



Global Guide 2023



2023 GLOBAL GUIDE

The Global Guide is a publication of the U.S. Department of State's EducationUSA global advising network, produced by the Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the Institute of International Education (IIE) under a cooperative agreement. Unless otherwise noted, student mobility statistics are drawn from the *2022 Open Doors® Report on International Educational Exchange*, produced by IIE and sponsored by the U.S. Department of State.

CONTENTS

Introduction to EducationUSA	2
Resources for U.S. Higher Education Institutions.....	4
EducationUSA: By the Numbers.....	8
Regional Manager (REAC) Map	8
EducationUSA Advising Center Map.....	10
EducationUSA Advising Center Levels of Service	12
Social Media.....	13
EducationUSA Regional Reach Chart	14
Sub-Saharan Africa	16
East Asia and Pacific.....	24
Europe and Eurasia	36
Middle East and North Africa.....	48
South and Central Asia	60
Western Hemisphere	70



Introduction to EducationUSA

Mission and Structure: EducationUSA is the U.S. Department of State’s global network of international student advising centers located in more than 175 countries and territories. The Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) oversees the network as part of its mission to promote international educational exchange and build mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. EducationUSA’s more than 430 centers are located at U.S. embassies and consulates, Fulbright Commissions, binational cultural centers, nongovernmental organizations, and foreign universities and libraries. Supporting student mobility to the United States is a U.S. government priority. In July 2021, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona released the [Joint Statement of Principles in Support of International Education](#), which outlines 10 principles to guide a coordinated, national approach to renew the country’s focus on international education – from primary and secondary education to higher education. Efforts include enhanced support for international students and scholars, expanded study abroad opportunities for U.S. students, and international collaboration in research and innovation.

Regional Managers

Regional Managers (REACs) guide and support advisers in the EducationUSA network, which is organized into six geographic regions: East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Eurasia, Middle East and North Africa, South and Central Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Western Hemisphere. REACs provide training and guidance to enable advisers to maintain and improve the quality of their work, and they are responsible for maintaining the quality and consistency of EducationUSA advising services center operations in their respective world regions. REACs also serve as resources for the U.S. higher education community to better understand local educational systems and to develop strategies for increasing international student mobility.

Programs and Services

EducationUSA advising centers offer a variety of services to assist international students and the U.S. higher education

community. The centers provide international students with information about the breadth of U.S. higher education, as well as the application process, through group advising sessions, virtual advising, individual appointments, and predeparture orientations. Basic services for students are free of charge. The EducationUSA network offers the U.S. higher education community current information and guidance to help develop regional and country-specific recruitment strategies, create programs and products to connect with student audiences abroad, and obtain information about application and admission issues that may impact overseas candidates. EducationUSA advisers use their expertise to help U.S. institutions make connections with local universities and schools for recruitment, study abroad programs, and the establishment of university partnerships. EducationUSA also works with recruitment agents representing accredited U.S. higher education

institutions (HEIs), incorporating them into public events, information sessions, and consultations.

Opportunity Funds Program

The EducationUSA Opportunity Funds program assists high-achieving students who are competitive for full financial aid from U.S. colleges and universities but lack the financial resources to cover the upfront costs of obtaining admission, such as testing fees, application fees, or airfare. Opportunity Funds program students participate in one to two years of cohort advising sessions with EducationUSA advising staff, ultimately diversifying the pool of students applying to U.S. colleges and universities. Hundreds of academically talented students from almost 40 countries worldwide participate in the Opportunity Funds program each year and receive millions of dollars in scholarship offers from U.S. HEIs. For more information about this program, please visit the EducationUSA website.

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



7 million+

Social Media “likes”

198,000+

Webinar participants

1.6 million+

Video views

Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study

One of EducationUSA's principal resources, *Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study*, guides international students through the application and admission processes for undergraduate, graduate, and English-language programs, as well as for short-term educational opportunities at U.S. colleges and universities. This framework provides students a timeline and practical tips to navigate the American higher education sector. *Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study* is available on the [EducationUSA website](https://educationusa.state.gov).

U.S. Study Abroad

The U.S. Department of State has a dedicated team focused on increasing and diversifying U.S. student mobility through programs and initiatives that support individual U.S. students studying abroad, as well as the establishment or expansion of study abroad programs. EducationUSA advisers around the globe are excellent resources for developing study abroad programs for U.S. students as they are experts on the national education systems in their respective countries and have strong relationships

with local universities and schools. For more information, visit the [USA Study Abroad website](https://usa.study).

Resources for U.S. Higher Education Institutions

The U.S. Department of State promotes the United States as the top study destination for students and scholars around the world through its EducationUSA global network of more than 430 advising centers in more than 175 countries and territories. EducationUSA provides resources and strategic guidance to accredited U.S. institutions of higher education (HEIs) to help them meet their international student recruitment and campus internationalization goals. This includes information on international higher education systems that can strengthen their international networks and potential partnerships.

Benefits of Internationalization

International students enrich U.S. classrooms, campuses, and communities with diverse perspectives and experiences that expand U.S. students' horizons. They enhance the research and teaching capacity of U.S. institutions, increasing their prestige and position in the competition for global talent. The knowledge and skills all students develop on an internationalized U.S. campus prepare them to become the next generation of world leaders, who work across languages, cultures, and borders to solve shared global challenges. International students and their families also benefit the U.S. economy. The U.S. Department of Commerce estimates that international students in the United States contributed more than \$37.68 billion to the U.S. economy in tuition and living expenses during the 2022 calendar year, for a trade surplus of \$30.62 billion.

Promoting Diversity of U.S. Higher Education

With the goal of promoting diversity in U.S. higher education, EducationUSA advocates for study at the nearly 4,000 accredited U.S. HEIs and supports HEIs that are working to increase their capacity to host international students. This diversification will help international students find their best fit academically, financially, and socially. According to data

reported in the *2022 Open Doors® Report on International Educational Exchange*, in academic year (AY) 2021-2022, more than a quarter of international students studied in California or New York. While there are excellent institutions in these states, there are many high-quality institutions across the country, including community colleges, looking to welcome international students. EducationUSA is committed to helping these and other institutions, such as minority-serving institutions (MSIs) and historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), meet their internationalization goals.

Research on U.S. and International Student Mobility

The U.S. Department of State funds the Institute of International Education's *Open Doors® Report on International Educational Exchange*, an annual survey of international students and scholars in the United States and of U.S. students studying abroad in credit-bearing courses. *Open Doors* data is used by U.S. embassies and consulates; the U.S. Departments of State, Commerce, and Education; and other federal, state, and local organizations to inform policy decisions about educational exchanges, trade in educational services, and study abroad activity. U.S. colleges and universities, foreign governments, and the media rely on these comparative

statistics to analyze trends in student mobility.

EducationUSA Adviser and Regional Manager (REAC) Expertise

EducationUSA encourages the U.S. higher education community to connect with EducationUSA advisers and REACs in the United States and abroad. Institutions can engage by taking the following actions:

- Join U.S. higher education professionals, REACs, and advisers from key overseas markets at the EducationUSA Forum in Washington, DC, or regional forums held overseas.
- Participate in EducationUSA international student recruitment fairs throughout the year. EducationUSA fairs connect U.S. HEIs with local students interested in opportunities to study in the United States. EducationUSA is pleased to announce the launch of a new registration and payment portal, which will serve as a centralized platform for U.S. HEI representatives to register for EducationUSA fairs taking place around the world. The fair portal is in response to requests for a simplified, streamlined option for fair registration and fee payment. U.S. HEI representatives will create individual accounts on the fair portal, allowing them to log in, register



for, and (as applicable) pay for one or more EducationUSA fairs.

- Engage with EducationUSA virtually by participating in virtual fairs, webinars, consultations, and other events.
- Host EducationUSA advisers for campus visits, either virtually or in person. Ensuring that advisers have access to current information and skills-based training is essential to the success of the EducationUSA network. Experienced advisers represent EducationUSA at a variety of U.S. higher education association conferences each year. Advisers often visit colleges and universities, either virtually or in person, before or after these conferences. Calls for campus hosts are publicized on the [EducationUSA website](#) and in the monthly [EducationUSA newsletter for higher education professionals](#).
- Offer to serve as a subject matter expert in EducationUSA adviser training programs. Assist in training advisers on specific higher education topics such as the application cycle, admissions essays, the transfer process, recommendation letters, campus safety initiatives, Title IX compliance, and more.

- Direct students who are accepted to study at U.S. HEIs to EducationUSA predeparture orientations in their home countries.

HEI Exclusive Website Access

The U.S. higher education section of the [EducationUSA website](#) helps institutions develop and refine their international student recruitment strategies. Free logins are available to employees of U.S. postsecondary institutions accredited by bodies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and to members of higher education professional associations. A higher education professional login allows users to access information that can be found only on the [EducationUSA website](#) and to submit their institutions' scholarship opportunities for international students for posting on the EducationUSA website.

Strategies for International Student Recruitment

The EducationUSA network provides advice about developing regional and country-specific recruitment strategies. Institutions can collaborate with EducationUSA to enhance their strategies in a variety of ways:

- Consult REACs, the first point of contact for advice regarding a specific region or country. REAC contact information is available to accredited U.S. HEIs that create a profile to log into the [EducationUSA website](#).
- Ask REACs about connecting with foreign government education ministries and scholarship-granting bodies in the region.
- Encourage prospective students to connect with EducationUSA advisers early in the college search and application process to ensure they receive accurate information and get good guidance.
- Demystify the U.S. application and admissions process by directing international students to [Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study](#) on the [EducationUSA website](#).
- Conduct market research to identify audiences of prospective students in regions or countries that fit your institution's recruitment priorities. Utilize the [Open Doors® Report on International Educational Exchange](#) and the [Student Mobility Fact Sheets](#).

- Visit EducationUSA advising centers to engage student audiences and gain exposure for your institution or program. REACs and advisers can help you make the most of your international recruitment efforts, whether in person or virtual. Contact local centers in advance to arrange meetings or school visits, schedule presentations with students, or attend a college fair.
- Encourage international alumni to get involved with EducationUSA advising centers. Word of mouth is an important factor in building institutional name recognition overseas, and alumni can be excellent ambassadors. EducationUSA advisers can assist in setting up alumni presentations.
- Leverage state and regional consortia relationships with the EducationUSA network to promote an institution to students abroad. EducationUSA works with state and regional consortia that promote U.S. cities, states, and regions as destinations for international students.

Enhanced Outreach and Networking

In addition to resources such as country reports and presentations on timely issues in the field, EducationUSA offers an array of services for U.S. higher education, including:

- Participating in or attending the **EducationUSA Dialogues**: This webinar series engages senior administrators, campus practitioners, and faculty members who play key roles in campus internationalization – including strategies for ensuring international student success both in and outside of the classroom. These discussions will lay the groundwork for enhanced collaboration, dissemination of best practices, and greater success for U.S. higher education stakeholders and international students alike.
- Accessing the EducationUSA network of advisers and REACs
- Connecting with EducationUSA staff based in Washington, DC
- Connecting with U.S. embassy representatives abroad

- Facilitating connections with foreign HEIs and organizations
- Participating in EducationUSA webinars as content experts
- Subscribing to the *EducationUSA U.S. Higher Education Monthly Newsletter*
- Scheduling visits to EducationUSA centers
- Accessing special programming, such as EducationUSA Dialogues, the Opportunity Funds program, regional fairs, and other events
- Providing institutions a platform on social media to help engage with prospective international students

Dedicated Domestic Outreach Team

EducationUSA values its relationship with the U.S. higher education community and has created a dedicated domestic outreach team to engage U.S. HEIs through a variety of initiatives, including:



- Hosting the EducationUSA Dialogues series
- Expanding best practices in internationalization
- Building the capacity to host international students in a diverse range of U.S. institutions
- Identifying and sharing best practices for international student success on campus
- Supporting collaboration and networking among U.S. HEIs
- Featuring U.S. HEI representatives as guest speakers in EducationUSA Interactives, EducationUSA Seminars, or EducationUSA Dialogues
- Promoting the diversity of U.S. higher education, including the U.S. community college system and 2+2 model for international student transfer to a four-year college or university, and minority-serving institutions (MSIs), such as HBCUs and Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs).

Continued Collaboration with Stakeholders

EducationUSA is committed to working with the full array of institutions, organizations, and individuals that advance opportunities for qualified international students to study in the United States. This includes agents identified by accredited U.S. HEIs as their representatives overseas. EducationUSA content and other relevant resources – including this annual publication, *Global Guide*; *Student Mobility Fact Sheets*; *Open Doors*, and the EducationUSA website – are available to the public.



EducationUSA

By the Numbers

EducationUSA collects statistics to measure outreach to prospective students through center-based and outreach activities, and virtual and social media platforms.

Number of In-Center Contacts (both in-person and virtual), by Type

Individual advising appointments	70,848
Advising by phone or SMS (each conversation)	177,155
Advising by email	281,414
Group advising attendees	263,207
Walk-ins/library/computer users	110,662
U.S. institution representatives	6,113
Online Course attendees	4,259

Total 913,658

Number of Event Attendees, by Outreach Activity

Education fairs (in-person & virtual)	322,127
American Corners/Centers	21,030
Local universities/secondary schools	168,306
Other fairs/conferences/seminars	21,668
Host government events	2,861
Embassy/consulate events	7,555
Public locations	15,002
Other activities	9,901

Total 568,450

Number of Virtual/Social Media Contacts, by Type

Social networks - page engagement	5,291,087
Instagram engagements	1,273,687
Videos/video channels views	1,671,950
WhatsApp/IM advising	199,061
Blog visitors	61,285
Twitter/microblog engagements	488,024
EducationUSA webinar participants	198,516
EducationUSA Interactive Session views	516

Total (engagements) 9,184,126

Website visitors (center and flagship websites)

Total 2,103,911

Grand Total 12,770,145

**Changes were made to classification and methodology in 2023 to better capture the quality of engagement and overall impact of the EducationUSA network's social media outreach efforts. Variances with past data should not be interpreted as trends over time in specific categories.*

Regional Manager (REAC) Map





EducationUSA Worldwide Advising Centers

Levels of Service: Advising centers in the EducationUSA network offer one of three levels of service: Comprehensive, Standard, or Reference. To find an advising center, visit <https://educationusa.state.gov/find-advising-center>.

Types of Center (By color)



Reference Centers

Comprehensive Centers

Standard Centers



EducationUSA Advising Centers

Comprehensive

- Adheres to the [EducationUSA Principles of Good Practice](#)
- Maintains an up-to-date library of reference books and materials
- Offers individual and group advising, information on financial aid, and predeparture orientations and information
- Employs advising staff who have college degrees (U.S. bachelor's degree or equivalent) and are proficient in spoken and written English
- Provides virtual advising and consulting through email, the web, social media, and instant messaging
- Maintains computers with internet access for visitors
- Organizes and participates in alumni group activities and college fairs, hosting the EducationUSA booth
- Maintains relationships with local high school counselors and university administrators, and conducts outreach to local high schools and HEIs
- Provides briefings on the local education system for visiting U.S. representatives
- Describes and compares U.S. and host country educational systems
- Provides information on Ministry of Education recognition and certification of local high schools and universities

- Facilitates communication between local secondary and tertiary institutions and visiting U.S. representatives
- Organizes public presentations at off-site locations for visiting U.S. representatives
- Hosts visiting U.S. representatives for thematic presentations on U.S. higher education
- Organizes general U.S. higher education orientation sessions, often featuring visiting U.S. school representatives
- Provides information on local government and foundation scholarships, as well as other financial aid
- Displays college- and university-provided materials

Standard

- Adheres to the [EducationUSA Principles of Good Practice](#)
- Maintains an up-to-date library of reference books and materials
- Employs, at minimum, one adviser and offers hours sufficient to meet local demand
- Employs advising staff proficient in spoken and written English
- Offers individual advising
- Provides information on financial aid
- Describes and compares U.S. and host country educational systems

- Maintains relationships with local high school counselors and university administrators
- Displays U.S. college- and university-provided materials
- Provides access to internet-based videoconferencing equipment
- Offers predeparture information and orientations
- Participates in college fairs, hosting the EducationUSA booth
- Provides briefings on the local education system for visiting U.S. representatives
- Provides information on Ministry of Education recognition and certification of local high schools and universities
- Organizes general U.S. higher education orientation sessions, often featuring visiting U.S. school representatives

Reference

- Adheres to the [EducationUSA Principles of Good Practice](#)
- Maintains an up-to-date library of reference books and materials
- Employs no adviser or offers minimal personal assistance to students

Social Media

Social media and other digital communication tools linking the EducationUSA network to students and U.S. higher education institutions (HEIs) are critical to EducationUSA's goal of promoting U.S. higher education around the world.

Platforms and Trends

Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn are the most widely used social media platforms by EducationUSA centers around the world. EducationUSA Twitter and YouTube pages are also popular. In 2022, the flagship EducationUSA Facebook page generated more than 27,000 engagements, while the flagship Twitter account's following grew to more than 37,000. The flagship EducationUSA Instagram account saw its following increase by 11.4 percent to more than 107,000 over the course of 2022. The EducationUSA LinkedIn account had 22,301 followers at the end of 2022. EducationUSA continues to leverage Facebook Live and virtual meeting platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet to expand and enhance outreach.

EducationUSA advising centers have also embraced country- and region-specific social media platforms to better engage with the students they serve. For example, advisers in Russian-speaking countries reach students on VKontakte, while advisers in China connect with students via WeChat and the microblogging site Sina Weibo. Similarly, those in South Korea employ KakaoTalk and Naver, while Telegram is popular in Iran, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Finally, WhatsApp is widely popular in many regions of the world. Where in-person advising is not feasible

– as is the case in Iran, Libya, and Syria – EducationUSA advising centers operate exclusively on virtual platforms.

For downloadable PDFs listing EducationUSA-branded social media properties worldwide, visit the [social media page on the EducationUSA website](#).

Global Marketing Campaign

EducationUSA's global marketing campaign is focused on promoting the United States as a top study abroad destination for international students, highlighting international student testimonials, and focusing on a variety of themes specific to the U.S. higher education sector. Consisting of high quality short videos, the campaign features international students from all major world regions seeking to familiarize international audiences with unique aspects of the U.S. higher education landscape, such as the diversity of U.S. higher education institutions, community colleges, and liberal arts colleges. The campaign's videos also showcase the value of earning a professional degree in the United States as well as the many opportunities for practical training upon degree completion. Finally, U.S. strength and leadership in STEM, arts/humanities/social sciences, climate change, and the emerging field of artificial intelligence receive a spotlight. EducationUSA will continue to release

additional video assets, all designed to strengthen the EducationUSA brand, promote the U.S. as a study destination, and serve as a resource for the U.S. higher education community.

EducationUSA Website

EducationUSA's mobile-friendly website serves as the central information hub for the EducationUSA network. There, international students and their parents can find reliable information about studying in the United States. Advisers regularly post information about upcoming in-person and virtual events, making the site the best place to find listings of EducationUSA events worldwide. In addition, social media posts from EducationUSA's Instagram account are pulled onto the homepage, creating an interactive and dynamic site. Links to social media on each page allow users to share pertinent information about study in the United States with their own social network. The site also provides resources for U.S. HEIs, as well as foreign institutions and government users. Higher education professionals can request a login to access Regional Manager (REAC) contact information, subscribe to the monthly newsletter, and submit scholarship opportunities targeted to the international student audience for posting to the site.



Facebook
Likes: 5.2 million+



Twitter
Followers: 488,000+



Instagram
Followers: 1.2 Million+

EducationUSA Regional Reach

Contacts Made in 2022 by Region

Region	Sub-Saharan Africa	East Asia and Pacific	Europe and Eurasia	Middle East and North Africa	South and Central Asia	Western Hemisphere
Total contacts made through advising centers (both in-person and virtual)	168,120	61,255	145,221	86,884	197,797	254,381
Advising center-based contacts	167,685	59,728	143,994	86,381	196,793	252,964
U.S. institution representative contacts	435	1,527	1,227	503	1,004	1,417
Total contacts made through outreach activities	88,506	104,569	113,658	21,551	103,611	136,555
Education fairs (in-person & virtual)	34,531	57,521	76,945	10,980	45,016	97,134
American Corners/Centers	5,442	4,222	5,245	541	3,199	2,381
Local universities/secondary schools	42,999	32,824	17,570	7,565	41,934	25,414
Other fairs/conferences/seminars	3,004	5,285	5,390	970	4,968	2,051
Host government events	222	646	425	93	1,250	225
Embassy/consulate events	306	736	3,054	254	2,418	787
Public locations	1,220	2,457	3,857	756	1,900	4,812
Other activities	782	878	1,172	392	2,926	3,751
Total contacts made through virtual platforms	2,155,969	1,428,608	382,534	976,613	1,776,083	2,873,833
Social media platforms	2,136,994	1,405,147	357,986	969,477	1,692,864	2,833,001
Webinars	18,975	23,461	24,548	7,136	83,219	40,832
GRAND TOTAL	2,412,595	1,594,432	641,413	1,085,048	2,077,491	3,264,769

**Changes in classification and methodology have resulted in variances that should not be interpreted as trends over time in specific categories.*



The U.S. Departments of State and Commerce are committed to ensuring that the United States remains the top destination of choice for international students. The departments work to support international student mobility to the United States and collaborate wherever possible to strengthen inbound student mobility through a diverse range of activities and events.

EducationUSA

EducationUSA is the U.S. Department of State's global network of more than 430 international student advising centers staffed by approximately 550 professionals in more than 175 countries and territories worldwide. EducationUSA is the department's official source of information on U.S. higher education and, in an increasingly competitive global environment, promotes the value of U.S. higher education to students, families, institutions, and governments abroad.

The EducationUSA network also provides strategic guidance on international student recruitment and support and campus internationalization to all accredited U.S. colleges and universities through a suite of basic services that are provided free of charge. EducationUSA works with the Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) at U.S. embassies and consulates abroad to support the goals of visiting trade missions or U.S. higher education institutions (HEIs).

EducationUSA advising centers are based at a wide variety of host institutions, such as U.S. embassies and consulates, Fulbright Commissions, binational centers, and local universities. Advisers provide prospective international students with accurate, comprehensive, and current information about opportunities to study in the United States, application procedures, testing requirements, student visas, and financial aid.

To ensure that financial constraints do not limit opportunities for highly qualified international students to pursue their studies in the United States, the EducationUSA Opportunity Funds program assists academically talented and economically disadvantaged students who are likely to be awarded full financial aid from U.S. colleges and universities, but who lack the financial resources to cover the array of upfront costs associated with applying to and enrolling in U.S. HEIs.

EducationUSA also funds the annual *Open Doors® Report on International Educational Exchange* implemented by the Institute of International Education (IIE). The report is an annual survey of international students and scholars in the United States and of U.S. students studying abroad in credit-bearing courses.

U.S. Commercial Service

U.S. education ranked ninth among service exports in 2022. International students studying in the United States contributed more than USD\$37.68 billion to the U.S. economy in tuition and living expenses during the 2022 calendar year, for a trade surplus of USD\$30.62 billion.

The U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration's (ITA) mission is to create prosperity by strengthening the international competitiveness of U.S. industry, promoting trade and investment, and ensuring fair trade and compliance with trade laws and agreements.

The U.S. Commercial Service is the ITA's trade promotion arm. The ITA has 2,100 trade and investment professionals – based in more than 100 U.S. cities and in U.S. embassies, consulates, and business centers in more than 70 markets around the world. These professionals are dedicated to helping U.S. education service providers get started in exporting and developing partnerships in new global markets.

The U.S. Commercial Service and ITA's Global Education Team help U.S. educational institutions and organizations build a recruitment pipeline and partnership channels through various program offerings that are unique to the education sector. The U.S. Commercial Service provides counseling on market potential for programs and develops market research for the education industry. Support includes prescheduled meetings with potential partners, virtual events, trade missions, assistance at trade shows, and single-school promotions. The U.S. Commercial Service also supports the U.S. educational state consortia across the United States with development, promotion, and strategic planning for international recruitment and highlights their states as study destinations. ITA's Global Education Team developed the USA: A Study Destination campaign and wrote the National Export Strategy chapter on strengthening U.S. international education to assist the U.S. international education industry to compete, increasing trade and investment opportunities for institutions and study states. For a complete list of study states, please visit the ITA's [USA: A Study Destination website](#).

To find out more about how the U.S. Commercial Service and its Global Education Team can help U.S. HEIs achieve export success, please visit the ITA's [Education and Training Services Resource Guide](#) on the ITA website.



Sub-Saharan Africa

Regional EducationUSA Profile

Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Réunion, Rwanda, St. Helena, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

63

EducationUSA Advising Centers in the Region

32 Comprehensive
30 Standard
3 Reference

The EducationUSA network across Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) operates in 46 countries and comprises 63 advising centers, including 32 comprehensive, 30 standard, and three reference centers. A total of 74 EducationUSA advisers work throughout the region. Of the 63 centers in the region, 56 are located in U.S. embassies and consulates, six are located in American Corners, and one is at an independent organization. In addition, there are nine at Global Youth Advising (GYA) centers in South Africa.

Most EducationUSA advisers in the region work part time as advisers and have other responsibilities within public diplomacy sections at U.S. embassies or consulates. Public diplomacy sections have restructured staffing in recent years, which for many advisers has changed the number of hours they spend on advising or the number of public diplomacy programs that fall under their purview.

All standard and comprehensive centers offer EducationUSA general information and subject-specific sessions, respond to queries from U.S. colleges and universities, offer opportunities for higher education institutions (HEIs) to make presentations to public audiences, and contribute to predeparture orientations. Many comprehensive centers in the region offer EducationUSA Scholars Programs, a competitive cohort program that guides academically talented students through the entire *Your Five Steps to U.S. Study* process.

The EducationUSA Opportunity Funds program, serving high-achieving

prospective students who demonstrate substantial financial need, operates at 16 advising centers in Botswana, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana (two centers), Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria (two centers), South Africa, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (three centers).

Regional Overview

Sub-Saharan Africa includes all countries south of the Sahara Desert. According to Statista, in 2021, the total population of Sub-Saharan Africa was approximately 1.18 billion people, almost 20 percent of whom were between the ages of 15 and 24. According to the United Nations, these young people will represent 42 percent of the world's college-age youth in 10 years. This explosion in college-age youth is creating three scenarios: (1) Many SSA countries do not have the local capacity to provide tertiary education for qualified students. As a result, SSA students are highly mobile and seek higher education opportunities outside their home countries. (2) The cost associated with tertiary education at home or abroad is often a challenge. (3) Global competition for the recruitment of these students has increased. Sub-Saharan African students are some of the most highly mobile students seeking higher education opportunities abroad.

According to the 2022 *Open Doors® Report on International Educational Exchange*, 42,518 students from Sub-Saharan Africa studied in the United States during the academic year (AY) 2021-2022, an increase of 8.9 percent over the pre-pandemic number of 41,697 students.



¹ "Africa" in this section refers to the 51 countries of Sub-Saharan Africa

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



During AY 2020-2021, just 354 U.S. students studied in Sub-Saharan Africa, reflecting the impact of COVID. Prior to COVID, in AY 2019-2020, 5,444 U.S. students studied in the region.

Over the past five years, ten countries (Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, South Africa, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte

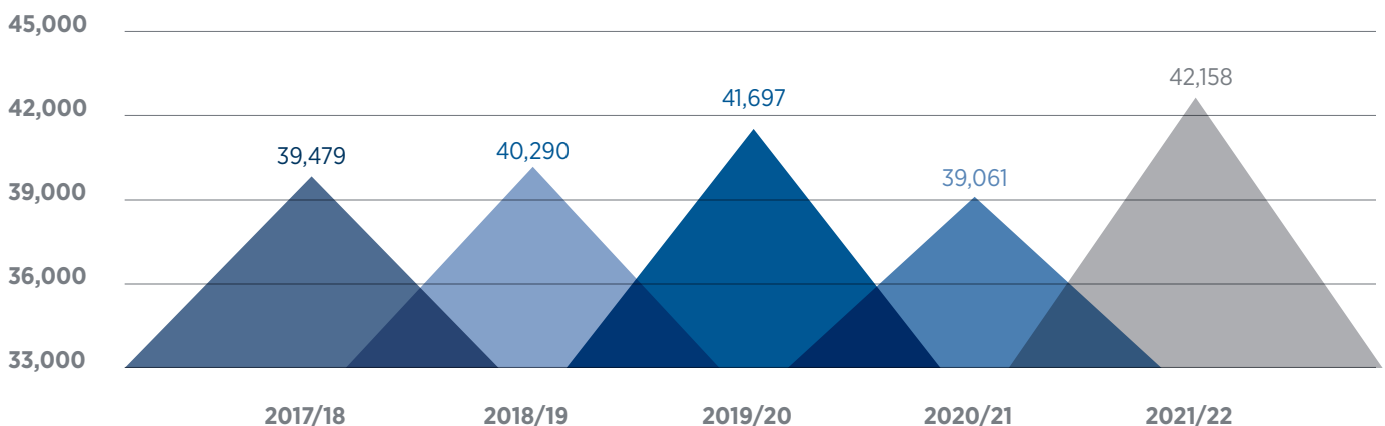
D'Ivoire, and Cameroon) have each sent more than 1,000 students to the United States each year. They accounted for 78 percent of the Sub-Saharan African students studying in the United States during AY 2021-2022.

The top five countries (Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Africa) accounted for 66.3 percent of SSA

students studying in the United States in AY 2021-2022, with Nigeria alone accounting for one-third of all students from the region.

The rising numbers of young people and Sub-Saharan African students' interest in pursuing higher education abroad make the region an important recruitment destination for U.S. HEIs. Furthermore,

Student Mobility in the Region (Five-Year Trend)



Sub-Saharan Africa

technological advances have increased the need for coursework and training in STEM fields to meet local workforce development needs.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute of Statistics, more than 412,207 students from Sub-Saharan Africa are studying abroad. This number has increased by 9.4 percent since 2016, when 388,408 students from the region studied outside their home country. By comparison, the growth of outbound students worldwide is 8 percent.

Competition for SSA students will continue to increase. Expect China, France, Malaysia, Germany, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia to recruit in SSA and offer scholarships to students. Before January 2022, Russia and Ukraine were also recruiting SSA students. Government officials throughout the region ask that the U.S. government provide scholarships, as other countries do. EducationUSA advisers explain that in the U.S. decentralized educational system,

scholarships (except for Fulbright) are offered by the institutions themselves.

Sub-Saharan Africa includes several regional, economic, and political organizations that bind together nations across the continent. For example, 15 countries in West Africa comprise the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) includes 16 countries in Southern Africa, and the East African Community (EAC) is a regional intergovernmental organization that brings together seven countries. These subregional blocs encourage interregional trade and migration and offer educated youth an opportunity to seek additional employment opportunities.

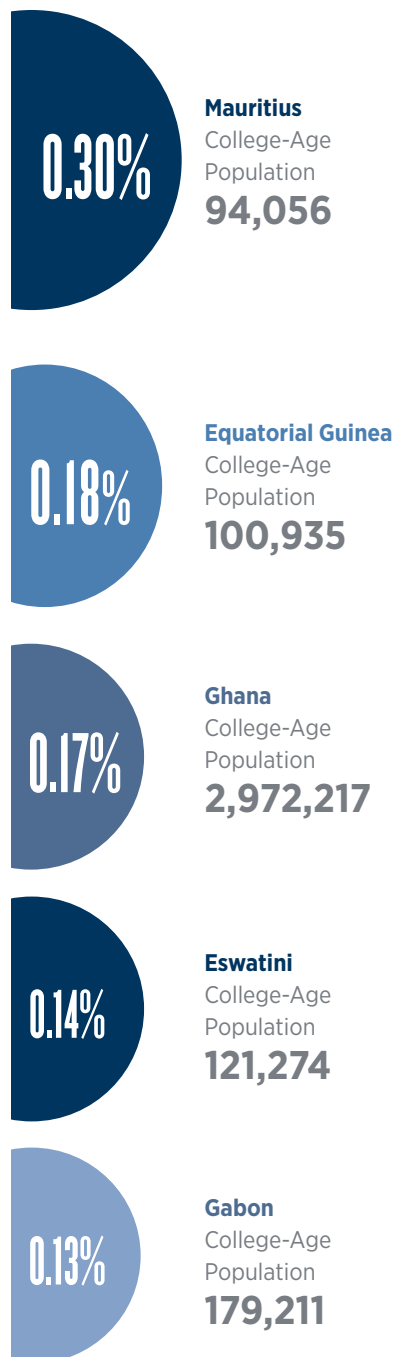
According to the World Bank, economic growth in SSA is set to decelerate from 4.1 percent in 2021 to 3.3 percent in 2022 due to a slowdown in global growth, rising inflation exacerbated by the war in Ukraine, adverse weather conditions, a tightening in global financial conditions, and the rising risk of debt distress.

Agriculture, oil and gas, banking, tourism, and technology are the dominant industries in the region, leading many students to pursue studies and careers in STEM fields. Expertise in agriculture and agricultural engineering, water dam construction, and irrigation development are particularly sought after in Eritrea, Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

EducationUSA continues to offer virtual advising to engage and support students in Sub-Saharan Africa. The region continues to host U.S. recruiters and admissions representatives in virtual recruitment programs to showcase the strength and diversity of U.S. universities and colleges. Some of the platforms used for virtual advising include Facebook, Google Meet, Instagram, Twitter, Viber, WhatsApp, and Zoom. Prospective students in the region have continued to participate in virtual programs, with Facebook Live and WhatsApp being the preferred platforms as they use less bandwidth. Instagram is also growing in popularity.



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



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics; Indicator: 2020 or most recent Population of the official age for tertiary education, both sexes

While the region is home to diverse educational systems, most systems require students to sit for final-year national exams. For example, in West Africa, students take the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). Kenya requires the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE), and South Africa mandates that students take “matric” exams. All francophone countries continue to require the French baccalaureate, or the “bac.”

Mobile phone usage is ubiquitous in Sub-Saharan Africa, and many students access the internet through their phones to research and apply to U.S. universities. Mobile-friendly websites are critical to reaching these students and ensuring that institutional information is available and accessible. Because costs associated with mobile device data plans can limit the number of students able to participate in virtual activities and the amount of time they can remain engaged, prospective students prefer shorter presentations. Unreliable electrical service can also present a challenge in some parts of the region. Many students rely on EducationUSA advising centers and American Spaces to access books, test preparation materials, technology, workstations, and free internet connections.

Recent Trends

Interest in studying in the United States remains high among both students and parents.

Prior to COVID, Sub-Saharan Africa continued to send a growing number of students to the United States. In fact, from 2016 to 2020, there was a 64.4 percent increase, from 25,364 students in 2016 to 41,697 students in 2020.

COVID disrupted education for all students, but particularly for women. According to an *International Politics and Society* article published in March 2022 (“Africa’s Lost Girls”): “One of the most underreported effects of the COVID-19 pandemic is its adverse effect on girls’ education, especially in Africa. An entire generation of African girls has been lost after lockdown-induced disruptions in their education, as many girls did not return to school after they reopened last year.”

Competition in the region is real. Perennial competitors China, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom continue to draw large numbers of students from Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, Canada and Malaysia actively recruit in Sub-Saharan Africa. Prior to the war, Ukraine and Russia also demonstrated tremendous interest in recruiting students from the region. Canada has invested substantial funding in its recruitment efforts in the region and promotes the opportunity for permanent residency.

Top Senders and Countries to Watch

Below are the top ten countries in the region 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. Nigeria
2. Ghana
3. Kenya
4. Ethiopia
5. South Africa
6. Rwanda
7. Zimbabwe
8. Democratic Republic of the Congo (Kinshasa)*
9. Côte d’Ivoire
10. Cameroon

African Countries with More than 1,000 Students in the United States

Country	# Of Students	% Change
Nigeria	14,438	12%
Ghana	4,916	16%
Kenya	3,799	8%
Ethiopia	2,680	24%
South Africa	2,375	14%
Zimbabwe	1,507	16%
Congo, Dem. Rep. of the (Kinshasa)	1,266	13%
Rwanda	1,226	-8%
Cote d'Ivoire	1,034	-7%

Sub-Saharan Africa



**It is important to note that the majority of students from the Democratic Republic of the Congo apply to study in the United States from outside of their home country.*

HEIs should consider the following locations in their recruitment plans to help diversify SSA students on U.S. campuses: Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius,

Mozambique, South Sudan, and Uganda. These countries have experienced steady growth over the past five years. Since travel may be restricted by time and budgets, EducationUSA advisers in these countries are prepared to offer virtual sessions.

Regional Student Totals Top Five Countries of Origin		
Country	2021/22	% Change
Nigeria	14,438	12%
Ghana	4,916	16%
Kenya	3,799	8%
Ethiopia	2,680	24%
South Africa	2,375	14%

What to Expect in the Next Three to Five Years

Sub-Saharan African students will continue to seek higher education outside of their home countries, because the number of qualified students far exceeds the spaces available at local universities.

Continued population growth will exacerbate this capacity issue. Africa’s 2.45 percent population growth rate in 2021 is very high compared to the U.S. rate of 0.59 percent and is projected to remain above 2 percent for the next 20 years, according to *Statistics Times*. *The World Factbook* reports that 19.54 percent of people in Africa are aged 15 to 24. According to the United Nations, in 10 years 42 percent of the world’s youth aged 15 to 24 will live in Africa.

In addition to capacity constraints, students in most Sub-Saharan countries face being assigned to a field of study based on their secondary school leaving exams. Prospective students and their families appreciate the flexibility of being allowed to declare a major after two years of undergraduate study in the United States. Prospective students and their families need substantial instruction provided by EducationUSA information sessions to understand the U.S. educational system, because it is so dissimilar to their own. Students are also interested in ways to earn U.S. degrees online, and this trend is expected to continue.

Finally, interest in graduate study in the United States has grown and is expected to continue to increase. In 2019, 31 percent of all SSA students in the United States studied at the graduate level, and by 2021 that had risen to 34.2 percent. Sub-Saharan African students are seeking specialized advanced degrees that may not be offered in their home countries. Funding opportunities through graduate assistantships are another reason students seek graduate study in the United States. Inflation and currency fluctuations are impacting students and their families in a number of countries throughout the region.

Virtual Engagement and Social Media Usage

The increase in social media usage throughout the region has further

enabled advisers and HEIs to connect with students, particularly outside of major cities. Physical recruiting visits and fairs are often limited to major cities because of budget, time, and sometimes travel warnings. Many sessions are livestreamed on local Facebook pages and the [EducationUSA Africa Connection](#) page, allowing students, counselors, and other stakeholders to access the sessions. Advisers also use WhatsApp and Instagram to communicate with students, counselors, and other stakeholders. HEIs can participate in local or regional sessions by contacting Regional Managers (REACs) or advisers.

Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp

Facebook continues to be popular in the region, while Instagram use is growing. Statista provides useful data by subregion. In 2022, Facebook had 75.7 million users in West Africa, 42.7 million in East Africa, 27.1 million in Southern Africa, and 15.1 million in Central Africa. In contrast, in 2022, Instagram had 14.9 million users in West Africa, 9.9 million in East Africa, 6.8 million in Southern Africa, and 2 million in Central Africa. WhatsApp use is rapidly growing in the region because it is inexpensive and easy to use. WhatsApp is expected to have 74.08 million users in 2022, and that number is expected to grow to 126.91 million by 2028.

Mobile technology has proved to be the most affordable and accessible means to engage many Sub-Saharan African students. Many students complete their applications on their telephones. According to the [2021 GSMA Mobile Economy Report](#), by 2020, 495 million people had subscribed to mobile services in Sub-Saharan Africa, an increase of almost 20 million over 2019. By 2025, 615 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa will subscribe to mobile services, equivalent to 50 percent of the region's population.

Despite this growth in social media and virtual activity, there is still a socioeconomic and gender-based digital divide. EducationUSA advisers have made efforts to address this by using affordable social media and virtual platforms and increasing the use of mobile phones.

HEIs should make the most of the social media realities in the region by creating short informational clips with basic facts

and scholarship opportunities. Students frequently lament how costly it can be to watch long videos or join virtual sessions. Short clips can be impactful if there is follow-up information for future engagement.

Open hours or office hours on WhatsApp can provide a space where students can actively engage with HEIs. Being on WhatsApp will establish an HEI as willing to meet students “where they live.”

According to “Reversing the Sub-Saharan Africa Digital Divide,” a March 2021 [article](#) posted on the Borgen Project's website: “Sub-Saharan Africa is slowly digging its way out of the digital divide it faces today. With the help of several organizations, more emphasis on economic growth through STEM and new financial-based breakthroughs, the region is constantly facing more opportunities for improvement. By catalyzing a technological revolution in Sub-Saharan Africa, the world is ensuring that its inhabitants lead more enriching, productive and prosperous lives for years to come. Technology drives the future; Sub-Saharan Africa is taking one large step to embrace it.”

Successful Recruiting Strategies

- Travel has fully resumed in the region, and students and their families want the opportunity to meet with HEIs in person. Families want to know that HEIs are committed to the region and their students; therefore, plan to invest up to three years connecting with students and families in Sub-Saharan Africa before expecting a return on investment.

- Current students and alumni are a valuable recruiting resource. Students and their parents show greater interest in the U.S. higher educational experience when they hear the positive impact from others in their home country. Develop sessions for parents, as they appreciate the chance to interact directly with U.S. university representatives, which will increase institutional credibility and demonstrate commitment to their students from SSA.

- Competition from countries with generous immigration policies, particularly Canada, makes it important for U.S. HEIs to highlight the Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Optional Practical Training (OPT) benefits of studying in the United States.

- Prospective students are likely to use mobile phones to access HEI websites; therefore, be certain that websites are optimized for mobile devices. In addition, having attached documents in mobile-friendly form allows students to dive deeper into their research while still using their phones.

- All Sub-Saharan African countries have a mixture of students whose families can pay a portion of the cost of attendance and families who cannot afford to pay any of the cost. When offering scholarships, consolidate multiple smaller ones into fewer more substantial awards to ensure more comprehensive support. This demonstrated commitment to the region will have a direct effect on others considering the institution.

U.S. Study Abroad

Top Five Receiving Countries in the Region

Destination	2020/21	% Change
South Africa	89	-99%
Ghana	53	-97%
Rwanda	36	-91%
Kenya	36	-95%
Zambia	29	-91%

Sub-Saharan Africa

- Consider waiving application fees and/or enabling payment from mobile money accounts to mitigate additional expenses associated with bank checks and traditional money transfers. It is also important to disclose the full cost of attending your institution so families can plan properly.
- Partner with two or three colleagues to offer an EducationUSA Wednesday Webinar on a specific topic relevant to students at the time of the presentation and then provide information about the institution. Complete the [interest form](#) and review [Tips for Presentations to Students in SSA](#) to enable better communication with students in the region. Always feel free to reach out to REACs and advisers with your cultural communication questions. They will be happy to help.
- In admissions letters, direct students to EducationUSA predeparture orientation sessions, which typically take place in July. Many countries in the region include presentations by consular officers in their sessions.

Institutional Partnerships

EducationUSA recognizes the enormous opportunity posed by the projected doubling of Sub-Saharan Africa's population by 2050 and the "youth bulge" it will produce. Therefore, HEIs are encouraged to reach out to public affairs offices at U.S. embassies and consulates if they are interested in exploring academic partnerships.

Developing existing links and promoting new partnerships at the university level will strengthen Africa's educational institutions – enhancing regional prosperity, security, and stability. EducationUSA advisers recommend working with alumni and current Fulbright teachers and students abroad to develop the all-important personal relationships that may lead to successful partnerships. U.S. schools are encouraged to have the duties and expectations of both partners clearly stated in a memorandum of understanding when engaging in any partnership in the region.

Institutions in Ethiopia have a strong appetite for partnerships for staff and student exchange, curriculum development, sharing campus and/or curriculum, and developing sandwich programs. For example, Maharishi International University launched two graduate programs in partnership with Ethiopian colleges. In addition, two U.S. universities currently have a 2+2 program with Bordeaux Management School (BEM) in Dakar, Senegal. Students complete two years of study at the BEM School of Business Management and two years at the U.S. school. They earn a bachelor's degree at both institutions.

Foreign Government and Private Funding

Governments in Sub-Saharan Africa have limited funds to support tertiary study abroad. Students rely on support from host countries, and as such, personnel of local education ministries may be unfamiliar with the decentralized

organization of the U.S. higher education system.

The newsletter [Opportunities for Africans](#) contains various scholarship opportunities for African students. HEIs should consider adding scholarship information here as well as to the EducationUSA website.

Examples of foreign government and private funding opportunities are listed by country below.

Botswana. The government of Botswana offers the Top Achievers Scholarship, which is administered by the Department of Tertiary Education Financing (DTEF).

Ghana. The [Ghana Education Trust Fund](#) (GET Fund) supports local and U.S. study in fields of interest to the government, including public health, policy, and administration.

Togo. Togo's Ministry of Higher Education and Research, through the National Agency for Scholarships and Internships, supports two Opportunity Funds students' participation in the Aviation Maintenance Technician Program in partnership with Lane Community College. Total financial aid from the government of Togo is USD\$16,600 per year for each student.

Regional Economics and Market Demands

Although the fastest-growing employment sectors in the region vary by location, there are specific fields of study that are generally in high demand.

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

Country	2017/18	2021/22	% Change
Madagascar	132	209	58%
Ghana	3,213	4,916	53%
South Sudan	76	100	32%
Mozambique	111	145	31%
Ethiopia	2,118	2,680	27%

58.0%

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

In 2020, Africa.com compiled [a list of the most in-demand fields in Africa](#), predicting that STEM fields, agriculture, and tourism, among others, will likely remain popular as students seek skills in sectors with strong employment prospects.

Agriculture is a crucial sector of the economy in Sub-Saharan Africa and is likely to become even more critical as the continent continues to face a rapidly growing population and the challenges that accompany urbanization. Mining is a key pillar of many economies in the region. It offers a broad array of employment opportunities, including careers for engineers, geologists, information and communications technology (ICT) professionals, and human resource professionals. As Africa's middle class grows, banking and finance are also likely to remain critical economic drivers. As a result, institutions offering MBA programs and programs in financial management, insurance, and banking are likely to interest students from the region.

ICT is a significant driver of SSA economies, where mobile phone usage is the highest in the world, primarily due to low internet connectivity. As infrastructure grows, investment in the growth of ICT infrastructure will increase rapidly, and the continent will see higher demand for software developers, systems and network administrators, business and systems analysts, and technical and business architects.

Entrepreneurship has been growing significantly in SSA over the past few years and is expected to become one of the leading employment providers. Africa leads the world in the number of women starting businesses, with an almost equal number of male and female entrepreneurs.

As the economy improves and businesses become established, transportation, logistics, and warehousing will become significant. A career in transportation requires sound knowledge of construction, architecture, town planning, logistics engineering, and business management.

Tourism is a booming industry in Africa, contributing 8.5 percent to the continent's GDP and over 2 percent of employment in

hotels, travel agencies, airlines, passenger transportation services, restaurants, and leisure industries. Students entering this sector will need to study in specialized tourism and hospitality management programs.

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

The West African countries of Ghana, Nigeria, and Côte d'Ivoire will offer a five-city fair tour beginning in Kumasi, Ghana, on September 14, and concluding in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on September 23. Cities in the tour include Kumasi, Accra, Abuja, Lagos, and Abidjan.

EducationUSA Sub-Saharan Africa will offer its fourth annual virtual fair in October. HEIs are invited to participate in the Wednesday Webinar programs described above.

Please join the closed [EducationUSA Africa Facebook group](#) to stay up to date on events happening throughout the region.

U.S. Study Abroad in the Region

The COVID pandemic affected U.S. study abroad programs across all regions, resulting in a 91 percent decline overall, according to data from the *2022 Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*. According to *Open Doors*, 354 U.S. students studied in the Sub-Saharan Africa region in AY 2020-2021. The top three study abroad destinations continued to be South Africa, Ghana, and Senegal, with South Africa being number 23 in the world. There has been some rebound in study abroad demand over the past year,

but it will likely take some time for this to be reflected in *Open Doors* data.

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. In summer 2022, the [Increase and Diversify Education Abroad \(IDEAS\) Program](#) awarded 11 grants to U.S. colleges and universities to develop study abroad programming in Benin, Cabo Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, and Zimbabwe. In 2023, USA Study Abroad also awarded Study Abroad Engagement Grants to U.S. embassies in Lesotho and Tanzania to deliver training and programs for local HEIs designed to foster their ability to partner with U.S. colleges and universities on study abroad programming.

U.S. study abroad students are invited to join EducationUSA programming 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 the institution to local audiences. U.S. students 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.

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

The best times to plan in-person travel for recruitment are when schools are in session. The pandemic has created some changes in academic calendars and local national exams. It is best to contact advisers and REACs to check for the best times to visit and interact with students.

It is best to avoid travel to the region during Ramadan, Easter, Christmas, exam periods (April to June and November to December), and national elections. U.S. HEI representatives are encouraged to note U.S. Department of State travel warnings posted at travel.state.gov, and U.S. citizens should utilize the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) before traveling abroad. Contact the EducationUSA adviser in your target country for additional guidance.

East Asia and Pacific

Regional EducationUSA Profile

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

68

EducationUSA Advising Centers in the Region

27 Comprehensive
21 Standard
20 Reference



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 a strong presence in East Asia and the Pacific (EAP), with 68 centers and more than 80 advisers. In addition to the standard services offered across the global EducationUSA network, EAP centers also support larger events like university fairs and local educator training. These events require coordination among multiple countries and emphasize the region's priority to increase the visibility of the United States as a destination of choice for prospective students. EducationUSA centers in EAP offer a comprehensive range of in-person, hybrid, and virtual programming. To support advisers and provide regional expertise to U.S. higher education institutions (HEIs) and other stakeholders, two Regional Managers (REACs) based in Jakarta and Seoul oversee subregional portfolios.

EducationUSA advising centers in EAP are mainly located at U.S. embassies and consulates, but they are also found at Fulbright Commissions, American Spaces, and other host institutions. EAP centers work closely with U.S. embassy public diplomacy sections.

Regional Overview

EAP houses a quarter of the world's population and includes several top-sending countries of international students to the United States. It consists of the following subregions: Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania. East Asia is the biggest sending subregion, with China alone sending more than 67 percent of all students originating from EAP. Other major East Asia senders include the Republic of Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

Southeast Asia is a developing market with strong potential for student recruitment. The region has some of the

world's fastest growing middle-class populations, a sizable proportion of youth (over 200 million), and national governments prioritizing and investing in youth and workforce development. When choosing study abroad destinations, prospective students in Southeast Asia generally are driven more by affordability than prestige. Students also tend to consider a wide range of destinations, including those within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region. In China, prestige and brand recognition still take precedence as determining factors.

The UK and Australia surpass the United States as the top study abroad destinations for Southeast Asian students. Recently, Chinese institutions have increased recruitment efforts in the region, often offering strong financial aid packages directed at ASEAN and Pacific Island countries. The infusion of targeted scholarships offered by China has created stiff competition within developing countries.

Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, all major senders to the United States, face challenges associated with a low birth rate and population declines. At the higher education level, institutions face the possibility and threat of closure even as they work to maintain levels of domestic students and increase inbound international programs.

Although there is very little U.S. HEI recruitment presence in Pacific Island countries, the language of instruction is largely English, interest in studying in the United States is strong, and students are already seeking study abroad opportunities in neighboring Pacific Islands and in popular study abroad



destinations such as New Zealand, Australia, Taiwan, Japan, and China. The opportunity to play college sports is a major draw for students from Australia and New Zealand at the undergraduate level. The ability to engage in athletics at a competitive level while studying for a degree is a highly attractive proposition for students and their parents.

Recent Trends

Nearly half of all international students in the United States come from EAP, with a total sending population of 427,113 in AY 2021-2022, despite a 5.1 percent drop from the previous year. The decrease was primarily due to a drop in mobility of mainland Chinese students. Other EAP countries only observed minor changes in their student mobility rates. Due to the regional decline, the proportion of international students from EAP in the United States compared to students from other regions is slightly lower than in previous years, dropping from 49 percent to 45 percent overall.

The decline of Chinese students can be partly attributed to the Chinese government's Zero COVID policy, which impeded travel to and from mainland China. Chinese parent concerns about U.S. campus safety and the rise of violence targeting Asians, as well as the challenging U.S.-PRC bilateral relationship and Chinese Communist Party anti-American propaganda, have also impacted student numbers. The lifting of Zero COVID restrictions in January 2023 and re-establishment of direct flights between the PRC and the United States should lead to increased mobility, but a full recovery to pre-COVID numbers may take several years. The U.S. education brand remains strong, there is high student interest throughout China in pursuing studies in the United States, and the United States consistently ranks as the top choice for overseas study among Chinese students. Despite a growth in competition from closer study destinations such as Hong Kong, Singapore, and Australia, U.S. universities

rank first among students' desired study destinations. Interest in business and STEM fields among Chinese students remains strong, however, a growing number also express interest in arts and the humanities, especially in applied arts such as graphic design, 3D animation, and video game design.

Vietnam continues to be the top sender of international students to the United States within Southeast Asia and is the fifth largest sender worldwide. Vietnam is a healthy market for undergraduate students; 67.3 percent of Vietnamese students currently in the United States are pursuing undergraduate studies. Vietnam is the fourth most popular source of undergraduate candidates worldwide behind China, India, and South Korea and the second leading place of origin for international students at community colleges. Approximately 10 percent of all international students attending community colleges in the United States hail from Vietnam.

East Asia and Pacific

Student mobility to and from Japan was severely affected by the pandemic and the relatively late lifting of travel restrictions. To combat the effects of the pandemic, Japan’s Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) 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 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. By December 31, 2022, there were 191 candidate and authorized schools for the IB program in Japan.

In partnership with the International Baccalaureate organization and local offices of education, select Korean public schools recently began offering IB programs. The cities of Daegu and Jeju adopted the IB in 2019, and several schools are now authorized to deliver the IB Diploma Programme. Three other regional offices also began to offer IB education in 2023.

Since most COVID-related travel restrictions have been lifted throughout Southeast Asia, in-person recruitment from U.S. HEIs is gaining momentum, and numerous education-related

events such as large fairs, recruitment tours, and conferences are now taking place throughout the year. University representatives are able to visit all countries in EAP without needing to quarantine; it is still common, however, to follow social distancing measures. Local educational institutions are once again open to receiving external visits, and EducationUSA centers are able to host group activities and information sessions. Student engagement activities are still offered in virtual and hybrid formats, but emphasis has shifted to in-person engagements where possible.

According to the 2022 *Open Doors® Report on International Educational Exchange*, Thailand is ranked 25th globally for international students studying at the undergraduate level in the United States. The number of secondary schools and local universities in Thailand offering English programs has been on the rise in the last decade. Thai institutions, especially those with an international English-language track for academic programs, are providing what is perceived as more affordable options compared to study abroad. Nevertheless, more than half of international school students in Thailand express intent to study abroad. The most popular majors include computer sciences, business, and the arts. STEAM education is a national priority in Thailand, so interest in the arts has risen considerably among prospective students.

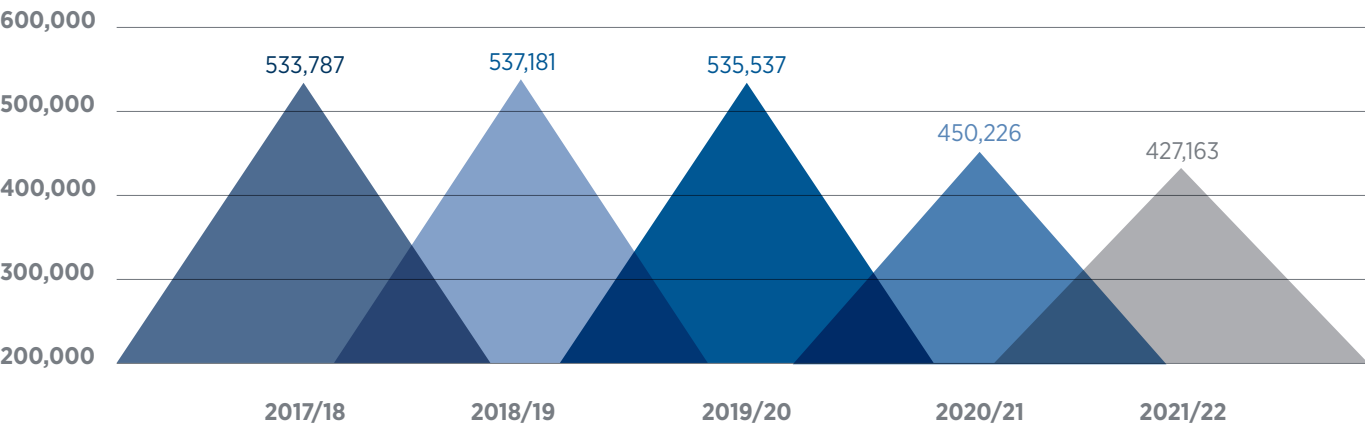
Despite challenges faced by Burmese students since the February 2021 military

coup, there was a 12.4 percent increase in the number of Burmese students studying in the United States in AY 2021-2022, according to *Open Doors*. Visiting Burma for in-person recruitment is difficult for safety and security reasons, but students are keen to connect virtually with U.S. representatives from affordable schools that offer scholarship aid. Burmese students are seeking undergraduate and graduate opportunities abroad at an increasing rate. Community colleges in the United States are well positioned to attract Burmese students due to their affordability and relaxed application requirements. Burmese students can face restricted international travel and limited access to required application documents and appropriate funding sources. U.S. HEIs that offer increased flexibility for applicants from Burma will be in a better position to attract interest from this country.

There is growing interest across the Pacific Islands for athletic pathways to U.S. institutions, despite ongoing concern about meeting core course requirements. As of January 2023, the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) removed the SAT or ACT requirement for Division I and II students who initially enroll full-time on or after August 1, 2023. While students may still need the exams for admission or scholarships, the relaxed eligibility requirement may increase interest in U.S. schools for athletes in the Pacific.

This development may also represent an opportunity for sports recruitment in

Student Mobility in the Region (Five-Year Trend)





other parts of the region. While Australia and New Zealand are major sources of student athletes, the rest of EAP, including top senders, send relatively few athletes to the United States. Only two countries, Japan and Thailand, had more than 100 students playing NCAA Division I and II sports in AY 2020-2021.

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

Australia recently became the 21st country to endorse the United Nations' 2019 Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education. Ratification of this policy makes it easier for students to have their high school certificates recognized outside of Australia, opening doors to more higher education options in other countries. The policy also facilitates easier transfer of credit for students seeking to

transfer abroad. Japan also accepted the convention in September 2020.

The COVID pandemic amplified concerns about affordability, and as major study abroad destinations such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United Kingdom revive their programs, competition for student recruitment will intensify. Parents and students may also be attracted to post-pandemic incentives in other countries, such as more favorable visa policies, opportunities to work, and pathways to immigration, some of which come as a package deal for prospective students. Several non-anglophone destinations, such as China and Russia, are also making concerted efforts to attract students from EAP, often offering fully funded educational opportunities coupled with job offers. With more options and new incentives, families of potential students will consider return on investment more seriously.

Although test-optional policies are in place at many U.S. institutions, a large number of students from EAP still opt

to take standardized exams such as the SAT and ACT since they regard them as necessary for admission and scholarships. Students concerned about affordability tend to prioritize standardized testing if it means access to academic scholarships at U.S. HEIs. To further increase flexibility for international students, U.S. HEIs may consider accepting approved national exams, such as the National College Entrance Examination, or gaokao, in China, the College Scholastic Ability Test in the Republic of Korea, or the Eiken English test in Japan.

Top Senders and Countries to Watch

Below are the top 10 countries in the region by number of students studying in the United States. *Student Mobility Facts and Figures 2022* sheets for all countries are available on [the Open Doors website](#).

1. China
2. South Korea
3. Vietnam
4. Taiwan
5. Japan
6. Indonesia

East Asia and Pacific



- 7. Hong Kong
- 8. Thailand
- 9. Malaysia
- 10. Singapore

In addition to these top-sending countries, HEIs should consider the following locations in their recruitment plans.

Australia. Australia’s reopening for international travel in February 2022 brought relief to Australian students that were interested in international study options. While they were always able to leave, the stringent requirements for returning home, coupled with limited and expensive flight options, made it challenging for many. Understandably, families were apprehensive about international study options during the

pandemic’s toughest periods. Despite the challenges, there was a strong demand for U.S. study among Australian students in AY 2021-2022, especially at the graduate level. According to *Open Doors* data, undergraduate enrollment of Australians in U.S. HEIs rose by 3.5 percent, and the number of graduate students increased by 14.8 percent. Australia consistently ranks among the top five sending countries of student athletes to the NCAA and has high participation rates within the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) and National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). The opportunity to play sports at any level and at all associations is a strong motivator for Australian students.

Cambodia. The number of Cambodian students studying at U.S. colleges and

universities reached an all-time high in AY 2021-2022, according to the *Open Doors* report, increasing from 848 to 875. While the increase may seem marginal, there has been consistent growth in student mobility since 2012. Business and STEM are the most popular fields of interest for Cambodian students studying in the United States. The cost of studying in the United States is prohibitive for the majority of Cambodians, and as a result many have begun to recognize the benefits of pursuing U.S. higher education through community college options and the 2+2 model.

The Philippines. The Philippines is the second most populous country in Southeast Asia with more than 100 million people, of which approximately 19.16 percent are between the ages of 15 and 24. English is one of the official languages, making the Philippines one of the most important student recruitment markets to watch in Southeast Asia. While the number of Philippine students studying in the United States has remained fairly steady for the past few years, Philippine students consistently show a strong level of interest in studying in the United States. The EducationUSA college fair held in person in Manila in October 2022 welcomed more than 2,000 visitors.

The Freely Associated States (FAS). Three Pacific Island countries, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau, are under the Compacts of Free Association with the United States, which allows citizens of these countries to work, travel, and study in the United

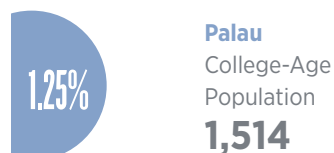
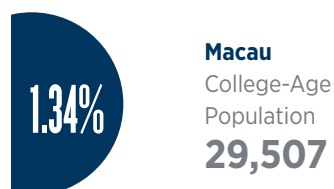
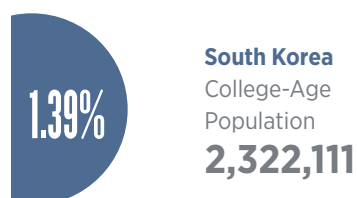
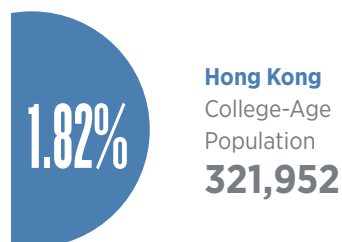
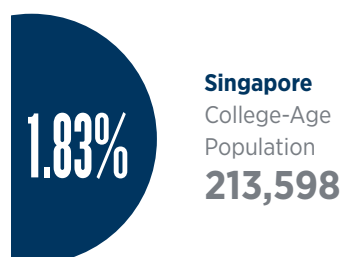
Five Countries of Origin (with over 100 students) with Highest Percentage Growth, International Students in the Region (Five-Year Trend)

Country	2017/18	2021/22	% Change
Cambodia	659	875	33%
Burma	1,569	1,909	22%
Philippines	3,225	3,278	2%
Laos	104	101	-3%
Indonesia	8,650	8,003	-7%

33.0%

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

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



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics; Indicator: 2020 or most recent Population of the official age for tertiary education, both sexes

States without a visa. While the annual *Open Doors* report consistently shows low student mobility from these countries (often fewer than 20), FAS students are eligible for U.S. Federal Student Aid, and statistics show that each year thousands of them access federal funds to study in the United States. Each country has a U.S. accredited community college as the highest level of education available in-country, presenting an opportunity for HEIs seeking transfer agreements. Government scholarships are also available for students pursuing higher education abroad.

What to Expect in the Next Three to Five Years

As enhancing employability for the general population becomes a key goal throughout the region, nondegree programs and vocational training will attract more government attention and support, especially among developing countries. This trend will offer a window of opportunity for U.S. institutions as government agencies seek qualified training providers, particularly institutions that can provide on-the-job training with U.S. companies.

Several governments in Southeast Asia have expressed interest in investing in advanced training for the next generation of workforces to support their transition from developing to advanced economies. The *Billion Futures* initiative, which aims to create opportunities and build human capital on both sides of the Pacific Ocean, will continue to contribute to student mobility from the region.

Some universities in East Asia are successfully building capacity to provide instruction in English, and government initiatives will likely fuel demand for English programs abroad. In 2020, Japan adopted English education as an official subject in primary school starting from the fifth grade. The Japanese government is also considering incorporating tests to assess speaking and writing skills, in addition to listening and reading, into university entrance exams.

Taiwan adopted a policy to become a bilingual English-Mandarin Chinese nation 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. The move toward bilingualism in Taiwan will offer 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 higher education institutions 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 Chinese government continues to build capacity in its own postsecondary sector with a 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 from around the world. China has also reduced English language learning requirements in its national curriculum for the GaoKao test, which may impact the future English-language abilities of Chinese students who wish to pursue education abroad. China has been finding ways to incentivize Chinese students and scholars to stay

Regional Student Totals Top Five Countries of Origin

Country	2021/22	% Change
China	290,086	-9%
South Korea	40,755	3%
Vietnam	20,713	-4%
Taiwan	20,487	4%
Japan	13,449	14%

East Asia and Pacific

home for study instead of pursuing higher education abroad. In a January 28 statement, the Chinese Service Center for Scholarly Exchange (CSCSE), the only official organization that provides overseas credential evaluation and recognition services in China, stated it would no longer recognize international degrees obtained through online learning. The statement noted that Chinese students should return to international campuses if they wish to pursue university abroad as soon as possible. With this policy back in place, Chinese students are likely to prioritize on-campus options so their degree verification for further studies and employment in China is not jeopardized.

Virtual Engagement and Social Media Usage

Access to high-speed internet is a standard convenience in most metropolitan areas across EAP. Even outside major cities, students do not usually have connection issues unless they reside in rural locations. While many countries around the world adapted to online engagements as a result of COVID, it has not been possible in some Pacific countries like Samoa. 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 ahead of time and tested for functionality.

Since China's Great Firewall blocks many non-Chinese platforms, student engagement in China relies on local language websites, Weibo, and WeChat. U.S. universities 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.

Platform usage can vary from country to country, but 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.

EducationUSA advising centers in Mongolia and Australia have launched podcast series to attract youth and parents in an engaging way. Mongolia's podcast, which offers Mongolian Sign Language interpretation, has had over one million downloads, adding another layer of access to underserved students. EducationUSA Australia's [Graduate in the USA](#) podcast series offers exclusive insights on topics including the admissions process, college sports, and the Australian student perspective for students, parents, and school staff.

In-person engagements are resuming in full force, and virtual fatigue is an increasing challenge. To keep engagements lively, several EducationUSA advising centers in EAP have conducted virtual events on metaverse platforms such as Gather. These platforms have been well received by students, and not only provide a fun user experience, but also 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 the opportunity to experience campus life through VR goggles or mobile devices. Metaverse platforms, VR, augmented reality, and other developing technologies will only grow in the coming years, and U.S. HEIs may wish to explore integrating them into their outreach strategies.

Successful Recruiting Strategies

- Highlight financial aid and post-study work opportunities. Affordability and return on investment are top factors affecting prospective students in much of EAP, and concerns about educational costs in the United States have grown due to the strength of the dollar.
- Focus on building trust and personal relationships with students and parents. Utilize current students, alumni, and international student influencers as advocates to highlight campus life and opportunities. Advisers overwhelmingly agree that sharing the real experiences of EAP students is critical when recruiting in the region.

- Provide clear messaging about safety. Along with costs, safety has become a top concern among parents and students as news about gun violence and other negative events affecting the U.S.-based Asian communities continue to make headlines. U.S. institutions should proactively incorporate these themes into their messaging, highlighting specific campus services that can alleviate concerns.
- Provide clear information on Optional Practical Training and Curricular Practical Training, 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. A thorough presentation on postgraduation opportunities will help international students compare local opportunities with those in the United States.
- 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 popular events to which HEIs may add a recruitment component.
- 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 actively partner with U.S. institutions. Events like the Asia-Pacific Association for International Education (APAIE) Annual Conference and Exhibition are increasingly popular. The APAIE conference encourages greater cooperation between HEIs, enriches and supports international programs,



activities, and exchanges, and promotes the value of international education across the region and beyond. Every year, EducationUSA hosts a pavilion at the APAIE conference. Interested U.S. HEIs may share the booth space to engage with stakeholders interested in developing and furthering partnerships. The APAIE 2024 Conference and Exhibition is planned for March 2024, in Perth, Australia. EducationUSA hopes to see strong U.S. representation at the event.

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, New Zealand institutions are interested in partnering with U.S. schools to boost student and scholar engagement, particularly in climate change, indigenous research and knowledge sharing, and emerging areas such as quantum science, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity. In

Vietnam, the United States has a window of opportunity to positively influence the direction of a rapidly developing public and private education sector. Institutions from both countries are eager to increase the number of U.S.-Vietnamese HEI partnerships.

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. As a result, increased focus on joint research, partnerships, English-language training, and educational exchanges across EAP has become a primary goal and area of support. 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 micro-credentials and other offerings that support working professionals.

EducationUSA Philippines has been actively involved in building linkages

between U.S. and Philippine institutions in partnership with the Philippine Commission in Higher Education (CHED) for several years, and 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.

East Asia and Pacific



In Japan, in order to revive international student exchanges after the COVID pandemic, MEXT recently announced policies on student mobility that include strengthening alumni networks, internationalization of colleges of technology, and promoting the spread of IB programs among Japanese schools. In addition, MEXT has selected the United States as the next partner for its Inter-University Exchange Project (IUEP), an initiative that supports Japanese universities in developing student exchange programs with partner universities.

To provide a means for U.S. and EAP institutions to share their partnership goals and contact information, the

EducationUSA EAP team has developed the [EducationUSA EAP HEI Partnership Board](#). This searchable database will serve as a resource for HEIs in the United States and the East Asia and the Pacific region as they seek to identify potential partners. Institutions that wish to be included on the board may visit the website for more information.

Foreign Government and Private Funding

Students in EAP benefit from a wide range of government and private funding. 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 based on an assortment of rankings. EducationUSA encourages stakeholders in the region to promote the inclusion of more U.S. institutions based on accreditation status and program offerings rather than rankings.

Many ASEAN countries focus scholarship programs on developing skilled workforces to promote national priorities and educational goals. The Thai government provides between 450-500 scholarships per year to Thai citizens under the [Office of Civil Service Commission's 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. The Indonesia [Endowment Fund for Education \(LPDP\)](#) provides full degree scholarships for undergraduate and graduate programs at select U.S. universities. They also provide 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 launched the [Quad Fellowship](#), which provides one-time awards of \$50,000 for study in STEM master's and doctoral programs in the United States. Fellows can apply separately for up to \$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.

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 Chinese 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 \$32,000 to \$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 in the national college entrance examination.

[Fulbright New Zealand](#) offers a range of exchange awards for New Zealanders and Americans to study, research, teach, or present their work in each other's countries.

In the Republic of Korea, the [Kwanjeong Educational Foundation](#) provides full scholarships for students pursuing degrees overseas, offering 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 [Lotte Foundation](#) scholarship offers USD\$40,000 per year for tuition, USD\$36,000 per year for living expenses, and a round-trip airplane ticket for graduate students of any major. The [Asan Foundation](#) offers KRW 40,000,000 per year for graduate students majoring in the medical and life sciences.

Regional Economics and Market Demands

With COVID-related restrictions mostly lifted across Southeast Asia, several ASEAN countries are reporting fast and healthy recovery and will make increased efforts in the coming season to bring their economies back to the rapid growth the region was experiencing prior to the

pandemic. Tourism and tourism-related business have traditionally been a major economic driver of many Southeast Asian countries, especially Thailand. As technology-based industries and multinational companies become more prevalent in the region, countries have struggled to prepare workforces outside of the tourism and service sectors to meet the growing market demand. COVID disruptions caused a decline in revenue for many tourism-dependent countries. Students and parents who can afford overseas education are interested in cost-effective options that will guarantee a return on investment. ASEAN leaders want more graduates with specialized skills that can help alleviate the shortage of skilled laborers.

The Oceania region is an emerging market that values U.S. degrees. Countries in the Pacific are 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 potential 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.

Major contributors to the larger economies of Northeast Asia include manufacturing, the automobile industry, construction, and technology-based industries such as telecommunications, electronics, and semiconductors. Mining is particularly important in Mongolia. 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 in Japan and Taiwan to expand English-language instruction may be a boost for intensive English and education-related programs. The Republic of Korea Ministry of Science and 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, and most centers are now open for in-person activities. The regional network resumed in-person EducationUSA college fairs in fall 2022, completing a college fair tour including three Southeast Asian countries in October and a series of independent fairs involving four countries in February-March 2023. Moving forward, the EducationUSA Southeast Asia fair tour, which typically took place in the spring of each year, will happen in the fall (September-October). In addition to the regionally coordinated fair tours, individual EducationUSA advising centers in EAP also run their own country fair events targeting niche markets such as community colleges, the arts, law schools, STEM, and business programs when there is capacity to do so. Virtual fairs targeting prospective student pools unable to attend in-person fairs may also continue.

Each November, the regional network boosts programmatic efforts in celebration of International Education Week and the release of the annual *Open Doors* report. Advising centers collaborate with U.S. institutions on a wide range of programs and social media campaigns promoting U.S. higher education. In 2022, in addition to programs offered by individual EducationUSA centers, the EAP REAC team organized virtual fairs on the

East Asia and Pacific

Metaverse platform Gather to link U.S. HEIs with EAP high school counselors and university representatives.

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

The EAP REACs routinely organize virtual meet-and-greet events for U.S. higher education representatives and EducationUSA advising teams in the region. The September 2022 event included nine EducationUSA teams and about 70 U.S. higher education representatives engaging in lively conversations about regional trends, recruitment strategies, and ideas for collaboration.

U.S. Study Abroad in the Region

The COVID pandemic affected U.S. study abroad programs across all regions, resulting in a 91 percent decline overall, according to 2022 *Open Doors* data. According to *Open Doors*, 1,791 U.S. students studied in the East Asia Pacific region in AY 2020-2021. The most popular destinations included Japan, Thailand, Taiwan, China, and the Republic of Korea. The Republic of Korea was the top receiver of U.S. students in EAP, with 977 students, and the fifth largest in the world. There has been some rebound in study abroad demand over the past year, but it will likely take some time for this to be reflected in *Open Doors* data.

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. In summer 2022, the Increase and Diversify Education Abroad (IDEAS) Program awarded five grants to U.S. colleges and universities to develop study abroad programming in French Polynesia, Japan, Taiwan, and Vietnam. Additionally, the IDEAS Program began implementing the U.S.-ASEAN University Connections Initiative, designed to foster sustainable international academic

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 and fall 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 planned 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 in an attempt to reach prospective students when they are most available. EducationUSA centers in the EAP region may have longer waiting times than in other regions for HEIs to plan information sessions. For example, Vietnam has a two-month waiting period for information session requests. Countries like Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore may be able to schedule information sessions in three weeks or less. The ability to honor requests to EducationUSA centers depends on team capacity and available virtual programming slots.

For in-person engagements, most advising centers in EAP have been able to resume center-based programs, student programming at local educational institutions, and outreach activities without restrictions.

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. HEIs may also wish to contact EducationUSA for information on exam or vacation schedules, which vary and sometimes change.

- The Lunar New Year holiday (based on the lunar calendar, and holiday period varies by country) – February 10, 2024.
- 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.
- Ramadan (fasting month) and a vacation period afterward of approximately two weeks should be considered in countries with large or predominantly Muslim populations like Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia, among others. Ramadan 2024 is anticipated to last from March 10 – April 9.
- Chuseok or Autumn Festival holidays in the Republic of Korea, China, Taiwan, and other places that celebrate this holiday.
- Major exam periods for high school students across EAP – Undergraduate recruitment may be difficult before and during these periods. Exam schedules vary by country; please refer to the Student Mobility Fact Sheets available on the [Open Doors website](#) to confirm ideal times to visit with EducationUSA advisers and local contacts.
- Winter holidays in East Asia – Advance planning and promotion are necessary to ensure an audience during this period.
- 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.



partnerships and the two-way exchange of students, scholars, and researchers between U.S. and ASEAN HEIs. Twenty-five U.S. and 25 Southeast Asian higher education leaders met for a week of in-person training and networking in Washington, DC in February 2023 and will continue to engage in a series of follow-on virtual activities designed to support partnership development. Resources and recordings of public training events from this initiative are available on the [IDEAS Program website](#). In 2023, USA Study Abroad also awarded Study Abroad Engagement Grants to U.S. embassies in New Zealand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam to deliver training and programs for local HEIs designed to foster their ability to partner with U.S. colleges and universities on study abroad programming.

U.S. study abroad students are welcome to join EducationUSA programming 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 institution to local audiences. Students 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.

U.S. Study Abroad

Top Five Receiving Countries in the Region

Destination	2020/21	% Change
South Korea	977	-50%
China	382	-85%
Japan	124	-96%
Taiwan	100	-78%
Thailand	77	-94%

Europe and Eurasia

Regional EducationUSA Profile

Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bermuda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom

100

EducationUSA
Advising Centers
in the Region

43 Comprehensive
29 Standard
28 Reference



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

Regional Overview

As a region, Europe and Eurasia saw the largest increase in student mobility to the United States as reported in the 2022 *Open Doors® Report on International Educational Exchange*, an increase of 22.4 percent from the previous year. Eighty percent of countries in the region experienced positive growth. The top sending countries – Germany, Spain, France, and the United Kingdom – all experienced a more than 25 percent increase in student mobility. Denmark had the largest percentage growth of 80 percent, followed by Germany at 60 percent. Many students from these countries participate in exchange or nondegree programs. As travel restrictions eased in 2021, more than 11,000 European students enrolled in exchange and nondegree programs, four times more than the previous year.

The number of graduate students coming to the United States from Europe and Eurasia increased by 14 percent, according to the *Open Doors* data. The number of undergraduate students increased by 9 percent. This growth occurred despite ongoing challenges including population declines, access to shorter undergraduate and graduate degree options in the region, more options at local and regional institutions for English-language academic programs in non-English speaking countries, rising inflation, and the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Western and Northern Europe continue to be strong markets for short-term academic programs, many of which are facilitated through institutional partnerships. Institutions and governments in other parts of Europe and Eurasia are keen to develop linkages

with the United States, especially in less traditional study abroad destinations across the region. EducationUSA advisers and their host institutions frequently offer training and workshops for local institutions on local post-secondary sectors and strategic partnerships.

European students benefit from a wide range of study opportunities within the EU. Most universities offer tuition-free programs with families needing to cover only living expenses. However, Brexit offers a window of opportunity for U.S. universities, as the low cost of British education has lost its appeal to EU citizens. For example, the number of Hungarian students applying to UK universities decreased by 71 percent compared to pre-Brexit data. The Netherlands is another strong competitor in the EU, but the country's housing shortage has started to lead students to explore other alternatives.

Countries in the rest of Europe and Eurasia, particularly those in the EU, share the burden of supporting millions of Ukrainian refugees, the majority of whom are in Poland. The EU has provided temporary status for Ukrainians for up to a year, allowing them to work, obtain medical care, and continue their education. Aside from the difficulties of securing financial resources to study in the United States, Ukrainians face challenges when applying to U.S. institutions if they did not carry their academic credentials with them when they fled Ukraine, or if they were not able to complete their senior year in high school or a term as a university student. Many Ukrainian institutions have been destroyed and key personnel are displaced, so Ukrainian students likely



will not be able to access their academic records or secure recommendation letters from instructors. Due to martial law, male students over 18 cannot leave the country. Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine's parliament, recently introduced a bill that would allow male students to leave the country to study abroad. Voting has not yet been scheduled. The EducationUSA Ukraine team works closely with the U.S. embassy in Kyiv to monitor progress. The United States will continue to face competition from institutions in Europe that are responding quickly to accommodate displaced Ukrainians and other international students. U.S. institutions that seek to recruit and/or retain Ukrainian students are providing them with additional assistance and support through financial aid, grants, on-campus work opportunities, and scholarships.

EducationUSA Russia has resumed in-person activities in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Vladivostok, offering consultations, lectures, and fair presentations. One of the team's goals was to improve the website design and offer interactive engagement for better virtual services. The Parent's Cohort program continues to be popular. Russia's Opportunity Funds program provides counseling services, updated

career planning and self-assessment presentations for prospective students.

EducationUSA advising centers in many other countries have fully resumed in-person advising. The EducationUSA Competitive College Club (CCC) and Opportunity Funds programs continue to provide comprehensive support to students in Europe and Eurasia. CCCs are offered in 14 countries in the region and assist students in preparing for the admission process and U.S. classroom experience. The EducationUSA Opportunity Funds program is available to citizens and officially recognized refugees in 10 countries and provides assistance to students who are academically gifted but unable to afford the initial costs of applying to and enrolling in accredited HEIs in the United States. Engaging with EducationUSA cohort programs is an excellent way to identify talented students who have demonstrated a strong commitment to U.S. study. Please contact a Regional Manager (REAC) for details on cohort programs in the region and guidance on how to leverage them.

Recent Trends

The past several years have been tumultuous for Europe and Eurasia, with significant events like the war in Ukraine,

the earthquake in Türkiye, the COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit, the conflict in the Caucasus, currency volatility (particularly in Türkiye), and other events that are negatively impacting student mobility trends both within the region and to the United States. New programs to support international education, such as the UK's Turing Scheme and the EU's Erasmus+ Programme, are expanding in Europe. To successfully engage students during the recruitment process and attract them to U.S. campuses, it is important for U.S. HEIs to understand the shifting higher education landscape in the region and how it impacts student mobility.

Perceptions about the cost of studying in the United States remain a challenge, especially given the prevalence of high-quality, lower-cost academic programs across Europe. Additionally, Erasmus+ programs provide robust support for study abroad closer to home, although European students may apply some support from that program to study in the United States. U.S. institutions with EU institutional partners should reach out to them for more information on these opportunities. Inflation and currency volatility will also contribute to economic uncertainty, in the short term at least, and should be factored into institutions' recruitment strategies.

Europe and Eurasia



Due to high inflation rates, the cost of living in the United States is becoming unmanageable for many students. While many universities offer tuition or partial-tuition scholarships/assistantships, there is less assistance available purely for the rapidly rising living costs. In particular, for Austrian applicants housing is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain, particularly in large and attractive cities like New York City, Los Angeles, and Cambridge, Massachusetts. As a result, many students are rerouting to English-speaking universities closer to home in the UK and Ireland. The Central European University (CEU) has also recently relocated to Vienna, Austria, and

is growing in popularity among students interested in an English-language education.

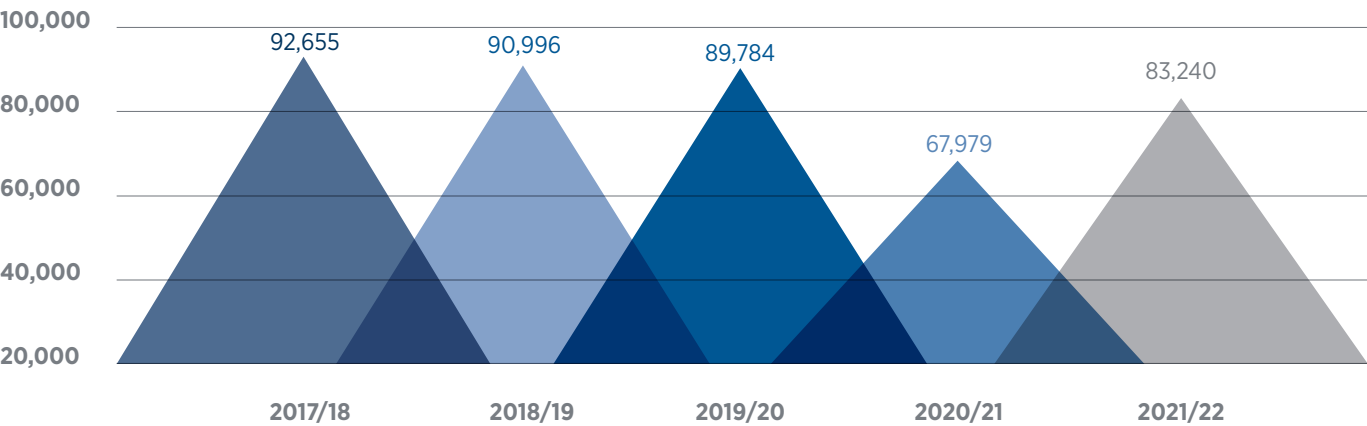
Devaluation of the Turkish lira will likely continue after national elections in spring 2023. In addition to many other economic challenges in Türkiye, devastation caused by the earthquakes in the country's southwest is likely to have knock-on effects for economic growth. Turkish students will need more financial support from U.S. institutions to be able to continue with their plans to study in the United States. On the other hand, recent events leave many Turkish families more determined to have their children study abroad, and

students are continuing to work on their college applications.

Demographics over the past five years vary across the region, with some countries, particularly in Eastern and Southern Europe, facing significant declines in the number of young people aged 15 to 24. Meanwhile, Türkiye, the third-most populous country in the region, is home to a rapidly increasing number of people in this age group. Populations, including college-age young people, in other countries have stabilized and have even grown in Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. This growth could be due to large immigrant and refugee populations, or to the increasing number of programs offered in English, which attract students from other parts of Europe who may choose to remain in those countries after finishing their studies.

Students in the region commonly study and achieve high levels of proficiency in English. Spain has made an effort to increase students' English-language proficiency by expanding bilingual education programs in primary and secondary schools. Mobility to countries where students' native languages are spoken remains appealing to some students, as well, such as French students who choose to study abroad in Quebec, students from Francophone Africa who study in France, and Spanish students who study in Latin America. Argentina, for example, is the largest recipient of Spanish students from the region.

Student Mobility in the Region (Five-Year Trend)



There are many scholarship programs for secondary-level students, including the Department of State's Future Leaders Exchange Program (FLEX) that primarily serves students from former Soviet countries and some countries in Central Europe. Other sponsored programs include the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange & Study (YES) Program in several countries in the Balkans, the Amancio Ortega Foundation in Spain, and the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX) program for German students. Countries such as Norway, Sweden, and Luxembourg offer national financial aid programs that can be used to cover the cost of study in the United States. These programs will continue to influence student mobility trends at the postsecondary level throughout the region.

Top Senders and Countries to Watch

Below are the top 10 countries in the region 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. United Kingdom
2. Germany
3. Türkiye
4. Spain
5. France
6. Italy
7. Russia
8. Greece
9. Sweden
10. Netherlands

In addition to these top-sending countries, HEIs should consider the following locations in their recruitment plans.

Italy. Italy has strong outbound and inbound study opportunities. Italian students are very interested in internships, employment opportunities, and Optional Practical Training (OPT) programs. Italy is the most popular destination globally for U.S. students studying abroad. There are two EducationUSA centers in Italy, one at the Fulbright Commission in Rome, which serves northern and central Italy, and one in Naples, which serves the south. Study in the United States is recognized for the quality of higher education and the opportunity students have to personalize their own fields of study, explore interdisciplinary interests, and develop

hands-on experience in their fields. While Italian higher education is also recognized for its rigorous theoretical content and high-quality, in-depth, and comprehensive curricula, it is also perceived by some Italians as highly centralized and offering less flexibility than the U.S. system. Fulbright scholarships represent the most important source of funding for U.S. study in Italy and cover as much as USD\$38,000 for Italian students who want to study at the graduate level. The Italian Fulbright Commission partners with the Zegna Foundation, which provides full scholarships to economically disadvantaged students who apply for graduate studies at U.S. universities. Bilateral university exchange programs are increasingly popular. They allow undergraduate university students to spend a semester in the United States and return to finish their studies at an Italian university. Italian universities are eager to find partners in the United States to further develop this type of partnership.

The Netherlands. The Netherlands is among the top 50 places of origin for international students studying in the United States. According to the latest *Open Doors* report, a 23 percent rise for AY2021-2022 can largely be attributed to an increase in nondegree-seeking students. As with many countries, cost is a significant factor in where students choose to study abroad. With currency fluctuations and new scholarship programs, the next three to five years will see increased competition for Dutch students. The Dutch government strongly encourages study abroad programs, as foreign languages and intercultural skills are highly important in the country's international economy. The government has reinstated a monthly stipend of approximately 300 euros for students to use for degree programs at home or abroad, in addition to offering low-interest loans. The country's labor market needs professionals in the fields of information technology, healthcare, education, construction, and other service professions. Although students are not necessarily inquiring about these areas of study, U.S. HEIs could promote these fields by relating them to students' job prospects upon return from study abroad. For degree-seeking programs, students express interest in business, law, and STEM programs. Post pandemic, students feel a high need for

in-person contact. Attending in-person events, such as the annual College Night, is a good way to connect with students. In addition, reaching students through social media, such as student Instagram takeovers or YouTube videos, would be an effective way to gain visibility and connect with students throughout the country. If your institution is interested in partnerships, universities of applied sciences are newer to international exchange and are generally more open to establishing new partnerships. The larger research universities tend to have several established partnerships and focus on quality rather than expansion.

Ukraine (virtual recruitment). Despite the effects of the global pandemic and the ongoing war, the latest *Open Doors* report showed a 5.5 percent increase in Ukrainian students getting higher education in the United States, after a slight decrease during the last couple of years. Cost remains a significant factor for Ukrainian students looking for education opportunities abroad. Highly competitive students are looking for possible scholarships to cover or decrease the cost of education in the United States. [EducationUSA Ukraine](#) administers cohort programs for such students and numerous virtual events to reach a wide audience. Virtual engagement led to an additional 50,000 contacts last year, including externally displaced prospective students. Virtual activities included outreach events, websites, online courses, social media, and special projects. EducationUSA Ukraine also supports the efforts of Ukrainian universities to build partnerships with U.S. HEIs through Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL). There is a growing interest in U.S. community colleges, where Ukrainians can learn a profession that will be in demand when the war is over. Specific programs of interest include but are not limited to logistics, agriculture, construction, IT, and welding.

What to expect in the Next Three to Five Years

Europe and Eurasia will feel the consequences of the war in Ukraine and the earthquake in Türkiye for some time. The war in Ukraine has a negative impact on the economic situation for many families across the region. While students' ability to pay for study in the United States has decreased, students' desire

Europe and Eurasia

to find other countries in which to study and work has increased. Due to the war, currency fluctuation and high fuel prices are new concerns, even in countries that have a stable economy, such as Germany. Other EU countries, like Hungary, have seen significant devaluations of their national currency, which will likely make it more difficult for students to pursue studies abroad. At the beginning of the year, Hungary had one of the highest inflation rates in the EU at 26 percent.

In the UK, political and economic challenges are impacting student mobility. The cost-of-living crisis is particularly challenging. Incomes have significantly dropped in real terms, the rate of inflation is 10 percent or more, which particularly impacts energy and food costs, and disposable income has dropped. Currency fluctuation has also had a big impact. Conversely, the UK birth rate started to increase about 18 years ago, and UK universities are expecting more competition for university places at the undergraduate level. This may mean that more students will look to the United States if UK universities cannot accommodate them. This trend is particularly seen at private high schools, where teachers are suggesting that students look to the United States if they cannot get into UK universities they perceive as prestigious.

More EU countries are committed to increasing the number of exchange programs and are setting new targets for upcoming years. The Swiss government wants to increase its

support for exchanges to make sure every Swiss student has some study or work experience abroad. The Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research recently publicized its strategy to revitalize university education in Austria with a comprehensive development plan that involves four pillars: improvement of student-faculty ratio, increase in academic degrees, gender equality (particularly in key/management positions), and increase in student mobility and exchange. The goal is to increase student mobility 26 percent by 2030, which likely means an increase in short-term exchanges as opposed to full study programs. Since Erasmus+ focuses its resources on study close to home, students may wish to take advantage of short-term academic exchanges in the United States that will allow them to continue to benefit from Austrian state support, as opposed to independent long-term studies that require significant personal investment.

In Armenia, local foundations that provided funding for international education changed their priorities after the 2020 and 2022 wars. Fewer local foundations now support students from low-income families to pursue education abroad. It is also mandatory that all males who are 18 years old serve in the army. Only those students who get admitted to the top 50 universities according to the Shanghai Ranking and receive at least a 70 percent scholarship are eligible for military deferment to continue their education abroad. Therefore, students must apply to only very competitive U.S.

universities, making Europe and other competitor countries more appealing to male Armenian applicants.

Virtual Engagement and Social Media Usage

Social media engagement and virtual programming continue to be major components of EducationUSA outreach and advising, and they will remain important even as centers resume in-person activities. A growing number of advising centers organize hybrid events to target students not just in capital cities, but in smaller cities across the country. Lessons learned during the pandemic remain in force – sessions that are shorter and interactive are the most popular, as are those that feature alumni, insights into the admissions process, and workshops on practical skills. Social media campaigns prove to be the most effective in Ukraine. Due to a well-developed advertisement campaign, EducationUSA Ukraine received 450 applications for the Competitive College Club program this year, 50 percent more applications than years prior.

Facebook and Instagram are the most commonly used platforms for EducationUSA Europe and Eurasia, though the region’s advisers have noted that Facebook’s popularity is waning, especially among younger audiences. EducationUSA advisers use a variety of other platforms to engage students. For direct communication with students, the most common platforms include WhatsApp, Viber, and Telegram. Discord and TikTok are popular with

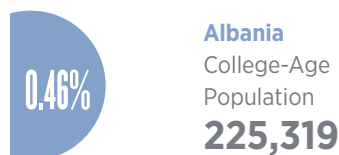
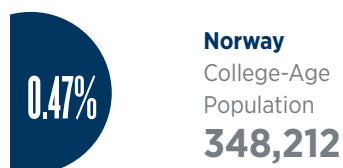
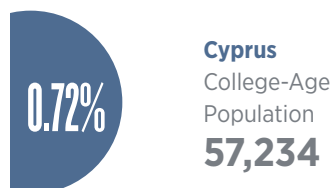
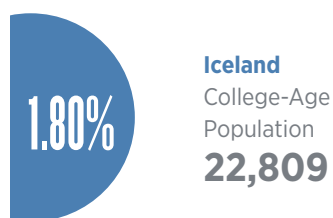
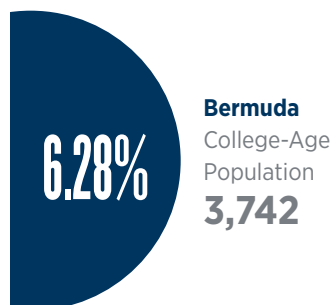
Five Countries of Origin (with over 100 students) with Highest Percentage Growth, International Students in the Region (Five-Year Trend)

Country	2017/18	2021/22	% Change
Azerbaijan	426	728	71%
Latvia	236	291	23%
Armenia	313	366	17%
Albania	884	1,026	16%
Ireland	1,141	1,295	13%

71.0%

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

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



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics; Indicator: 2020 or most recent Population of the official age for tertiary education, both sexes

younger audiences, though their use has not been officially adopted in the EducationUSA network. TikTok is very popular among teenagers and students in the UK. Identifying students with TikTok followings and sharing with them highlights or key things to note may help with promotion. Catchy videos, especially about an individual's college application process, are popular, and U.S. universities could ask incoming students from the UK if they are interested in sharing content about their experiences on campus. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet are used frequently for webinars. As of April 2022, all social media platforms in Russia are banned (Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn), but can be reached with a VPN service. Only Youtube is available. The most active platforms are local ones: VKontakte and Telegram.

Effective virtual and social media engagement should include student success stories, student-led Facebook and Instagram live events, Instagram takeovers by students studying in the United States, information about scholarship opportunities, and OPT. The EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) applies in much of the region and governs the collection and storage of personal data gathered through engagement on virtual and social media platforms. Non-EU countries also have restrictive privacy laws, so U.S. institutions should review these rules and requirements when engaging. Virtual and social media practices vary across the region. EducationUSA advisers can recommend the most effective platforms for reaching students and can provide instructions for sharing social media content or scheduling virtual events.

Successful Recruiting Strategies

- In-person engagement remains a critical component in a successful recruitment strategy for the region, and U.S. HEI representatives should visit the region when possible. A series of in-person events is planned for fall 2023, including the European Association for International Education (EAIE) conference and exhibition in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, and a suite of recruitment fairs. As always, the U.S. Department of State provides information and travel advisories to make informed decisions about traveling to the region.

- EducationUSA advising centers in Europe and Eurasia have a robust social media presence and have the capacity to host virtual and hybrid events. Due to increased demand, and to maintain audience engagement, advisers often collaborate to host regional events. U.S. HEI representatives should contact REACs to learn more about participating in these multicounty, virtual programs. REACs can add representatives to a sign-up sheet on which to indicate interest and ability to present on specific topics, such as sports scholarships or graduate admissions.

- U.S. HEIs should avoid a one-size-fits-all approach and should tailor outreach to the locations in which they have prioritized recruitment. In an age of information overload, students and advising centers are less interested in PDF or hardcopy versions of "look books" or brochures. Social media content is most effective and should include short summaries, URLs, video links, and hashtags. Alumni profiles, social media takeovers, and scholarship information are also particularly useful in engaging prospective students. U.S. HEIs are encouraged to develop their own social media influencers among students, alumni, and faculty to help promote the institution and the United States as a study destination.

- Holistic messaging focused on an institution's return on investment and the variety of programming offered (regardless of duration) is particularly effective for students in the region. Marketing materials should feature alumni and demonstrate the ways in which their career paths were informed by their experiences at the institution.

Regional Student Totals Top Five Countries of Origin

Country	2021/22	% Change
United Kingdom	10,292	28%
Germany	8,550	59%
Turkey	8,467	4%
Spain	8,165	51%
France	7,751	37%

Europe and Eurasia



As applicable, institutions are also encouraged to highlight steps they are taking to simplify the application process for international students, such as waiving application fees or offering test-optional policies. High school students and parents continue to express trepidation about test-optional admission policies and how they are implemented on campus, so HEIs are encouraged to clearly articulate any flexibilities in their admissions process. U.S. institutions can also benefit from sharing ways that international students can earn and/or save money while on U.S. campuses, including on-campus work, teaching or research assistantships or fellowships, and by leveraging student discounts. Institutions are encouraged to promote 2+2 transfer agreements between

community colleges and universities and short-term programs, including certificate-bearing programs. Consult with advisers to determine which types of programs to promote to students in different countries.

- Students and parents may be apprehensive about traveling to the United States due to media coverage of openly debated social and political issues and general safety concerns, including gun violence. U.S. HEIs should be transparent and candid about how their campus addresses these issues to ensure the safety and well-being of all students. For example, it can be helpful to highlight text and email alert systems that your institution employs.

Institutional Partnerships

A growing number of countries in Europe and Eurasia are investing in partnerships that support educational mobility and exchange for students and faculty. Some countries in the region, such as Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Luxembourg, allow students to apply support from their respective public financial aid programs to the cost of studying in the United States, especially for short-term experiences including exchanges.

EducationUSA is uniquely positioned to facilitate engagement between U.S. institutions and HEIs in the region. U.S. HEIs are encouraged to be mindful that saving significant sums for education-related costs is not part of the culture in most countries in the region, or not possible because of socioeconomic factors. Directly addressing those considerations with institutional partners will improve engagement. Virtual and hybrid partnership configurations – like COIL models – are becoming increasingly common in countries like Armenia, Serbia, Ukraine, and others. Over the last two years, around 30 successful partnerships were established in Ukraine, and virtual learning modules have been implemented for Ukrainian and American students.

Credit transfer continues to be a major concern for institutions in the region. European and Eurasian HEIs are advocating for simpler and more flexible reciprocity regulations. Some countries continue to pursue transfer agreements for students in three-year bachelor's degree programs to attend their senior year in the United States and obtain a U.S. undergraduate degree. In some countries, like the Netherlands and Kosovo, international exchanges are increasingly woven into higher education curriculum.

Fulbright Commissions in Europe and Eurasia are enhancing their programs to initiate mobility collaboration with local institutions. Individual connections between research groups and faculty can be the best strategy to develop long-term partnerships that include student exchange agreements and tuition waivers. Czech universities in particular have been actively internationalizing, thanks in part to support from Fulbright capacity-building programs and the Czech National Agency for International Education and

Research. Other successful examples include the Transatlantic Mobility Program in France and the Fulbright International Education Administrators Program. The UK Fulbright Commission has a cohort of UK universities who are actively interested in creating partnerships with U.S. colleges and universities. The EducationUSA center based at the commission can put U.S. institutions in touch to explore further. British Universities Transatlantic Exchange (BUTEX) is working to build relationships between UK and U.S. universities. They exhibit at the NAESA: Association of International Educators conference and other international conferences. The UK government's Turing Scheme provides UK universities with funding to distribute to undergraduate students to support mobility through small travel stipends, and other supports.

When identifying prospective partners, consider institutions that may have been left out of the institutional partnerships arena, including institutes that offer a number of professionally oriented bachelor's degrees. In some cases, there are also unique opportunities for larger scale partnerships, such as the regional higher education initiative between the U.S. state of Georgia and Bavaria. EducationUSA advisers and U.S. embassies and consulates can advise U.S. institutions on potential partnership opportunities.

The Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) is active in the region, and education is a primary focus in some countries, such as Austria, Bulgaria, France, Portugal, Spain, and Türkiye. FCS can offer matching programs to help identify prospective local higher education partners or organize

U.S. pavilions at some of the largest higher education fairs in the region. Advisers are well apprised of partnership-related resources that might exist in their respective countries. A national organization in Germany, for example, maintains a countrywide, searchable database of institutional partners, as does Poland with its Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA) initiatives. U.S. HEIs can also receive support from the Erasmus+ program and should engage directly with EU institutional partners for details. It is essential that partnerships be actively managed. There should be regular

check-ins between partners about needs and opportunities.

Foreign Government and Private Funding

All 46 countries in Europe and Eurasia offer Fulbright awards for students and scholars. For more information, please visit each country's EducationUSA advising center website.

Erasmus+ provides a wide range of opportunities to students, educators, and administrators. Visit the [Erasmus+ website](#) to learn more. Signature initiatives include Jean Monnet Actions,

Horizon 2020, and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships. All EU countries have Erasmus+ program administrators that can provide additional information about how U.S. HEIs can engage with these programs.

Albania. The Albanian-American Development Foundation fully funds master's degrees for selected fields of study.

Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani government intends to reopen scholarship opportunities for citizens to study in undergraduate and graduate programs abroad. Relevant updates will be shared on the global [EducationUSA website](#) when an official announcement is made.

Armenia. More than 15 private foundations provide scholarships for Armenians to study in the United States.

Details are provided on the [EducationUSA Armenia website](#).

Austria. The Marietta Blau Grant is available for doctoral students, and the Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education, Science and Research offers additional support that can be accessed through a comprehensive grant database.

Baltic-American Freedom Foundation. The Baltic-American Freedom Foundation (BAFF) provides scholarships to citizens of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to support participation in research and internships in the United States that are focused on economic growth and democratic processes. Awards range from USD\$30,000 to USD\$60,000.

Belgium. The Belgian American Educational Foundation and Fayat Beurzen provide scholarships for graduate studies, the Fernand Lazard Foundation offers interest-free loans, and the National Research Foundations support doctoral studies.

Croatia. U.S. Mobility Micro-Grants cover up to USD\$500 of application costs to U.S. universities (for bachelor's and master's programs). The Bepina Sabalic Kunin Endowed Scholarship Fund at Georgetown University supports graduate and professional education. The Zlatko i Joyce Baloković Scholarship Fund supports graduate education. Additional

U.S. Study Abroad

Top Five Receiving Countries in the Region

Destination	2020/21	% Change
Italy	2,193	-89%
Spain	2,089	-89%
United Kingdom	1,612	-92%
France	1,025	-88%
Denmark	622	-80%

Europe and Eurasia



details on scholarships are available on the [EducationUSA Croatia center website](#).

Czech Republic. Several private foundations offer scholarships for study abroad: Bakala Foundation, the Kellner Family Foundation University Scholarship, the Scholar Foundation, and the Krsek Foundation. Amounts vary, but all programs provide as much as USD\$30,000.

Denmark. The State Educational Grant and Loan Scheme supports study abroad, and Scandinavia Grants provide support to Danish students at the graduate and postgraduate levels up to USD\$20,000. The American Scandinavian Foundation supports graduate and postgraduate students with awards ranging from USD\$2,500 to USD\$10,000.

France. The French government gives financial aid to students for exchange programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Depending on the regional government, students can receive around 400 euros per month. The Monahan Foundation – in partnership with Fulbright France – provides funding up to

approximately USD\$25,000 for master's or doctoral degrees in STEM fields.

Finland. The Fulbright Finland Foundation provides funding for students, scholars, teachers, artists, and other professionals. Please see the [foundation's website](#) for a comprehensive list of organizations offering funding for studies and research in the United States. The Finnish government also supports study abroad, up to USD\$470 per month, including a living allowance.

Georgia. The Georgian government's Center for International Education (CIE) awards study abroad scholarships to Georgian citizens pursuing master's and doctoral studies overseas. The number of scholarships and funding levels vary from year to year. Students studying in the United States are typically eligible for scholarships in the range of USD\$20,000 to USD\$40,000.

Germany. The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) provides scholarships for non-degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The Arnold Heidsieck Scholarship covers one year of undergraduate studies

in the humanities. The Foundation of German-American Clubs provides 30 scholarships each year that cover most fields of study. Baden-Wuerttemberg scholarships provide support for students at universities in that German state. The Fulbright program is augmented by German funding, making it one of the largest worldwide. Wisconsin and Hesse maintain a sister-state agreement for mutual exchange.

Greece. Greece offers scholarship support for U.S. study at the graduate level only. Additional details on scholarships are available on the [EducationUSA Greece website](#).

Hungary. The government of Hungary offers the Stipendium Peregrinum to support undergraduate or graduate studies abroad. The Hungary Foundation provides full funding and living stipends for undergraduate and graduate students, as well as internships. Additional details on scholarships are available on the [EducationUSA Hungary website](#).

Iceland. Fara Bara posts general information about studying abroad. The [Icelandic-American Society](#) awards

scholarships, usually ranging from USD\$2,000 to USD\$5,000 for graduate studies. [The Leifur Eiríksson Foundation](#) awards up to USD\$25,000 for graduate studies.

Ireland. The Irish Research Council provides support to researchers across all disciplines. George Moore Scholarships provide comprehensive support to students in master's programs.

Italy. The Fulbright Commission and the Zegna Foundation provide full scholarships to economically disadvantaged graduate students.

Kosovo. The Kosovo American Education Fund (KAEF) is dedicated to the long-term economic development of Kosovo through the education of its people. KAEF provides up to eight graduate fellowships per year for degrees at select U.S. universities.

Lithuania. The Lithuanian government's Next 100 program (Kitas 100) provides funding to students applying to, or already studying at, select institutions around the world. Scholarships cover up to four years of study, with a maximum funding level of approximately USD\$22,500 per year.

Luxembourg. The Information and Documentation Centre for Higher Education (CEDIES) has changed the name of its financial funding office to MengStudien.lu and has a new online application and processing platform. Resident students can apply to receive funds with the local government throughout their academic journey.

Montenegro. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports provides scholarships for a limited number of graduate students in the fields of science and math, technology, medicine, agriculture, social sciences, and humanities. The scholarships amount to 500 euros per month.

North Macedonia. The Ministry of Education and Science awards academic scholarships of up to USD\$40,000 per year to support study in a limited number of fields. Additional details

on scholarships are available on the [EducationUSA North Macedonia website](#).

Netherlands. Low-interest loans are available through the government's Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs (DUO) program. Fulbright grants for graduate study are currently USD\$35,000. KHMW-Eizenga scholarships provide up to USD\$50,000 to pursue a degree in economics or a Master of Business Administration (MBA). Nuffic's scholarship database [www.beursopener.nl](#) includes 59 additional smaller private funds that offer scholarships for study in the United States.

Norway. Lånekassen provides non-merit-based financial aid for Norwegian students through a loan and grant package for full-time academic programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Poland. The National Science Centre of Poland offers funding for predoctoral and doctoral students. The Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange supports research at the doctoral, postdoctoral, and experienced researcher levels. The Kosciuszko Foundation provides support for Polish nationals to pursue research or study in the United States. The Visiting Research Graduate Traineeship Program (BioLAB) offers research traineeships to graduate students in the biomedical sciences.

Serbia. The Ministry of Youth and Sports awards graduate scholarships and scholarships for designated performing arts schools around the world. The funding is as much as USD\$11,000 per year.

Slovenia. The Ad futura Scholarship for Study Abroad offers students as much as USD\$33,000 annually for the duration of their academic program. This scholarship program funds undergraduate studies in STEM fields or graduate studies in all fields except the fine and performing arts.

Slovakia. The Martin Filko Scholarship supports graduate study in economics, mathematics, statistics, and public policy. The Tatra Banka Foundation offers grants at all academic levels. The maximum

funding amount is 5,000 euros per student to support IT projects.

Spain. Banco de España, Iberdrola, Fundación Rafael del Pino, Fundación Ramón Areces and La Caixa provide partial or full financial support for graduate studies in all or selected fields.

Sweden. The Swedish Board of Student Finance (CSN) is the government's academic financial aid program. It provides grants and low-interest loans covering tuition, fees, and living expenses.

Switzerland. The Swiss Benevolent Society (SBS) of New York offers the Medicus Student Exchange Scholarship, the Sonia Streuli Maguire Outstanding Scholastic Achievement Award, and the SBS Merit Scholarship (formerly known as the Pellegrini Scholarship). Students can apply for stipends and loans to support semester- or year-long study abroad.

Türkiye. The Turkish Ministry of Education offers scholarships supporting graduate-level study at select institutions around the world. The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye offers scholarship funding for doctoral-level study. The Turkish Education Foundation offers scholarships supporting master's-level study in select fields. All three of these funding sources provide transportation, health insurance, tuition, and living expenses.

United Kingdom. The Sutton Trust U.S. Programme supports economically disadvantaged students with outstanding academic qualifications who aspire to study at U.S. colleges and universities. The British Universities North America Club (BUNAC) provides support in the form of partial scholarships for British students applying to graduate programs in the United States.

Ukraine. The [WorldWideStudies](#) program provides up to USD\$50,000 to cover tuition, books and materials, and health insurance for students in master's degree programs. Priority fields include agriculture, environmental studies, ecology, law and public administration, alternative energy, and aerospace engineering. [Ukrainian Global University](#)

Europe and Eurasia

also has funding which depends on what hosting universities can offer.

Regional Economics and Market Demands

The Europe and Eurasia region was hit hard by the pandemic and the war in Ukraine. As in other regions, there is still a high demand for medical personnel and those skilled in technical fields such as IT and engineering. Health care and personal care for children and the elderly is a priority for France, Italy, and Portugal. Slovenia is in need of specialists in family medicine. Belgium, Germany, and Greece also face a lack of qualified health-care workers, increasing the need for trained doctors, nurses, and technicians.

In some countries in the region, such as North Macedonia, there is a dearth of STEM professionals. The country's labor market lacks high-school graduated professionals in the fields of biology, chemistry, and other sciences with manual scopes of work. STEM is on the margin in Slovakia, as well. Many students lack a deep knowledge of mathematics, reasoning, and logical deduction. In Spain, there is a need for more investment in vocational programs as opposed to traditional higher education. In addition, there is an emphasis on continuing studies and academic opportunities to help professionals who are already working in their fields level up with university degrees. In the UK, there is a policy focus on technical skills, which includes reform of post-16 qualifications and new training routes into careers.

Armenia's IT sector continues to grow. The biggest gap in the IT workforce is in leadership and management. Agriculture and hospitality have been identified as key areas to growth in the next five to 10 years. Research in the field of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning is also a priority for the Armenian government.

Due to the war in Ukraine, cybersecurity has become more prominent than ever, especially in Northern and Western Europe and countries such as Norway, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Iceland, and the UK.

Agriculture, mining, chemical, pharmaceutical, and metals are the largest industries in Serbia. Serbia is a rich area for lithium mining which, with the

appropriate environmental safeguards in place, could become a central source for electric vehicle (EV) battery materials. Bulgaria is also in need of workers in the mining and processing industries.

For many countries in Europe and Eurasia, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Poland, Russia, and Latvia, the most in-demand professions are in the field of construction and construction engineering. This is especially true in Ukraine, which needs workers in construction, engineering and technology, IT, and agriculture. The war, but also the earthquake in Türkiye, will further increase the need for qualified workers in these fields.

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

The Europe and Eurasia region offers a wide variety of opportunities for HEI engagement, and advisers plan events throughout the year. Visit the [EducationUSA website](#) to find information about upcoming fairs, webinars, conferences, and other activities. The events listed below are hosted by EducationUSA or are EducationUSA-organized pavilions at national fairs. EducationUSA advisers can share a full list of commercial fair offerings through which U.S. institutions can reach target audiences.

EducationUSA will host a full U.S. pavilion at the 2023 European Association for International Education (EAIE) conference in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, from September 26-29. U.S. HEIs report that exhibiting at the EducationUSA pavilion leads to an increase in their institution's visibility, more students from Europe on their campuses, and an increase in exchange-related income for their institutions. Contact [REAC Assistant Lidiya Adane](#) for more information.

The Annual EducationUSA Eurasia and Central Asia Tour takes place in October. For updates, visit the Find an Event page on the EducationUSA website.

The Annual EducationUSA European LLM Tour takes place in November. For updates, visit the Find an Event page on the [EducationUSA website](#).

The Annual Virtual EducationUSA Southeastern Europe Tour is scheduled for the fall. The tour will include a student

recruitment fair with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia. For more information, email [REAC Assistant Lidiya Adane](#).

Sign up to receive the EducationUSA monthly newsletter on Europe and Eurasia to keep abreast of recruiting events planned in the region, as well as information about emerging trends. These events will also be shared via the Global EducationUSA HEI newsletter.

U.S. Study Abroad in the Region

The COVID pandemic affected U.S. study abroad programs across all regions, resulting in a 91 percent decline overall, according to the 2022 *Open Doors* data. According to *Open Doors*, 9,647 U.S. students studied in the Europe and Eurasia region in AY 2020-2021, which hosted 66 percent of the total U.S. study abroad population. Italy, Spain, the UK, and France were the four most popular study abroad destinations in the world, with Italy and Spain hosting more than 2,000 students each. In 2021 and 2022, there has been some rebound of study abroad demand, but it will take some time before this rebound will be reflected in *Open Doors* data.

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. In summer 2022, the [Increase and Diversify Education Abroad \(IDEAS\) Program](#) awarded eight grants to U.S. colleges and universities to develop study abroad programming in Austria, Azerbaijan, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Portugal, Spain, and the UK. In 2023, USA Study Abroad also awarded Study Abroad Engagement Grants to U.S. embassies in Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Georgia, Greece, Norway, Spain, and Ukraine to deliver trainings and programs for local HEIs designed to foster their ability to partner with U.S. colleges and universities on in-person and virtual study abroad programming.

EducationUSA centers have collaborated with local universities, embassies, and Fulbright Commissions to support these initiatives. U.S. study abroad students are welcome to join EducationUSA programming 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 the institution to local audiences. Students 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. A growing number of Virtual Student Federal Service (VSFS) interns have been assisting advisers in Europe and Eurasia with their virtual programs. More than 20 countries in the region work with U.S. VSFS interns to diversify their advising services.

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

In general, the best times to interact with students are from September to November and February to May. Avoid recruitment travel or virtual programming in July and August, or over the Christmas, New Year, and Easter holidays. Please note that Christmas and Easter are observed according to the Roman and Eastern Orthodox calendars, so the dates of these holidays may differ by country. Advisers in each country can advise on national holidays and other factors, such as examination dates, that might affect students' ability to attend events. As always, institutions should check with EducationUSA advisers in the country they want to visit before making any travel or virtual outreach plans.

Middle East and North Africa

Regional EducationUSA Profile

Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

27

EducationUSA Advising Centers in the Region

17 Comprehensive
9 Standard
1 Reference



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

EducationUSA advising centers in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are located at U.S. embassies and consulates, America-Mideast Educational and Training Services, Inc. (AMIDEAST) offices, American Centers, and a World Learning center in Algeria. Although all centers offer virtual advising, EducationUSA advising centers for Iran, Libya, and Syria are 100 percent virtual operations. Yemen has a unique setup with a physical center in Aden and an adviser who works remotely. The region includes 27 centers (17 comprehensive, nine standard, and one reference) in 19 countries and territories with 30 advisers who provide up-to-date services and programming.

EducationUSA advisers across MENA provide expertise, support, and information about local higher education systems and the broader postsecondary sector landscape in the region. In addition to advising students and college counselors, EducationUSA centers offer U.S. higher education institutions (HEIs) and governmental partners opportunities to engage student audiences through tailored programs and activities that support increased student mobility. Gulf countries such as Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) offer government scholarship programs to their citizens. EducationUSA advisers maintain contact with scholarship offices to connect them with prospective HEI partners' students interested in U.S. study.

MENA is a dynamic and complex region divided into three subregions: North Africa, the Levant, and the Gulf. Students across North Africa have historically chosen study options in Europe, while many countries in the Gulf are striving to expand capacity and retain domestic students. Newly developed higher education options are likely to attract some MENA students.

EducationUSA advisers in the MENA region are working in an environment of frequent change and opportunity. Despite a decade of overall population growth, the *2022 Open Doors® Report on International Educational Exchange* indicates a 7.7 percent decrease in students from the region studying in the United States during the academic year (AY) 2021-2022 compared to the previous year. This is the fifth consecutive year of decline, with Iraq (-20.2 percent), Libya (-21.8 percent), Qatar (-16.1 percent), Saudi Arabia (-17 percent), and the UAE (-6.9 percent) all decreasing as a result of scaled-back government scholarship programs, recent changes in mandatory military service requirements, growing higher education options in the region, and increased competition from other countries. After a decade of consistent growth, student numbers from Kuwait have also dropped for the third year in a row (-13.5 percent). Student mobility from the following locations also declined: Egypt (-4.8 percent), Lebanon (-0.5 percent), Morocco (-13.7 percent), the Palestinian Territories (-11.3 percent), Algeria (-8.4 percent), Israel (-17.2 percent), Jordan



(-4.2 percent), Syria (-8.2 percent), and Yemen (-8.4 percent).

The region boasts many EducationUSA Competitive College Clubs (CCCs) through which advisers meet regularly with highly motivated and engaged high school students to prepare them for study on U.S. campuses and guide them through the college application process. Advisers support students in identifying their best institutional fit by exploring their academic, cultural, geographic, and financial needs and preferences. CCC activities include community service projects, book clubs, virtual programs, lectures from guest speakers, test preparation activities, and information sessions on the application process. All CCCs foster student leadership skills. EducationUSA advising centers in Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian Territories, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Yemen manage CCC programs. The EducationUSA Opportunity Funds program, serving high-achieving prospective students who demonstrate financial need, operates at advising centers in Egypt and Lebanon.

EducationUSA advising centers in MENA conduct strategic outreach in collaboration with public affairs and consular sections of U.S. embassies and consulates. Half of the advising centers in MENA are based at an embassy or consulate and are located within the public affairs sections. Regional Managers (REACs) and EducationUSA advisers hold regular education briefings and webinars for U.S. HEIs about local educational systems, trends, opportunities, and recruitment strategies.

Regional Overview

The United States remains a top higher education destination for students from MENA, despite recent declines in the overall number of students from the MENA region enrolled at U.S. institutions. The decline in enrollment is partly due to economic pressures, currency devaluation, and the rise in locally and regionally available options. Some governments have also narrowed the lists of approved institutions or areas of study for scholarship programs. For example, Kuwait eliminated dentistry and pharmacy scholarship programs to the United States. However, scholarship opportunities remain available to many

students in the region and are designed to support emerging labor market demands.

Local and regional institutions are attractive to students because of their cost, location, and partnerships with international institutions. Opportunities for growth in student numbers from MENA depend partly on labor market demands driving the need for specialized training not available in the region. The growth of online study opportunities due to the COVID-19 pandemic has created interest in hybrid programs, online degrees, and partnerships between U.S. and regional institutions. The future of online higher education will continue to influence students' study abroad plans and preferred coursework modalities. Beyond the pandemic, recognition of online coursework and online degrees is unclear in countries that require degree attestation. Countries that successfully leverage digital education will likely see more opportunities to attract and retain international students in the years to come.

Over the past decade, MENA has experienced one of the highest population growth rates of any region in the world.

Middle East and North Africa

Demand for postsecondary education far exceeds the capacity of local universities in many countries. In addition, variability in the quality of higher education systems leaves some students without local options to develop the skills necessary to enter competitive labor markets at home. Science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) fields are in high demand, and there is growing interest in health fields, including medicine, health sciences, and public health. Students in North Africa and the Levant are increasingly interested in exploring the benefits of community colleges, including lower costs, transfer flexibilities, and limited standardized test requirements. Students in Gulf countries are largely interested in studies in aeronautics, cybersecurity, tourism, antiquities, and a broad range of medical fields.

Most countries in the region have engaged with the U.S. government and U.S. colleges and universities to expand local higher education capacity through institutional linkages. Many universities in the Gulf are interested in collaborating with U.S.-educated faculty to develop institutional capacity and are eager to connect with U.S. institutions for joint research and teaching opportunities. Although students in the Gulf region have adequate access to universities in their home countries, they are also interested in U.S. study, particularly at the graduate level. U.S. institutions are encouraged to collaborate with the region's ministries of education to implement programs that create pipelines of students equipped

with skills that will prepare them for educational opportunities in the United States.

Recent Trends

Many countries in the region are eager to include U.S.-trained professionals in their workforce development efforts. Governments support scholarships, short-term grants for local faculty to experience U.S. study tours, research projects, and short-term training programs for government officials and administrators. Scholarship programs link government objectives and priority fields of study to meet national labor market needs. Other programs encourage work experience through internships, Curricular Practical Training (CPT), and Optional Practical Training (OPT) in the United States.

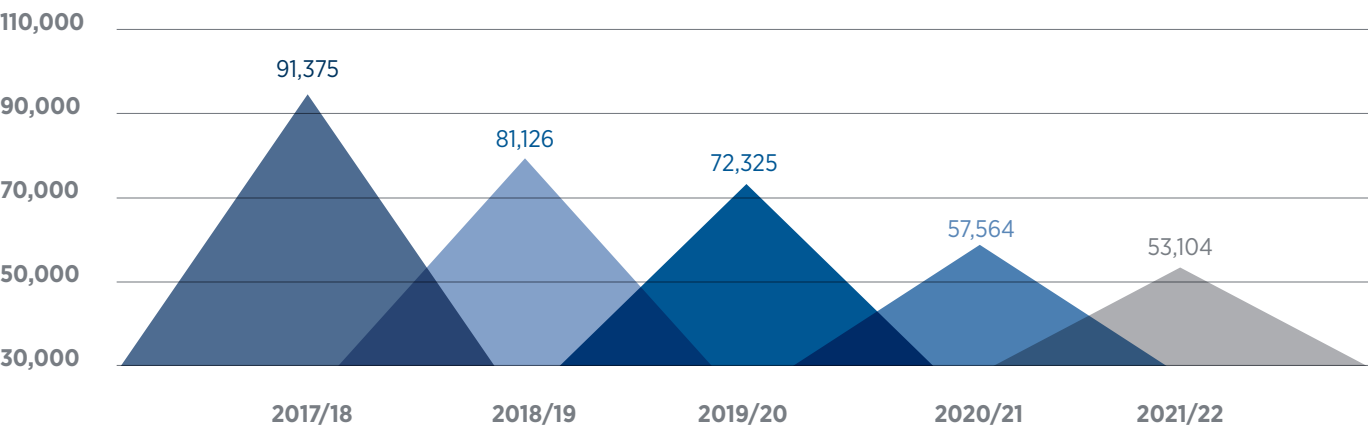
Students across MENA pursue study abroad in a range of countries. Some choose Canada because of the perception that the country offers lower tuition rates and a less complex student visa process. The UK is attractive to some students because of its geographic proximity and solid historical ties to Gulf countries like Bahrain, Qatar, and the UAE. France remains a viable option for students from North Africa due to geographic proximity and linguistic affinity.

Compared to five years ago, students in the MENA region now have more opportunities to study closer to home, and increasing numbers are choosing institutions in Oman, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and the UAE. Kuwaiti universities are adding new degree programs and

improving physical capacity. Competition for international students in the Gulf is growing as Qatar, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia establish themselves as educational hubs in the region. Over the past year, several Gulf nations eased visa and employment restrictions on foreign nationals, allowing them to remain in the country while working to support their studies. For example, the UAE is home to 60 globally recognized international university campuses. At over half of these universities – 34 of them in Dubai – 28 percent of the student body is made up of students from outside the country. According to the *Khaleej Times*, this trend is growing, with a 3.6 percent annual enrollment growth and more than 29,000 students in these programs. Outstanding students in the UAE are eligible for a five-year student visa extended to family members. This visa change is attractive to students from Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Egypt. U.S. branch campuses in the region – including six in Qatar and three in the UAE – are growing in popularity. Many American-style HEIs in the region have attained accreditation from one or more U.S. accrediting organizations, including one in Egypt, two in Lebanon, one in Morocco, one in Qatar, one in Saudi Arabia, and six in the UAE. Qatar offers a live-to-classroom distance learning model, and three U.S. institutions currently offer undergraduate and graduate programs locally under this Global Studies Institute (GSI) umbrella.

Student recruitment practitioners from U.S. HEIs are often required to seek local government permission before

Student Mobility in the Region (Five-Year Trend)



entering secondary schools. The security process takes time, especially in STEM-focused and other government schools. Though some students demonstrate significant financial need, these secondary institutions prepare highly qualified students for merit-based U.S. scholarships. Countries such as Jordan, Kuwait, and the UAE require student recruitment fair organizers to collaborate with local agencies. Government permission is also often necessary to host virtual fairs, especially in countries with approved institution lists.

Students and parents in the MENA region express concern about safety and other social issues in the United States. Gun violence is of particular concern and is further encouraged by international media coverage of shooting incidents on university campuses. Social media campaigns, including the EducationUSA #StudyWithUS hashtag and the #WhyUS program, started by Temple University, have been widely shared to engage broader audiences and address many of these concerns. Personal connections are critical to establishing positive, realistic impressions of the United States. HEIs are encouraged to consider in-person visits to the region as conditions allow.

Online learning, distance learning, and homeschooling were widely available and accepted in most Gulf countries during the pandemic. Many countries have used online learning platforms during Ramadan, when school hours are reduced, or in some cases when weather or local events, like the World Cup in Qatar, make it challenging for students

to attend in person. On the other hand, schools in some countries lacked the resources to provide online education and completely halted all public-school instruction for weeks or months during the pandemic. Many countries did not anticipate how long the pandemic would limit in-person instruction. The inability to provide consistent access to education has widened the digital divide and exacerbated educational disparities.

Top Senders and Countries to Watch

Below are the top 10 countries in the region 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. Saudi Arabia
- 2. Iran
- 3. Kuwait
- 4. Egypt
- 5. Jordan
- 6. Oman
- 7. Israel
- 8. Lebanon
- 9. United Arab Emirates
- 10. Morocco

What to Expect in the Next Three to Five Years

Kuwait is the region's third-largest sender of international students to the United States. Although qualified students can receive fully funded government scholarships, students must achieve a minimum score on a standardized English exam to qualify for the benefit, limiting the pool of eligible students. Recent pandemic-related interruptions to the

academic year contribute to a decrease in qualified scholarship applicants in the short term.

Saudi Arabia will support education programs that address national development requirements and labor market demands. Priorities include improving learning environments, stimulating creativity and innovation in the classroom, and welcoming foreign investment in education. Continued efforts to support Vision 2030 have led to the growth of smaller niche scholarships not only through Giga projects, ministries, and universities but also through businesses. More specialized fields will be in demand based on the country's market needs, but tourism and health will still be popular. The Ministry of Education intends to add fields like music and performing arts to the specific scholarship-approved lists.

Due to recent domestic economic challenges and evolving regional relationships, governments across the region have made changes to scholarship designs, titles, and foci while establishing stricter eligibility requirements and limitations on study location. In many cases, scholarship recipients are limited to specific fields of study at institutions on government-approved lists, significantly limiting choice of academic disciplines and study destinations. HEIs should highlight programs that support priority fields, as identified by the ministries of education, and be prepared to offer documentation that demonstrates student compliance with scholarship requirements. In Oman, Saudi Arabia,

26.0%

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

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

Country	2017/18	2021/22	% Change
Algeria	212	268	26%
Lebanon	1,633	1,958	20%
Egypt	3,701	3,967	7%
Palestinian Territories	480	485	1%
Jordan	2,420	2,426	0%

Middle East and North Africa



and the UAE, students no longer apply directly to scholarship programs, and an offer of admission must be granted from an eligible institution before students can apply for financial aid. This change has resulted in fewer students studying in the United States and a corresponding decline in students enrolling in U.S.-based English language institutes before their studies.

U.S. institutions should expect more interest in partnerships, linkages, and U.S. faculty visits to the region. Local institutions see their U.S. counterparts as institutional structure and curricular development models. STEM fields are the highest priority across the region. Many institutions in the region have allocated funding to send faculty to the United States for training and advanced

research. There is also interest in earning accreditation from U.S. accrediting bodies.

Loss of jobs, weakening currencies, and higher food costs in countries like Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Yemen continue to make academic options viable for many students only if full scholarships are offered. In contrast, many Gulf countries such as Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE have experienced greater currency stability, resulting in more flexibility for students to explore study opportunities abroad regardless of financial aid. However, economic challenges have not affected all families equally, and many continue to have the resources to support their children's higher education. HEIs should consider the MENA region's broad range of economic situations in their outreach strategies to attract a diverse array of

top students, including government scholarship recipients, self-funded students, and those requiring financial support.

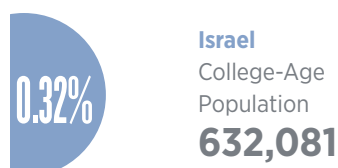
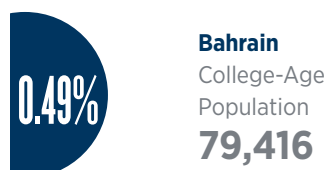
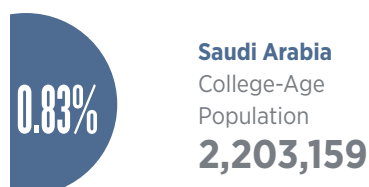
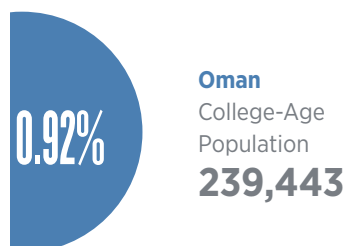
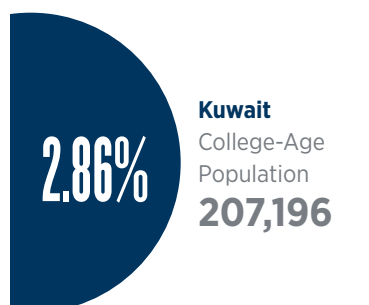
Many governments sponsor college and university fairs and value the participation of U.S. institutions. EducationUSA advisers can provide guidance on local conditions, participate in events, help obtain required approvals from local authorities, and facilitate communication with higher education ministries. U.S. institutions can also send faculty to EducationUSA-sponsored events. EducationUSA advisers can arrange faculty-to-faculty dialogues and provide strategies for engaging counterparts in collaborative research projects and other joint ventures. Provided that they have authorization from the college or university, alumni of U.S. institutions are also welcome to attend and represent their alma maters.

Virtual Engagement and Social Media Usage

According to the *Digital 2023 report* by We Are Social and Meltwater, there were 365.07 million internet users in the MENA region in January 2023. Internet connectivity is widely available in the region, although Syria, Lebanon, Libya, the Palestinian Territories, and Tunisia have the slowest speeds for fixed connections. Before the pandemic, many people accessed the internet in public spaces like cybercafes or university campuses. Bandwidth sufficient to participate in webinars or download large files is a challenge for those in areas affected by power outages, slow connection speeds, or limitations on connectivity. These issues are particularly pressing in Algeria, Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen.

As local conditions permit, centers are reintroducing face-to-face programming while maintaining a virtual presence. Virtual programming's broader engagement and reach to previously untapped regions and audiences has proven that sustaining a combined approach will be necessary. The most popular platforms used for webinars include Zoom, Facebook Live, and Google Meet. YouTube is popular for viewing prerecorded sessions, and Instagram Live and IGTV have also become more widely used in the region. WhatsApp and

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



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics; Indicator: 2020 or most recent Population of the official age for tertiary education, both sexes

Facebook Messenger are frequently used for texting.

Even before the pandemic, EducationUSA advising for Iran was an exclusively virtual operation, so advisers were well positioned to build on an already robust online presence. With an updated website, new student videos, and a series of webinars, the EducationUSA Iran office provides information about U.S. higher education via a dedicated website in Farsi (Persian) and English. The adviser meets with Iranian students and school representatives through virtual campus visits, online consultations, and EducationUSA conferences. To effectively reach Iranian nationals residing worldwide, EducationUSA Iran has also leveraged global advertising campaigns through outlets such as Radio Javan.

Iranian students' interest in U.S. graduate studies remains solid, with 75.6 percent of Iranian students in the United States enrolled in graduate programs. Telegram and Instagram are top platforms for Iranians whose access to some social media platforms, including Facebook and YouTube, is limited. It is strongly recommended that HEIs keep social media platforms updated and boost posts related to Iranian students. HEIs can gather more information and additional guidance on the [EducationUSA Iran website](#).

EducationUSA webinars offer opportunities to engage students creatively while informing them about educational opportunities in the United States. EducationUSA centers in the MENA region continue to develop innovative approaches to student outreach, including the recent launch of mobile applications in Bahrain and the UAE that provide students and parents with information about upcoming EducationUSA programs.

Online webinars and programs are not as popular in Kuwait as in neighboring countries. Instagram and YouTube have the most traction, with 3.62 million users at the beginning of 2022, reaching 84 percent of the population. In-person engagement with Kuwaiti students goes far, and when face-to-face meetings are

safe and permitted, in-person recruitment will be essential.

Successful Recruiting Strategies

- Consider high school guidance counselors a resource and conduit to reach larger student audiences. The EducationUSA network has enhanced efforts to engage these key stakeholders and to provide them information about the U.S. higher education sector and college advising resources. Local counselors frequently meet to share best practices in the admissions process and to discuss topics such as applying for student visas, writing school profiles, meeting institutional application deadlines, and identifying institutions that best meet students' needs. When possible, coordinate with recruitment colleagues to organize virtual school visits, as not all schools can accommodate the high demand for engagement. In Kuwait, the U.S. embassy is working with the Ministry of Education and local providers to introduce a robust college advising program in government public schools. Six trained counselors, alongside EducationUSA, are working directly with these schools to educate students about studying in the United States. Eighty percent of government scholarship recipients are from public schools. This program has the potential to be a driving force toward increasing the numbers of Kuwaitis pursuing study in the United States.

- EducationUSA, based at the U.S. embassy, launched several new initiatives to promote study in the United States, including outreach at Kuwait's largest mall and a wide-ranging

Regional Student Totals Top Five Countries of Origin

Country	2021/22	% Change
Saudi Arabia	18,206	-17%
Iran	9,295	-3%
Kuwait	5,923	-13%
Egypt	3,967	8%
Jordan	2,426	4%

Middle East and North Africa

social media campaign that set an embassy record for YouTube views. The funding of new grants to increase access to Kuwaiti schools helped create college advising positions in high schools.

- It is helpful to translate websites and promotional materials into Arabic, Farsi, Hebrew, and/or Kurdish and record videos featuring currently enrolled students from MENA to engage parents and students with limited English-language skills. High-quality video and photo content can convey a sense of the campus and local communities that will resonate with students and their families. Students, particularly those at the undergraduate level, are eager to learn about campus life, including housing arrangements and dining options that meet religious needs. Institutions are also encouraged to highlight student support services, such as academic tutoring, extracurricular activities, social programs, public safety precautions, and medical services on campus.
- Parents and family members in the MENA region often play an essential role in students' decision-making about institutions and programs of study. In some cases, graduate students will be accompanied by dependents and will seek institutions that can accommodate their families. Institutions should consider crafting recruitment messages with these audiences in mind.
- U.S. HEIs can benefit from relationships with international alumni and from visiting alumni when recruiting abroad.

Alumni may offer helpful insights into their experiences as students, hold key positions in the public and private sectors, and appreciate the opportunity to engage with admissions officers from their alma maters. Don't underestimate word of mouth when it comes to recruitment plans.

- Engaging currently enrolled international students during recruitment and student orientation is another helpful strategy for reaching prospective students. EducationUSA invites all students and alumni to submit an [interest form](#) to connect with EducationUSA advisers who are eager to develop joint programming, student success profiles, and other engagement opportunities.
- Although EducationUSA advisers can offer guidance and advice about Gulf scholarship programs, U.S. institutions are encouraged to reach out directly to scholarship organizations with specific questions.
- North Africa is a largely untapped market for international students. HEIs are encouraged to contact EducationUSA for assistance in planning a trip or virtual engagement focused on Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, or Tunisia.

Institutional Partnerships

HEIs throughout MENA are eager to explore partnerships with U.S. institutions that provide opportunities for reciprocal student and scholar exchanges, joint research ventures, and dual-degree

programs. EducationUSA REACs and advisers can provide information to local institutions about the U.S. higher education sector and strategic guidance on establishing successful partnerships. Beyond EducationUSA advising services, the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) facilitates other in-person and virtual exchanges to support student mobility, institutional partnerships, and higher education capacity building, including the [Fulbright Program](#) and the [International Visitor Leadership Program \(IVLP\)](#).

In contrast to the United States, national governments across the MENA region include ministries that centralize the curriculum, accreditation, training, and strategic priorities for each country's education sector. As a result, governments are critical stakeholders for institutions seeking to establish partnerships with local universities. EducationUSA REACs and advisers can facilitate engagement among institutions interested in collaboration in the region. In many cases, the U.S. embassy or consulate in that country can also connect interested parties. There is a growing interest in establishing partnerships with technical colleges, aviation institutions, 2+2 programs, and short-term programs in Kuwait. Saudi universities are interested in Arabic-language programs, study abroad partnerships, training, faculty exchange programs, and U.S. academic programs based in the kingdom. Universities in the UAE seek partnerships with HEIs in surrounding emirates, beyond Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

While many institutions in the region are interested in establishing partnerships, it is crucial that all parties clearly outline goals and expectations. U.S. HEIs should be prepared to highlight their strengths and offer suggestions for mutually beneficial arrangements. For example, many countries in MENA are interested in partnerships for English-language instruction, which could be accomplished through faculty exchanges, specific in-country workshops, or virtual initiatives. While virtual exchanges in some cases may be a great approach, in countries like Yemen, issues with connectivity or staff continuity could present a challenge.

U.S. Study Abroad

Top Five Receiving Countries in the Region		
Destination	2020/21	% Change
Israel	539	-72%
Jordan	102	-83%
Egypt	40	-89%
Morocco	20	-98%
Qatar	3	-90%



Foreign Government and Private Funding

Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE fund government-sponsored scholarship programs and maintain lists of approved receiving institutions. U.S. institutions can raise awareness and increase the chance of inclusion on these lists by visiting these countries' cultural missions in Washington, DC, and conducting outreach by email or phone. Proactive engagement can offer U.S. institutions the opportunity to inform government authorities about their programs of study, express interest in hosting students from the region, and explain how U.S. institutions are prepared to be effective and qualified hosts for their students. In many of these countries, the number of scholarships available for students to study in the United States declined in the last few years due to budget constraints. U.S. HEIs should highlight the quality and affordability of their programs and work closely with the funders and organizations offering scholarships to prospective students.

Bahrain. Through the Crown Prince's International Scholarship Program (CPISP), the government of Bahrain provides scholarships supporting overseas study for 10 students, most of whom choose to study in the United States. All scholarship students enter at the undergraduate level and can receive full funding through a doctoral degree.

Oman. Since 2012, Oman's Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) has offered scholarships for Omanis to pursue undergraduate and graduate studies in the United States. More than 500 students study abroad annually and go to 21 scholarship destinations, with the United States and the United Kingdom hosting the largest numbers of students. Most scholarships are awarded to support "Omanization," an initiative to increase the number of Omani citizens employed in industries of strategic importance to Oman. Over 75 percent of Omanis studying in the United States are on a scholarship program. The number of undergraduate and graduate scholarships

decreased in the last year, with the Direct Entry Scholarship (DES), an external undergraduate scholarship for students, placed on hold in fall 2021. Despite this, many Omani students continue to pursue higher education studies in the United States. For undergraduate study, there are two types of government-funded scholarships: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education (STEM); and Education, Social Sciences, Art, and Management (ESAM). The MoHE selects receiving institutions for all students on these scholarship programs. At the graduate level, the MoHE offers a National Postgraduate Scholarship supporting study in key subjects at select institutions. To be eligible for a National Postgraduate Scholarship, applicants must have received an unconditional offer of admission at an MoHE-approved university. Visit the [MoHE website](#) for more information on U.S. universities that are approved to receive Omani government-sponsored students.

Middle East and North Africa

Kuwait. The Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) offers a scholarship for undergraduate studies that includes an initial year of English-language instruction to ensure proficiency. In 2018, the Kuwaiti government began requiring that all scholarship recipients earn a score of five or higher on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or a 45 or higher on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) to receive a scholarship to study abroad. This policy shift reduced the number of students eligible for scholarships. There is a generally low standard of English-language proficiency among Kuwaiti public-school students, who formerly comprised approximately 85 percent of scholarship recipients. Pharmacy studies is no longer an approved field of study for Kuwaiti scholarship recipients in the United States, and rigorous requirements for admission to U.S. medical and dentistry schools have caused more Kuwaiti students to pursue these fields in other countries, mainly the UK and Ireland. The MoHE also offers graduate scholarships to qualified applicants who have already received funds from the ministry's undergraduate scholarship program. Additionally, government agencies and private institutions such as Kuwait University, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, the Civil Service Commission, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, and the Kuwait Investment Authority offer scholarship opportunities for graduate students.

Libya. The Libyan government continues to grant scholarships to top students; however, due to the processing time for funding (in some cases taking years), many students have been left unable to pursue study overseas.

Qatar. The government of Qatar offers scholarships to Qatari students pursuing studies abroad. Factors considered for eligibility include high school exit scores, English-language proficiency, and unconditional acceptance to a government-approved U.S. university and field of study. In addition, male students must complete one year of national service or be given a waiver before pursuing postsecondary studies. While female students have the option to complete national service, they are

not required to do so before continuing their education. Scholarship recipients must also commit to working at one of 30 government entities upon graduation. Other companies, such as Qatar Airways and Sidra Medical Center, and industries such as the banking sector and the gas and petroleum sector, offer scholarships, most of which adhere to the government program requirements.

Saudi Arabia. The government of Saudi Arabia has restructured its scholarship program to better align with its economic and workforce development goals. Saudi Arabia launched the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program in 2022, supporting high-achieving high school and university graduates in one of four tracks: Pioneer Path, Supply Path, Research and Development Path, and Promising Path. The Pioneer Path (Alrwad) supports students pursuing bachelor's and master's degrees in various fields at 30 HEIs around the world. The goal is to increase competitiveness in disciplines that support sustainable development and contribute to the kingdom's Vision 2030 initiative. The Supply Path (Imdad) targets training, bachelor's, and master's degrees in fields that meet the needs of the labor market. It supports students pursuing study at 200 HEIs around the world. The Research and Development Path supports students pursuing doctoral degrees in select fields at 200 HEIs around the world. The Promising Path (Waaed) track supports students pursuing bachelor's and master's degrees in sectors and fields that are growing in demand. For more information about the program, visit the Custodian of the [Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program website](#).

Other scholarship programs include the Ministry of Culture Scholarship, the Saudi Space Commission Scholarship, Al-Ula, NEOM, Mawhiba, the Mohammed bin Salman Foundation (MISK), and the Institute of Public Administration (IPA). Companies like Aramco and Saudi Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC) also provide employees with scholarships to study abroad, focusing on the United States.

UAE. Of the 1,618 Emiratis studying in the United States in AY 2021-2022, 80 percent were at the undergraduate level,

while just over 15 percent studied at the graduate level. A majority of students received full scholarship support. Ten scholarship programs offering full funding are available to UAE students to support study in the United States. Some scholarships are specific to a particular emirate, and benefits differ depending on the government entity awarding the scholarship. The Ministry of Education (MOE) scholarship program is open to all UAE students; recipients receive full tuition support, a monthly stipend of more than USD\$3,200, an annual airline ticket, funds for books and clothing, medical insurance, and other benefits. UAE students on scholarships must attend one of the 50 U.S. universities on the MOE-approved list and pursue majors approved by the scholarship-granting institution. To qualify, students must gain admission at an approved institution, meet English-language proficiency requirements, and achieve a high grade-point average in grade 12. Similarly, the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) provides scholarships for study at select U.S. HEIs. Approved majors, many of which are in STEM fields, are determined by anticipated UAE job market needs.

ADEK launched the [Khotwa \(RizeUp\) Scholarship Program](#) in September 2022 to expand Emirati students' access to education opportunities abroad and open new knowledge horizons for high school graduates. The AED 1.9 billion RizeUp program will send up to 6,000 Emirati students from the emirate of Abu Dhabi to community colleges in the United States and Canada by 2028. Students will then be eligible to transfer their credits to an international or local university to complete their bachelor's degrees. Throughout the program rollout, the public affairs section at the U.S. embassy in Abu Dhabi directly supported ADEK efforts by connecting them with U.S. community colleges and homestay organizations, in particular by facilitating a meeting with Community Colleges for International Development, one of the largest community college organizations in the United States. The U.S. embassy will introduce additional contacts and best practices to ADEK as they build out the RizeUp program, which will expand Emirati students' access to education opportunities abroad and equip students



with future-ready skills to contribute to the growth of the knowledge economy. In January, 75 percent of the first batch of 135 Emirati students were attending 16 community colleges across the United States.

Many oil companies and other private firms in the region offer scholarships to current and future employees working in STEM fields. Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, SABIC, and Saudi Aramco all have programs for high school students who are on track to become employees after obtaining a bachelor's degree in the United States. Companies in Qatar, such as Qatar Airways, Sidra Medicine, and Qatar Petroleum, implement similar programs.

Regional Economics and Market Demands

Students in the MENA region have traditionally prioritized STEM fields when exploring programs of study. In Gulf countries, most government scholarship programs specify approved majors based on labor market and workforce

development needs. Nationalization practices have been developed to reduce the need for expatriate labor. Qatari and Emirati nationals, for example, are minority groups in their country's population. As a result, expatriates fill many roles, but ministries of labor seek to expand the employment of citizens in priority fields and encourage their citizens to pursue key fields of study. These include innovation, entrepreneurship, space science, alternative and renewable energy, engineering, artificial intelligence, hospitality, culinary studies, health, music, performing arts, sciences, and business information technology.

In addition to popular STEAM fields, some emerging sectors, including cybersecurity and English-language instruction, offer opportunities for U.S. recruiters. Saudi students may be interested in short-term English language programs to prepare for graduate studies, achieve eligibility for scholarships, and attain a competitive advantage in the labor market. Peace studies are also gaining prominence as

a discipline, especially in current and former conflict zones. New fields of study are emerging in Saudi Arabia as the country opens its borders to visitors and tourists, whose presence drives demand for expertise in managing historical sites, national parks, theme parks, and concerts. In March 2020, the Saudi Ministry of Tourism launched the Your Future Tourism campaign, which aims to create 100,000 jobs by the end of 2021 and one million jobs by 2030.

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

EducationUSA centers in the region organize in-person and virtual events throughout the year. Consult the [EducationUSA website](#) and Facebook pages for information about the growing number of webinars, fairs, and workshops offered in specific countries across the region. REACs also share regular updates via the MENA newsletter for HEIs, which is issued six times per year, and via a closed Facebook group, [EducationUSA in the Middle East and North Africa](#). Throughout

Middle East and North Africa



the year, EducationUSA advising centers offer country briefing webinars with information about local education systems, challenges and opportunities, and country-specific developments that impact student recruitment. U.S. HEI representatives can further engage by meeting with U.S. embassy public affairs and consular staff (subject to scheduling availability), presenting at an EducationUSA advising center, and visiting local high schools or universities. HEI representatives are encouraged to contact EducationUSA centers to explore options. Upcoming fairs and exhibitions in which EducationUSA is participating are listed below.

EducationUSA REACs maintain a [list of regional fairs and opportunities](#) in which U.S. HEIs may participate.

Bahrain. The [Bahrain Education and Training Exhibition \(EDUTEX\)](#) is usually held in March at the Bahrain International Exhibition and Convention Center. The [University of Bahrain Career Fair](#) takes place in April.

Oman. The annual [Global Higher Education Exhibition \(GHEDEX\)](#) in Muscat and Sohar is Oman's largest higher education expo. It takes place on April 30 – May 2 in Muscat and May 3–4 in Sohar. The GHEDEX fall fair in Muscat will be in October. The virtual [Education and Training Exhibition \(EduTrex\)](#) and the IDP education fair held in September are also popular. This year's [EduTraC](#) Oman exhibition will be held October 22–24.

Qatar. EducationUSA is hosting an education fair in fall 2023.

Saudi Arabia. The Ministry of Education's International Conference and Exhibition for Education (ICEE) offers insights into the Saudi education market and gives opportunities to build strategic alliances and business contacts. The conference will be held at the International Convention and Exhibition Center in Riyadh. The May 2023 opening has been postponed, and a new date will be announced.

UAE. [NAJAH](#), the official government-sponsored education expo, typically attracts more than 1,600 visitors. It will occur in Dubai on October 8–10 and in Abu Dhabi on October 29–30.

Virtual Team. EducationUSA virtual advisers for Iran, Libya, Syria, and Yemen will host a virtual university fair on September 4.

All Countries. EducationUSA centers host regular web chats and video conferences for students in the region. Advisers offer focused online discussions on study options and undergraduate and graduate admissions issues. Advisers also present regular weekly or monthly sessions on financial aid, personal statements, and standardized tests.

All advising centers conduct predeparture orientations in the summer, and some centers also conduct orientations in January. U.S. institutions are encouraged to advise accepted students to visit the [EducationUSA website](#) or contact their local EducationUSA center for dates and times. Even students who are new to EducationUSA or first-time visitors are welcome to attend a predeparture orientation.

Many centers host monthly meetings with guidance counselors from surrounding secondary schools. These meetings offer opportunities for U.S. HEIs to engage with local schools and prospective students. Interested representatives should contact an adviser.

U.S. Study Abroad in the Region

The COVID pandemic affected U.S. study abroad programs across all regions, resulting in a 91 percent decline overall, according to the *2022 Open Doors* data. According to *Open Doors*, 711 U.S. students studied in the Middle East and North Africa region in AY 2020–2021. Israel hosted 539 of these students,

making it the leading study abroad destination in the region and the eighth most popular in the world. Jordan and Egypt hosted the second and third most students in the region. There has been some rebound in study abroad demand over the past year, but it will likely take some time for this to be reflected in *Open Doors* data.

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. In summer 2022, the [Increase and Diversify Education Abroad \(IDEAS\) Program](#) awarded four grants to U.S. colleges and universities to develop virtual and in-person study abroad programming in Iraq, Kuwait, and Morocco. In 2023, USA Study Abroad also awarded Study Abroad Engagement Grants to the U.S. embassies in Algeria, Jerusalem, Jordan, and Lebanon to deliver trainings for local HEIs designed to foster their ability to partner with U.S. colleges and universities on study abroad programming.

Although EducationUSA advising centers in the region do not host study abroad programs, some centers offer internship opportunities and are eager to work with American student volunteers. Study abroad staff can inform students about potential internships and connect students with a local advising center.

U.S. study abroad students are welcome to join EducationUSA programming 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 the institution to local audiences. Students 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.

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

Algeria. The best time to visit is from November to February. Avoid traveling during Ramadan and the Eid holidays.

Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar. The best time to visit is from October to February. Avoid traveling during Ramadan and the Eid holidays. There are many international school calendars due to the large expatriate community. Consider the Indian school timetable as well as exam preparation times.

Egypt. The best times to visit are from October to December and mid-February to March. Avoid visiting during Ramadan, Eid, and other major holidays, including Sham el Nessim (April) and Sinai Liberation Day (April 25).

Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yemen. Travel is not advised (at the time of publication). Virtual interaction is recommended. Consult travel.state.gov for more information.

Israel. The best times to visit are from November to January and March to May. Avoid significant holidays, such as New Year and Passover, the dates for which can vary each year.

Jordan. The best times to visit are from October to November and February to May. Avoid traveling during major religious holidays, such as Ramadan, Eid, Easter, or Palm Sunday.

Lebanon. The best time to visit is from mid-October to March. First-term exams take place in early January. Avoid visiting during major religious holidays.

Morocco. The best times to visit are from October to November and March to April. Avoid visiting during Ramadan and the Eid holidays.

Oman. Visit during GHEDEX, Oman's largest [higher education expo](#), typically held in April. Another good time to visit is during [EduTraC](#) in October in Muscat.

Palestinian Territories. The best times to visit are from September to November and February to April. Avoid traveling during Ramadan, Eid, major exam periods (January, May, June, October, and December), and the summer break (June to August).

Saudi Arabia. The best time to visit is from October to February. Avoid traveling during Ramadan and the Eid holidays. There are many international school calendars due to the large expatriate community. Consider the Indian school timetable as well as exam preparation times. In AY 2021-2022 Saudi Arabia moved to three semesters instead of two, resulting in long weekends and shortened summer vacation in July and August.

Tunisia. The best time to visit is from October to November and from January to mid-February. Avoid major exam periods (early December and late February to early March).

UAE. The best time to visit is from October to February. Avoid traveling during Ramadan and the Eid holidays. There are many international school calendars due to the large expatriate community. Consider the Indian school timetable as well as exam preparation times.

South and Central Asia

Regional EducationUSA Profile

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

29

EducationUSA Advising Centers in the Region

22 Comprehensive
7 Standard
0 Reference

EducationUSA advising centers in South and Central Asia (SCA) are located at U.S. embassies and consulates, Fulbright Commissions, American Councils for International Education offices, and local nonprofit organizations.

There are 74 advisers at 29 EducationUSA centers in SCA, with several countries hosting multiple advising centers at various host institutions. India, Pakistan, and Kazakhstan have the largest concentration of centers. There are 37 advisers in India across eight centers, 11 advisers in Pakistan across three centers, and eight advisers in Kazakhstan across four centers. Advisers in SCA function as mentors and local experts in the U.S. higher education sector, providing advising sessions, engaging with students and families, and conducting outreach activities.

contact the advising centers to learn more about supporting Opportunity Funds students through virtual programs and specialized scholarships.

EducationUSA advising centers in SCA conduct strategic outreach in their respective countries in close collaboration with public affairs and consular sections at U.S. embassies and consulates. U.S. HEI representatives assist advising centers in engaging public audiences by joining visits and participating in webinars for students, high school counselors, and local postsecondary institutions. In addition, visits to advising centers by U.S. college and university representatives allow EducationUSA to highlight outreach opportunities with local HEIs and facilitate personal interactions with students, parents, and local educational institutions.

Regional Overview

SCA is a region of vast cultural and geographic diversity, home to one of the largest youth populations in the world. Young people in the region are driven and eager to enter the workforce. Limited access to higher education is a significant challenge. People-to-people ties and international student exchanges are crucial in this region. South Asian economies are among the fastest-growing globally, and the region is a tremendous market for recruiting highly qualified students. Despite the growth, challenges include high inflation and volatile economic conditions in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, rising food costs, and regional and domestic security issues. Turmoil in Afghanistan is also affecting neighboring nations. U.S. higher education costs are becoming increasingly unaffordable for students in countries with declining currencies

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

Given current safety and security concerns, EducationUSA cannot offer in-person advising services in Afghanistan. The U.S. embassy in Kabul suspended operations in Afghanistan on August 31, 2021.

The EducationUSA Opportunity Funds program, serving high-achieving prospective students who demonstrate financial need, operates at advising centers in Nepal, Pakistan, and Turkmenistan. Nepal and Pakistan host Opportunity Funds cohorts for undergraduate students. Cohorts engage in robust mentoring activities over two years and interact with Opportunity Funds alums. Turkmenistan hosts Opportunity Fund cohorts for graduate students, offering mentoring activities for one year. U.S. higher education institutions (HEIs) are encouraged to



like Pakistan and Sri Lanka. According to [Reuters](#), the Pakistani rupee fell nearly 10 percent against the U.S. dollar in a single day in January 2023, the largest one-day drop in nearly two decades.

While SCA stretches from Kazakhstan in the north to the Maldives in the south, students from this region share common traits: They seek similar fields of study (notably STEM and business) and look to develop practical skills that prepare them for future careers. Prospective students and their parents view the award of a scholarship – even a partial tuition award – as a prestigious achievement. SCA has many educational systems, including local government-supported and private English-medium schools. Students from Central Asia are likely to seek intensive English-language programs abroad. At the same time, those in India and the rest of South Asia have opportunities to achieve English proficiency in their home countries. The U.S. government has a growing interest in opening U.S. branch campuses in Uzbekistan. The Kazakh government hopes to attract American specialists to improve the qualifications of professors, teach English, give lectures, conduct seminars and master classes, and open branches of American universities in the country. They have

invested millions of dollars in partnering with the Uzbek government to promote English-language education, focusing on improving textbooks, curriculum development, teacher training, and access to English-language study opportunities. There continues to be a growing interest in English-language programs amongst the populations of Central Asia. With a median age of fewer than 27 years, the burgeoning youth population faces limited postsecondary capacity and local barriers to access to quality higher education, thereby driving demand for academic opportunities abroad.

In many parts of SCA, the internet is widely and easily accessible, with most users accessing the web through mobile devices. According to the *January 2023 Digital Global Overview Report*, internet usage has reached 72.5 percent in Central Asia and 47.4 percent in South Asia. Internet connection speeds vary significantly across the region and between rural and urban areas. Disruptions to electrical service are becoming less frequent; however, some countries continue to face outages during peak summer and winter months. In addition, government-imposed restrictions limit online activity in some countries. Government limits on internet speed, specific applications, and services impact

students' ability to access online content, conduct research, sit for exams and interact virtually. EducationUSA centers in the region are equipped with computers, offering students an alternative, reliable way to connect to the internet. Many people throughout the region lack internet access at home, meaning many students cannot access virtual learning options or participate in virtual programming. The U.S. higher education system is well-positioned to provide training in fields that will equip graduates with practical skills to address these challenges.

Although the United States remains the top study destination for students from the region, students and families are attuned to political developments and discourse. Students are attracted to countries in which they anticipate the ability to obtain student visas, work, and sometimes transition to permanent residency. Traditionally, students from the region have gravitated toward the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia. However, over the past few years, China, Japan, Malaysia, and India have begun to attract more students by offering government scholarships, affordable tuition, and employment opportunities. Such offers and proximity to the student's home countries make these

South and Central Asia

options increasingly attractive. Linguistic and cultural ties drew many Central Asians to study in Russia and the former Soviet Union. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, in particular, have expanded higher education capacity in recent years and are becoming attractive to students who wish to stay closer to home. The Arab Gulf states are also an option for students from the region, given their proximity, multicultural environment, and more flexible student visa regulations.

Reliance on consultants or agents is common among prospective students, especially in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan. Consultants and agents provide a range of services, from basic advice to the full completion of applications for students. Representatives of U.S. institutions should highlight their institutional recruitment standards and criteria as a strength when speaking with parents and students. Institutions are encouraged to publicize their relationships with consultants and agents to ensure international students are fully informed.

Recent Trends

According to the Institute of International Education's (IIE) *2022 Open Doors® Report on International Educational Exchange*, just over 25 percent of international students in the United States in the academic year (AY) 2021-2022 were from the SCA region. *Open Doors* reported an 18 percent increase in mobility from this region, with 237,500

students from SCA studying in the United States in AY 2021-2022.

Of the SCA students studying in the United States, approximately 44 percent are in graduate programs, and 31.9 percent are enrolled in nondegree Programs and Optional Practical Training (OPT). Undergraduate students represent 18 percent of international students from SCA. Student mobility to the United States increased in AY 2021-2022 across the 11 countries in SCA. According to *Open Doors* data, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan were among the top 15 sending countries in the world to the United States in AY 2021-2022. India and Nepal are the world's second- and 12th-largest senders, respectively, while Bangladesh and Pakistan are the 14th- and 18th-largest senders.

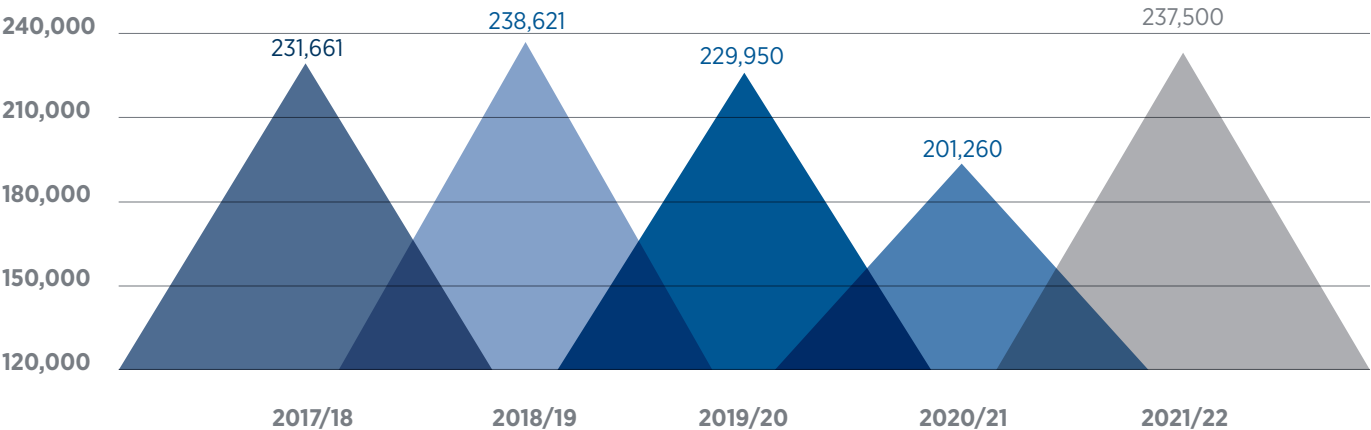
Bangladesh, India, and Nepal were among the top 15 sending countries of graduate students to the United States in AY 2021-2022, with 18.9 percent from India, 5.6 percent from Nepal, and 23.2 percent from Bangladesh.

Sri Lanka continues to face a political and economic crisis but is recovering. Defaults on foreign debt have led to crippling power cuts and an extreme scarcity of food, fuel, and other essential items such as medicines. One of Sri Lanka's significant sources of income, tourism, has been impacted heavily. In 2022, the country welcomed just 719,978 tourists, down from 2.3 million in 2018.

Several factors contributed to an increasing number of graduate students from the region. Local HEIs often require a foreign terminal degree when hiring faculty, fueling interest in foreign doctoral programs. A lack of opportunity to pursue research in their home countries also leads many students to seek foreign research opportunities, especially in the United States. Savvy students understand that connections made during graduate studies can build careers, leading many to pursue graduate degrees abroad to expand their professional networks. The high cost of U.S. undergraduate education is also an important factor that can drive students to pursue fully or partially funded graduate study in the United States.

Private English-language secondary schools prepare students for undergraduate study abroad in some countries. Although such schools hesitate to sacrifice class hours to accommodate visiting college and university representatives, EducationUSA advisers may be able to assist institutional representatives in securing a meeting. Advisers are well placed and well connected and can invite qualified students to meet U.S. HEI representatives at EducationUSA advising centers or during a college fair. Students and their families are increasingly concerned about safety on U.S. campuses and local communities. Many opt to apply to states and institutions with existing diaspora communities or sizable international student populations. Institutions are

Student Mobility in the Region (Five-Year Trend)





encouraged to address safety concerns and share success stories of international students thriving on campus and in the community.

Gap years are increasingly common among prospective students from the region.

Top Senders and Countries to Watch

Below are the top five countries in the region by the 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. India
2. Nepal
3. Bangladesh
4. Pakistan
5. Kazakhstan

What to Expect in the Next Three to Five Years

South Asia has a huge population of youth, many of whom will pursue study abroad. Across the region, competition for limited seats in engineering and business programs at respected local undergraduate institutions may increase

the number of undergraduate applicants to the United States.

Central Asia's most populous country, Uzbekistan, is home to more than 34 million people, and 60 percent are younger than 30. Close to half of Uzbek students in the United States pursue an undergraduate degree, including many students at community colleges. English-language instruction is improving in the country, paving the way for more students to pursue educational opportunities in the United States.

As the country develops and the economy grows, more families will have funds to pay for quality education and consider sending their children abroad. Uzbekistan's educational vision and priorities continue to evolve. In 2019, the Ministry of Higher and Secondary-Specialized Education introduced a five-year education sector plan focused on expanding the English-language curriculum, increasing technical and vocational training, opening new educational institutions, and diversifying available fields of study. The public affairs section at the U.S. embassy in Tashkent recently awarded a \$5 million grant to create the English Speaking Nation

(ESN) program, which is focused on strengthening secondary school teachers' English-language skills. The number of private high schools continues to increase, with many focusing on STEM education. Uzbek universities seek partnerships with foreign institutions to support their internationalization efforts. Recently, several U.S. institutions have signed agreements around teacher training and geological sciences.

Shared linguistic and historical roots have long made Russia a study destination for Central Asian students; however, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and resulting economic instability and political concerns are prompting families to look elsewhere for study and work opportunities. Affordable options and community colleges with articulation agreements with four-year institutions are attractive. In Turkmenistan, there are limited seats in STEM and business programs at the undergraduate level, making foreign institutions attractive. Due to limited access and slow or unreliable internet, flexibility around testing is essential for students from Central Asia.

Steady economic growth and a growing middle class in Bangladesh have increased

South and Central Asia

the demand for quality higher education. Interest in graduate studies overseas is expected to increase as political instability and economic challenges impact higher education in SCA. Many students and families realize that obtaining a foreign degree confers prestige and allows them to develop valuable professional networks.

In India, the [National Education Policy \(NEP\) 2020](#), which prioritizes internationalizing education, creates new opportunities for foreign HEIs. The shift from a three-year system to a four-year degree option bodes well for students applying to U.S. universities. Still, it is causing concern amongst current Indian faculty used to a three-year system and facing a continuing shortage of seats. As a result, more students from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities in India will seek higher education opportunities in the United States. The [University Grants Commission](#), the Indian government's regulatory body for education, released a draft curriculum framework for four-year degree programs to be implemented in the 2022-2023 academic cycle. Only a few have adopted it.

The new policy also shifts focus to a multidisciplinary education that will better align with the pedagogical model in foreign universities, allowing students to transition more easily from one education system to another. Furthermore, the NEP 2020 allows top-ranked foreign universities to set up their International Branch Campuses (IBCs) in India.

Virtual Engagement and Social Media Usage

The internet is widely available in the region, but there are significant disparities in speed and accessibility outside major cities. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Zoom are popular social media platforms throughout the region. They are among the most effective ways for institutions to promote opportunities for international students. The EducationUSA India Facebook account has more than 193,000 followers. EducationUSA Bangladesh's official Facebook page has more than 1.3 million followers. The messaging app Telegram is also a popular communication platform in Central Asia. It allows interaction with subscribers through reactions, comments, and live streams. Users can chat directly with each other or join thematic groups or channels. Internet bandwidth in some locations cannot always sustain webinars and video conferencing sessions; however, messaging tools and social media announcements remain highly effective. Messages highlighting student success stories and short, engaging pieces of information are the most popular.

The Indian government's DigiLocker service allows citizens virtual access to authentic and official documents as part of an official digital empowerment initiative. State boards and Indian universities are gradually opting to use the DigiLocker service to provide official documents such as transcripts, diplomas, and letters of recommendation. This service addresses the issue of document authentication for school/university-

issued documents, although many Indian HEIs have yet to opt into the service.

In the past year, Turkmenistan has eased restrictions on popular social media platforms, and EducationUSA centers increasingly offer webinars and virtual meetings. Students primarily rely on traditional advising methods: in-person sessions, telephone, and email. Instant messaging platforms like Skype or Google Meet have proved highly effective in the past year. Highlighting recent student success stories from the region on social media platforms is an effective strategy for gaining visibility. With limited testing options available, flexibility around testing will be critical to students interested in applying to the United States.

Pakistan launched the EducationUSA Pakistan Mobile App in 2022. The free digital tool complements EducationUSA's efforts to inform students, parents, and educators about study opportunities at accredited postsecondary institutions in the United States. In addition to its user-friendly interface, the EducationUSA app is a timely resource that takes audiences through its content in a smooth, logical flow. India and Nepal have also implemented a mobile app to reach students and parents.

Successful Recruiting Strategies

- Connect with students through EducationUSA college and regional university fairs. Graduate and undergraduate applicants appreciate the opportunity to meet institutional representatives virtually or in person, discuss study options, and pose

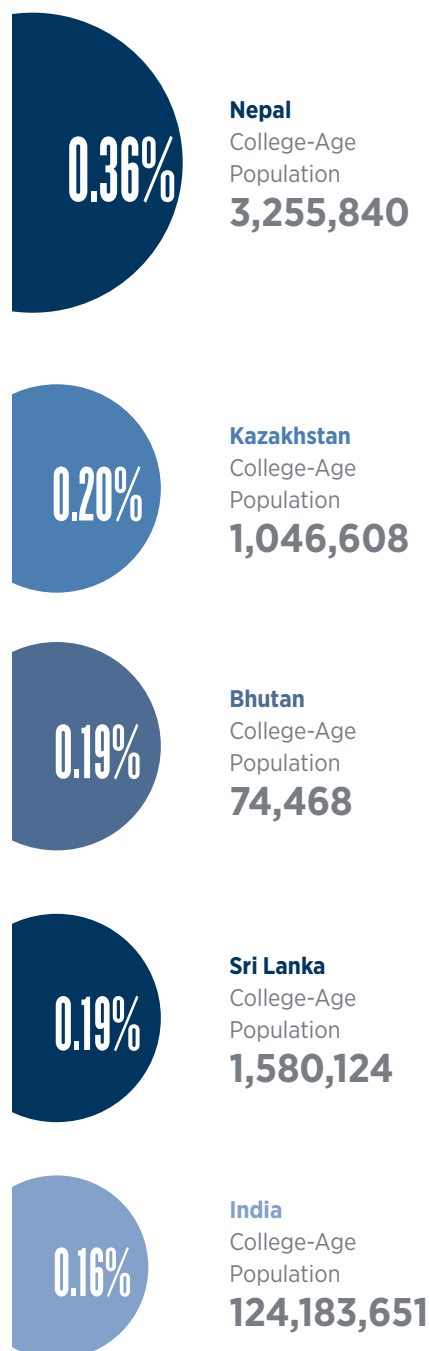
Five Countries of Origin (with over 100 students) with Highest Percentage Growth, International Students in the Region (Five-Year Trend)

Country	2017/18	2021/22	% Change
Kyrgyzstan	227	478	111%
Bangladesh	7,496	10,597	41%
Pakistan	7,537	8,772	16%
Kazakhstan	1,865	2,121	14%
Uzbekistan	570	631	11%

111.0%

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

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



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics; Indicator: 2020 or most recent Population of the official age for tertiary education, both sexes

questions to HEI representatives to ensure they are well-informed when deciding where to apply.

- Consider organizing summer precollege programs to create a pipeline toward degree-granting programs. These programs also help students learn about the institution, engage with other international and American students, and connect with faculty.
- Participate in informational seminars that showcase the breadth of U.S. higher education, highlight the strengths of U.S. educational institutions, and offer insights into specific fields of study.
- Organize interactive webinars that go beyond a presentation with a question-and-answer period. Look for opportunities to build a connection with students and offer tangible and measurable ways to engage.
- Combine multiple partial financial aid awards into more significant awards for fewer students. Providing more prominent awards attracts quality students who share their positive experiences with peers, encouraging them to apply. Word of mouth is the most effective recruiting tool in the region.
- Engage alums and train them to promote their alma mater at EducationUSA recruitment fairs. Parents of prospective students are keen to send their children to study in the United States at universities and towns where they know other people from their home country or region have studied.
- Offer opportunities for parents of enrolled students to meet parents of prospective students to provide a sense of security to families anxious about sending children abroad.
- Share information about internship opportunities and other practical training experiences. Students in the region are highly motivated by opportunities to advance their career prospects.
- Research virtual platforms that can facilitate communication with prospective applicants and parents. Students appreciate opportunities

to speak directly to admissions representatives or other students. Contact EducationUSA Regional Managers (REACs) and advisers in the region to organize a webinar for a specific country or group of countries. Collaborating with other HEIs is recommended to help centers accommodate programming.

- Showcase alumni success stories and career trajectories, emphasize the value of a degree from your institution, and highlight affordable financing and scholarship options. These topics generate strong interest on social media.
- Communicate any test-optional policies or flexibilities your institution offers. Local curricula are rigorous, making it challenging for students to find the time to prepare for admissions tests.
- Organize fly-ins for EducationUSA advisers, local university and high school guidance counselors, and key stakeholders.
- Connect with high school counselors in specialized private and public schools and conduct workshops for school counselors, teachers, and students.

Institutional Partnerships

While many countries in SCA are eager to establish formal partnerships with U.S. institutions, needs and scope vary. Interested U.S. institutions are encouraged to reach out to the U.S. embassies and consulates in SCA and other not-for-profit international entities within the United States and abroad to assess and understand the needs of specific countries regarding institutional partnerships.

Regional Student Totals Top Five Countries of Origin

Country	2021/22	% Change
India	199,182	19%
Nepal	11,799	6%
Bangladesh	10,597	23%
Pakistan	8,772	17%
Sri Lanka	2,928	6%

South and Central Asia

Effective and successful partnerships are those in which both institutions invest time and resources while developing strategies to ensure the sustainability of these academic linkages.

India. U.S. institutions interested in partnerships in India should be prepared to invest time developing such connections. Institutional partnership grants most frequently supported by the United States-India Educational Foundation (USIEF) are those where the principal U.S. institutional representative had significant prior association with the Indian partner university. Previous association with HEIs in India and experience navigating complex institutional bureaucracies can be helpful to both parties. U.S. university representatives are encouraged to explore mutually beneficial partnerships and collaborative opportunities, such as twinning programs, faculty and student academic exchanges, research and secondary school internships, and summer programs.

Pakistan. The U.S.-Pakistan university partnership initiative, funded by the public affairs section of the U.S. embassy in Islamabad, established 23 long-term relationships between Pakistani and American HEIs. Through sustainable peer-to-peer relationships, these three-year partnerships promoted faculty professional development, curriculum reform, joint research, and mutual understanding between Pakistan and the United States. In 2020, the U.S. embassy public affairs section launched a follow-on program, the U.S.-Pakistan University Partnerships Grants Program (UPGP) 2020-2023, in collaboration with the U.S. Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP), which serves as the implementing partner. Under this program, previous grant recipients can apply for up to USD\$50,000 to support follow-on projects focused on disseminating the knowledge and expertise acquired during the partnership program to other Pakistani universities. University partners may [contact USEFP](#) to participate in the program.

Central Asia. Institutions in Central Asia are eager to explore partnerships focused on enhancing teacher preparation, teaching methodology, and training to support language teaching and learning.

U.S. embassies throughout the region support partnerships through the Central Asia University Partnerships Program (UniCEN) to build capacity for substantive international engagement between HEIs in the United States and Central Asia. Since 2017, the program has supported more than 70 projects led by U.S. HEIs to improve teacher training.

Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan was the first country in Central Asia to allow international branch campuses, ushering in Russian, British, and U.S. campuses. Through partnerships with U.S. universities, the UniCEN program provides Central Asian universities an understanding of the U.S. higher education system and strategies for successfully engaging and internationalizing. For example, the University of California, Davis, and the National University of Uzbekistan organized the Central Asia Genomics Symposium. Purdue University and Urgench State University's collaboration on ecotourism opportunities in Uzbekistan resulted in a new Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) focused on increasing awareness of the topic. Tashkent State University of Law cooperates with Penn State University and sends a significant number of students to law school there.

Foreign Government and Private Funding

Many national governments across SCA allocate funding each year for students to pursue higher education overseas. Despite such assistance, students with government funding often attend institutions closer to home – in countries such as India, Türkiye, and the UK – because of lower tuition, geographical proximity, and familiar cultural traditions. However, many students are eager to study in the United States, and institutions able to offer competitive tuition or discounts have a recruiting advantage.

Bangladesh. Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), the country's premier HEI for STEM education, recently announced it would provide three-year-long fellowships to 30 master's and 20 doctoral students to encourage research and innovation.

Kazakhstan. Since 1993, the government's Bolashak International Scholarship has funded postgraduate training to address a shortage of specialists in priority fields.

Scholarships are available for those admitted to top global institutions to study toward master's and doctoral degrees and internships in engineering, medicine, and teaching. The program provides full funding for study in the United States, including a monthly stipend for living expenses, roundtrip airfare, textbook allowances, and health insurance. In 2023, the Bolashak International Scholarship plans to fully fund 395 master's students, 50 doctoral students, and 110 people pursuing internships. Bolashak introduced a cost-sharing practice: Students who received a partial scholarship from the U.S. institution can request funds to cover the rest of the expenses. STEM and medical students can take a one-year-long English-language preparation course before receiving an admissions decision from the university. The program has also expanded the [list of approved foreign universities](#).

India. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has offered the [National Overseas Scholarship](#) since 1954. The scholarship supports overseas graduate study for low-income students who are recognized as belonging to the following groups: scheduled castes, denotified nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes, landless agricultural laborers, and traditional artisans. The government has invested USD\$206 million annually in this scholarship program.

In 2021, Quad partners Australia, India, Japan, and the United States announced the [Quad Fellowship Program](#) designed to build ties among the next generation of scientists and technologists. The fellowship will be operated and administered by Schmidt Futures in consultation with a nongovernmental task force.

The [J N Tata Endowment Loan Scholarship](#) is dedicated to Indian students who wish to pursue higher studies abroad. Introduced by the Tata Trusts, this scholarship specifically supports postgraduate, doctoral, postdoctoral, and research-level education.

Nepal. Nepal's Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology and the World Bank launched a USD\$60 million Nurturing Excellence in Higher Education

Program in 2021. The program seeks to support fields that address labor market needs, boost collaborative research and innovation, and enhance access for underprivileged and disaster-affected groups in Nepal. This is a five-year program that can help students plan for further studies.

Pakistan. The U.S.-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor, a Government of Pakistan initiative established in February 2017, supports high-level human capital development as outlined in the government’s Vision 2025 policy document. This initiative supports Pakistan’s efforts to strengthen its university system by increasing the number of Pakistani faculty who obtain doctoral degrees from U.S. universities. The initiative aims to send 1,000 Pakistanis on scholarship to U.S. universities over a 10-year period. The scholarship covers travel and living expenses; for some scholars, it also covers partial tuition.

Turkmenistan. EducationUSA Turkmenistan offers a year-long cohort model program with a build-up and top-up scholarship. The U.S. embassy in Turkmenistan fully funds the top-up scholarship. It provides a maximum of USD\$20,000 for 16 to 20 alumni annually, to be paid out during the first two years of study at any U.S. institution. In addition, cohorts are eligible for the Opportunity Funds scholarship, which can cover the upfront cost of studying in the United States based on demonstrated talent and needs.

Uzbekistan. The Islam Karimov Foundation, established in 2016 in honor of the late president, organizes a competition to select promising young people to study in U.S and European master’s programs. The foundation’s grant supports study in natural sciences (renewable energy and chemistry), water and land resource management, engineering technology, food technology, food safety, food production and marketing, architecture (urban development and protection and restoration of architectural monuments), design (product design, industrial and architectural design), and fine arts. The grant covers full tuition and living expenses for up to two years.

The El-Yurt Umidi Foundation’s government scholarship program introduced new scholarships for the undergraduate level. The foundation offers scholarships for doctoral programs, master’s programs, short-term professional development programs, and six-month internship programs.

Currently, 124 scholarship holders are studying at 34 universities in the United States.

Regional Economics and Market Demands

Many students in the SCA region gravitate toward STEM fields. English-language proficiency is strong in India and Pakistan, and the local postsecondary sector offers high-quality undergraduate programs. As a result, many students complete undergraduate degrees at home and pursue graduate study overseas to enhance their career opportunities. Program quality, research opportunities, and competitiveness are all factors that students consider when applying to U.S. institutions.

India has surpassed China as the world’s most populous nation and continues to be one of the world’s fastest-growing economies. The rise of the middle class has led to growing workforce needs in several areas, including the service sector, technology finance (banking and insurance), information technology (robotics, cybersecurity, data science, machine learning, and blockchain), manufacturing, e-commerce, media, and entertainment. U.S. universities offer cutting-edge programs with specializations catering to these

industries’ current and future needs and much-needed expertise and training for both new entrants to the job market and mid-career professionals. The number of startups in India is growing, and many aspiring business leaders are choosing programs that integrate tech and entrepreneurship.

India was one of the very few countries where applications for U.S. visas saw a major upswing after coronavirus-related travel restrictions were lifted. The U.S. Department of State has quietly implemented recommendations of a presidential commission which has suggested steps like opening up American diplomatic missions outside India for visa appointments to reduce the visa backlog in the country.

Economic and workforce needs in Central Asia, such as English-language proficiency, differ from those of the subcontinent, where English is widely spoken. Central Asian countries are establishing programs to ensure teachers and students have the skills to enter the global market, including English-language proficiency. Key areas of interest are oil and gas, STEM, agriculture, education, and health care. In Nepal, expertise is needed in infrastructure development and management, tourism and hospitality, and information and communication technology.

China’s Belt and Road Initiative will leave an indelible mark on the region for years to come. This large-scale infrastructure investment will expand China’s economic influence in the region, creating jobs and

U.S. Study Abroad

Top Five Receiving Countries in the Region		
Destination	2020/21	% Change
Kyrgyzstan	30	-3%
India	16	-99%
Nepal	7	-98%
Uzbekistan	4	0%
Pakistan	3	-25%

South and Central Asia



attracting students from SCA to study in China to develop the expertise needed to support the initiative.

For students in Turkmenistan and other Central Asian countries, affordability is the main factor in educational decisions. Countries such as Australia, Canada, Türkiye, and Malaysia that offer robust funding and job placements are strong competitors for international students. U.S. HEIs interested in recruiting in Central Asia should emphasize the affordability of their programs and/or return on investment to make a compelling case to prospective students.

The birth rate in Kazakhstan has been relatively high since 2003. This demographic will increase the number of applicants for undergraduate programs. The number of highly selective private and public high schools is growing; they employ school counselors and offer college prep programs in addition to a rigorous curriculum and a range of extracurricular activities. Some schools sponsor professional training led by leading U.S. institutions. Kazakh school counselors actively participate in the International Association for College Admission Counseling (ACAC), improving their expertise and enlarging their network.

More high schools plan to introduce Advanced Placement (AP) classes, with some schools serving as AP centers where students from other schools can take

AP classes. This change may lead to an increase in the quality of applicants from Kazakhstan in the next few years. In the past two years, the EducationUSA Almaty and Nur-Sultan centers have developed virtual programs (some open to the public and some only for Competitive College Club participants) that cover all regions of Kazakhstan. Advisers have already seen growing interest from students in underserved areas and expect this trend to continue.

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

HEIs can find country-specific information about upcoming in-person and virtual events, including fairs and webinars, on the [EducationUSA website](#). REACs regularly host in-person and virtual workshops and training in the region. Contact the REACs to learn how you can participate in these activities.

In addition to the many in-person and virtual student recruitment opportunities offered through participation in EducationUSA fairs and conferences, EducationUSA advisers provide country briefings, facilitate meetings by U.S. embassy public affairs and consular staff (subject to scheduling availability), give welcome presentations at EducationUSA advising centers, and arrange visits to local high schools or colleges for representatives of U.S. HEIs. Contact the EducationUSA staff to explore options for participating in upcoming events.

Bhutan. The Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry organizes an annual International Education Fair in Thimphu in March.

Central Asia. The EducationUSA Central Asia tour includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. The tour consists of college and university fairs, secondary school visits, cultural activities, and visits to local universities. Many advising centers in the region have strong cohort advising programs composed of students seeking opportunities at the undergraduate level. The tour visits multiple cities including Almaty, Nur-Sultan, and Atyrau in Kazakhstan; Bishkek and Osh in Kyrgyzstan; and Tashkent, Uzbekistan. EducationUSA Central Asia has hosted virtual fairs over the past year, with some events highlighting community colleges and 2+2 options.

India. The EducationUSA India fair tour, traditionally held in the fall, visits as many as 10 cities. EducationUSA India hosts Chalo America, small-group tours in the spring across different cities, and alumni fairs in December and January. For details about these events, contact the [South Asia Tour Planning Team](#).

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

EducationUSA advising centers participate in an array of locally organized international student fairs, the Begin Group's spring and fall international education fairs, and the fall [Bolashak Development Fund](#) Program, with 300 HEIs from around the globe visiting six cities across Kazakhstan.

South Asia. The South Asia tour traditionally includes Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The tour offers college and university fairs, secondary school visits, cultural activities, and visits to local universities relevant for graduate-level recruiters. EducationUSA advisers across South Asia leverage social media networks to reach diverse student audiences. Costs are kept as low as possible to offer an affordable recruitment opportunity. The tour traditionally takes place in the spring and fall each year. For details, contact the [South Asia Tour Planning Team](#).

Turkmenistan. The government of Turkmenistan sponsors an annual international exhibition and scientific

conference in Ashgabat each November. The EducationUSA advising center in Ashgabat reaches thousands of high school and university students, parents, teachers, professors, and various organizations at this event.

Uzbekistan. Twice a year, Expocontact, under the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan, organizes an education and career fair with support from the Ministry of Higher and Secondary-Specialized Education. This fair is in early April and mid-September. For more information, contact the [EducationUSA Tashkent office](#).

U.S. Study Abroad in the Region

The COVID pandemic affected U.S. study abroad programs across all regions, resulting in a 91 percent decline overall, according to the 2022 *Open Doors* data. According to *Open Doors*, 61 U.S. students studied in the South and Central Asia region in AY 2020-2021. The top study abroad destinations were Kyrgyzstan, which hosted nearly half the study abroad students in the region, followed by India. There has been some rebound in study abroad demand over the past year, but it will likely take some time for this to be reflected in *Open Doors* data.

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. In summer 2022, the [Increase and Diversify Education Abroad \(IDEAS\) Program](#) awarded four grants to U.S. colleges and universities to develop study abroad programming in India and Nepal. In 2023, USA Study Abroad also awarded Study Abroad Engagement Grants to the U.S. embassy in Kyrgyzstan to deliver training for local HEIs designed to foster their ability to partner with U.S. colleges and universities on study abroad programming.

U.S. study abroad students are welcome to join EducationUSA programming activities throughout the region. U.S. institutions are encouraged to provide information and resources to study abroad participants before they depart from the United States so that they can promote the institution

to local audiences. Students 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.

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

U.S. HEI representatives are encouraged to note U.S. Department of State travel warnings posted at [travel.state.gov](#). Regarding holidays, note that the Muslim calendar is lunar-based, and dates vary yearly. Please check U.S. embassy websites and consult EducationUSA advising centers for a complete list of annual holidays. Exam periods and religious holidays can vary due to multiple academic calendars. Advisers try to accommodate U.S. HEI representatives' needs and plans throughout the year.

Bangladesh. The best times to visit are August to November, February, and March. Avoid public holidays, such as Ramadan and Eid holidays.

Bhutan. The best time to visit is from March to June.

India. The best times to visit India for recruitment are July, August, October, and November. States observe local and national holidays, and U.S. HEI representatives are encouraged to check the list of holidays at [Holiday Calendar - U.S. Embassy & Consulates in India \(usembassy.gov\)](#) for more information. HEIs are advised to coordinate their visits to India and travel in groups to maximize the time for themselves and visiting institutions. Visiting HEIs are also advised to connect with respective alumni associations/chapters in their recruitment efforts and involve them during their visits.

Kazakhstan. The best times to visit are October to December and late March to April. Avoid visiting during significant exam periods, from January to February and May to June.

Kyrgyz Republic. The best time to visit is October to February. Avoid exam times and school holidays from May to August.

Maldives. The best time to visit is February to July. Avoid holidays.

Nepal. The best time to visit varies according to the lunar calendar, but October and November generally have the most significant number of holidays in the year.

Pakistan. The best time to visit is September to March. Avoid holidays, exams, and school holidays between May and August.

Sri Lanka. The best times to visit are January and February, May to July, and September to November. Avoid visits during significant school holidays or breaks and major exam periods.

Tajikistan. The best times to visit are September to October and April to May. Students are out of school in March, June to August (for summer break), and December.

Turkmenistan. The best time to visit is from the end of June to November. The primary exam period runs from late May to approximately June 20 and should be avoided.

Uzbekistan. The best times to visit are September to November and February to May.

Western Hemisphere

Regional EducationUSA Profile

Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela

162

EducationUSA Advising Centers in the Region

76 Comprehensive
59 Standard
27 Reference



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

EducationUSA advising centers in the Western Hemisphere (WHA) region are located at U.S. embassies and consulates, binational centers (BNCs), American Spaces, Fulbright Commissions, local higher education institutions (HEIs), national government ministries, public libraries, and nonprofit organizations. Since the 2022 Global Guide, EducationUSA has opened two new centers in the region: one in Chile (Santiago) and another in Ecuador (Quito). In total, 163 advisers are employed throughout the region, over 40 percent of whom are based at BNCs.

EducationUSA advising centers in the region offer at least one annual predeparture orientation, which is open to the public, either in person or virtually. During these orientations, advisers collaborate with consular officers, U.S. higher education admissions offices, international student services offices, and alumni to offer comprehensive information to students and their families.

EducationUSA fairs attract many qualified students at all levels of study and take place at least once a year in the Caribbean, Central America, North America, and South America. A key public diplomacy tool for U.S. and local governments, fairs often feature high-profile government officials. EducationUSA centers frequently support education trade missions and state educational consortia visits organized by the U.S. Department of Commerce. EducationUSA advisers also organize and support U.S. embassy- and consulate-organized alumni fairs, at which U.S. government officials share their experiences as college or university students and distribute information

about their alma maters. In 2022, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the WHA region organized its second regionwide virtual fair in lieu of in-person fairs. The fair featured more than 80 U.S. HEIs and attracted more than 13,000 students. Also in 2022, the Southern Cone region organized an in-person Master of Laws (LLM) fair tour in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, hosting 37 U.S. LLM universities in five cities during 11 days with 1,825 prospective students registered for the fairs. The event had nationwide media coverage in all countries. In 2023, there will be more in-person fairs, but virtual events will also continue, as they have a wider reach.

EducationUSA advisers also participate in local fairs organized by private sector organizations to promote student mobility and exchange opportunities in the United States. At these fairs, EducationUSA advisers host information sessions and interact with the public in exhibit halls.

Hosting visits for U.S. HEI representatives is a high priority for EducationUSA advising centers. During these visits, advisers arrange group presentations, open houses, one-on-one appointments, and specialized workshops for tailored audiences at EducationUSA centers and/or local institutions, including secondary schools. Advisers also organize webinars to connect U.S. college and university representatives with local students, parents, and counselors to provide information about opportunities to study in the United States and offer insights on application processes. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, EducationUSA has implemented more virtual opportunities for U.S. HEI engagement with local audiences, including frequent webinars,



showcases, open houses, college days, Facebook and Instagram Live interviews, and virtual workshops. These practices have continued in a postpandemic world to offer HEIs and students more opportunities for engagement.

Advisers report that the expansion of virtual engagement during the pandemic has increased the volume of requests for advising services from more diverse student audiences. Advisers continue to find innovative ways to assist students virtually and through in-person programming. They rely on social media tools (such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp) to promote and deliver EducationUSA services. With the easing of pandemic restrictions, advisers also interact with students by hosting activities at their centers and conducting extensive outreach.

Advising centers in the region connect with currently enrolled international students in the United States as well as international alumni of U.S. institutions and U.S. government exchange programs to support activities such as alumni fairs, cohort advising, outreach to prospective students, and, more recently, video campaigns through which alumni share their experiences as international students. Fulbright English Teaching Assistants (ETAs), Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs), Gilman Scholars, and other Americans studying or working abroad also collaborate with EducationUSA on various activities, including writing workshops, English tutoring, and outreach visits in remote areas.

Many universities in the WHA region continue to express interest in developing and strengthening partnerships with U.S. HEIs to increase academic exchanges and support research collaboration. To

strengthen internationalization efforts, EducationUSA advisers in several countries facilitate engagement between U.S. and local universities, offering capacity-building workshops on best practices for study abroad that are funded by the USA Study Abroad Branch of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA).

The EducationUSA Opportunity Funds program, serving high-achieving prospective students who demonstrate significant financial need, is available to students in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay. During the past year, more than 160 students from across the region were enrolled in the program.

Western Hemisphere

Regional Overview

The Western Hemisphere is a diverse region of 35 countries and a population of approximately 900 million. Four countries in WHA are among the global top 25 senders of international students to the United States (Canada, Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia). The region as a whole is second only to Asia in international student mobility to the United States. In the academic year (AY) 2021-2022, 104,982 students from the region studied in the United States. The region has recently seen steady growth in numbers of undergraduate and graduate students studying in the United States, and WHA represents more than 11 percent of the total international student population in the United States, according to the Institute of International Education's (IIE) *2022 Open Doors® Report on International Educational Exchange*.

Prior to 2020, many countries in the region were already suffering from economic recessions, which the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated. This economic landscape has impacted students' short-term plans to study abroad as families are forced to re-evaluate their finances. However, interest in studying in the United States remains high, and many students are interested in hybrid programs that will allow them to work in their home countries while experiencing U.S. study. Countries in the region have diverse economies and deep disparities in purchasing power and in gross domestic product per capita. Access to quality education at the primary school level and beyond is a challenge

for some communities across the region, and access to internet connectivity varies greatly. While an average of 79 percent of people in the region have internet access, connectivity ranges from 35 percent in Haiti to more than 96 percent in Canada.

Petroleum, mining, agriculture, manufacturing industries, health-related services, and other services (including banking and tourism) continue to be top employment sectors in many countries in the region. As a result, the Americas remain focused on expanding science, technology, and innovation initiatives and on developing a strong, capable workforce to grow local and regional economies. Advisers report that students' top choices of academic discipline in 2022 were business and entrepreneurship, STEM, and social sciences.

While in some ways a cohesive region, WHA's languages, cultures, and educational systems vary by subregion. Educational systems follow the British, Dutch, French, Portuguese, and Spanish models, in combination with regional credentialing models aimed at achieving standardization across subregions. Academic calendars vary across the region, and some pose challenges for students submitting required application documents in time for U.S. college and university admissions deadlines.

Flight options in the region can be limited, but direct travel between countries is possible through regional hubs. Flight availability between smaller cities is often infrequent. Ground transportation may

be the only option for traveling within smaller countries. Travelers to the region should refer to [U.S. Department of State travel advisories](#) for up-to-date guidance and recommendations, paying careful attention to local conditions.

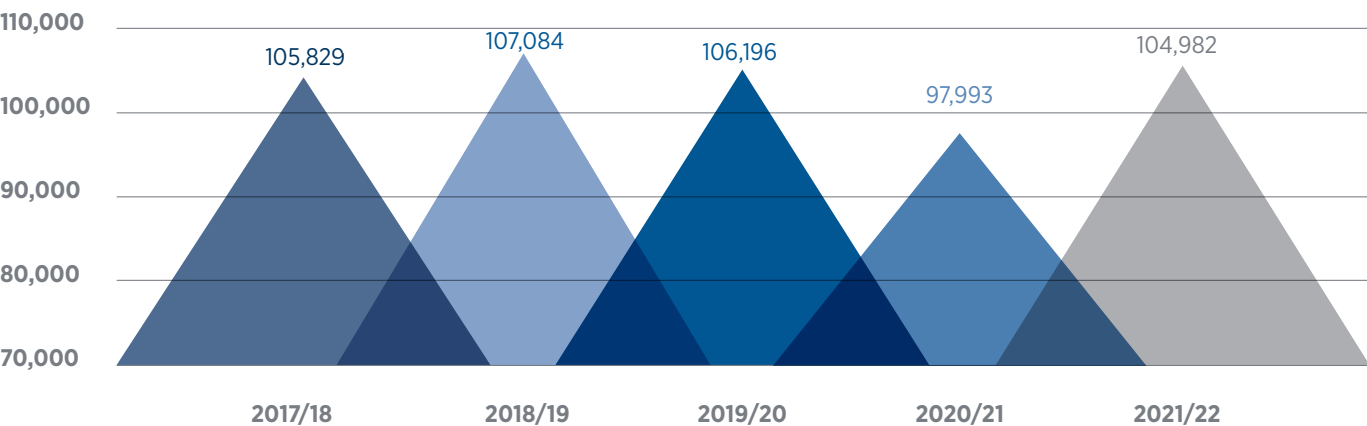
Recent Trends

EducationUSA advisers frequently address questions from students related to safety and security on U.S. campuses, and now health as well, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Advisers work hard to dispel misconceptions, sharing examples of common campus security and public health practices and highlighting the benefits of U.S. study.

Local political and economic conditions continue to impact student mobility to the United States. Economic instability forces young professionals to delay graduate studies or seek more affordable options in the region or in other parts of the world, while local security concerns drive parents to consider sending their children abroad for undergraduate studies. Despite financial barriers to U.S. study, many families in the region recognize its value and are willing to invest in it. Elections in the region have polarized many countries, which has also influenced the decision of students and families to leave their countries and pursue studies in the United States.

Offers of in-state tuition and the presence of diaspora communities continue to attract WHA students to the United States. As a result of Mexico and Canada's proximity to the United

Student Mobility in the Region (Five-Year Trend)



States, students from these countries tend to be concentrated in border states. An increasing number of international students appear to express a preference for institutions located in predominantly urban and coastal areas of the United States, where they anticipate the presence of diaspora and immigrant communities.

In some WHA countries, industry is investing in academia, and public-private partnerships to fund international educational initiatives are becoming more common. Bilateral dialogues between the United States and countries in the region have prioritized workforce development, resulting in a focus on partnerships between nontraditional institutions (such as technical universities) and U.S. community colleges.

Teacher training through exchanges is increasingly a central component of national and regional educational programs and policy. Governments are focused on strengthening local teachers' language and pedagogical skills. Many local governments are funding short-term English-language programs for students and teachers, and these programs are now more readily available in non-English-speaking countries across the region.

There is also continued interest in institutional partnership building to increase student mobility, collaborative research, and other internationalization efforts. Local colleges and universities are eager to explore virtual or hybrid programs to increase international opportunities for students and faculty, as well as dual degrees and transfer agreements. There is special interest in Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) initiatives to offer a U.S. academic experience directly to local classrooms.

In some southern South American countries, high schools offer dual local country-U.S. high school diplomas. Several universities and companies (Texas Tech University, University of Missouri, Griggs International, Maple Bear, and Pearson Academy, among others) have partnered with high schools to offer required courses in English, leading to a U.S. high school diploma. Such programs have created a new pool of highly qualified students for U.S. HEIs to engage.

Students from the region continue to express interest in two-year institutions and the transfer process between U.S. community colleges and four-year institutions as an affordable option for study in the United States. Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Canada, and El Salvador all have high percentages of students enrolling in U.S. community colleges.

As students look for more affordable U.S. study options, EducationUSA advisers report an increased interest in virtual programs including internships, co-ops, and research.

Top Senders and Countries to Watch

Below are the top 10 countries in the region 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. Canada
2. Brazil
3. Mexico
4. Colombia
5. Venezuela
6. Peru
7. Ecuador
8. Chile
9. Argentina
10. Jamaica

What to Expect Over the Next Three to Five Years

Online education and sustainable academic partnerships are gaining momentum in North and Central America and the Caribbean, offering U.S. HEIs new opportunities for training and engagement. Programs offering skills development for students, faculty, and researchers such as virtual exchanges, research, and internships as well as joint degrees and short-term certifications will continue to be in demand.

Mexico and most Central American countries continue to prioritize English, workforce development, and there is strong interest in short-term certificate programs and partnerships between local technical universities and U.S. community colleges. Public-private partnerships, including the signature 100,000 Strong in the Americas Initiative provide opportunities in Mexico and Central America, to support bilateral and sub-regional academic exchanges.

Caribbean 2020, a U.S. government interagency strategy for engagement in the Caribbean, identifies education as one of six priority areas. The strategy focuses on support for public-private sector collaborations that facilitate higher education and workforce development in the United States and the Caribbean, as well as the efforts of U.S. colleges and universities to recruit qualified students from the region.

The Andean region's economy was severely impacted by the pandemic. This led to sociopolitical unrest throughout the region in 2022. This political instability will continue to impact the region in the next several years. Therefore, there will likely be an increase in students seeking to study abroad. Though students will have a harder time financing their studies abroad, parents will make an extra effort to offer their children a more stable environment to continue their studies. Young professionals will also continue to have a strong interest in investing in graduate programs, though they might search for more affordable options, such as online and hybrid programs.

Students in the Andean region show continued interest in studying in the United States. According to the 2022 *Open Doors* report, most countries in the region recorded a double digit increase in students in the United States, and Peru led this trend with 21.9 percent growth. This growth will likely continue in years to come. At the 2022 EducationUSA WHA Virtual Fair, Ecuadorian participants represented over 30 percent of total participants from WHA, demonstrating that a growing number of students are seeking admission at U.S. institutions. To better serve this surge in demand for advising services, EducationUSA has expanded operations and will continue to do so. Between 2021 and 2022, Ecuador expanded from two to six EducationUSA Centers. In 2023, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela will open new centers to better help local students.

In the next several years, local governments will continue to prioritize improving student access to local HEIs. This is especially true in Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. Ecuador has eliminated the national entry exam to make it easier for students to access

Western Hemisphere

higher education. Each institution will have the flexibility to implement admissions requirements depending on their institutional needs. Colombia is redirecting more funds to HEIs with the goal of increasing the number of spots at public universities. Local HEIs will continue their internationalization efforts and will look for more institutional partnerships. This is an area for growth in the region, as many universities are interested in finding counterparts in the United States to collaborate in areas of research collaboration, faculty exchanges, COIL programs, and student mobility.

EducationUSA advisers in South America’s Southern Cone are expanding pools of prospective students for U.S. HEI recruitment through advising cohort programs in schools that offer dual high school diplomas (U.S. and local country’s). These connections will make it easier for U.S. HEIs to establish rapport and organize visits to recruit students directly at these schools.

Paraguay has expanded its EducationUSA presence with the hiring of three new advisers, all of whom are graduates of U.S. HEIs, for Asunción and the new tri-border office in Hernandarias, which serves Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay. They will host a stop on the South America LLM Fair this year. Brazil increased the number of EducationUSA offices to 44 including the newly inaugurated office at the Federal University of Ceará, at the medical university hospital Pequeno Príncipe in

Curitiba, and at the Federal Institute of Rondônia and the Federal Institute of Acre, where U.S. universities will have access to environmental research and partnerships in the heart of the Amazon region. A new office will open in São Paulo, linked with the state of São Paulo, that encompasses 73 universities and 227 schools with 327,000 students. In Chile, a new EducationUSA center opened at the Catholic University of Chile in Santiago. Universities and schools in the region are now accepting educational tours, so look for upcoming recruitment trips in the region to all Southern Cone countries. Brazil also organized a Fall EducationUSA Roadshow in 2022, hosting 27 U.S. colleges and universities in five cities over 12 days with 4,253 students registered for the fairs. Brazil repeated the roadshow in April. Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay are revamping their competitive college clubs and undergraduate college clubs to attract more students to apply to U.S. HEIs. All advisers are seeing a renewed interest in studying in the United States. Argentina, Brazil, and Chile had polarized elections for president, which has also influenced the decision of families to send students to pursue their studies outside their countries.

U.S. and local HEIs are collaborating on innovative recruitment activities in the region. Best practices include dual-degree agreements, online credit-bearing visiting student programs, and institutional partnerships that facilitate pathways for transfer between institutions in specific disciplines.

Online collaboration has increased engagement between U.S. universities and students interested in certificate programs. As these students conclude undergraduate or certificate programs, many apply for graduate programs at the U.S. universities in which they were previously enrolled.

Virtual Engagement and Social Media Usage
EducationUSA centers in the region maintain active Instagram and Facebook accounts, with more than 80,000 and 400,000 followers, respectively. Advisers also engage through other platforms, such as Twitter, YouTube, and blogs. Advisers use WhatsApp to disseminate information about upcoming events and for cohort advising. Advisers conduct virtual advising and virtual office hours using platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet. Facebook ads and Facebook Live are also effective outreach tools in the region. The following examples highlight virtual initiatives in the WHA region.

The EducationUSA North America, Central America, and the Caribbean (NCAC) regional working group of senior advisers organizes webinars, workshops, professional roundtables, and showcases on diverse topics, providing opportunities for U.S. HEIs to share their expertise with students, parents, counselors, and teachers in this subregion. All sessions are available for students to watch on demand through EducationUSA’s [YouTube channel](#). HEIs wishing to get involved can indicate interest by completing this [survey](#).

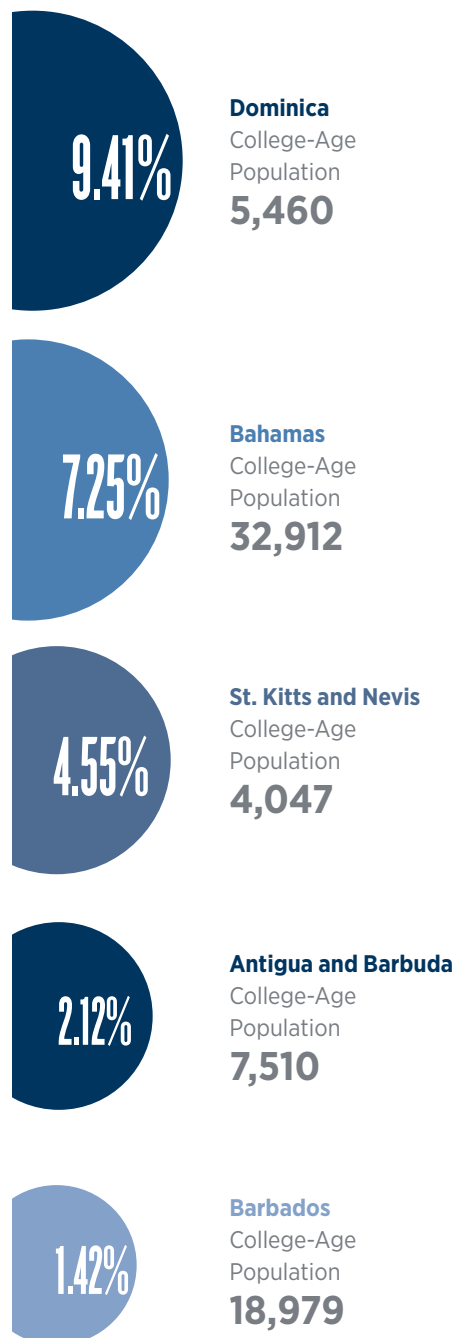
Five Countries of Origin (with over 100 students) with Highest Percentage Growth, International Students in the Region (Five-Year Trend)

Country	2017/18	2021/22	% Change
Dominica	371	514	39%
Nicaragua	409	553	35%
Peru	3,235	4,335	34%
Paraguay	590	704	21%
Argentina	2,283	2,718	19%

39.0%

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

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



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics; Indicator: 2020 or most recent Population of the official age for tertiary education, both sexes

Through weekly programs on Facebook and Instagram, EducationUSA Canada regularly provides information on [Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study](#) to large audiences. EducationUSA Canada also offers a virtual SAT prep boot camp in the spring and essay-writing boot camp in the summer.

EducationUSA Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay have developed online cohort advising programs to reach larger and more diverse student audiences. Social media campaigns on topics such as Black History and Women's History months have attracted significant student interest. Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Paraguay have revamped their websites in local languages (Spanish and Portuguese), highlighting U.S. university webinars through online agendas and International Education Week (IEW) [events](#). Instagram Live sessions and social media takeovers by currently enrolled students are popular in the region. By offering all presentations, workshops, and cohort advising groups virtually, EducationUSA Southern Cone has expanded to advise more students from a wider variety of locations.

To meet increased demand from U.S. institutions for virtual engagement with Colombian students, EducationUSA Colombia created a [webinar request form](#) that allows EducationUSA to better coordinate and promote events.

EducationUSA advisers in the Andean region work together to create regional social media campaigns and virtual programming to have a wider reach in the region. Advisers welcome U.S. HEIs interested in collaborating in these regional virtual spaces. Internet connectivity issues and local power outages in Venezuela make virtual activities challenging. During EducationUSA webinars and virtual workshops, advisers also connect with students via WhatsApp, which is an accessible and reliable platform in Venezuela.

Successful Recruiting Strategies

- Interact with students through EducationUSA webinars and in-person presentations at advising centers when local health, safety, and travel conditions allow.

- Incorporate alumni into student engagement strategies. Consult local EducationUSA advisers when engaging alumni to represent your institution.
- Connect prospective students with currently enrolled international students on campus who are willing to share their personal experiences.
- Coordinate with other U.S. HEIs to offer group presentations, seminars, workshops, and mini-fairs virtually or at EducationUSA centers. Collaborative sessions are effective, given the demand for EducationUSA services and students' limited time to participate in events.
- Contact EducationUSA advisers in locations that are off the beaten path. These connections may yield new opportunities to reach diverse student populations.
- Distribute materials in local languages, including Dutch, English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish, and employ local-language-speaking representatives in recruitment efforts to engage parents in meaningful ways.
- Consider recruiting qualified students from prominent national (i.e., public) secondary schools in addition to international schools.
- Offer virtual office hours to enhance communications with students and advisers helping students with their applications.
- Work with your institution to make your institution's website more international

Regional Student Totals Top Five Countries of Origin

Country	2021/22	% Change
Canada	27,013	7%
Brazil	14,897	6%
Mexico	14,500	12%
Colombia	8,077	14%
Venezuela	5,317	-13%

Western Hemisphere



student friendly. Students should be able to easily find information about programs, costs, scholarships/ financial aid opportunities, and contact information in case they have questions.

- Stay informed about faculty-led study abroad programs. Encourage professors and students to visit EducationUSA advising centers to meet local students when traveling abroad and ask students to share their experiences.
- Explore in-person and virtual internship opportunities at EducationUSA advising centers. Students can gain skills, assist advisers, and help promote their institution locally.

Institutional Partnerships

Many institutions in the region have established specific internationalization goals and are eager to explore institutional linkages, including faculty exchanges, research or internship programs, and group study abroad for both inbound and outbound students. Dual and/or joint degrees and collaborative online education are also increasingly common. Many local

institutions seek language training for faculty to facilitate more instruction in English and attract U.S. and other international students.

Before pursuing new institutional partnerships, inventory faculty on existing relationships – formal and informal – with HEIs and their faculty counterparts in the region. Identify the types of programs that are or would be relevant and sustainable for both institutions.

Organize meetings with local institutional representatives to outline priorities, explore opportunities, and discuss sustainability. Contact the Regional Manager (REAC) to develop an initial strategy prior to engaging prospective partners. In some cases, EducationUSA can also share local institution and/or higher education association contact information.

Maintain regular follow-up conversations with local institutions after visits. Subsequent in-person meetings may be needed to solidify relationships. Including staff who speak the local language offers a strategic advantage.

One of the leading tools to expand regional education partnerships and exchange program is the 100,000 Strong in the Americas Initiative. This signature hemisphere-wide education initiative catalyzes an inter-regional network of private, public, and academic sectors in collaboration with the U.S. Department of State (WHA Bureau), U.S. embassies, and Partners of the Americas. Working across sectors throughout the Americas, the 100K Strong program builds institutional capacity, expands access to innovative, inclusive student and faculty exchanges, and contributes to workforce development in the United States and Latin America. The 100K Strong in the Americas initiative harnesses the power of education to create enduring links between governments, private sector, and academic networks that are critical to the economies of the Americas.

During the ninth Summit of the Americas (June 2022), the White House announced the new 100K Strong in the Americas Climate Initiative supporting foreign policy goals to ensure a greener, more inclusive, democratic, and prosperous Hemisphere. New 100K Strong Climate grant competitions in 2023–2025 will expand 100K Strong partnerships between a diversity of HEIs in the U.S. and Latin America and provide access to innovative, inclusive exchange and training programs that will prepare students to lead in a climate-positive, 21st century workforce.

Since its inception in 2013, the 100K Strong Innovation Fund has awarded 306 grants (USD\$25,000 to USD\$40,000 each) to 585 HEIs working in teams across 25 countries and 49 U.S. states. Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, and Costa Rica are the leading 100K grant recipient countries in the region. The 100K Network, managed by Partners of the Americas in coordination with the WHA Bureau, comprises more than 2,300 regional HEIs, including more than 1,200 universities and colleges in the United States, and 4,000 individual members.

EducationUSA advisers and the REACs in the WHA region actively support the promotion of 100K Strong grant competitions and 100K partnership development between U.S. colleges and universities and regional HEIs. The

WHA Bureau works closely with the EducationUSA team in Washington and in Latin America to promote the ecosystem of opportunities via the 100K Strong program and EducationUSA networks and services.

Learn more and apply for 100K Innovation Fund opportunities at the [100K website](#).

Foreign Government and Private Funding
Argentina. The Ministry of Education's Department of International Scholarships and International Cooperation (DGCIN) funds scholarships for graduate studies in the United States and supports teaching assistants and researchers. The City of Buenos Aires Magistrates' Council awards LLM scholarships through the Fulbright Commission in Argentina as well as three-month research grants. The National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET), the National Institute for Agricultural and Technological Research (INTA), and Bunge and Born Foundation-Williams Foundation awards research grants to local scholars. Instituto Argentino del Petroleo y del Gas (IAPG) Houston offers grants to pursue master's degrees in petroleum engineering, geology, renewable energies, environmental sciences, and related fields. The Federal Investment Council (CFI), with representation in 22 provinces in Argentina, funds master's degree scholarships and research grants.

Aruba. The government of Aruba provides loans to bachelor's- and master's-level students pursuing study overseas. Aruban students pursuing study in the United States are eligible to apply for a starter package of 17,000 Aruban florin (AWG) and 15,375 AWG per academic term for up to eight terms at a 2 percent interest rate.

Antigua and Barbuda. Antigua and Barbuda offer a government-funded grant of approximately USD\$5,000 annually as well as low-interest loans to students pursuing postsecondary studies, including online study at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The Bahamas. Lyford Cay Foundations Scholarships provide maximum awards of USD\$30,000 to approximately 100 Bahamian students each year to pursue undergraduate, graduate, and technical education abroad. In addition, the Ministry

of Education has implemented a tiered system to award grants and merit-based scholarships ranging from USD\$7,500 to USD\$35,000 for study abroad.

Barbados. The Barbados Scholarships and Exhibitions are merit-based awards offered to approximately 30 undergraduate-level students with high scores on the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) or in an associate's degree program at the Barbados Community College. The scholarship covers tuition and airfare and provides a stipend of approximately USD\$3,500 per year for study at home or abroad. In addition, approximately 10 students per year receive National Development Scholarships, which provide financial support to students ages 18 to 40 who have been accepted by an accredited university abroad, including in the United States, at the undergraduate or graduate level.

Bolivia. Soberanía is a government scholarship program that offers full funding for graduate studies at select international universities, including in the United States, mainly in STEM-related fields.

Brazil. With the new government recently elected, funds that were drastically cut during the previous government are slowly returning to educational funding agencies, such as the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), which supports study within Brazil and abroad. The government increased in-country teaching assistantship (TA) scholarships

in science by 300 percent and is directing funds to support science in the country. The Fulbright Commission in Brazil works with CAPES to expand Fulbright's professional development support for public school teachers in one-month English teacher training programs at U.S. HEIs. EducationUSA now collaborates with the Behring Foundation in Brazil, which supports the EducationUSA undergraduate Opportunity Funds program together with ECA.

Canada. The Killam Fellowships Program, administered by Fulbright Canada, provides support for exceptional students to study at U.S. HEIs for one semester or a full academic year. This program provides a cash award of USD\$5,000 per semester. More information is available on the [Fulbright Canada website](#). The [Mitacs Globalink Research Award](#) provides USD\$6,000 for seniors in undergraduate programs, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows in Canada to conduct 12- to 24-week research projects at universities overseas. The Fulbright-MITACS Globalink program provides CAD\$7,800 to American undergraduate students who undertake a summer research project (10-12 weeks) in Canada.

Chile. The National Agency for Research and Development (ANID) (formerly known as the National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research) administers Becas Chile and other programs that promote research opportunities in all disciplines, technological development, and scientific-technological innovation. Becas Chile graduate scholarships provide an

U.S. Study Abroad

Top Five Receiving Countries in the Region		
Destination	2020/21	% Change
Costa Rica	565	-89%
Mexico	248	-92%
Belize	156	-86%
Dominican Republic	149	-83%
Ecuador	145	-92%

Western Hemisphere



opportunity for U.S. HEIs to recruit fully sponsored Chilean students. Becas Chile is accepting applications for scholarships to fund doctoral studies abroad beginning April 6 and ending May 9. Final selection is in July. For master's programs abroad, the application period starts April 12 and ends May 17, with final selection in August.

Colombia. The Foundation for the Future of Colombia ([COLFUTURO](#)), a nonprofit foundation established in 1991 with support from Colombia's government and the private sector, provides loans for graduate study abroad. These loans can be converted to partial scholarships if graduates meet requirements, such as working for the public sector upon graduation. [ICETEX](#), the Colombian government entity that promotes higher education through national and international educational credits, offers loans for students to pursue graduate study abroad. The Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation ([Minciencias](#))

offers scholarships for doctoral studies in the United States. Some of this funding is administered through the Fulbright Commission in Colombia as Fulbright doctoral grants. These leading government of Colombia education entities actively support Department of State programs including Fulbright and the 100K Strong in the Americas.

Costa Rica. The Costa Rica United States Foundation for Cooperation ([CRUSA](#)) supports international exchange and student mobility initiatives in STEM fields using tools that include the EducationUSA Opportunity Funds program. In 2023, through collaboration with the BNC Centro Cultural Costarricense Norteamericano and its EducationUSA center, CRUSA plans to support eight students with awards of approximately USD\$42,000 to pursue technical degrees at community colleges.

Dominica. The Dominica government awards one Island Scholarship each year to the student with the highest score on the [CAPE](#). The government also awards approximately five scholarships annually to the top student in each of the faculties of Dominica State College.

Dominican Republic. The Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology ([MESCyT](#)) continues to support study abroad at the graduate level and for certificate programs. MESCyT prioritizes master's and doctoral degrees in engineering, technology, science, public health, education, and agriculture. The ministry seeks to establish articulation agreements with U.S. research-focused universities that offer tuition waivers or in-state tuition for scholars from the Dominican Republic. These scholarships can also be used for hybrid and joint-degree programs offered in partnership between U.S. and local HEIs.

Ecuador. Local private banks offer a wide range of student loans that range from USD\$20,000 to USD\$30,000 a year for accredited programs at foreign institutions. Students have the option of paying off their loans in a period that extends from five to 20 years depending on the institution, and they have at least a six-month grace period to start paying off their loan once they have graduated.

Guatemala. The GuateFuturo Foundation offers loans of as much as USD\$50,000 for master's programs. Students are eligible for scholarships of up to 50 percent of the loan amount, provided they receive their degree within a certain time frame and return to Guatemala and satisfy residency requirements (typically three to five years). Students can obtain an additional 10 percent discount if, upon returning home, they complete one year of continuous employment in the public sector, teaching, or research, or if they work in the interior of the country (outside of the Department of Guatemala). Those pursuing master's degrees in management or business programs are limited to 25 percent of the loan amount as a scholarship.

Honduras. The HonduFuturo Foundation offers the same model of support as GuateFuturo, with loans of up to USD\$50,000. Students can obtain an additional 10 percent discount if, upon

returning to the country, they immediately engage in employment for one full year as teachers in local universities. Those pursuing master's degrees in management or Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs are limited to 25 percent of the loan amount as a scholarship.

Mexico. The U.S. embassy in Mexico is organizing 200 events across the United States and Mexico in celebration of the December 2022 bicentennial of diplomatic relations between the countries. HEIs interested in participating should contact bicentennial@state.gov. The U.S. ambassador to Mexico has set a goal of significantly increasing student exchanges between the United States and Mexico. During President Biden's 2023 visit to Mexico, he highlighted education as one of the important deliverables for the 2023 North American Leaders' Summit, in support of economic growth and prosperity across the three countries (Canada, United States, and Mexico), including the trilateral education and workforce development opportunities via a new 100K Strong in the Americas competition to launch in 2024. In addition to managing traditional Fulbright exchanges, the Fulbright Commission in Mexico (COMEXUS) supports short-term programs in undergraduate research, teacher training, and professional internships, both in Mexico and the United States. The government of Mexico supports graduate students mainly via the Fulbright Commission, the National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT), and the Human Resources Development Fund (FIDERH). Local NGOs such as the Mexican Foundation for Education, Technology, and Science (FUNED) and the Becas Magdalena O. Vda. de Brockmann offer scholarships and loans to Mexican graduate students.

Panama. The Panamanian government's National Secretariat for Science, Technology, and Innovation (SENACYT) administers several scholarship programs, including the Fulbright-SENACYT scholarship, at the master's and doctoral levels in a range of STEM fields. The scholarship also includes postdoctoral fellowships, and research or academic internships abroad. To date, this program has provided full funding for more than 750 Panamanian students in the United States. The Panamanian government's

Institute for Training and Development of Human Resources (IFARHU) offers loans and financial aid to support undergraduate and graduate study abroad. IFARHU has also established agreements with U.S. HEIs to provide merit-based scholarships for students with financial need, which can be used to cover the costs for English pathway programs.

Paraguay. The Paraguayan government's Programa Nacional de Becas en el Exterior don Carlos Antonio López (BECAL) scholarship program funds in-person master's, doctoral and postdoctoral students in education, science, technology, and innovation fields at specific U.S. HEIs. The Kansas Paraguay Partners of the Americas out-of-state tuition waiver agreements have contributed to a steady flow of Paraguayan students attending colleges and universities in Kansas every year. BECAL has established a partnership with the Paraguay Kansas Committee that funds 32 students from Paraguay to participate in a semester abroad at HEIs in Kansas. The U.S. embassy and EducationUSA Paraguay have offered webinars to promote and help applicants navigate the application process of U.S. embassy-driven Fulbright scholarships. This year, there are 18 Fulbright-CAL scholarships co-funded by the Paraguayan government: 10 are for master's programs (five master's in education and five master's in science, technology, and innovation), five for doctoral programs, and three for postdoctoral programs. Moreover, there are five Fulbright scholarships funded by the U.S. Department of State for master's programs in any field of study and for faculty development programs. Additionally, BECAL offers up to 81 yearly scholarships for master's, doctoral, postdoctoral, and undergraduate exchange programs in the education, science, technology, and innovation fields from top-ranked universities worldwide. For these scholarships, students must be admitted to the universities in order to apply for the financial support from BECAL.

Peru. PRONABEC is the government agency that manages scholarship programs, including Beca Generación del Bicentenario (previously known as Beca Presidente de la República), a full

scholarship program for graduate studies abroad that awards approximately 150 scholarships each year. PRONABEC takes into consideration any partial funding students can secure from other sources, such as an assistantship, when evaluating a candidate's scholarship application. The scholarship continues to use a list of approved universities based on international rankings. This year, 159 U.S. institutions are included on the list. In 2023, the World Bank will partner with CONCYTEC, the National Council of Science, Technology, and Technological Innovation, to offer funding for Peruvians interested in doctoral studies abroad. Reto Excelencia-SERVIR is a government "loan-scholarship" program that supports public servants pursuing graduate studies abroad. Contact the [EducationUSA Lima center](#) for updates on these three scholarships. [Beca Cometa](#) is a private scholarship that fully funds 20 Peruvian students' undergraduate studies each year at select U.S. universities. This initiative is led by Intercorp Group, one of the largest business conglomerates in the country.

Uruguay. The Uruguayan government, through the [National Agency for Research and Innovation \(ANII\)](#), cost-shares with [Fulbright Uruguay](#) programs for Uruguayans to do master's and doctoral work in the United States in fields such as biotechnology, environmental sciences, energy, information and communication technology, human and animal health, education, creative industries, agribusiness and agro-industry, transportation and logistics, education, and criminology. Costs of the Teacher Exchange Program for Uruguayan teachers are shared between the Uruguayan government, through the Ministry of Education and Plan Ceibal, Fulbright Uruguay, and the U.S. embassy.

Organization of American States (OAS). Students from member countries are eligible for [Rowe Fund loans](#). These interest-free loans are available at the graduate level throughout the region and for undergraduate studies in English-speaking Caribbean countries. The Rowe Fund allows EducationUSA Opportunity Funds students from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and

Western Hemisphere

Uruguay to apply for the loan without a cosigner.

Regional Economics and Market Demands

The majority of governments in the region have identified STEM-related fields as key priorities for workforce development and economic growth. Governments in the region support both technical and research-related pursuits in STEM fields, and strategic sectors include oil, gas, mining, agribusiness, and health care. Several countries, such as Colombia, are investing in the “Orange Economy” and considering how culture and creative industries can play a pivotal role in economic development. Entrepreneurship is also a regional focus as countries consider ways to support small-business growth. Several countries also rely on service industries such as tourism, banking, and information, as major employment sectors.

Countries in the region seek opportunities to collaborate on tailored, nondegree, short-term programs, especially for technical education. Such programs include internships and other hands-on experiences for young professionals, virtual education opportunities, and capacity-building opportunities with local academic institutions as well as the public and private sectors.

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

Visit the [EducationUSA fair portal](#) for upcoming fairs and follow specific country’s websites and social media accounts for other local in-person and virtual opportunities. Additional activities include participation in beginner adviser training, thematic subregional workshops, and capacity-building workshops for local HEIs.

Brazil. The EducationUSA Brazil Roadshow is an opportunity to recruit students, meet key leaders in internationalization, and establish partnerships. The roadshow was the first EducationUSA fair in the region offered in person in 2022. In April 2023, EducationUSA Brazil hosted an in-person roadshow with stops in five cities. Contact [Marina Martins](#) for updates for 2024.

Canada. EducationUSA Canada held its first virtual fair in April 2022. The event

featured 100 U.S. HEIs emphasizing their undergraduate degree programs. In spring 2023, EducationUSA Canada hosted its first in-person fair tour with stops in Vancouver, Ottawa, and Toronto. Each city had 50-60 U.S. colleges and universities participating.

Caribbean. In 2021, EducationUSA Bahamas, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago hosted their first virtual subregional fair in place of the traditional annual in-person Caribbean fair circuit. Planning is under way for a fall 2023 in-person EducationUSA Caribbean fair tour. [Contact fair organizers](#) for status updates.

Colombia STEM Fair. This annual STEM-focused fair tour takes place in March and includes stops in various cities in Colombia. In March 2023, the tour returned to an in-person framework after two years of a virtual fair. In 2023, 20 U.S. institutions joined the event and met with more than 2,000 students in Armenia, Bogotá, Cali, and Medellín. Contact [Karina Otalora](#) for information on future Colombia fairs.

EducationUSA Central America Fairs. Each year, EducationUSA Central America organizes theme-based, multi-country fairs during the spring semester. For example, in June 2023, EducationUSA Costa Rica and Panama hosted their third iteration of the virtual science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) open house, featuring 50 U.S. HEIs. The event was designed to promote undergraduate and graduate programs in STEAM, offer updated information about applying to OPT, and offer information about student visas. It also provided opportunities for group conversations between U.S. HEIs and potential students. There will be a virtual fair for Honduras and El Salvador in October. Contact the [fair organizing committee](#) for information about future fairs in Central America.

High School Counselor Training Workshops. EducationUSA Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Eastern Caribbean Islands, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, and Trinidad and Tobago regularly organize training workshops on U.S.

higher education for local high school counselors.

EducationUSA South America LLM Fair Circuit. EducationUSA plans to offer the South America LLM Fair in person from October 12 – October 30, including stops in Argentina (October 12), Paraguay (October 14), Brazil (October 16 in São Paulo, October 19 in Brasília, and October 21 in Rio de Janeiro), Chile (October 23), Peru (October 25), Ecuador (October 27), and Colombia (October 30). Contact [Marina Martins](#) for more information.

EducationUSA Mexico Community College Fairs. For the past few years, EducationUSA Mexico has held a virtual Community College Open House, with strong support from the U.S. embassy in Mexico. The event highlights affordability, accessibility, and skills development for Mexican students and young professionals. A community college engagement in-person event will take place in fall 2023 in collaboration with the Department of Commerce. Contact the [EducationUSA Mexico office](#) for more information.

EducationUSA South America Fair Circuit. After three years of hosting a WHA virtual fair, EducationUSA in South America will return to its in-person fair circuit from August 27 to September 20. It will include stops in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Brasília, Asunción, Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Santiago, Santa Cruz, Lima, Quito, Guayaquil, and Bogotá. Institutions promoting undergraduate, graduate, and short-term programs are encouraged to participate. Contact [Karina Otalora](#) for more details.

Venezuela. EducationUSA Venezuela offers “mock fairs” that reach more than 6,000 students per year. As local conditions for the past several years have made it difficult for U.S. higher education representatives to visit the country, U.S. HEIs have prepared English-language students from local binational centers to represent them at these fairs. Represented HEIs frequently send materials for the fairs and promote them widely on their social media platforms.

Alumni fairs. EducationUSA regularly hosts alumni fairs featuring U.S. embassy and consulate officers sharing their personal experiences at their alma



maters. U.S. HEIs are encouraged to share informational materials with the organizers for use in these fairs.

U.S. Study Abroad in the Region

The COVID pandemic affected U.S. study abroad programs across all regions, resulting in a 91 percent decline overall, according to the *2022 Open Doors* data. According to *Open Doors*, 1,664 U.S. students studied in WHA in AY 2020-2021, and the region hosted 66 percent of the total U.S. study abroad population. Costa Rica received the most study abroad students in the region and the seventh most in the world. Mexico, Belize, Dominican Republic, and Ecuador also placed within the top 25 most popular study abroad destinations. In 2021 and 2022, there has been some rebound of study abroad demand but it will take some time before this rebound will be reflected in *Open Doors* data.

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. In summer 2022, the [Increase and Diversify Education Abroad \(IDEAS\) Program](#) awarded 21 grants to U.S. colleges and universities to develop study abroad programming

in Bahamas, Barbados, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, and Peru. In 2023, USA Study Abroad also awarded Study Abroad Engagement Grants to U.S. embassies and consulates in Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, Grenada, Honduras, and Peru to deliver trainings and programs for local HEIs designed to foster their ability to partner with U.S. colleges and universities on study abroad programming.

U.S. study abroad students are welcome to join EducationUSA programming 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 they can promote the institution to local audiences. Students 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.

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

U.S. HEI representatives are encouraged to review and consider U.S. Department of State travel warnings posted at travel.state.gov. In Northern Hemisphere countries, the academic year runs from August, September, or October to May, June, or July. In Central American and Southern Hemisphere countries, the school year aligns more closely with the calendar year, running from February or March to November or December. Secondary schools in a few countries in the region follow multiple academic calendars – even within the same country. Avoid travel during Christmas, at the beginning of the New Year, and during region-specific festivities such as Carnival, Holy Week, and All Saints' Day/Day of the Dead. Contact REACs or advisers before planning a trip to avoid visiting during local holidays.



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