullet point format, providing information about your achievements and goals. Include contact information, graduation date, intended major, and a few details such as SAT/ACT scores (or projected testing dates), current GPA, and class ranking/size.
 - b. see the resource links below for do-it-yourself promotion.
- 7 **Write a cover letter to the head coach at each institution that explains both your academic and athletic abilities** (This is where the sport CV comes in as an easy reference tool for athletic accomplishments).
- 8 **Apply to as many U.S. colleges or universities as possible.** any questions about your application? see “getting started” or contact [EducationUSA](#).
- 9 **Good luck!** college athletics can be one of the most rewarding and unique experiences in U.S. campus life.
- 10 **Contact your EducationUSA adviser with questions.**

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the NCAA?

The [NCAA](#), or national collegiate athletic association, was established in 1906 and serves as the athletics governing body for more than 1,280 U.S. colleges, universities, conferences and organizations.

What are the NCAA Core-Curriculum requirements for my country?

Important: Find your country and core-curriculum requirements in the [NCAA guide to international academic standards for athletics eligibility](#).

What is “[Eligibility Certification](#)”?

Any prospective student-athlete who will enroll in college and plans to compete in NCAA Division I or Division II athletics must register with the eligibility center. The NCAA eligibility center will certify the academic and amateur credentials of all college-bound student-athletes who wish to compete in NCAA Division I or II athletics. Keep in mind that the eligibility center is not a placement agency and it does not guarantee admission to universities.

Athletic Scholarships (Continued)



The NCAA Eligibility Center Requires:

- Online application for international student-athletes
- Score(s) from either the ACT or SAT standardized tests, reported directly to the eligibility center by entering the code “9999” after your test
- \$85 nonrefundable payment by credit card
- After online registration, mail certified copies of academic records and transcripts, proof of graduation and official translations to the address below

Eligibility center customer service:

Representatives are available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., U.S. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday.
International Callers: +1 317-223-0700.

Mailing Address: ***NCAA Eligibility Center***
 P.O. Box 7136
 Indianapolis, IN 46207 USA
 www.ncaaclearinghouse.net

Online Resources for Researching Collegiate Athletics in the U.S.

- **National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)**
 - Includes the informative “Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete”.
 - www.NCAA.org
- **International Students - Frequently Asked Questions**
 - Summary of recruiting rules for each sport
- **National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)**
 - Includes 510 junior colleges, some of which offer financial support for student-athletes. Search for the “NJCAA Eligibility Rules Pamphlet”.
 - www.NJCAA.org
- **National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)**
 - Includes 350 small college athletics programs, most of which offer financial support for student-athletes. Search for “A Guide for the College-Bound Athlete”. www.NAIA.org
- **Find a school offering your sport:**
 - Peterson’s College Search or NCAA Sports.



EducationUSA advisers in 170 countries provide accurate, unbiased information about all accredited U.S. higher education institutions. Find your EducationUSA center at: www.http://www.educationusa.info/centers.php.

Excerpts from this handout were originally published in EducationUSA Connections (September, 2008). Special thanks to Tove Lain Knudsen, Judy Freudenberger, and Mukami Macharia for their contributions to this article.

Seven personal questions to ask yourself about going to grad school (Excerpt):

At some point in your recent past you have decided to consider graduate study. You may or may not end up going in that direction, but for now it is on your mind. Before going any further, ask yourself the following questions:

1 **Why do you want to do this?**

There are many reasons. Here are some:

- To truly learn more
- To add a credential to your resume
- To have a better chance of being promoted
- To have more credibility in your chosen field
- To change careers
- To increase your earning potential
- Because of pressure from your family
- Because of a need to feel better about yourself
- Because you don't know what else to do at the moment
- Something else

2 **Why do you want to do this now?**

- Because you are mentally/emotionally ready for a new challenge
- Because your employer is encouraging you to do so, and might help sponsor you
- Because you have reached a plateau in your career
- Because you are not getting any younger
- Because it is a logical next step for you professionally
- Because you are ready financially
- Because you have the necessary time to commit
- Something else

3 **What type of academic/professional degree are you seeking?**

- M.A., M.S., J.D., MBA, MSW, MSJ, M.Ed., etc.
- Ed.D., Ph.D., LL.M., M.D., Psy.D., etc.
- Joint degree

NOTE: If you are seeking a degree in law, medicine, or business, you have a fairly clear idea of the type of professional graduate degree you need. However, if you are thinking about education, social service, public policy, the humanities, social sciences, etc., you may want to do a more thorough search of the type of degree earned for the area in which you are interested. For example, you may not need a Ph.D. to advance in the area of public policy; a master's degree may be sufficient.

4 **Is there a geographic region of your country or the world where you would like to study?**

- Perhaps you have always wanted to live in another part of your country or go abroad for graduate study. Knowing what you are thinking as to location will help guide your search. However, at this early stage be careful not to rule out a certain location completely.
- During the search process, you may find that an option emerges in that geographic region that may be worth a closer look.

For all 7 personal questions, a 12-month checklist before applying and much more, go to Dr. Martin's website and order his book Road Map for Graduate Study: A Guide for Prospective Graduate Students.

The website address is:

www.gradschoolroadmap.com

"I would like to go to the U.S. for global exposure in my chosen field.

In my opinion, the quality of education provided by the best universities in the U.S. is not found anywhere else in the world."

-Pallavi, from India



Getting Started: Choosing a graduate institution (Continued)



12 month checklist to use in searching for the right program or programs (Excerpt)

Graduate school is not something to take lightly. It involves a major investment personally, intellectually, socially, emotionally, and financially. Be sure to allow yourself enough time to do your “Due Diligence” and get all of the information you want and need. It is wise to take about a year to do your research. If you are considering starting your program of study in the fall, you will want to start your search two years ahead of time. Why two years, you may ask? Typically, graduate schools start accepting applications just under a year before the intended start date. In order for you to have the time to thoroughly evaluate all of the information you will receive and read, you will need at least a year before applying to gather that information and thoroughly review it.

“One year in the U.S. opened a new world of opportunities, which enabled me to grow personally and professionally. I chose to study in the U.S. because of the enormous opportunities that are available for people seeking personal and professional growth.”

- Rustem from Kazakhstan

Twelve months before applying:

- 1 Answer the personal questions posed at the beginning of this chapter.
- 2 Do an initial web-based search on graduate programs, based on the answers to your personal questions. For example, if you have decided on a program and know where you would like to study, do a search of educational institutions that offer a program in the area and degree classification you desire. You can also do a search by program, such as Psychology, Law, Humanities, Advertising, Finance, etc. Make sure you do a couple of searches, so as many institutions matching your search criteria as possible are found. *There are more than 4,000 accredited higher education institutions in the United States. Your EducationUSA adviser can help you create a manageable list of colleges that match your needs. Start your school search here:*
<http://www.educationusa.info/pages/students/search.php>.
- 3 Once you have done a thorough search, make an alphabetical list of all your options, regardless of what you presently know/have heard about them. Write them all down or put them on a spreadsheet.

TIP :

This is a good time to start setting aside financial resources for your search and application process. There will be standardized tests and application fees for sure. In addition, you may decide to purchase some test taking preparation materials and/or to visit some of the institutions you end up placing on your list of top options.

Remember: *Perception is reality, it is where you end up, not where you start.* Be very careful about accepting word of mouth or what you think you know as final at this point in the search process. We are individuals, and as such, have different needs, expectations and experiences. This is YOUR educational experience - not someone else's. You need to start by gathering a list of options. Do not eliminate any of them at this point. You want to get as much information as possible so you can decide what options are most appealing.

Getting Started: Choosing a graduate institution (Continued)

- 4 Go online and do some initial research on all the institutions you have on your list. Assess not only the content of material on websites, but look at the way in which it is presented. Is information easy to find? Is the tone friendly and inviting? Are there easy and quick ways to request more information? Speaking of which, this would be a good time to request written information from each of the institutions. This will enable you to review what you receive any time you want. It will also provide you an opportunity to find out just how responsive admissions offices are to you. This can be very telling, and may shed light on the general level of responsiveness of those institutions about which you have made inquiry. Give each institution a grade on their website, and on the level of responsiveness they provided to you.



Suggested Grading System

Website

- A-** Easy to navigate, informative, captivating
- B-** Well-done, good information, friendly
- C-** Fairly easy to navigate, not as helpful / friendly
- D-** Difficult to navigate, not very informative
- F-** What were they thinking?

FF- No website

Responsiveness

- A** = had a response within 7 business days
- B** = had a response within 12 business days
- C** = had a response within 17 business days
- D** = had a response within 22 business days
- F** = took three weeks or longer for a response
- FF** = no response

- 5 Should you consider taking a graduate level course or two now? Perhaps you were an undergraduate student awhile ago, or you may have received your bachelor's degree very recently. Either way, if your undergraduate GPA was not what you believe is competitive, or does not speak to the academic work you believe you are capable of performing, you would do well to register at a nearby institution as a non-degree student and take one or two courses. If you do, earning an A or B will be very impressive to the admissions committee, and will demonstrate that you are able to perform well as a student.

Getting Started: Choosing a graduate institution (Continued)



Eleven months before applying:

- 1 Based on the two items above (website and responsiveness), you are now in a position to narrow your search a bit. But do not narrow it too much. Obviously those institutions you have graded as F or FF could most likely be eliminated. You may be surprised at some of the options you are eliminating should you rely completely on the grades given. If you still have an interest in a college/university that you did not initially grade well, keep it on the list for now. However, if you continue to get the same treatment you did when first browsing the web and/or asking for information, ask yourself the following question: If I'm being treated this way now, how will it be should I apply, be offered admission, and enroll?
- 2 Create a research spreadsheet to use from this point on for each of the options that remain on your list. You may have already started a spreadsheet when you did your initial research. If so, you are just expanding it now. If not, this is the time to start one. Down the right hand column will be an alphabetical list of your options. Across the top will be all of the areas about the options that you want to compare.

Ten months before applying:

- 1 Work on completing your research spreadsheet, filling in every column for each option. As you go along you will eliminate a few or quite a few. That is okay. As a consumer you are doing what you should be doing - comparison shopping.

- Website grade
- Responsiveness grade
- Usefulness of printed materials, brochures
- Friendliness of admissions staff
- Interaction with current students
- Interaction with faculty
- Interaction with alumni
- Campus visit/Admissions event(s) you attended
- Number of students enrolled in the entire institution
- Number of students enrolled in the program you are considering
- Professor/student ratio
- Average class size
- Grading system
- Facilities
- Housing options (should you be re-locating)

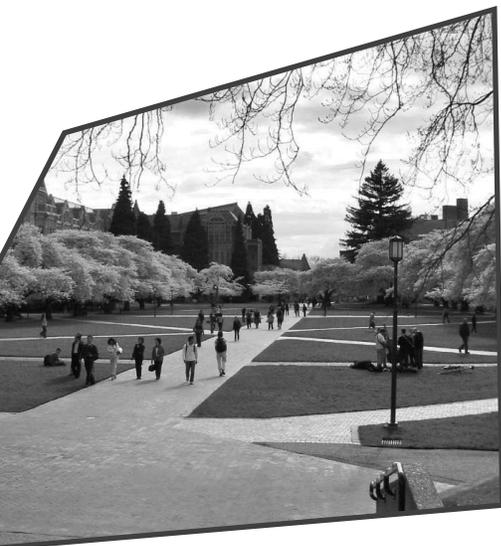
- Extracurricular opportunities
- Career services/employment percentages
- Total cost of education for one year
- Tuition cost for one year
- Financial aid - scholarships, loans, assistantships, fellowships, work study
- Application deadlines
- Application fees
- Application requirements (including what standardized test(s) are needed)
- Must you do an interview?
- Do they keep a waiting list of applicants?
- Can you appeal/get feedback if denied?

TIP: Some of the columns in your research spreadsheet will have letter grades, some will say "yes," "no" or "maybe," some will be dates, dollar amounts or various numerical responses, and some will be more evaluative (scale of 1-5, with 1 being terrible and 5 being outstanding).

For the complete 12-month checklist, seven personal questions to ask about grad school and much, more, go to Dr. Martin's website and order his book Road Map for Graduate Study: A Guide for Prospective Graduate Students. The website address is www.gradschoolroadmap.com.

TIP: Remember, you can and should feel free to change your research spreadsheet evaluations at any time. Perhaps further information and/or contact with one or more of your options will cause them to go up or down on your overall list. That is another great reason for taking plenty of time to do your research. You tend to learn more about an institution the longer you do research about it. First impressions, while important, may change later on based on repeated observation and communication.

Getting Started: Choosing a graduate institution (Continued)



- 2 After reviewing your entire spreadsheet, do a very general rank order of the options that remain. You could rank every option, starting with #1 and going to the end of the list. Or, you could group your options: top group, second group, third group, etc. Whenever possible, you should have at least five options left. Hopefully, you will have many more. However, depending on the type of graduate program you seek, the number of options will vary. My point is that you are still not at the place where you need to have a “short list”. You are still ten months away from applying, and will have several opportunities to narrow down your list before that time.
- 3 Take a look at the general rank order you have done. Do you believe the ranking is based on what YOU really feel? Did you get enough information to complete your ranking?

Application Timetable:

Contact your EducationUSA adviser at any stage in the application process.

12 to 18 months prior to the year in which you hope to enroll:

- begin researching programs and financial aid, and required standardized tests

August:

- request admissions and financial aid applications
- register for tests (TOEFL, IELTS, GRE, or GMAT, for example)

September-December:

- request official transcripts and letters of recommendation
- submit completed applications
- take standardized tests.

January-April:

- verify that you have met deadlines

April-June:

- receive admissions decisions
- decide which school to attend and complete necessary paperwork
- organize finances and finalize arrangements for housing and medical insurance

June-August:

- apply to U.S. embassy or consulate for visa and complete SEVIS I-901 form upon receipt of I-20 form
- make travel arrangements
- contact international student office to detail arrival plans and confirm orientation for new students at university

Talk to an EducationUSA adviser about all the opportunities available to you.

EducationUSA advisers in 170 countries provide accurate, unbiased information about all accredited U.S. higher education institutions. Find your EducationUSA center at: www.EducationUSA.info/centers.

Funding Graduate Education in the U.S.



Is the best grad program the one that gives you money?

In the United States, you will have access to quality graduate education on a scale available nowhere else. The key to receiving admission with funding is to distinguish yourself from the competition by researching opportunities and enhancing your application. Here's how:

Research sources of university funding available to you

Funding from universities for graduate study comes in a variety of forms, including:

- **Fellowships and Tuition Scholarships:** These are awarded by the university's graduate school, and are based on the student's overall merit or academic strength. Usually, the graduate school selects fellowship or tuition scholarship recipients, but candidates are sometimes asked to submit a separate application. Recipients do not have to work for the university in exchange for these funds.
- **Research Assistantships (RA):** Professors apply to outside sources (foundations, agencies, etc.) for funds to conduct research, and then select graduate students to assist them. Many students apply their RA work towards their thesis research. RA funding consists of a tuition waiver plus a monthly stipend that covers your living expenses. Both half and full RA's are available.
- **Teaching Assistantships (TA):** Departments determine the need for TA's in undergraduate classes, and professors who teach those classes select graduate students to assist them in teaching, leading discussion sections, running labs, or grading assignments. TA's have the opportunity to build important teaching skills that will help them when they become professors. TA funding consists of a tuition waiver plus a monthly stipend that covers living expenses. Both half and full TA's are available.
- It is occasionally possible to get a TA in a department other than the one in which you are studying. For example, an engineering graduate student might be awarded a TA in the department of mathematics, or a social sciences/humanities graduate student might be awarded a TA in the department of his/her native language (e.g., French, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, etc.).
- **Graduate Assistantships:** Departments sometimes employ administrative assistants in positions that provide partial funding.

Maximize Your Investment:

- The main types of costs involved in study in the United States are tuition and fees, plus living costs. These vary widely, which gives you some control over the costs involved in your education.
- Look for universities that offer the best educational value for money, and for state universities that offer 'out-of-state tuition waivers' to international students.
- Take as many courses as you can manage, including summer term, to finish quickly.
- Apply to be a Resident Assistant in an undergraduate dormitory, which provides free housing (but a lot of distractions).

There are also other types of work that can cover a smaller portion of your costs:

- **Campus Jobs:** U.S. Immigration allows you to work a maximum of 20 hours per week on campus without special authorization while school is in session. A wide variety of jobs are available though most are clerical or computer-oriented, and pay a relatively low wage. An on-campus job may cover the cost of books, clothing, and personal expenses, but will not be adequate to cover tuition or rent.

- **Internships:** These are off campus jobs that provide practical experience in your field of study. They are particularly common in professional fields. Payment varies, and you must obtain work authorization from U.S. Immigration. The international student office of your university can help you with on and off-campus employment opportunities.



Funding Graduate Education in the U.S. (Continued)

Here are some things that you can do to increase your chances of graduate admission with funding:

- Research thoroughly all possible options.
- Select departments where there are professors who will be interested in supporting your research. Contact your EducationUSA adviser and use our website to find the best fit.
- Apply to the programs that have the most funding available for your field of interest.

TIP: The best graduate program is the one that gives you money.

- Be prepared to pay for the first semester, so that when they see your abilities, you could become eligible for funding.
- Professors control assistantships: communicate with them and show relevant experience that you can contribute.
- Enhance your application to maximize financial aid:
 - Score as high as you can on GRE/GMAT and TOEFL or IELTS.
 - Learn to write a superior statement of purpose.
 - Cultivate effective recommendations.
 - Submit professional and polished applications on time.
- Apply to as many universities as you can.
- The early bird gets the worm: Start your planning at least one year before you intend to enroll, and submit completed applications

before January 1 for entry the following August.

Enhance Your Application

- 1 To find information on funding sources, start with IIE's www.fundingUSstudy.org, and apply only to those institutions whose eligibility requirements you meet fully.
- 2 Visit your local EducationUSA Advising Center, where you will find a wealth of resources to help you in your search, as well as professional educational advisers who can answer your questions.
- 3 You can also visit EducationUSA, where you will find databases of graduate programs and a wide range of comprehensive, reliable, and current information on all accredited institutions of higher education in the United States. The Peterson's Guides to Graduate & Professional Programs provides details such as how many students in each department receive funding, and the types and amounts of funding awarded.
- 4 As you shortlist universities with graduate programs that meet your specific needs, go to each department's website and study it thoroughly. Because professors control teaching and research assistantships, it is in your best interest to communicate with them and make them understand what you will contribute to their research. From the university's website, and websites such as www.scholar.google.com and www.scholarly-societies.org, you can learn about professors and their research.

Feel free to contact the admissions coordinator and professors with constructive questions about available funding and how to qualify for it. They should know you before they receive your application!

Sample questions to ask the departmental coordinator:

- How many first-year international graduate students received financial assistance?
- What are some common factors demonstrated by students who are selected for admission with full funding?

What Do Fulbrighters Do?

Fulbrighters are more than students, scholars and teachers. They are valuable contributors to the exchange of knowledge, skills, ideas and mutual understanding.

The Fulbright Program operates in over 155 countries worldwide and is based on binational partnerships and open, merit-based competition for a variety of grants to and from the United States.

- The Fulbright Foreign Student Program enables graduate students, young professionals and artists from abroad to conduct research and study in the United States.
- The International Fulbright Science and Technology Award provides grants to exceptional foreign graduate students for doctoral study at leading U.S. institutions in science, technology, engineering and related fields.

Contact a [U.S. embassy](#) or [Fulbright Commission](#) about specific programs and opportunities.

Funding Graduate Education in the U.S. (Continued)



Additional Resources

Print Resources (available at your EducationUSA Advising Center):

- Peterson's Graduate and Professional Programs, a comprehensive 6-volume set describing virtually all graduate programs in the United States and Canada, published annually.
- Getting What You Came For: The Smart Student's Guide to a Master's or Ph.D. Robert L. Peters, Farrar, Straus, Giroux.
- Graduate Admissions Essays: Write Your Way into the Graduate School of Your Choice. Donald Asher, Ten Speed Press.

Online Resources:

- EducationUSA Advising Centers
A good starting point for international students, providing a clear, concise introduction for people unfamiliar with the U.S. system of graduate education. Click on publications, and download the booklet, If You Want to Study in the United States: Graduate and Professional Study and Research. www.EducationUSA.info

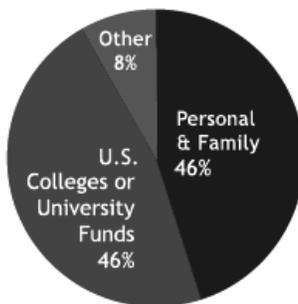
Writing a Statement of Purpose:

- See "Writing Your Statement of Purpose for Grad School" and "Ten Tips for Better Writing": www.accepted.com
- Review Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's clear directives on writing the statement of purpose for your graduate application: www.rpi.edu

Grants and related resources:

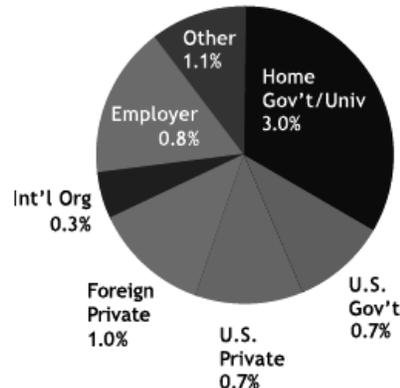
- [Links to External Financial Aid Resources:](#)
- *Funding for US Study Online* is a database of scholarships, fellowships and grants organized and maintained by the Institute of International Education (IIE). www.fundingUSstudy.org
- [Harvard's Graduate Guide to Grants](#)
- [Michigan State University's database](#), the most comprehensive of all, covering a wide range of funding issues.
- [Cornell University's database](#), efficiently organized.
- [North Carolina State University's database](#)

Primary Source of Funding: International Graduate Students



Source: IIE Open Doors, 2008

Other = 8%



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Special thanks to EducationUSA's Nancy Keteku for her contributions to this article.



Seven Pointers for Completing Your Graduate School Application

Seven Pointers for Completing your Graduate School Application(s)

-DR. DONALD C. MARTIN

As you start working on your graduate school application(s), here are a few pointers:

Seven Common but Serious Mistakes

- 1 Rude or arrogant behavior
- 2 Dishonesty
- 3 Too much contact
- 4 Not following directions
- 5 Sending wrong or non-proofed information
- 6 Asking questions you could answer for yourself
- 7 Leaving something completely unaddressed, or making excuses when addressing it

1 Relax

Do your best to relax as you work on your applications. Worrying and obsessing, while tempting, will not help. In fact, worrying and obsessing could hinder your ability to think clearly and focus on preparing the best applications you can. In truth, going through a graduate school application process can result in a major learning experience for you. As you complete each application you will engage in personal reflection and self-discovery. This can prove to be very rewarding, whatever the decisions you receive from the admissions committee. So use this application process to your benefit; consider it a positive learning experience in and of itself. Be calm. Be reflective. Be thoughtful. Relax.

2 Allow Time

If you have been following some or most of the suggestions provided in Chapter One's monthly checklist (see [Getting Started](#)) you should be feeling fairly comfortable about the application deadlines you are working to meet. In fact, allowing plenty of time during the search process, which then allows you plenty of time to complete your applications, automatically helps you to relax. Knowing you have adequate time is very comforting and, as I mentioned earlier, allows you to focus on the task at hand – doing your best on your applications.

3 Follow Directions

This seems like such a “no-brainer” that you may wonder why I even mention it. I do so because over the years I have truly been amazed at the number of applicants who do not follow directions. If you are one of those applicants, it raises some questions about how well you might follow policies and procedures once admitted and enrolled. Some directives may not make sense to you, but they have been provided for a reason, and you need to comply. If you are unable or unwilling to do so, you send a clear signal about yourself to the admissions committee. It is a red flag, not a green light.

Seven Pointers for Completing Your Graduate School Application (Continued)



Let me give you a few examples:

- a. If there is a word limit for essay questions, follow it. Remember, application evaluators are reading hundreds, maybe thousands of essays. You will not get a positive response if yours is longer than it is supposed to be.
- b. If you are asked for two letters of recommendation, do not send ten. Some institutions will permit an extra recommendation, but usually no more. Honor that.
- c. If an interview is conducted by invitation only, do not request one. You might mention that you hope you will have the opportunity to interview, but leave it there.
- d. If an interview is highly recommended, by all means request one, and make every possible effort to follow through. More about this in the next section of this chapter.
- e. If you are an international student applying to a U.S. graduate school and are required to take a test to measure your English language skills, do so. Do not argue even if you are fluent in English. If that is the case you will obviously do very well on the test, which will serve to enhance your application.
- f. Do not knowingly leave a question unanswered. Make sure you have responded to everything you've been asked and that you have really addressed the questions asked of you.
- g. Be careful about sending extra materials. Some applications allow for this, or will allow you to write an extra essay question. But if they do not, first check to see if it is okay for you to send extra information rather than assuming that it is okay to do so.

Get Positively Noticed as an Applicant:

- Ask questions that demonstrate you did your homework and are really interested in this institution.
 - Be creative, but not silly or outlandish.
- Include a succinct, upbeat cover letter with your application, stating why you are interested in the institution and why you hope they will decide to admit you.

4 **Be a professional at all times / In all interactions**

Remember, as an applicant you are at the part of the process where you are not in the driver's seat. You are one of many applicants being compared with each other. Always present yourself in a calm, assertive and sincere manner. It is appropriate to be inquisitive about your application, but it is never to your advantage to be argumentative. Be confident but not arrogant; be kind and patient, not abrasive and demanding. Many admissions professionals keep written records of their interactions with applicants. At one university where I was employed we used something called the "orange sheet". If we had an extremely positive or extremely negative encounter with an applicant we wrote a summary of that interaction on an orange sheet of paper and placed the sheet just inside the person's application. When it came time to make a decision on that application, the orange sheet(s) was/were very persuasive, for better or worse. Actions speak louder than words. Some of the best applications on paper have been completely devalued due to the behavior of the person who prepared them.



Seven Pointers for Completing Your Graduate School Application (Continued)

- 5 **Content and presentation are both important**
While what you say in your application is obviously very important, so is the “look and feel” of your application. This is especially true when the institution/program to which you are applying is extremely selective and has the luxury of choosing their admitted students from a very large applicant pool. Some applications are sloppy, wrinkled and disorganized. Others are hand-written (there is absolutely NO excuse for this in the age of word processing). Some have coffee or tea stains on them. Occasionally essay questions are not sent to the right institution, and often it is clear that they were not proof read for correct grammar or spelling. Pages are out of order. Some information is not provided, or contradicts similar information provided elsewhere in the application. Applications with these kinds of presentation errors quickly become less competitive. The admissions committee tends to assume that the applicant was not really serious about this application, and they tend to respond in a similar manner.
- 6 **Be Yourself / Human / Honest**
Resist the temptation to lie, embellish or make excuses. Don’t be someone you’re not. At times, applicants try to make themselves look perfect. As we all know, no one is perfect. Trying to look that way can often cause application evaluators to be more suspicious than impressed. I’m not suggesting you discuss all of your weaknesses and past mistakes (which are there for all of us), but rather, that you simply be yourself. The best applications I have read are from those who were saying the following in between the lines:

“This is me. I hope you will appreciate who I am, and also appreciate the level of interest I’ve demonstrated in your institution by completing this application. If you choose to admit me, I’ll be thrilled. If you don’t, I’ll be okay.”

Above all, do not lie or embellish the truth. This can have disastrous effects. Many admissions evaluators randomly screen applicants and verify information they have provided. While it is human to be tempted, don’t allow yourself to yield. There is nothing to be gained, whether you are found out or not. Finally, don’t make excuses on your application. You may decide that you need to explain a lower overall GPA, a less than stellar academic record during one of the years you were in college, a break in your employment record, holding several jobs in a short period of time, etc. If there are legitimate reasons for what might seem like a blemish in your application, by all means let the admissions committee know. Perhaps you had a serious illness, lost a loved one, had a sudden financial crisis, etc. That should definitely be mentioned. Bottom line, make explanations, not excuses. The admissions committee will know the difference and your application will either be helped or hindered.

Seven Pointers for Completing Your Graduate School Application (Continued)



Notes from Dr. Martin

A missed opportunity...

In my years as an application evaluator and decision maker, I have seen individuals with great talent and potential be denied admission, have their admission revoked, or be expelled after enrolling because they lied and/or embellished. If you earned a 3.2 overall GPA, don't say it was a 3.5. If you did not serve as a class officer or student leader, don't say you did. If you were not in an organization, the military, and/or the Peace Corps, don't put it on your resume. Don't write your own letters of recommendation and/or falsify the names of their authors. Don't pretend you are someone else when an admissions representative calls to speak with you. That one probably sounds a bit strange. Let me explain.

When working as Director of Admissions at the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business, I would personally phone each admitted student before she/he received notification in the mail or online.

Obviously, it was a win-win phone call all the way around. I often made admitted student calls on the weekends to help spread out the number of contacts I made each day. I tended not to identify myself immediately, but did so as soon as the person on the phone indicated that they were indeed the applicant. One Saturday morning I called a newly admitted male student. The gentleman who answered the phone claimed he was not the applicant. I was sure I had dialed the correct phone number, so I tried the number again a few minutes later. This time a woman answered the phone. I identified myself and asked if the applicant was there. The same gentleman, who had just answered my call a few minutes earlier, took the phone. When I asked why he lied to me about his identity, he said he thought I was making a "sales call". Upon hearing this, I informed the applicant that while the original purpose of my call was to congratulate him on his admission, I was now informing him that he was denied. That story could be repeated more times than I care to remember. **Dishonesty is such a waste** - there is absolutely no need for it.

7 **Make contingency plans in case you are not admitted**

Things happen for a reason. In my years as an admissions director I met applicants who were so convinced that a particular institution was for them, or that this was the year they were going to attend graduate school that they did not make plans for what to do if things did not go as they hoped. Some would go so far as to inform employers and loved ones of their plans before it was advisable to do so. In some very extreme cases they moved to where their number one graduate option was located before they received a decision on their application! Being confident and positive is one thing. Throwing caution to the wind is another. Be prepared to be denied admission, perhaps to every one of your options, or to be placed on the waiting list by several of your options (I'll have some suggestions on how to respond if/when this happens at the end of this chapter). Also, be prepared for what you will do if you end up not attending graduate school in the year you thought, planned, prepared and hoped to. Being prepared for all outcomes is not a sign of lack of belief in yourself or your abilities to do graduate work. It IS a sign that you realize life does not always go the way we plan and making alternative plans is often required.

"According to the U.S. News and World Report (Clark, 2008), the average employee with a master's degree, and a professional degree can double, on average, the earnings of a bachelor degree holder. The intrinsic and interpersonal rewards can be even more advantageous."
-Dr. Martin

For the 10 DOs/DON'Ts of applying, the 7 deadly sins for applicants, tips for essays, interviews and recommendation letters, the 7 ways to get positively noticed as an applicant, and much more, go to Dr. Martin's website and order his book *Road Map for Graduate Study: A Guide for Prospective Graduate Students*. The website address is www.gradschoolroadmap.com.

EducationUSA advisers in 170 countries provide accurate, unbiased information about all accredited U.S. higher education institutions. Find your EducationUSA center at: www.EducationUSA.info/centers



Graduate Admissions Tests

The Main requirements for admission to educational institutions in the United States are:

- A strong academic background
- Demonstrated command of the English language
- For many programs, scores on one or more standardized admissions tests such as the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), General test or a demonstration of proficiency in your field (GRE Subject Test), or some times both
- Adequate financial resources

“Graduate school involves a major investment personally, intellectually, socially, emotionally, and financially. Be sure to allow yourself enough time to do your ‘due diligence’ and get all of the information you want and need. It is wise to take about a year to do your research.”

-Dr. Donald Martin

Graduate Admissions Tests

Standardized exams are one way in which US universities will assess your academic potential amongst both US and international applicants.

English Language Proficiency Exams

To participate in graduate study in the United States successfully, students must be able to read, write, and communicate orally in English with a high degree of proficiency. The two most widely accepted English language proficiency exams are TOEFL and IELTS.

- TOEFL test locations and dates
- Search for an IELTS test center
- Explore the links below for test preparation options or talk to your EducationUSA adviser.

GRE (Graduate Record Examination)

If you are planning to enter into a professional or academic/research Master’s program other than medicine or business, you will most likely sit the GRE. This three to four hour exam includes sections on quantitative analysis, verbal reasoning and analytical writing and is offered in a computer-based, adaptive format and paper-based format.

- GRE test locations and dates
- The GRE Subject Tests, offered three times a year, gauge undergraduate achievement in eight specific fields of study and can help forecast a candidate’s potential for success in graduate school. Before registering for these tests, check with your university about the entrance exams they require.

GMAT® (Graduate Management Admission Test)

Over 1,900 graduate business schools around the world use GMAT scores as a part of their admissions process. Test-takers will complete three sections: Analytical Writing (60 minutes), Quantitative (75 minutes) and the Verbal Section (75 minutes).

- Schedule a GMAT appointment or learn more about graduate business degrees in the United States.

Over 4,000 U.S. institutions use TOEFL to measure the English language proficiency of their international applicants. IELTS is also recognized and accepted by more than 1,700 educational institutions in the USA.

Consult an EducationUSA adviser or U.S. university website for information about which exams are required or accepted.

Additional tests

Check university websites for admission requirements before registering for an entrance exam.

- **LSAT** (Law School Admission Test): If you are interested in pursuing a law degree (J.D.), you will likely be required to take the LSAT. The LSAT is required by most J.D. degree programs, but not LL.M. (Master of Laws) programs which often require the GRE.
- **The MCAT** (Medical College Admission Test) is required for entrance to most M.D. programs. Talk to an EducationUSA adviser or please visit the MCAT website.
- **Applying to Residency Programs:** Through its program of certification, the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) assesses the readiness of international medical graduates to enter residency or fellowship programs in the United States that are accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. See "Medical Education in the USA".

TIP:

Remember that at busy times of the year (July to December) you may not be able to take the test immediately; therefore, register well in advance.

GRADUATE TEST

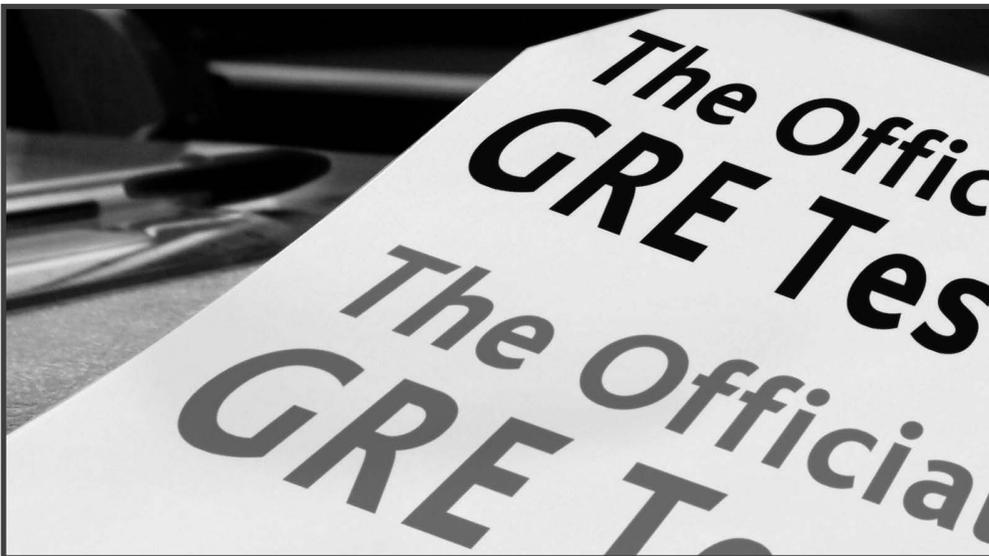
PREPARATION AND RELATED LINKS

Preparing to take the exams

EducationUSA Advising Centers have test preparation materials available for onsite consultation, loan, and in some cases for purchase. Several centers offer test preparation courses. Contact the EducationUSA Advising Center nearest you to learn more.

Keep in mind:

Usually, the faculty of each department within a university determine the requirements for various admissions tests, as well as the weight given to the results. Consequently, there is no general rule to follow with respect to test requirements.



EducationUSA advisers in 170 countries provide accurate, unbiased information about all accredited U.S. higher education institutions. Find your EducationUSA center at: [www.http://www.educationusa.info/centers.php](http://www.educationusa.info/centers.php). Special thanks to the U.S.-U.K. Fulbright Commission for contributing to this article.



Top Fields of Study

Undergraduate: One of the most attractive features of a Bachelor's Degree Program in the United States is that it is highly flexible. Many undergraduates are "Undecided" for their major and choose to explore a wide variety of courses or create their own unique program of study.

Graduate: Over 1,200 universities offer degree programs to 2.5 million graduate and professional students in different types of institutions, academic and social environments. EducationUSA can help you "Find the right fit".

STEP 1

Define your education and career goals

STEP 2

Talk to an EducationUSA Adviser

STEP 3

Develop a shortlist of 10-20 institutions

STEP 4

Decide where to apply

"The engineering programs here are very hands on and focus on getting you accustomed to real world problems. The courses concentrate on explaining concepts rather than making you memorize material.

Additionally, they mandate engineering students take liberal studies courses to provide them with a well-rounded education. Many engineering programs have interdisciplinary components as well."

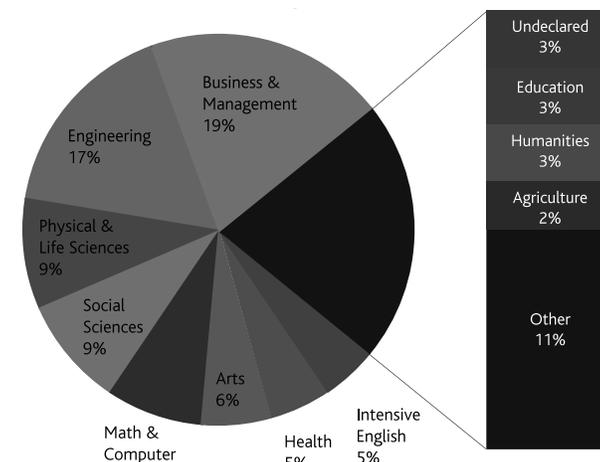
-Sujith Vidanapathirana
Sri Lanka, Computer Science
(Engineering Department)
Cornell University

What field of study and campus features are important to you?

Learn about the many high quality degree programs in the United States

- Liberal arts and sciences - Undergraduate
- Political Science & International Relations
- Factsheet: Computer Science - Graduate
- Factsheet: Public Administration - Study the implementation, determination, and output of policy
- Factsheets: Electrical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering -Graduate
- Studying Engineering in the USA - An excellent guide for international students
- Explore 38 fields of study: College Board Major and Career Profiles - Undergraduate

Liberal arts is a shortened form of the term "liberal arts and sciences," and the liberal arts philosophy is a unique feature of the U.S. higher education system. U.S. undergraduate education is based on this concept, which believes in providing a wellrounded academic education that develops the student's verbal, written, and reasoning skills. Undergraduates are encouraged to explore several fields of interest and many start their studies with "undecided" majors.



(IIE Open Doors, 2008)

36% of international students in the U.S. are studying in the fields of Business & Management and Engineering, the top 2 fields of study.

Field of Study Focus

Political Science & International Relations

Prospective students face a wide variety of choices for study, and will need to decide which degree program, department, and university will best fit their career goals. Aristotle wrote that politics is the “master science”. Put another way, politics is one of the most interdisciplinary fields including anthropology, economics, history, law, philosophy, psychology, and sociology. As such, prospective students face a wide variety of choices for study, and will need to decide which degree program, department, and university best fit their career goals (indeed, one of the first challenges is sorting out all the various programs that fall under the heading “international”). Ask your educational adviser for the Petersen’s Guide to Graduate Programs in the Humanities, Arts, & Social Sciences and Getting What You Came For (a general guide to graduate education written by Robert Peters). What follows is some specific advice for political science/international affairs students.

Selecting the Right Degree

When deciding what degree to pursue, students must consider their career goals. Do students want to work at a university or at a research institute/ think tank? Do they want to work as a diplomat or as a civil servant? Would they prefer to work for a political party or for the private sector? The answers to these questions will guide students toward the right program. Some may find themselves in a political science department or at a school of international affairs. Others may find themselves studying public policy or something else entirely (an increasing number of business schools offer specializations in international business or the international MBA).

- Find an undergraduate program in Political Science & International Relations
- Graduate students see: A Global Ranking of Political Science Programs.

New: F VISA now permits up to 29 months of optional practical training in the United States

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is an outstanding professional and academic benefit of completing a full degree program in the United States. OPT allows up to 12 months of practical training to foreign students enrolled and participating full-time in a U.S. college or university on an F visa, the most common visa type for academic studies. After being enrolled one full academic year, a student may be authorized to participate in pre-completion OPT on a part-time basis while school is in session, or full-time when school is not in session or upon completion of studies. A Designated School Official (DSO) at the United States college or university where you are enrolled must approve OPT before you can receive your Employment Authorization Document. Students of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) may apply for an additional 17 months of OPT for a total of 29 months. That is more than two years! STEM fields are:

- **Computer Science**
- **Chemical Engineering**
- **Engineering**
- **Engineering Technologies**
- **Biological and Medical Sciences**
- **Mathematics and Statistics**
- **Military Technologies**
- **Physical Sciences**
- **Science Technologies**
- **Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences**
- **Actuarial Science**

TIP:

Be wary of using rankings as the sole criterion for selecting an institution.

Consider the lifelong benefits of completing a Master’s or other full degree program in the United States. The international student office at your U.S. university or college can assist you with practical training opportunities in your field of study.

Top Fields of Study (Continued)

Political Science Master's and PH.D. Programs

If prospective students want to pursue a career in research and teaching, they should investigate Ph.D. programs in political science departments which emphasize theory and research methods. The website of the American Political Science Association at www.apsanet.org provides a great introduction to the academic side of political science. Another resource to consider is an article by Simon Hix from the Department of Government at the London School of Economics entitled "[A Global Ranking of Political Science Programs](#)", though students should be wary of using rankings as their sole criterion.

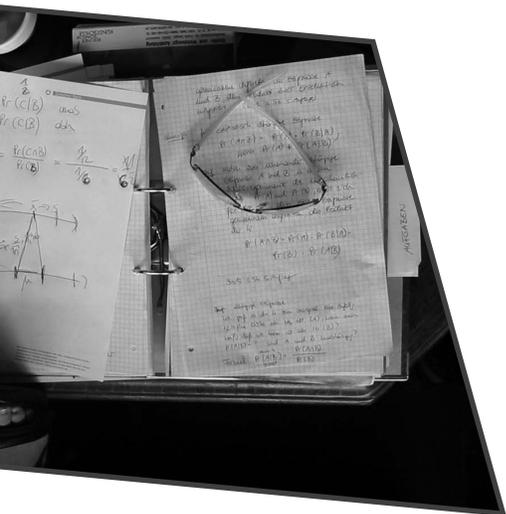
In the United States, political science departments are typically divided into four subfields: political theory (sometimes called political philosophy), American politics, comparative politics, and international relations. Some departments offer additional subfields, like political economy or methodology. Students are usually expected to specialize in one of these subfields and minor in another. Their course of study will depend on their specialization. Additionally, opportunities for dual degrees are widespread, and a good number of universities do not require that students have an MA before beginning doctoral studies.

Master's graduates often go into government service, serve as analysts in the private sector or work as foreign affairs specialists. Doctoral students are trained to conduct research (and, increasingly, to be effective professors in the classroom). On average, it takes more than 6 years for doctoral students in political science to complete their Ph.D. Students who want to pursue a Ph.D. should be highly dedicated to political science. It is very important that prospective doctoral students seek out potential faculty members whose research interests match their own before they apply. Some schools are stronger in particular subfields of political science than others and students will need to do a lot of research about departments.

Prospective students face a wide variety of choices for graduate study, and will need to decide which degree program, department and university will best fit their career goals.

Professional MA at a School of International Affairs / Public Policy

For specialized professional training - as opposed to academic study - students are advised to look at schools of international affairs or public policy/administration. These interdisciplinary programs train professionals for careers in international politics or national/local government. Schools of international affairs prepare students for careers in diplomacy and related areas of foreign affairs, although many graduates also pursue work in the private and non-profit sectors. The curricula of these schools focus on international relations theory and practice, international trade/economics, diplomacy, security studies, political economy, and foreign languages. For detailed information, visit the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs at www.apsia.org. APSIA organizes several education forums for international students in cities throughout the world (typically in Europe or Latin America). Schools of public policy and public administration train students for careers in the government and non-profit sectors. Good starting points for this career path include the websites of the [Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management](#) and the [National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration](#).



Top Fields of Study (Continued)



Area of Study

Students seeking deep knowledge (politics, economics, and culture) of a particular region of the world might also wish to consider “area studies” programs. Common specializations include Europe, eastern Europe/former Soviet Union, Latin America, Middle East, Asia, and so on. Graduates of area studies programs usually find careers in government, the private sector, or the nonprofit sector.

Preparation for Admission

Students who have a bachelor’s degree in political science, economics, area studies, history, or foreign languages would be well prepared to begin graduate study in any of the fields above. All applicants should present a strong undergraduate academic background, excellent admission exam test scores (GRE, TOEFL), insightful letters of recommendation, and a clear statement of purpose that outlines the applicants’ motivations, interests, and goals. Admissions committees will also value relevant internship or volunteer work; travel, study, or work experience at an international organization; or undergraduate research on an international theme.

Public Administration

General Description: The study and implementation, determination, and output of policy. Master of Public Administration (MPA) degrees prepare students for positions in government, NGOs, international organizations, public affairs divisions and agencies dealing with critical public policy issues. MPA candidates gain critical expertise in quantitative, analytical, and managerial skills and apply them to the public sector.

Common Specializations

Economic Development The development of economic wealth of countries or regions for the well being of their inhabitants. Public policy generally aims at continuous and sustained economic growth and expansion of national economies in hopes that developing countries becoming developed countries.

Environmental Policy & Management The study of laws, regulation, and other policy concerning environmental issues and sustainability. Issues include air and water pollution, natural resource protection as well as energy and toxic regulation.

Health Policy & Social Welfare A systematic evaluation of alternative means of achieving social goals. A focus on the guidelines for the changing, maintenance or creation of living conditions that can be conducive to human welfare. International Development Multidisciplinary study that aims to acquire a broader understanding of economic, political, and social changes in the developing world with the goal of alleviating poverty and inequality.

Public Finance Relates to economics with a focus on budgeting the revenues & expenditures of a public sector entity.

Public Policy Analysis Policy analysis is an organized structured thinking about policy problems. It can be methodologically diverse using both qualitative methods and quantitative methods, including case studies, survey research, statistical analysis, and model building.

Note: Preparation for Admission by:
Bram Caplan
American Councils for
International Education:
ACTR/ACCELS

Source: This information is based on internal materials produced by IIE and resources readily accessible on the internet.



Top Fields of Study (Continued)

Special Notes on Applying:

- Send detailed letters of recommendation from faculty/employers who can attest to your qualifications.
- Include a well written study objective focused on your specialization.

Common Degrees

MEng The MEng is a professional degree. This degree can usually be completed in 1 year and does not require a thesis.

M.S. There are usually 2 options for the Master of Science degree, thesis and non thesis. The non thesis option requires more credits to complete the degree.

Ph.D. Typically a 5 year program beginning with coursework followed by a dissertation composed of original research.

Special tip for visiting student researchers:

It is important to identify the faculty person in the U.S. with whom you would like to work.

Public & Nonprofit Management Public and Nonprofit Management explores the role of government and nonprofit organizations in developing, implementing, and evaluating policy.

Criminal Justice Policy & Management An interdisciplinary study where students are introduced to the academic disciplines that are needed to understand crime and the administration of criminal justice.

Urban Planning & Management Multidisciplinary study that looks at how neighborhoods, cities, and regions develop. Planners hope to use their skills to respond to changing social, economic, environmental, and cultural conditions.

Source: This information is based on internal materials produced by the Institute of International Education and resources readily accessible on the internet (EducationUSA Connections, January, 2009).

Electrical Engineering (Graduate)

General Description: Electrical Engineering is the practical application of the theory of electricity. This is the branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.

Common Specializations

Bioengineering Bioengineering is concerned with the application of engineering principles to the study of biological processes.

Computer Engineering The field of computer engineering is centered in digital design, computer architecture and computer applications, i.e., circuits and devices, computer systems, and engineering software.

Digital Signal Processing Digital Signal Processing is the representation of signals in digital form and the transformation of such signal representations using digital computation.

Electric Power Electric Power is primarily concerned with meeting the future demand of electrical energy while satisfying environmental constraints.

Electronic Design and Applications This specialization includes device and integrated circuit fabrication, and circuit and system design and simulation.

Microelectronics/Microsystems Microelectronics is concerned with the design, analysis, growth, and fabrication of micron/submicron feature length devices.

Systems and Controls Systems and Controls is concerned with mathematical and computation techniques for modeling, estimation, and control of systems and processes

Source: This information is based on internal materials produced by IIE and resources readily accessible on the internet.

Top Fields of Study (Continued)



Admission Requirements for Electrical Engineering (Graduate)

Admission and financial aid deadlines: Deadlines tend to be from December 15 to January 15. Ph.D. applicants may have earlier deadlines. Check the university website for details. Academic background: Students applying to the Master's or Ph.D. program must have an undergraduate or graduate degree in Engineering. Work and experience: Research and/or work experience is advantageous, but not necessary.

Tests: As a general rule, a TOEFL iBT score of 90 is required. GRE scores in the 90th percentile are essential, especially in Math.

Mechanical Engineering (Graduate)

General Description: Mechanical Engineering is the branch of engineering that deals with the design, construction and operation of machinery. Mechanical engineers use principles such as heat, force, and the conservation of mass and energy to analyze static and dynamic physical systems.

Common Specializations

Mechatronics Mechatronics is the fusion of electrical and mechanical disciplines in modern engineering.

Thermal-Fluid Sciences Thermal-Fluid Sciences includes computational fluid dynamics, experimental techniques, optical thermal sensing and laser diagnostics applied to the investigation of sprays, droplet deposition and combustion.

Acoustic/Vibrations This area of research deals with the engineering of sound and vibration. Applied research may involve the development of aircrafts and automotive brakes, jet engine turbine blades, components in power drive trains, and advanced manufacturing methods.

Design & Manufacturing This specialization focuses on design theory, methods, and practice. Stochastic optimization techniques are used to develop design tools for product layout.

Solid Mechanics Solid Mechanics addresses issues related to impact resistance and notch sensitivity of gas turbine materials, residual stresses and deformation in solid free form fabrication techniques, and the mechanics of thin bonded films and coatings.

Admission Requirements

Admission and financial aid deadlines: Deadlines begin as early as December 15 and will continue through February. Ph.D. applications may have earlier deadlines. Academic background: An undergraduate degree in Engineering is required for admission to both M.S. and Ph.D. programs. Strong quantitative skills are essential. Work Experience: Work experience is not essential but is recommended. Tests: As a general rule, a TOEFL iBT score of 79-80 (minimum) is required. GRE scores in the 90th percentile and above are essential, especially in Math.

Source: This information is based on internal materials produced by IIE and resources readily accessible on the internet.

Special notes on applying:

- Send detailed letters of recommendation from faculty/employers who can attest to your qualifications.
- Include a well written study objective focused on your specialization.

Common Degrees

MEng The MEng is a professional degree. This degree can usually be completed in 1 year and does not require a thesis.

M.S. There are usually 2 options for the Master of Science degree, thesis and non thesis. The non thesis option requires more credits to complete the degree.

Ph.D. Typically a 5 year program beginning with coursework followed by a dissertation composed of original research.

Special tip for visiting student researchers:

It is important to identify the faculty person in the U.S. with whom you would like to work.

Top Fields of Study (Continued)

Common Degrees

M.S. There are usually 2 options for the Master's degree, thesis and non thesis. The non thesis option usually requires more credits to complete the degree.

Ph.D. The Ph.D. is the highest degree. It is typically a 5 year program beginning with coursework followed by a dissertation composed of original research.

Special notes on applying:

- Send detailed letters of recommendation from faculty/ employers who can attest to your qualifications.
- Include a well written study objective focused on your specialization.
- For visiting student researchers, it is very important for the candidate to identify the faculty person in the U.S. with whom he/she would like to work.



Computer Science

General Description: Computer Science is the systematic study of computing systems and computation. This field of study includes: design methodology, algorithms, and tools; methods for the testing of concepts, analysis and verification; and representation and implementation.

Common Specializations

Artificial Intelligence AI is a complex, highly interdisciplinary branch of computer science that attempts to incorporate the principles of human intelligence and reasoning into computer systems.

Computer Information Systems This specialization is closely related to management information systems and information science, and integrates the computer applications of data processing with problem solving to improve the efficiency of organizations.

Computer Graphics/Design Computer graphics is the field of visual computing, where one utilizes computers both to generate visual images synthetically, and to integrate or alter visual and spatial information sampled from the real world.

Computer Networks A computer network is a system for communication among two or more computers.

Database Systems A database system is a computer program (or more typically, a suite of them) designed to manage a database; a large set of structured data, and run operations on the data requested by numerous users.

Neural Networks The study of computer systems modeled after the biological nervous system, neural networks are designed to imitate the workings of the human brain and are used in areas such as voice and pattern recognition and speech synthesis.

Robotics A branch of computer science that applies artificial intelligence and engineering concepts to create and program mechanical devices (robots) that are able to perform a variety of tasks including some previously performed by humans. Sometimes offered as a specialization in Electrical Engineering.

Software Engineering The application of engineering principles and methods of design to the production of software, Software Engineering covers not only the technical aspects of building software systems, but also management issues, such as directing programming teams, scheduling and budgeting.

Top Fields of Study (Continued)



Admission and financial aid:

Deadlines are early for Computer Science. Applications should arrive at universities by December 15 with a few exceptions. Some schools have earlier deadlines. Check the university website for details.

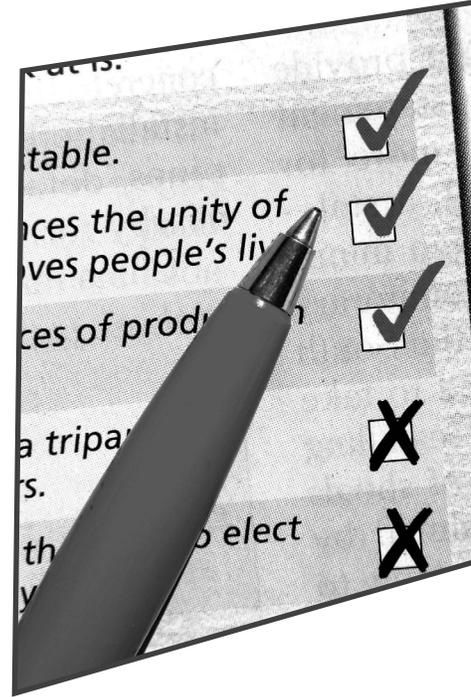
Academic background:

Most applicants to the M.S. and Ph.D. program hold Admission Requirements a Bachelor's or Master's degree in computer science, computer engineering, or a related area with a sufficient computer science component. Strong applicants from other areas may be considered; however, they must demonstrate outstanding ability to complete the required background on their own accord.

Tests:

As a general rule, a TOEFL iBT score of 90 is required. GRE scores in the 90th percentile are essential, especially in Math. Some universities require the GRE Subject Test in Computer Science for Ph.D. applicants. The candidate should check school websites to see if it is required for their program of interest. The GRE Subject Test is offered on a limited basis outside the U.S.

Source: This information is based on internal materials produced by IIE and resources readily accessible on the internet.



EducationUSA advisers in 170 countries provide accurate, unbiased information about all accredited U.S. higher education institutions. Find your EducationUSA center at:

[www.http://www.educationusa.info/centers.php](http://www.educationusa.info/centers.php).

Articles from this resource were originally published in EducationUSA Connections (2007–2009).



Internships, Short-Term Programs and Other Exchange Opportunities

The United States offers a wide range of educational and cultural exchange opportunities including professional internship programs, high school and university study, training, and short-term programs.

There is a range of educational and cultural exchange opportunities available in the United States, but you must be well-informed.

Plan Ahead:

Talk to an EducationUSA adviser to define your goals and begin your research. If you are interested in short-term academic programs or internships, you will need to give yourself 6 to 12 months to prepare your applications.

Short-Term Academic Programs in the United States

- Secondary School Programs: Read the EducationUSA guide to secondary school exchanges to get started.
- Short-Term University Study: Contact the office responsible for international programs and linkages at your home institution to ask if your school or university has exchange agreements with the United States. In addition, many U.S. universities open summer session classes (between May and August) to the outside public, and they sometimes make available on-campus dormitory accommodations. For detailed information about how to choose and apply to U.S. universities, see Undergraduate Study and Graduate and Professional Study and Research.
- English Language Programs: Would you like to improve your English language skills? Search for high-quality programs with a professionally trained faculty, an excellent curriculum, and superior facilities for study - www.IntensiveEnglishUSA.com. EducationUSA advisers can help you find an accredited English Language Program (ELP).

Check accreditation of academic programs: Academic Accreditation is a process of external quality review. Contact your adviser and be sure your program in the U.S. is accredited. Ask if your credits will be recognized in your home country upon your return.

Funding from universities, scholarship organizations, or grant-giving bodies may be difficult to obtain for academic study in the United States. Your home university may have an existing exchange relationship with a U.S. institution. These programs are often 'cost neutral'. **Internships** and **Optional Practical Training** may also help to reduce costs while providing academic and professional development opportunities (see OPT and internships below).



Internships, Short-Term Programs and Other Exchange Opportunities (Continued)



New: F VISA now permits up to 29 months of optional practical training in the United States

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is an outstanding professional and academic benefit of completing a full degree program in the United States. OPT allows up to 12 months of practical training to foreign students enrolled and participating full-time in a U.S. college or university on an F VISA, the most common visa type for academic studies.

After being enrolled one full academic year, a student may be authorized to participate in precompletion OPT on a part-time basis while school is in session, or full-time when school is not in session or upon completion of studies. Authorized employment may be paid or unpaid. A Designated School Official (DSO) at the United States college or university where you are enrolled must approve OPT before you can receive your Employment Authorization Document. Students of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) may apply for an additional 17 months of OPT for a total of 29 months. That is more than two years! STEM fields are:

- Computer Science
- Chemical Engineering
- Engineering
- Engineering Technologies
- Biological and Medical Sciences
- Mathematics and Statistics
- Military Technologies
- Physical Sciences
- Science Technologies
- Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences
- Actuarial Science

Consider the lifelong benefits of completing a Master's or other full degree program in the United States. The international student office at your U.S. university or college can assist you with practical training opportunities in your field of study.

Internships: Work-Based Learning

An intern on an exchange visitor program must be a foreign national who is:

- (a) currently enrolled in and pursuing studies at a degree- or certificate-granting post-secondary academic institution outside the United States, or
- (b) has graduated from such an institution no more than 12 months prior to his or her exchange visitor program start date. Additional requirements are listed below.

How do I find an internship?

Most students find their own internships (see the tips and resources section and talk to your EducationUSA adviser). Students who have studied or had a previous exchange experience in the United States often have developed contacts that will lead to an internship. In addition, U.S. companies working in your country may have interest in hosting interns in the United States.

Do I need an exchange visitor program sponsor?

With few exceptions, all foreign nationals must be sponsored by a U.S. Department of State designated exchange visitor program sponsor to receive the needed documents and programmatic support for their internship.

- **NEW:** In addition, any post-secondary academic institution in the U.S. which is a designated sponsor in the College/ University Student category may sponsor "student interns" (**see page 26**).
- Visit the websites of several sponsors to compare costs and services.

"The J student intern category, in our opinion, is the most appropriate status for visiting students (particularly undergraduates) to conduct research either paid or unpaid on our campus."

–James Dorsett
Iowa State University





Internships, Short-Term Programs and Other Exchange Opportunities (Continued)

Tips:

- Search by field of study and find 10-20 institutions/departments of interest. Graduate students may prefer to use www.scholar.google.com or other websites to learn about professors and their research activities.
- For off-campus internships, you may also like to research online at [FastWeb](http://FastWeb.com) or InternWeb.com. See the last page of this section for a sample of organizations that have accepted internship applications from foreign nationals in the past.
- Designated exchange visitor program sponsors for interns provide the necessary program application form and other paperwork, assist with placements or give guidance on how to locate an internship in the U.S., ensure that participants have U.S. health insurance, and provide support for interns as needed during the program (**see page 26**).
- Keep in mind that finding an internship can be a highly competitive process requiring thorough research and hard work. Your EducationUSA adviser has additional reference materials about how to prepare an effective application and find the best program for you.

“Intend to return abroad”

Most non immigrant visa applicants are required to establish that they intend to return abroad after their time in the U.S. (INA Section 214(b)).

Documents that prove this could be:

- Proof of continued enrollment in a study program outside the U.S.
- Continuing lease for an apartment
- Spouse/children staying outside the U.S.
- Property you own
- Career plans for after your return from the U.S. Each person’s situation is different. Consular officers are aware of this diversity and look at each application individually. It is up to them to determine what documentation can be accepted. For more information about this requirement, see: What constitutes “strong ties”?

Background and excerpt of additional requirements for interns:

- A primary objective of the exchange visitor program for interns is to enhance the skills and expertise of exchange visitors in their academic or occupational fields and to improve participants’ knowledge of American techniques, methodologies, and expertise.
- The internship must build on the student’s academic experience by developing practical skills.
- Payment and hands-on work are permitted as defined in the DS-2019. The DS-2019 is the Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Program (J-1) Status issued by a designated sponsor.
- Important: As with all exchange visitor programs, interns must have verifiable English language skills sufficient to function on a day-to-day basis in their internship environment.
- The maximum duration of a student internship in any occupational field is 12 months. Internships must be full-time; i.e. consist of a minimum of 32 hours per week.
- Interns must prove their intent to depart the United States. A key goal of the Fulbright-Hays Act, which authorizes the program, is that participants will return to their home countries and share their experiences with their countrymen.
- Internship placements may be on or off campus and many, but not all interns, are paid.
- Interns must have sufficient finances to support themselves for their entire stay in the U.S.
- Visit your EducationUSA Advising Center for reference materials and educational advising. The resources below are a sample to help you “find the best fit”.

External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

Internships, Short-Term Programs and Other Exchange Opportunities (Continued)



Trainee Programs

“Trainees” have different eligibility requirements and sponsors. A trainee means a foreign national who has either:

- (a) a degree or professional certificate from a foreign post-secondary academic institution and at least one year of prior related work experience in his/her occupational field acquired outside the United States, or
- (b) five years of work experience outside the United States in his/her occupational field, and who enters the United States to participate in a structured and guided work-based training program in his/her specific occupational field.

The regulations for trainees are designed to distinguish between bona fide training, which is permitted, and merely gaining additional work experience, which is not permitted.

With few exceptions, training programs may last up to 18 months. For training programs in the field of agriculture and in the “Hospitality and Tourism” occupational category, the maximum duration is 12 months. Select a designated exchange visitor program sponsor for “trainees” and apply for sponsorship.

Summer World Travel Programs

Summer work travel programs provide foreign post-secondary students the opportunity to work and travel in the United States for up to four months during their summer vacation. Participants must be enrolled in and pursuing a degree at an accredited post-secondary academic institution outside the United States, or have graduated from such an institution no more than 12 months prior to his or her exchange visitor program start date. Students must work with a Department of State designated exchange visitor program sponsor to participate in this program. Students may locate their own jobs and/or housing, or sponsors will locate jobs and housing for them.

Camp Counselors

The Department of State designates exchange sponsors to facilitate the entry of foreign nationals to serve as counselors in camps for up to four months during the U.S. summer. Participants must be bona fide youth workers, students, teachers, or individuals with specialized skills and at least 18 years of age. Camp counselors receive financial compensation for their service. Select an exchange visitor program sponsor and learn more about life as a U.S. camp counselor.

Training on a B-1 (Visitor) VISA or the VISA waiver Program:

You may be able to enter the U.S. temporarily on a visitor visa (B-1) or with the Visa Waiver Program for training or for independent research. You may not receive a salary or remuneration other than an allowance or other reimbursement for expenses incidental to your stay in the United States. See: acceptable B-1 activities.

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Internships, Short-Term Programs and Other Exchange Opportunities (Continued)

Au Pair Program

Foreign nationals are afforded the opportunity to live with an American host family in exchange for child care for up to one year, with a possible second year extension. All au pair participants receive room and board and are paid to provide child care services to the host family. Au pair participants provide up to forty-five hours of child care services per week and pursue not less than six semester hours of academic credit or its equivalent during their year of program participation. Au pairs must be:

- (a) between the ages of 18 and 26;
- (b) a secondary school graduate, or equivalent;
- (c) proficient in spoken English; and
- (d) capable of fully participating in the program as evidenced by the satisfactory completion of a physical.

Au pairs participating in the EduCare program (care for school-age children) provide up to thirty hours of child care services per week and pursue not less than twelve semester hours of academic credit or its equivalent during their year of program participation.

Select an exchange visitor program sponsor and learn more about participation requirements.

Resources

Designated Exchange Visitor Program Sponsors

For additional information about visas, please visit www.travel.state.gov. Keep in mind that in certain instances, exchange visitors may be subject to a two-year foreign residency requirement.

Short-Term Study, English Language Programs, Distance Education and Accreditation from the series If You Want to Study in the United States.

- [FastWeb](#) – *Guide to Jobs, Internships and Careers*
- [InternWeb.com](#) – *Internship Search Tools for Students*
- *Peterson's Internships – Find the right internship for you (Peterson's, published annually)*
- *Princeton Review: America's Top Internships. Mark Oldman and Samer Hamadeh. Random House, New York (published annually)*
- [Vault Guide to Top Internships](#)



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Talk to an EducationUSA adviser about additional reference materials and resources available in your local Advising Center.

Internships, Short-Term Programs and Other Exchange Opportunities (Continued)



Sample of U.S. institutions that accepted applications from foreign interns in 2008

Talk to an EducationUSA adviser about additional reference materials and resources available in your local Advising Center.

[Amelia Island Plantation](#) (Hospitality; Tourism/Recreation)
[American Geographical Society](#) (Environmental; Science/Research)
[Arab American Institute](#) (Government; Law)
[BalletMet Columbus](#) (Theater/Performing Arts)
[Brick Wall Management](#) (Broadcast & Entertainment; Health Care; Nonprofit)
[Capitol Music Group](#) (Broadcast & Entertainment; Music/Records)
[Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles](#) (Art/Museum)
[Discovery Communications](#) (Broadcast & Entertainment; Education; New/Interactive Media; Publishing)
[Dow Chemical Company](#) (Chemicals; Science/Research)
[Emerson](#) (Energy)
[Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting](#) (Journalism; Nonprofit)
[FAO Schwarz](#) (Toys/Retail)
[Farm Sanctuary](#) (Nonprofit; Animal Welfare/Animal Rights)
[Ford Models](#) (Broadcast & Entertainment; Fashion; Public Relations)
[Getty Foundation](#) (Art/Museum; Education)
[Global Volunteers](#) (Education; Environmental; Health Care; Nonprofit)
[Google Inc.](#) (Technology)
[Hallmark](#) (Consumer Products; Retail)
[Hawk Mountain Sanctuary](#) (Education; Environmental; Science/Research)
[Marvel Comics](#) (Broadcast & Entertainment; New/Interactive Media; Publishing)
[National Association of College Broadcasters](#) (Broadcast & Entertainment; Nonprofit)
[Pro-Found Software, Inc.](#) (Software; Technology)
[Rodale Institute Experimental Farm](#) (Environmental; Science/Research)
[Roll Call](#) (Government; Journalism)
[San Francisco Bay Guardian](#) (Journalism)
[San Francisco Opera](#) (Music/Records; Theater/Performing Arts)
[Schlumberger Limited](#) (Energy; Technology)
[Sesame Workshop](#) (Broadcast & Entertainment; Education; Nonprofit)
[Sotheby's](#) (Art/Museum)
[Source Theatre Company](#) (Theater/Performing Arts)
[Source, The](#) (Broadcast & Entertainment; Journalism; Publishing)
[Southern Center for International Studies](#) (Education; International Relations; Public Relations)
[Southwestern Company](#) (Publishing/Retail)
[Special Olympics International](#) (Nonprofit; Sports)
[Steppenwolf Theatre Company](#) (Nonprofit; Theater/Performing Arts)
[Student Works Painting](#) (Management & Strategy Consulting)
[Turner Broadcasting System](#) (Broadcast & Entertainment; Journalism; New/Interactive Media; Sports)
[Tyco Toys](#) (Consumer Products; Manufacturing)
[United Nations Association of the United States of America](#) (Government; Law)
[United Talent Agency](#) (Broadcast & Entertainment; Music; Digital Media; Philanthropy)
[Voice of America](#) (Broadcast & Entertainment; Journalism)
[Westwood One Radio Network](#) (Broadcast & Entertainment)
[Wired](#) (Journalism; Publishing; Technology)
[Women Express/Teen Voices](#) (Journalism; Nonprofit; Publishing)
[Women Make Movies](#) (Broadcast & Entertainment; Film; Nonprofit)
[Women's Sports Foundation](#) (Education; Sports)
[Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars](#) (Education; Government; International Relations; History)

Tips for Internships:

- Plan ahead! Be sure your goals, financial situation and time line are clear before formally applying.
- Contact EducationUSA. Your adviser has free and unbiased resources to assist you.
- Update and proofread your resume or CV.
- Include a succinct, upbeat cover letter with your application, stating why you are interested in the institution and why you hope they will decide to hire you.
- Contact a designated exchange visitor program sponsor to apply for sponsorship.
- Ensure your passport is valid six months beyond the date you expect to depart the U.S.
- Finding an internship is a competitive process requiring thorough research and hard work.

Good luck!

(Source: [Vault Guide to Top Internships, 2008](#))

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Internships, Short-Term Programs and Other Exchange Opportunities (Continued)

Designated exchange visitor program sponsors for interns provide the necessary program application form and other paperwork, assist with placements or give guidance on how to locate an internship in the U.S., ensure that participants have U.S. health insurance, and provide support for interns as needed during the program. Participants pay sponsors a program fee for these services. All such organizations have been approved to run the program by the U.S. Department of State and must abide by the State Department's program regulations.

AIESEC United States www.aiesec.org	Association for International Practical Training www.aipt.org	Association for International Practical Training www.aipt.org
Alliance Abroad Group www.allianceabroad.com	CDS International www.cdsintl.org	CDS International www.cdsintl.org
American Council on International Personnel www.acip.com	Communicating for Agriculture www.caep.org	Communicating for Agriculture www.caep.org
American Immigration Law Foundation www.aifl.org	Council for Educational Travel, USA www.cetusa.org	Council for Educational Travel, USA www.cetusa.org
American-Scandinavian Foundation www.asf.org	Council on International Educational Exchange www.ciee.org	Council on International Educational Exchange www.ciee.org
AMIDEAST www.amideast.org	Council of International Programs www.cipusa.org	Council of International Programs www.cipusa.org
ASSE International Student Exchange Programs www.asse.com	Cultural Exchange Network www.cenet.us	Cultural Exchange Network www.cenet.us
	Cultural Homestay International www.chinet.org	Cultural Homestay International www.chinet.org

“Student Interns” A New Option

- Any post-secondary academic institution in the U.S. which is designated as a sponsor in the College/University Student category may now sponsor “student interns”. The program requirements are slightly different than the separate “Intern” category, which most students use (see page 2 and the links above for additional program requirements).
- A student intern on an exchange visitor program must be a foreign national who is enrolled in and pursuing a degree at an accredited post-secondary academic institution outside the United States and is participating in a student internship program in the United States that will fulfill the educational objectives for his or her current degree program at his or her home institution. The designated exchange visitor program sponsor will inform you of other program requirements.
- Find an internship: For either category, use the search engines and the full range of resources above to find and apply for an internship. Whether you are looking for opportunities on or off campus and paid or unpaid, EducationUSA advisers can help you find the right fit.

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10 Tips For Recommendation Letters



“Recommendation Letters are more important in the college admissions process than many students realize. Now in my seventh year on the under grad admissions committee at Columbia University, I have learned that amidst all the information one can garner from reading a candidate’s secondary school transcript, short responses, application essay, and list of achievements and activities, what often ultimately pulls the entire picture together are letters from counselors and teachers. This is because, at the end of the day, the letters provide evidence that a student’s achievements make an impact upon the outside world.”

While some students think they have no control over their recommendation letters, students’ recommendation etiquette can, in fact, impact the quality of the recommendation they receive. My suggestions to pass along to your students are:

- 1 Give recommenders plenty of time to write your letters. At least two months before your applications are due, make appointments to speak briefly to the people who will be writing your recommendation letters.
- 2 Choose teachers who can vouch for your character, as well as your intellectual abilities.
- 3 Consider choosing teachers who have taught you in subjects you found challenging but nonetheless worked extremely hard in.
- 4 Consider choosing teachers who have taught you in the areas of study you would like to pursue in college.
- 5 Prepare an information sheet to give to recommenders when you want to meet with them with the following information:
 - The schools you are applying to, with descriptions of why you have chosen to apply to each school.
 - Your most meaningful and long-term commitments, with reasons you’ve chosen these activities.
 - The honors and achievements of which you are most proud, with a description of why they are important in general, and specifically to you.
 - Any personal issues (long commutes, after school jobs, family problems) that may have affected you over your secondary school years.
- 6 You will likely have little choice regarding who will write the “Counselor” recommendation, but put a good deal of thought behind what teachers will write your “Teacher” recommendations. Thus, choose teachers:
 - with whom you have been able to communicate comfortably;
 - who are not overwhelmed with hundreds of other letters to write;
 - who know you more than as a grade on a paper;
 - who may not have given you your best grade, but who recognize and appreciate your tenacity, hard work, discipline, willingness to take risks, genuine love of learning, collaborative spirit, and so forth;
 - who genuinely like you.
- 7 Show your teachers your true personality.
- 8 Share with teachers relevant aspects of your personal life.

Tips for Internships:

- Plan ahead! Be sure your goals, financial situation and timeline are clear before formally applying.
- Contact EducationUSA. Your adviser has free and unbiased resources to assist you.
- Update and proofread your resume or CV.
- Include a succinct, upbeat cover letter with your application, stating why you are interested in the institution and why you hope they will decide to hire you.
- Contact a designated exchange visitor program sponsor to apply for sponsorship.
- Ensure your passport is valid six months beyond the date you expect to depart the U.S.
- Finding an internship is a competitive process requiring thorough research and hard work.

Good luck!

(Source: Vault Guide to Top Internships, 2008)

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10 Tips For Recommendation Letters (Continued)

- 9 Share with teachers a paper, project or exam that demonstrates your best work in their class or similar classes.
- 10 Although gifts are not necessary, remember to send thank you notes to recommenders.

“My experience in reading international applications, as well as in speaking to many students abroad, has taught me that the American approach to letters of recommendation can be quite different from that of other countries.

GOOD LUCK!”

- Alice Huang
Senior Assistant
Director of Admissions
Director of Engineering Recruitment at Columbia University

Online Resources for students applying to US institution

EducationUSA:

[www.http://www.educationusa.info/](http://www.educationusa.info/)

Guide to U.S. higher education and practical information for living in the United States. The site includes find a school search engines and links to external financial aid resources.

The College Board:

www.collegeboard.com

Offers information for students, parents and educators regarding taking standardized tests, planning for college, finding a college, applying to college and paying for college.

The Common Application:

www.commonapp.org

The Common Application is a not-for-profit organization that serves students and member institutions by providing an admission application – online and in print – that students may submit to any of its 346 members.

Funding for U.S. Study | International Scholarships:

www.fundingusstudy.org

IIE’s free online resource, searchable by field of study, geographic area and nationality, filled with scholarship opportunities for international students seeking to study in the United States.

The Princeton Review:

www.princetonreview.com

Provides multimedia college campus tours and interactive tools to help students choose a major and find admissions expertise. To access information you must be a member, but creating a membership account is free.



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