

East Asia and Pacific

Regional EducationUSA Profile

Australia, Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Macau, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam

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EducationUSA Advising Centers in the Region

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An electronic version of this publication containing hyperlinks is available at <https://educationusa.state.gov/us-higher-education-professionals/recruitment-resources/global-guide>

EducationUSA has an extensive network in East Asia and the Pacific (EAP), with 70 centers and more than 80 advisers. Both standard EducationUSA services and larger events like college fairs take place in EAP. These events require coordination among multiple countries and emphasize the region's priority of promoting the United States as a destination of choice for prospective students. EducationUSA centers in EAP offer a wide range of in-person, hybrid, and virtual programming throughout the year. Two REAC: Regional Managers, based in Jakarta and Seoul, support the advising network and provide regional expertise to U.S. higher education institutions (HEIs) and other stakeholders.

Several EducationUSA advising centers in the region are located at U.S. embassies and consulates; others are housed within Fulbright Commissions, American Spaces, and other institutions. The centers work closely with U.S. embassy public affairs sections.

Regional Overview

EAP is the largest sender of international students to the United States among the six world regions, sending more than 41 percent of the total in academic year (AY) 2022-2023, 2.7 percent more than the previous year. EAP includes several top-sending countries and regions, including China, Republic of Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, Japan, Indonesia, and Hong Kong. EAP consists of three subregions: Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania.

Although all of the major Northeast Asian senders face population decline and economic challenges, students from China, Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Japan, and Hong Kong account for nearly 37 percent of all international students in

the United States, and with the exception of China, all of the major senders of Northeast Asia and Mongolia saw increases during AY 2022-2023. These increases indicate a successful recovery of outbound student mobility to the United States since the pandemic, though inbound mobility has yet to rebound.

In Oceania, interest in studying in the United States is strong, and Australia continues to rank among the top senders to the United States, although there is very little U.S. higher education recruitment in the region. Students in Oceania often seek study abroad opportunities in neighboring countries as well as the United Kingdom and East Asia.

The number of students from Southeast Asia studying in the United States increased nearly 5 percent in AY 2022-2023. All major sending countries in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Burma, and the Philippines, saw increases, signaling a healthy rebound from the impact of the pandemic and a positive outlook for the coming seasons. The most significant increases were in Burma, Cambodia, the Philippines, and Singapore. Vietnam remains the top sender of international students to the United States within Southeast Asia and is the fifth-largest sender worldwide.

Southeast Asia is positioning itself as the next big market for international student recruitment, with some of the world's fastest growing middle-class populations, a sizable youth population (over 200 million), and national governments prioritizing and investing in youth and workforce development. Local HEIs are eagerly establishing new partnerships with foreign counterparts.



Although affordability remains a top driver in prospective students' choice of study abroad destinations, prestige and return on investment are also important factors. Students consider a wide range of destinations, including those within Southeast Asia. The United Kingdom and Australia are more popular than the United States as study abroad destinations in Southeast Asia. Recently, Chinese institutions have increased recruitment efforts in the region, often offering strong financial aid packages directed at Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. The infusion of targeted scholarships from China has created stiff competition within developing countries.

Recent Trends

China remained the top sender of international students to the United States for the 14th consecutive year, and

the United States consistently ranks as the top choice for overseas study among Chinese students. A growing number of students express interest in arts and the humanities, especially in applied arts such as graphic design, 3D animation, and video game design. STEM majors, however, remain the programs of choice for more than 50 percent of international students from China. China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology announced that in 2024 it would issue an action plan for the development of future industries, with areas of focus including artificial intelligence, robotics, metaverse, and quantum information. This, along with rapidly developing technologies, will likely cement the popularity of STEM programs.

Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has announced a number of initiatives to rebuild international education programs,

particularly institutional partnerships. The ministry also announced continued support for the Tobitate Program, a Japanese public-private partnership aimed at helping Japanese students study abroad.

Japan and the Republic of Korea have made efforts to promote the spread of International Baccalaureate (IB) programs. In Japan, MEXT established a program in May 2018 to increase the availability of IB programs across the country. In 2023, MEXT exceeded its goal of 200 candidate and authorized IB schools.

Select public schools in the Republic of Korea recently began offering IB programs. Daegu and Jeju adopted the IB in 2019, and several schools are now authorized to deliver the IB Diploma. Three other regional offices also began to offer IB education in 2023. To date,

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there are 43 IB World Schools across the country.

Recent government initiatives and strategic partnerships have sparked increased mobility between the United States and EAP. The [Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States](#) aims to advance a free and open Indo-Pacific that is more connected, prosperous, secure, and resilient. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (The Quad) and the trilateral security partnership of Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States (AUKUS) have led to the creation of new graduate scholarships, particularly in STEM fields.

Recruiters are able to visit most countries in Southeast Asia without restriction, with the exception of Burma. Most EducationUSA teams based in Southeast Asia have increased in-person programming and offer a wide range of large-scale programs such as fair tours and seminars targeting different stakeholders, including parents, guidance counselors, and educational agents. EducationUSA advisers actively seek to collaborate with U.S. HEIs on many of these programs.

With the exception of a few countries and regions, EAP is widely underrepresented in student athlete recruitment. Australia and New Zealand have long been major senders of student athletes; however, according to 2022 National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) statistics, only three other locations in EAP (Japan, Thailand, and Taiwan) sent more than

100 students to Division I and II sports. U.S. HEIs may find opportunities for recruitment of student athletes and for sports-related programs among major EAP senders with highly competitive international athletics programs. Sports associations, Olympic committees, and sports academies are also untapped opportunities for student athlete recruitment.

Esports and related industries continue to gain popularity across EAP, and esports were recently added as official medal sports in the Asian Games. U.S. HEIs that offer esports programs will find competitive players in EAP who are interested in opportunities to study in the United States.

The cost of a U.S. higher education is a growing challenge for prospective students in the region. Survey data consistently point to tuition and rising costs as major factors when considering study abroad in general, and in selecting the United States as a destination in particular. In a study abroad interest survey by the U.S. Embassy Seoul and EducationUSA, for example, more than 80 percent of respondents, representing South Korean students and parents, said tuition and cost of living were their biggest concerns when considering studying in the United States.

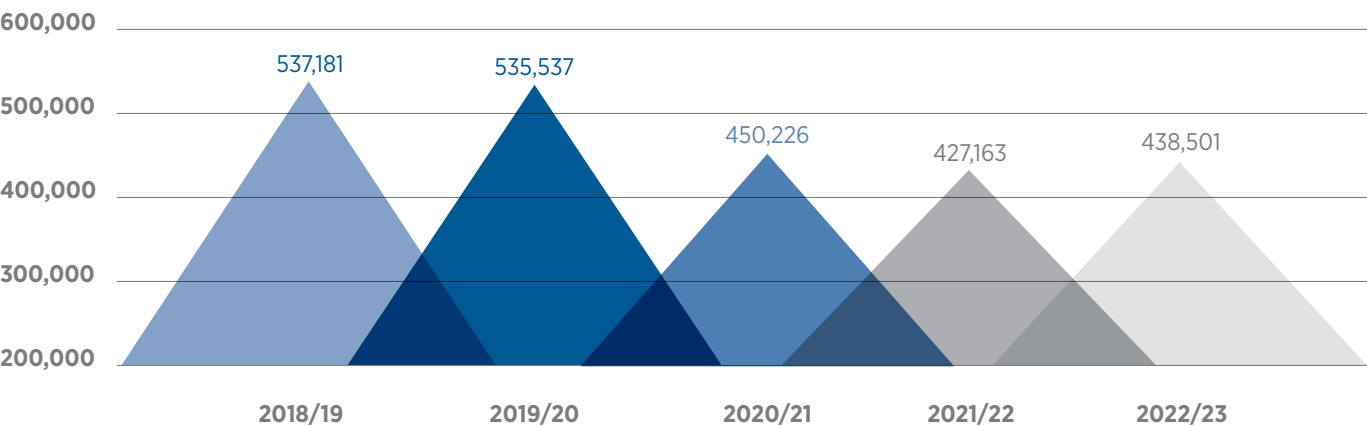
In addition to lower costs, parents and students may be attracted to more favorable visa policies, opportunities to work, and pathways to immigration. Some other study abroad destinations

may offer these as a package deal for prospective students. With more options and incentives available, families of potential students will consider return on investment more seriously.

Students in EAP also have more options to study in their home countries and in the region. As countries build their capacity to host international students, the number of courses and full-degree programs offered in English is rapidly growing. Several governments have announced ambitious plans to increase the number of international students coming to their countries. The Japanese government, for example, aims to have 400,000 international students by 2033, and in 2023 the Republic of Korea's government announced a five-year plan to host 300,000 international students. More than 100 South Korean institutions already offer lectures in English, and multiple EAP countries aim to become regional hubs for higher education.

Although many U.S. institutions have test-optional policies, a large number of students from EAP still regard exams such as the SAT and ACT as necessary for admission and scholarships. To provide flexibility for international students, an increasing number of U.S. HEIs recognize national exams as a criterion for admission. For example, some U.S. HEIs recognize national assessments in China, Republic of Korea, and Hong Kong, and the Eiken for English assessment in Japan. Testing authorities and providers may also list or highlight U.S. institutions that recognize their exams on official websites.

Student Mobility in the Region (Five-Year Trend)





Top Senders and Countries to Watch

Below are the top 10 EAP countries by number of students studying in the United States. *Student Mobility Facts and Figures* sheets for all countries are available on the [Open Doors website](#).

1. China
2. Republic of Korea
3. Vietnam
4. Taiwan
5. Japan
6. Indonesia
7. Hong Kong
8. Thailand
9. Malaysia
10. Australia

In addition to these top senders, countries to watch include:

Burma. Burma saw the greatest percentage increase among all Southeast Asian nations in the number of students enrolled in U.S. institutions in AY 2022-2023, up more than 30 percent to 1,060. While Burmese students often face limited access to required application

documents, lack of appropriate funding sources, and restricted international travel, they are eager to connect virtually with U.S. representatives from affordable schools that offer scholarship aid. Community colleges in the United States are well positioned to attract Burmese students due to their affordability and relaxed application requirements. U.S. HEIs that offer flexibility for applicants will be in a better position to attract interest from Burmese students.

Papua New Guinea. With a population of more than nine million and almost no U.S. higher educational recruitment presence, Papua New Guinea is a country of untapped potential. In 2023, the Papua New Guinean government sent some 40 students from its national Schools of Excellence program to pursue undergraduate degrees in the United States on fully funded scholarships. Moving forward, the government hopes to send more students and expand the number of U.S. HEIs hosting scholarship recipients. Workforce development, community college and student athlete

recruitment, and institutional partnerships are areas of opportunity in Papua New Guinea.

Singapore. Singapore saw a strong rebound in student mobility with 4,484 Singaporean students studying in the United States in AY 2022-2023, a 14.9 percent increase over the previous year. The Forward SG 2024 budget will invest SGD\$100 million in arts and SGD\$20 million in sports to build an appreciation of these fields. This could generate more commercial demand for employees with degrees in these fields, boosting parental permission for students to pursue arts and sports programs of study. Growing domestic HEIs such as the Singapore Institute of Technology, which is relocating to the new Punggol Digital District, and the University of the Arts Singapore, which will open in 2024, may present opportunities to create institutional partnerships. In addition, U.S. Embassy Singapore is hoping to create partnerships between polytechnics and U.S. community colleges or universities

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for a credit equivalency program, which would allow students to graduate early.

What to Expect in the Next Three to Five Years

Following a healthy rebound in post-pandemic student mobility, several countries in EAP will continue to see moderate to significant growth in numbers of students choosing to study in the United States. The resumption of U.S. HEI recruitment travel to the region, increased agent activities, more

government scholarships, and growing interest among local HEIs in establishing institutional partnerships with U.S. institutions will likely add to the positive trend.

However, competition from other study destinations such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, China, and several European countries will intensify, and prospective students will consider return on investment more seriously. Fluctuating currencies will influence prospective

students who look for cost-effective educational options, and many students may perceive studying in the United States as an expensive choice. While many governments are showing interest in sending their students to study abroad, they are also making efforts to improve and internationalize domestic HEIs in order to retain students and attract international students. Mobility within EAP is gaining momentum, since some students want to stay close to home and build their domestic professional networks. Prospective students in EAP will need to see a strong return on investment in U.S. HEIs, with a clear path to career opportunities following graduation, if they are to choose the United States as their study destination.

EducationUSA teams in Southeast Asia offered a series of large and small fairs in 2022 and 2023. These fairs were well attended, with some destinations attracting thousands of participants. EducationUSA teams will work to include more fair stops and attract more participants in the next three to five years. Commercial fairs that feature U.S. higher education also take place throughout the year, giving U.S. HEIs reason to visit the region multiple times annually. The rising popularity of English-medium schools across EAP will create larger pools of prospective students interested in studying in Anglophone countries. Similarly, several Southeast Asian governments continue to create scholarship schemes, encouraging local institutions to establish partnerships with foreign institutions. U.S. HEIs should check

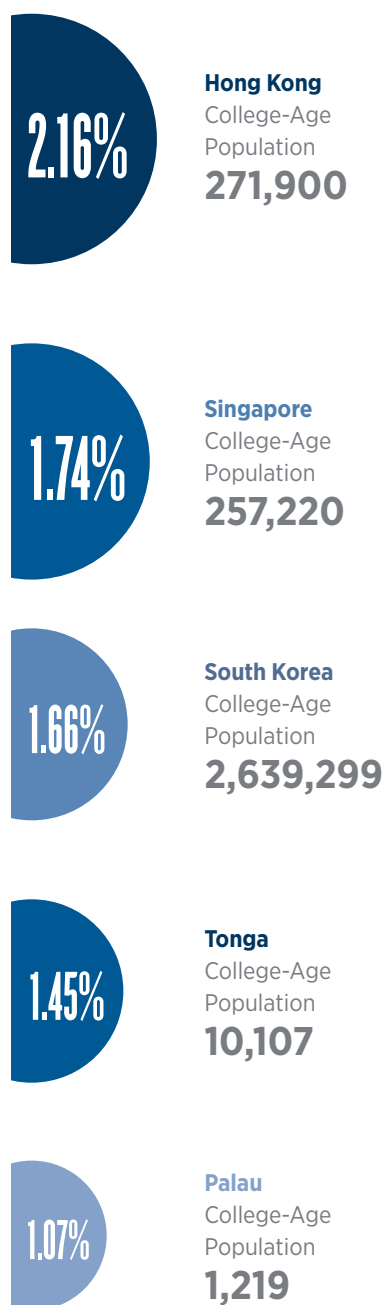
Five Countries of Origin (with over 100 students) with Highest Percentage Growth, International Students in the Region (Five-Year Trend)

Country	2018/19	2022/23	% Change
Cambodia	685	1,060	55%
Burma	1,773	2,483	40%
Fiji	98	134	37%
Papua New Guinea	86	104	21%
Philippines	3,320	3,818	15%

55.0%

Cambodia has the largest percentage growth in the region over the last five years (with over 100 students)

Five Locations of Origin in the Region with Highest Per Capita College-Age Student Mobility to the United States



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics; Indicator: 2023 or most recent Population of the official age for tertiary education, both sexes

for updates on the regional educational markets whenever visiting Southeast Asia.

Taiwan has adopted a policy to become a bilingual English-Mandarin Chinese region by 2030, from K-12 students and its civil service all the way up to university. The policy intends to connect Taiwan's workforce with the world and attract international enterprises to Taiwan. To achieve this, the Ministry of Education launched the Taiwan Foreign English Teacher Program (TFETP) to enhance Taiwanese students' ability to communicate in English, improve local English teachers' skills, and advance the English-learning environment at schools. Taiwan's move toward bilingualism will open opportunities for U.S. education technology companies, U.S.-Taiwan exchange programs, Chinese-language teacher training programs, and more.

The Korean Ministry of Education has announced plans to implement its [Regional Innovation System and Education \(RISE\)](#) initiative nationwide starting in 2025. The objectives of RISE are to support local economies with HEIs as hubs and nurture the competitiveness of these institutions. The initiative would initially designate 30 "glocal" institutions by 2027 and provide more regional autonomy for investment and development based on the needs of the local community.

The PRC government continues to build capacity in its postsecondary sector with focus on quality and higher education enhancements; it has invested in the development of high-tech research facilities and increased capacity to host international students. China has been finding ways to incentivize Chinese students and scholars to stay home for study instead of pursuing higher education in other countries.

Virtual Engagement and Social Media Usage

Access to high-speed internet is a standard convenience in most metropolitan areas in EAP. Even outside major cities, students do not usually have connection issues unless they reside in rural locations. Facebook, Instagram, Zoom, YouTube, and Google are widely used for engagement across EAP. Some EAP countries utilize platforms that are

unique to the region. For example, Zalo is a leading instant messaging platform in Vietnam, Line is popular in Thailand, and Naver and KakaoTalk are ubiquitous in the Republic of Korea.

Since the PRC's Great Firewall blocks many non-Chinese platforms, student engagement in China relies on local language websites, Weibo, and WeChat. U.S. HEIs should consider investing in Chinese-language web pages and maintain active engagement with high school counselors via WeChat messaging that includes updates, emails, and webinars in the local language.

While many countries around the world adapted to online engagement as a result of the pandemic, it has not been possible in some Pacific countries. For example, even with the installation of a high-speed cable, internet connections around the island of Samoa remain poor. Students in Samoa are often unable to join live sessions due to buffering issues and the relatively high cost of accessing the internet. For many countries in the Pacific, prerecorded content and information sessions are most effective since they can be downloaded at any time and tested for functionality.

Several EducationUSA advising centers in EAP have had success conducting virtual events on Metaverse platforms. These platforms provide a fun user experience and allow users to interact with each other more freely, bringing back the social aspect of gatherings that is often lost in online programming. Some centers have incorporated virtual reality (VR) tours into their advising toolkits, giving students

Regional Student Totals Top Five Countries of Origin

Country	2022/23	% Change
China	289,526	0%
South Korea	43,847	8%
Vietnam	21,900	6%
Taiwan	21,834	7%
Japan	16,054	19%

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the opportunity to experience campus life through VR goggles or mobile devices. Metaverse platforms, VR, augmented reality, and other developing technologies will become more widely used in the coming years, and U.S. HEIs may wish to explore integrating them into their outreach strategies.

Successful Recruiting Strategies

- In addition to highlighting financial aid and post-study work opportunities, help prospective students see a clear career path from U.S. education to employment. Provide clear information on Optional Practical Training (OPT) and Curricular Practical Training (CPT), internship opportunities, and employability after graduation. Highlight campus offices, resources, and services available to help international students prepare for their careers and include success stories of international students who found work opportunities after graduation.
- Be mindful of competitors and the growing popularity of home-based HEIs, and develop promotional messaging that helps students understand the unique strengths and characteristics of U.S. higher education. Contextualize the information so that messages are well received in students' cultural and socioeconomic settings.
- Utilize alumni and student ambassadors wherever appropriate to show prospective students and their families examples of success from their home communities. EducationUSA advisers overwhelmingly agree that sharing the real experiences of EAP students is critical when recruiting in the region. International student influencers are an effective marketing asset for highlighting campus life and opportunities in the United States.
- Provide clear messaging about safety. U.S. institutions should actively incorporate these themes into their messaging, highlighting specific campus services that can alleviate concerns, before questions are raised during a question-and-answer session.
- Participate in EAP college fairs and other activities such as school visits and engagement with local HEI stakeholders. Be sure to connect with the closest

EducationUSA center to get an overview of the regional market and recruitment tips.

- Connect with EducationUSA advising cohorts such as College Prep Clubs, Competitive College Clubs, Targeted Advising Groups (TAGS), or high-school counselor training groups. Advisers operating cohort programs often welcome U.S. HEIs to lead presentations, discussions, or virtual events.
- Engage diaspora communities in the United States. Communities of people from EAP may have local organizations, newsletters, professional associations, social gatherings, or businesses where HEIs may be able to promote educational opportunities.
- Work with multiple institutions to plan workshops, master classes, career or soft-skill building, or other events that offer concrete takeaways and will attract a wider audience. East Asia is particularly saturated with information sessions, whether online or in person, so consider adding a recruitment component to existing events.
- Include students with disabilities in recruitment strategies. Use inclusive language to welcome students and invite them to events, be sure materials are accessible, and work with local partners to provide opportunities to connect.

Institutional Partnerships

HEIs across EAP are actively involved in partnerships with U.S. institutions. Events like the Asia-Pacific Association for International Education (APAIE) Annual Conference and Exhibition are becoming increasingly popular. The APAIE conference provides a networking space for HEIs from across the greater Asia Pacific region, which includes not only EAP but also North America, South America, and South Asia. Every year, EducationUSA hosts a pavilion at the APAIE conference and invites interested U.S. HEIs to join the shared booth space to engage with stakeholders interested in developing and furthering partnerships. The APAIE 2025 Conference and Exhibition is planned for March 24-28, 2025, in New Delhi, India.

Partnership collaborations in EAP have included emphasis on sustainability, clean energy, emerging technologies, STEM, the arts, and joint training with foreign partners at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. For example, institutions in Australia and New Zealand are interested in partnering with U.S. schools to boost student and scholar engagement in climate change, indigenous research and knowledge sharing, and emerging areas such as quantum science, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity. Similar intergovernmental and institutional partnerships have recently emerged across EAP.

The implementation of the [Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States](#) will result in an increased focus on joint research, partnerships, English-language training, and educational exchanges across EAP. There is interest in cultivating new types of educational partnerships between U.S. and Pacific institutions, including potential 2+2 pathways and/or dual degree programs, and in promoting microcredentials and other offerings that support working professionals.

Cooperation in higher education between the United States and Vietnam is poised to increase following the elevation of the nations' bilateral relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in September 2023, and the signing of the inaugural Memorandum of Cooperation between the U.S. Department of State and the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) in November 2023. This will likely include the establishment of new institutional partnerships, leading to the development of more joint programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Increased research collaboration and student and faculty exchanges and other mutually beneficial initiatives are also expected.

EducationUSA Philippines and the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED) have been working together to build linkages between U.S. and Philippine institutions for several years. The Philippine Development Plan for 2023-2028 prioritizes quality teacher education. This will mean increasing tripartite coordination between the Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, and the Professional Regulation Commission and could be a



good opportunity for the United States to engage with the Philippines on capacity building, educational infrastructure development, and knowledge transfer.

The government of Indonesia is promoting expanded cooperation with international HEIs through student exchange programs, research, and the establishment of joint research institutes or micro-campuses. Indonesian universities are eager to initiate international education partnerships, especially with U.S. HEIs. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology has existing partnerships with U.S. institutions for its scholarship program and may expand the list of foreign partners as the scholarship programs continue to grow in size.

In Thailand, 18 U.S. and 29 Thai HEIs are participating in the Institute of International Education's International Academic Partnership Program (IAPP) in 2024. The U.S. Mission in Thailand

is committed to developing new partnerships and deepening existing ones. As part of this first-of-its-kind collaboration between U.S. and Thai HEIs, a group of U.S. participants toured 13 institutions across Thailand in April 2024 to learn about the local education landscape.

EducationUSA centers are capable of making general connections for U.S. institutions, but the capacity of each team varies. The EducationUSA EAP team developed the [EducationUSA EAP HEI Partnership Board](#) to provide a means for U.S. and EAP institutions to share partnership goals and contact information. This searchable database is a resource for HEIs in the United States and the EAP region as they seek to identify potential partners. Institutions that wish to be included may visit the board for more information.

Foreign Government and Private Funding

Students in EAP benefit from a wide range of government and private funding, and EducationUSA advising teams closely track updates about new government scholarships. Many government scholarships are based on merit and designed to support a small group of high-achieving students. Some require recipients to return to their home countries after graduation to work in the civil service. It is common for local government scholarships to stipulate at which U.S. HEIs scholarship funding may be used. EducationUSA teams, working closely with government organizations managing scholarships focused on study abroad and educational exchanges, consistently promote the inclusion of more U.S. institutions based on accreditation status and program offerings rather than rankings. These scholarship providers are often invited

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to EducationUSA college fairs to engage with students.

Many ASEAN countries focus scholarship programs on developing skilled workforces to promote national priorities and educational goals. The Thai government provides 450-500 scholarships per year to Thai citizens under the [Office of Civil Service Commission Royal Thai Government Scholarship Program](#). The Vietnamese government's [Project 89](#) finances about 300 master's and 7,300 doctoral degrees for Vietnamese lecturers at Vietnamese institutions and overseas. Indonesia's [Endowment Fund for Education \(LPDP\)](#) provides full-degree scholarships for undergraduate and graduate programs at

select U.S. universities. It also provides for semester-long exchanges for traditional academic programs and vocational programs.

In September 2021, the Quad partners of Australia, India, Japan, and the United States announced the launch of the [Quad Fellowship](#), which provides one-time awards of USD\$50,000 for study in STEM master's and doctoral programs in the United States. Fellows can apply separately for up to USD\$25,000 of additional need-based funding to support completion of their academic study. The fellowship develops a network of science and technology experts committed to advancing innovation and collaboration in the private, public, and academic sectors,

in their own nations, and among Quad countries. Citizens of one of the four Quad countries or any of the 10 ASEAN countries are eligible to apply for this scholarship.

The AUKUS Scholarship supports American and Australian students undertaking full-time graduate level study in the fields of security, technology, and diplomacy. The scholarship provides up to USD\$40,000 to support tuition, travel, living expenses, and other associated educational or research costs.

The [Australian-American Fulbright Program](#) is one of the largest in the world, with approximately 100 graduate scholarships distributed annually. Additional graduate scholarship opportunities for Australians to study in the United States include the [Ramsay Postgraduate Scholarships](#), the [American Australian Association Graduate Education Fund](#), and [General Sir John Monash Foundation](#) scholarships.

The [China Scholarship Council](#) offers government scholarships for Chinese and American students and faculty, and the PRC government has increased efforts to attract foreign students to its own institutions by providing full scholarships and financial support to international students around the globe – especially from countries that further their Belt and Road Initiative.

The [Taiwan Ministry of Education](#) offers 140 scholarships for students pursuing graduate degrees (mostly doctoral level) in 92 subject areas. The scholarships range from USD\$32,000 to USD\$90,000 per person. The ministry also offers 205 scholarships for disadvantaged students and works with universities around the world to offer 92 scholarships for doctoral students.

The Mongolian government's [Educational Loan Fund](#) supports high-achieving students who score among the top tier on the national college entrance examination.

In the Republic of Korea, the [Kwanjeong Educational Foundation](#) provides full scholarships for students pursuing degrees overseas up to USD\$60,000 per year for undergraduate students and USD\$20,000 to USD\$30,000 for graduate students. The [ILJU Academy and Culture](#)

Foundation provides scholarships up to USD\$120,000 for students in doctoral programs. The [Korea Student Aid Foundation \(KOSAF\)](#) provides up to USD\$60,000 per year for students pursuing undergraduate degrees abroad. The [Asan Foundation](#) offers KRW40 million per year for graduate students majoring in the medical and life sciences.

Regional Economics and Market Demands

Southeast Asia includes some of the world's most populous and fast-growing nations, such as Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines. These countries have high youth populations, and as more students are exposed to English-medium education, they are becoming high-priority markets for study abroad providers; an abundance of outreach and partnership-focused activities are already taking place in these countries throughout the year.

Southeast Asia also includes small yet wealthy nations with high gross domestic product per capita such as Singapore and Brunei; students here are less driven by affordability when considering study abroad. Prospective students in Singapore, with world-class HEIs available at home, tend to look at institutional reputation, or the “prestige” factor. The city-state of Singapore sends a sizable number of students to the United States each year, with a large portion of them choosing to study at institutions that are considered “top schools” in the United States, and several of Singapore's domestic HEIs have robust partnerships with U.S. counterparts. In moderate-size nations with developed higher education infrastructure such as Malaysia and Thailand, both affordability and prestige influence prospective students' choice of study destination. These countries are educational hubs that attract a large number of international students from other ASEAN countries and offer appealing educational options for local students. Finally, smaller sending countries such as Cambodia, Laos, and Timor-Leste show some of the highest percentage increases in student mobility numbers among Southeast Asian nations, leaving Southeast Asia with no country to skip on a university recruiter's travel itinerary.

Several countries in Southeast Asia have made significant strides in economic

development and are projected to surpass many of the economic powerhouses in Europe and East Asia over the next two to three decades. As ASEAN progresses toward its goal of establishing a knowledge, technology, and digital-based economy in the coming decades, member governments and leaders have been stressing the importance of training their young workforce with specialized skills and expanding investment in workforce training and educational exchanges. Many ASEAN member governments see U.S. institutions as key partners to help train their young generations and U.S. degree holders as valuable assets to help realize their long-term visions.

The Oceania region is an emerging market that values U.S. degrees. Countries in the Pacific have been focusing on building infrastructure, strengthening education systems, and identifying ways to combat the effects of pollution, climate change, and natural disasters. Cybersecurity is a major area of interest across Oceania, as recent upgrades to internet infrastructure in the Pacific have resulted in increased security risks. Students want to become experts in these fields to improve their professional prospects after graduation, and governments are interested in forging partnerships with leading institutions to initiate training in these fields. In New Zealand, many academic high achievers have shown interest in pursuing medicine or law degrees whether or not they want to actually practice. Students in Oceania are becoming more socially aware, further bolstering the growing demand for expertise in climate change issues, sustainability, human rights, and public health. STEM programs that specifically train students in cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and quantum science are also popular.

The pandemic severely impacted tourism in Northeast Asia, but the hospitality industry will likely make a comeback as COVID mitigation measures are eased. An aging population has led to increased demand for support in the medical and health services sectors. In Mongolia, government capacity-building initiatives and financial support cover a wide variety of fields, including law and education. Government plans to expand English-language instruction in Japan and Taiwan may mean a boost for intensive English and education-related programs. The

Republic of Korea Ministry of Science and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has launched [several initiatives](#), including the [Digital New Deal](#), which aims to develop a wide range of technologies to improve digital infrastructure and create new jobs. It has also announced an [action plan to foster talent in science and technology](#), and the [Direction for Establishing the 5th Science and Technology Basic Plan \(2023-2027\)](#), which includes plans for increased investment in science and technology and educating scientists and engineers.

Regional EducationUSA Events, Fairs, and Conferences (in person and virtual)

The EAP region hosts a wide range of events throughout the year. In fall 2022, the regional network resumed in-person EducationUSA college fairs. Notably, a college fair tour including nine EAP countries took place in fall 2023. In addition to joining regional fair tours, individual EducationUSA advising centers also host individual country fair events targeting niche markets such as community colleges, the arts, law schools, STEM, and business programs. Virtual fairs targeting prospective student pools unable to attend in-person fairs may also continue.

Following a month-long college fair tour that covers multiple countries in East Asia and Southeast Asia, the triennial EAP Regional Forum will take place in Denpasar, Indonesia, on October 16-18, 2024. This event will include concurrent sessions and a student-facing college fair and serve as a platform for engagement with EducationUSA advisers from across EAP.

Each November, the EducationUSA EAP regional network coordinates a series of events in celebration of International Education Week and the release of the annual *Open Doors*® Report on International Educational Exchange. Advising centers collaborate with U.S. institutions on a wide range of programs and social media campaigns promoting U.S. higher education. In 2023, the EAP REAC team organized virtual fairs on the Metaverse platform Gather to link U.S. HEIs with EAP high school counselors and university representatives.

The EAP REACs organize regular training sessions on U.S. higher education topics

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for EducationUSA advisers from across the region. U.S. university representatives may join these sessions as guest speakers and engage with multiple advising teams at once. These sessions often lead to further collaboration with individual advising centers.

Additionally, the EAP REACs routinely offer virtual meet-and-greet events for U.S. higher education representatives and EducationUSA advising teams in the region to engage in conversations about regional trends, recruitment strategies, and ideas for collaboration.

U.S. Study Abroad in the Region

EAP saw a healthy rebound in U.S. study abroad numbers according to 2023 *Open Doors* data. In AY 2021-2022, 9,294 U.S. students studied in EAP, up 419 percent from the previous academic year. The most popular destinations included the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Australia, Thailand, and Japan. The Republic of Korea was the top receiver of U.S. students in EAP, with 4,304 students, receiving close to half of all U.S. students studying in the region. While this recovery is promising, U.S. study abroad numbers are still far below pre-pandemic levels.

The State Department's USA Study Abroad branch is collaborating with government and higher education stakeholders throughout the region to build capacity for U.S. study abroad programming. USA Study Abroad's [Increase and Diversify Education Abroad for U.S. Students \(IDEAS\) Program](#) awarded 37 grants to U.S. colleges and universities in 2024 to develop study abroad programs across the world focusing on various foreign policy themes, including economic development and entrepreneurship, global health, and technology and innovation. Five U.S. colleges and universities are using 2024 IDEAS grants to expand their higher education partnerships and study abroad programming in six countries across East Asia and the Pacific. USA Study Abroad also provided funding to six U.S. embassies, consulates, and binational Fulbright Commissions in the region in 2024 to implement U.S. Study Abroad Engagement Grant projects that will build foreign higher education institutions' capacity to partner with U.S. colleges

Best and Worst Times of the Year to Interact with Students (in person and virtual)

EAP is accessible for student engagement opportunities year-round. Most U.S. higher education representatives plan their own itinerary, set their own meetings with local stakeholders and schools, and host a few key student recruitment events for the general public in target cities. Spring (February-May) and fall (August-November) are generally the best times to visit most EAP countries, but visiting recruiters should check with either an EducationUSA center or in-country contacts to ensure outreach plans are feasible. Guests should avoid lunar calendar holidays and religious and cultural events and differentiate between local and international school academic calendars.

For virtual sessions, HEIs must operate within EAP time zones to better encourage student participation. For most U.S.-based colleagues, this means hosting sessions during the late evening or early morning hours to reach prospective students when they are most available. Certain EducationUSA centers in the region may have long waiting times for HEIs to plan information sessions. The ability to honor requests to EducationUSA centers depends on team capacity and available virtual programming slots.

Times to avoid travel:

Country calendars and U.S. embassy holiday calendars list major holiday seasons that may predict heavy travel, business closures, and fewer opportunities to meet prospective students and parents. HEI representatives may also wish to contact EducationUSA centers for information on exam or vacation schedules, which vary.

- Avoid visiting during the Lunar New Year holiday – January 29, 2025. The holiday is based on the lunar calendar, and the holiday period varies by country.
- Avoid visiting during the New Year holiday in Burma, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand. Celebrations and cultural ceremonies typically last for three days in April, but extend past a week in some locations.
- When traveling to countries with large Muslim populations, avoid visiting during the fasting month of Ramadan and a vacation period afterward of approximately two weeks. Ramadan 2025 is anticipated to last from March 1-30.
- Avoid visiting the Republic of Korea, China, or Taiwan during Chuseok or mid-autumn festival holidays from September 15-17, 2024, and October 5-7, 2025.
- Across EAP, undergraduate recruitment may be difficult before and during major exam periods for high school students. Exam schedules vary by country; please refer to the *Student Mobility Facts and Figures* sheets available on the [Open Doors website](#) to confirm ideal times to visit with EducationUSA advisers and local contacts.
- Advanced planning and promotion are necessary to ensure an audience during winter holidays in East Asia.
- In Australia and New Zealand, avoid mid-April (around Easter), early to mid-July, late September to early October, and late December to the end of January. These blocks of time mark the main school holidays.



and universities and host more U.S. study abroad students.

U.S. study abroad students are welcome to join EducationUSA activities throughout the region. U.S. institutions are encouraged to provide information and resources to study abroad participants prior to their departure from the United States so that they can promote their institutions to local audiences. Exchange students from U.S. institutions have delivered general presentations about their institutions, joined conversation groups, assisted with mock admissions interviews, and participated in alumni fairs and other events that allowed them to engage with local high school and university students.

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U.S. Study Abroad

Top Five Receiving Countries in the Region

Destination	2021/22	% Change
South Korea	4,304	341%
Singapore	936	4,357%
Australia	924	3,596%
Thailand	848	1,001%
Japan	678	447%