



# Global Guide 2024



2024 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 *2023 Open Doors® Report on International Educational Exchange*, produced by IIE and sponsored by the U.S. Department of State.

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# 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 based at a variety of institutions including, but not limited to, U.S. embassies and consulates, Fulbright Commissions, Binational Centers (BNCs), nongovernmental organizations, and local 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](#) to guide a national approach to renew the country’s focus on international education. The approach includes efforts to enhance support for international students and scholars, expand study abroad opportunities for U.S. students, and strengthen international collaboration in research and innovation. In 2023, the Department of Education updated its international education strategy to align with this renewed focus, and the U.S. Department of Commerce included international education for the first time in its National Export Strategy.

## **REAC: 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 regions. REACs also serve as experts 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 accredited U.S. institutions of higher education (HEIs) 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 U.S. HEI application and admission issues that may impact overseas candidates. EducationUSA advisers use their expertise to help U.S. institutions enhance their international networks with local universities and schools for recruitment and study abroad programs, and facilitate

connections for potential university partnerships. EducationUSA also works with recruitment agents representing accredited U.S. 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

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





8.6 million+ 132,000+ 2.2 million+

Social Media “engagements”

Webinar participants

Video views

receive millions of dollars in scholarship offers from U.S. HEIs. For more information about this program, please visit the [EducationUSA website](#).

#### ***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](#).

#### **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 [ECA Exchange Programs website](#).

# 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 USD\$37.68 billion to the U.S. economy in tuition and living expenses during the 2022 calendar year, which supported more than 335,423 U.S. jobs.

## 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. U.S. embassies and consulates;

the U.S. Departments of State, Commerce, and Education; and other federal, state, and local organizations use *Open Doors* data 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.

## 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 2023 *Open Doors® Report on International Educational Exchange*, in academic year (AY) 2022-2023, the top three states hosting international students were California, New York, and Texas. 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) including historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs), and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institutions (AANAPISIs), meet their internationalization goals.

## EducationUSA Adviser and REAC: Regional Manager 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. The EducationUSA registration and payment portal serves as a centralized platform for U.S. HEI representatives to register for EducationUSA fairs taking place around the world. The fair portal allows visibility





on active and upcoming fairs throughout the global EducationUSA network, and provides 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](#). EducationUSA has also developed a [Toolkit on How to Host EducationUSA Advisers on your Campus](#). The toolkit

provides tips and best practices for a successful visit.

- 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 targeted to

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 their 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 their institution or program. REACs and advisers can help institutions make the most of their 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. HEIs, 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
- 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 MSIs, such as HBCUs and 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	88,112
Advising by phone or SMS (each conversation)	173,145
Advising by email	272,434
Group advising attendees	234,913
Walk-ins/library/computer users	155,202
U.S. institution representatives	6,027
Online Course attendees	5,578

**Total 935,411**

### Number of Event Attendees, by Outreach Activity

Education fairs (in-person & virtual)	555,837
American Corners/Centers	34,608
Local universities/secondary schools	225,463
Other fairs/conferences/seminars	30,241
Host government events	4,754
Embassy/consulate events	10,459
Public locations	17,888
Other activities	32,542

**Total 911,792**

### Number of Virtual/Social Media Contacts, by Type

Social networks - page engagement	6,986,656
Instagram engagements	1,400,505
Videos/video channels views	2,283,829
WhatsApp/IM advising	171,799
Blog visitors	111,252
X (Twitter)/microblog engagements	215,286
EducationUSA webinar participants	133,994

**Total 11,303,321**

### Website visitors (center and flagship websites)

**Total 1,784,801**

**Grand Total 14,935,325**

## REAC: Regional Manager Map



*\*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.*



**Charles Hornstra**  
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Dubai, UAE

**Lewis Cardenas**  
New Delhi, India

**Vincent Flores**  
Seoul, Republic of Korea

**Luke Yim**  
Jakarta, Indonesia

# 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)

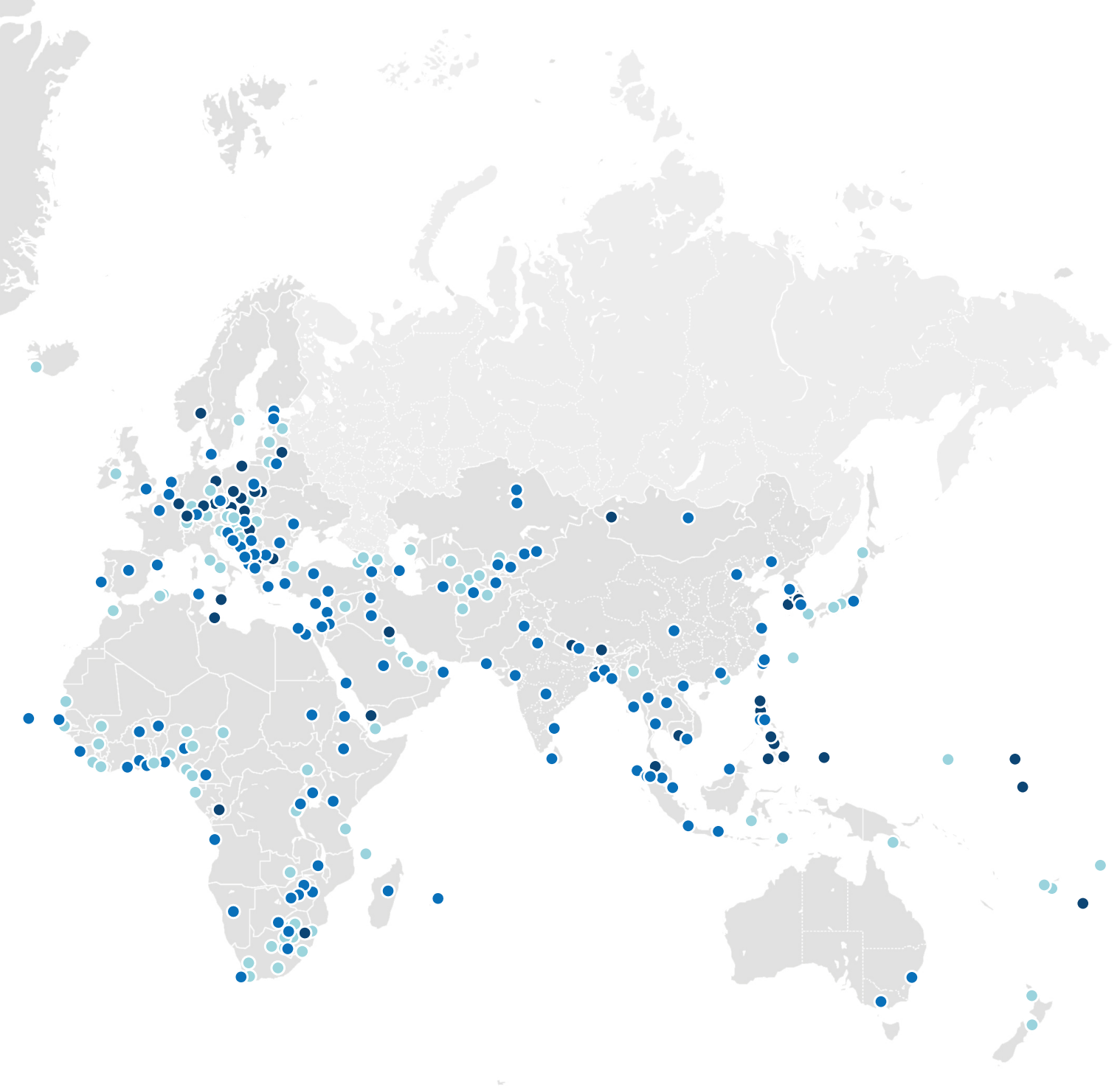




Reference Centers

Standard Centers

Comprehensive Centers



# EducationUSA Advising Centers

Advising centers in the EducationUSA network are organized by three levels of service: Comprehensive, Standard, and Reference. When searching for an adviser or advising center, it is helpful to know the level of service you can expect. Center levels may shift depending on a variety of factors, including, but not limited to, regional or country priorities for U.S. foreign policy, host country policy or regulations, international student recruitment needs for the U.S. higher education community, and available funding.

## 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 advisers who have college degrees (equivalent to U.S. bachelor's degree) and are proficient in spoken and written English and their local language (if applicable)
- Provides virtual advising and consulting through email, webinars, social media, and instant messaging
- Maintains computers with internet access for visitors
- Provides access to videoconferencing equipment
- Organizes and participates in alumni group activities and college fairs, hosting the EducationUSA booth
- Fosters 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 promotional 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 U.S. 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 advisers who have college degrees (equivalent to U.S. bachelor's degree) and are proficient in spoken and written English and their local language (if applicable)
- Provides virtual advising and consulting through email, webinars, social media, and instant messaging
- Maintains computers with internet access for visitors
- Provides access to videoconferencing equipment

- Organizes and participates in alumni group activities and college fairs, hosting the EducationUSA booth
- Offers individual advising
- Provides information on financial aid
- Describes and compares U.S. and host country educational systems
- Fosters relationships with local high school counselors and university administrators
- Offers predeparture information and orientations
- 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
- Provides information on local government and foundation scholarships, as well as other financial aid
- Displays U.S. college- and university-provided materials

## 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 international 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

Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn are the most widely used social media platforms by EducationUSA centers around the world. EducationUSA X (formerly Twitter) and YouTube pages are also popular. In 2023, the flagship EducationUSA Facebook page generated more than 81,331 engagements, while the flagship X account's following grew to more than 39,107. EducationUSA's flagship Instagram account saw its following increase by 3.4 percent to more than 110,660 over the course of 2023, and the EducationUSA LinkedIn account had 30,819 followers at the end of 2023. EducationUSA continues to leverage Facebook Live, Instagram 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 China connect with students via WeChat and the microblogging site Sina Weibo. Those in South Korea employ KakaoTalk and Naver, while Telegram is popular in Iran, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. 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](#).

## #StudyWithUS 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 specific themes determined by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). The campaign features specific messaging on how a U.S. education can help position students for a successful future and contribute to solving the world's most pressing global challenges. The first phase of the global campaign – including a [series of video assets](#) and a [global anthem video](#) – was piloted in the fall of 2020 across a myriad of social media platforms in three target countries: Colombia, Germany, and India. The campaign's second phase features a series of nine thematic #StudyWithUS short videos along with related sets of promotional assets, multiple messaging pillars, and digital toolkits. These are designed to strengthen the EducationUSA brand while serving as a resource for the U.S. higher education community and international students and their families around the world. #StudyWithUS video themes include: Diversity of Institutions,

Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Climate Change, STEM, Community Colleges, Professional Degrees, Liberal Arts, Practical Training, and Cutting Edge Fields.

## 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 networks. 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 REAC: Regional Manager contact information, subscribe to the monthly newsletter, and submit scholarship opportunities targeted to the international student audience for posting to the site.



**Facebook**  
Engagements:  
5.8 million+



**X (Twitter)**  
Engagements:  
215,000+



**Instagram**  
Engagements:  
1.4 million+

# EducationUSA Regional Reach

## Contacts Made in 2023 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)	213,706	46,266	144,906	34,579	218,258	277,696
Advising center-based contacts	213,092	44,898	144,122	34,133	217,276	275,863
U.S. institution representative contacts	614	1,368	784	446	982	1,833
Total contacts made through outreach activities	102,815	185,749	90,064	119,179	166,861	247,124
Education fairs (in-person & virtual)	54,603	115,420	58,250	98,121	83,912	145,531
American Corners/Centers	6,190	8,938	2,603	202	5,283	11,392
Local universities/secondary schools	35,995	49,518	20,973	13,223	44,958	60,796
Other fairs/conferences/seminars	2,093	3,230	2,000	395	11,744	10,779
Host government events	549	1,389	253	68	752	1,743
Embassy/consulate events	467	850	279	11	3,557	5,295
Public locations	251	1,570	1,203	537	7,028	7,299
Other activities	2,667	4,834	4,503	6,622	9,627	4,289
Total contacts made through virtual platforms	2,467,548	943,435	2,576,216	797,904	2,012,540	2,626,153
Social media platforms	2,456,449	914,124	2,553,483	794,257	1,980,627	2,592,205
Webinars	11,099	29,311	22,733	3,647	31,913	33,948
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>2,784,069</b>	<b>1,175,450</b>	<b>2,811,186</b>	<b>951,662</b>	<b>2,397,659</b>	<b>3,150,973</b>

*\*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 institutions, such as U.S. embassies and consulates, Fulbright Commissions, Binational Centers (BNCs), NGOs, and local universities and libraries. 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 eighth among service exports in 2022. International students studying in the United States contributed more than USD\$42 billion to the U.S. economy in tuition and living expenses during the 2022 calendar year, which supported more than 368,333 U.S. jobs.

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 80 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. Additional 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 Industry](#) homepage on the ITA website.



**Education  
USA**

A U.S. Department of State Network



**U.S.  
COMMERCIAL  
SERVICE**  
United States of America  
Department of Commerce

# 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.

# 55

### EducationUSA Advising Centers in the Region

31 Comprehensive  
20 Standard  
4 Reference

The EducationUSA network across Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) operates in 44 countries and comprises 55 advising centers, including 31 comprehensive, 20 standard, and four reference centers. A total of 63 EducationUSA advisers work throughout the region. Of the 55 centers in the region, 45 are in U.S. embassies and consulates, seven are in American Corners or Spaces, one is in a library, one is in a non-profit organization, and one is virtual.

The majority of advisers in the region work part time with EducationUSA and have other responsibilities within public diplomacy sections at U.S. embassies or consulates. Public diplomacy sections have restructured staffing in recent years, which has reduced the number of hours spent on advising. For that reason, higher education institutions (HEIs) might notice updated titles in adviser email signatures that reflect the wider purview of their new responsibilities (e.g., education outreach specialist).

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 HEIs to make presentations to public audiences, and contribute to pre-departure orientations. Every student who has an I-20 form for an accredited U.S. institution is welcome at pre-departure orientation, regardless of whether they worked with EducationUSA during the admissions process.

Many comprehensive and standard 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 15 advising centers in Botswana, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana (two centers), Malawi, Nigeria (two centers), South Africa, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (three centers). The high-achieving, low-income students who pass the rigorous selection process for this program are given intensive preparation and support to become competitive as they seek full funding from U.S. institutions. Opportunity Funds provide support for graduate and undergraduate students.

### Regional Overview

Sub-Saharan Africa includes all countries south of the Sahara Desert. According to the U.S. Census International Database, in 2023, the total population of Sub-Saharan Africa was approximately 1.2 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: First, 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. Second, the cost associated with tertiary education at home or abroad



<sup>1</sup> "Africa" in this section refers to the 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>





is often a challenge for prospective students. Third, 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 *2023 Open Doors® Report on International Educational*

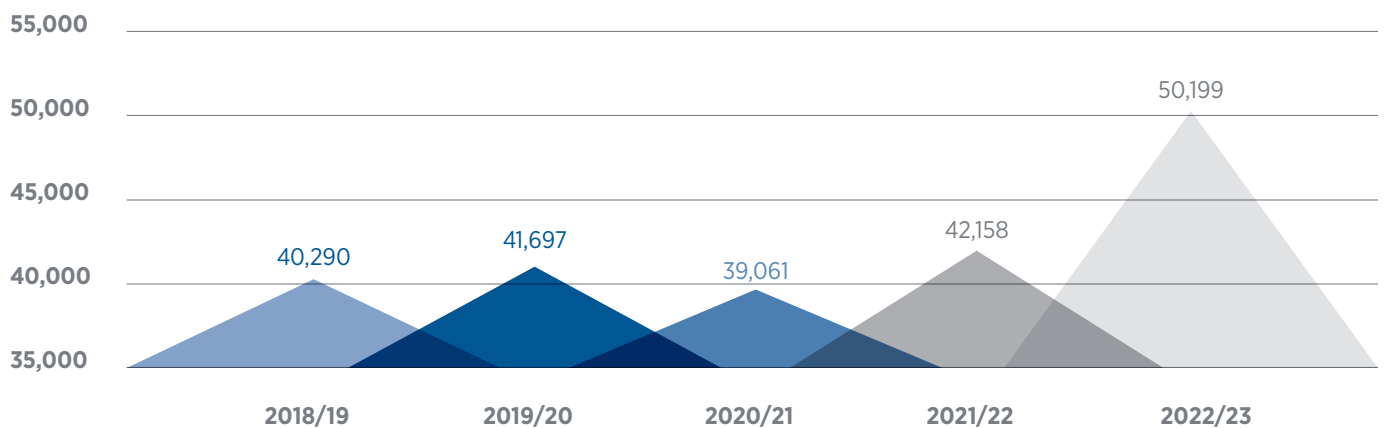
*Exchange*, 50,199 students from SSA studied in the United States during the academic year (AY) 2022-2023, an increase of 18.1 percent from the previous year.

Over the past six years, 10 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 81 percent of SSA students studying in the United States during AY 2022-2023.

The top five countries (Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Africa) accounted for 68 percent of SSA students studying in the United States during AY

## Student Mobility in the Region (Five-Year Trend)



## Sub-Saharan Africa

2022-2023, with Nigeria alone accounting for slightly more than one-third of all students from the region.

The rising numbers of young people and SSA students' interest in pursuing higher education abroad make the region an important recruitment destination for U.S. HEIs. Furthermore, 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 the SSA region are studying abroad. This number has increased 9.4 percent since 2016, when 388,408 students from the region studied outside their home countries. By comparison, the growth of outbound students worldwide is 8 percent.

Competition for SSA students will continue to increase. The UK has long been a popular destination for students from Anglophone countries on the continent. Expect China, France, Malaysia, Germany, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia to recruit in SSA and to offer scholarships to students. 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. Government officials throughout the region ask that the U.S. government provide scholarships to students directly, 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 eight countries. These sub-regional blocs encourage interregional trade and migration and offer educated youth opportunities to seek additional employment opportunities.

According to the World Bank's publication Global Economic Prospects, economic growth in SSA is expected to accelerate

to 3.8 percent in 2024. However, that growth will be slowest in the region's three largest economies – Nigeria, South Africa, and Angola – due in part to the falling cost of metals that they export. Across the region more broadly, factors that could impact growth include the rise in political instability and violence both in SSA and other regions that impact trade (e.g., the continuing conflict in the Middle East), increased frequency of adverse weather events, and higher risk of government defaults. Persistent inflation has also impacted students' ability to afford U.S. studies.

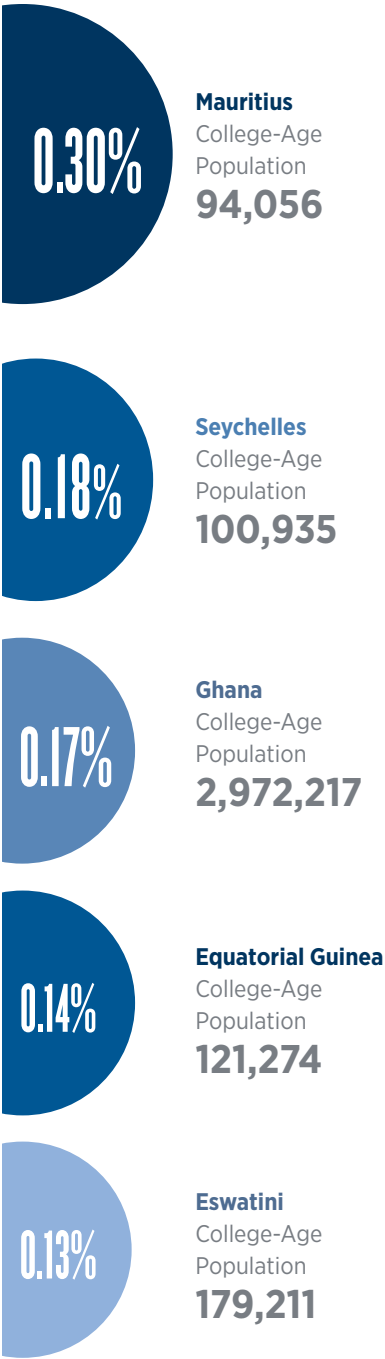
Agriculture, oil and gas, banking, tourism, and technology are the dominant industries in the region, leading many students to pursue studies and careers in STEM fields. Expertise in agriculture and agricultural engineering, water dam construction, and irrigation development are particularly sought after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

EducationUSA continues to offer virtual advising to engage and support students in SSA. 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





# 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: 2023 or most recent Population of the official age for tertiary education, both sexes

platforms used for virtual advising include Facebook, Google Meet, Instagram, X (formerly 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 growing in popularity, and Zoom is also commonly used.

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 require the French baccalaureate, or the “bac.”

Mobile phone usage is ubiquitous in SSA, 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, but competition in the region is fierce. An increasing number of HEIs are visiting the region for outreach and recruitment, and several well-known education recruitment tour providers are offering tours in the region for the first time for institutions looking for logistical support. EducationUSA advisers strongly advocate for more U.S. HEIs to visit as the best way to build relationships and demonstrate their commitment to the region. Further information about

structured opportunities to visit appears later in this section.

**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. Nigeria
2. Ghana
3. Kenya
4. Ethiopia
5. South Africa
6. Rwanda
7. Zimbabwe
8. Democratic Republic of the Congo
9. Côte d'Ivoire
10. Cameroon

This year, the region reached a mobility milestone with two countries in the top 25 countries sending students to the United States: Nigeria at No. 7 and Ghana at No. 23. Sub-Saharan Africa experienced 18.1 percent growth in 2023, the highest of any world region. To highlight just how tremendous the growth in the region has been, nine of the top 10 sending countries sent more than 100 additional students than they had in the previous year, eight sent more than 200 additional students,

Country	# Of Students	% Change
Nigeria	17,640	22%
Ghana	6,468	32%
Kenya	4,059	7%
Ethiopia	3,006	12%
South Africa	2,713	14%
Zimbabwe	1,789	19%
Congo, Dem. Rep. of the (Kinshasa)	1,660	31%
Rwanda	1,372	12%
Uganda	1,088	20%
Cameroon	1,086	17%
Cote d'Ivoire	1,072	4%

# Sub-Saharan Africa



five sent more than 300 additional students, and two sent more than 1,500 additional students.

Though Democratic Republic of the Congo (Kinshasa) ranks among the top 10 senders of students from the region, 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 also consider the following locations in their recruitment plans to help diversify SSA students on U.S. campuses: Botswana, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. These countries have experienced steady growth. It is important to remember that recruitment rooted in relationships

is often most successful, so institutions should explore recruiting in the home countries of their staff, students, or alumni. Since travel may be restricted by time and budget, EducationUSA advisers in these countries are prepared to offer virtual sessions and additional in-country guidance for visiting institutions when given advance notice.

### 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, as the number of qualified students far exceeds the spaces available at local universities.

Continued population growth will exacerbate this capacity issue. Africa's 2.34 percent population growth rate in

2023 is very high compared to the U.S. rate of 0.54 percent and is projected to remain above two percent for the next 10 years, according to Statistics Times. The United States Census Bureau's International Database reports that 19.8 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 SSA 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 to understand the U.S. educational system because it is so dissimilar to their own. EducationUSA provides many information sessions to help with this, but HEIs should also be prepared to educate prospective students on the U.S. system. Students are also interested in ways to earn U.S. degrees online.

Finally, interest in graduate study in the United States has grown and is expected to continue to increase. In 2021, 34.2 percent of all SSA students in the United States studied at the graduate level, and by 2023 it rose to 42.3 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.

### Virtual Engagement and Social Media Usage

An increase in social media usage throughout the region has enabled advisers and HEIs to better connect with students, particularly outside of major cities. This is a huge benefit in a region where in-person recruitment and fairs don't often extend beyond major cities because of budget, time, and sometimes travel warnings. Many sessions are live streamed on the centralized SSA [EducationUSA Africa Connection](#) page and on local Facebook pages run by advising centers, allowing students, counselors, and other stakeholders to access the sessions. Advisers also use

Regional Student Totals Top Five Countries of Origin		
Country	2022/23	% Change
Nigeria	17,640	22%
Ghana	6,468	32%
Kenya	4,059	7%
Ethiopia	3,006	12%
South Africa	2,713	14%

WhatsApp, Instagram, and Telegram to communicate with students, counselors, and other stakeholders. HEIs can participate in local or regional sessions by contacting REAC: Regional Managers or advisers.

Facebook continues to be popular in the region, while Instagram use is growing. Statista provides useful data by subregion. In 2022, Facebook had 57.7 million users in West Africa, 42.7 million in East Africa, 27.1 million in Southern Africa, and 15.7 million in Central Africa. In contrast, Instagram had 14.9 million users in West Africa, 9.8 million in East Africa, 6.8 million in Southern Africa, and two million in Central Africa in the same year.

WhatsApp is the primary platform for communication in the region because it is inexpensive and easy to use. WhatsApp is expected to have 91.64 million users in SSA in 2024, and that number is expected to grow to 135.44 million by 2029. Being on WhatsApp will establish an HEI as willing to meet students “where they live.” Open office hours on WhatsApp can provide a space where students can actively engage with HEIs.

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 mobile phones. According to the [2023 GSMA Mobile Economy Report](#), by 2022, 489 million people had subscribed to mobile services in SSA. By 2030, 692 million people in SSA 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 often 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.

Successful Recruiting Strategies

- Students and their families want the opportunity to meet with HEI representatives in person to know that they are committed to them and the region. Plan to invest up to three years connecting with students and families in SSA before expecting a return on investment.
- Current students and alumni are a valuable recruiting resource. Prospective 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. This will increase institutional credibility and demonstrate commitment to their students and the region. In Francophone Africa, it will be important to have French speakers available to provide interpretation if necessary.
- 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 SSA countries have a mixture of students whose families can pay all or a portion of the cost of attendance and families who cannot afford to pay any of the cost. When offering scholarships, consider consolidating 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 other students considering the institution.
- Consider waiving application fees and enabling payment from mobile money accounts to mitigate additional expenses associated with bank checks and traditional money transfers. It is 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 Sub-Saharan Africa “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.

U.S. Study Abroad

Top Five Receiving Countries in the Region		
Destination	2021/22	% Change
South Africa	1,543	1,634%
Kenya	737	1,947%
Ghana	697	1,215%
Tanzania	359	1,138%
Rwanda	235	553%

# Sub-Saharan Africa

- In admissions letters, direct students to EducationUSA pre-departure 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.

## Foreign Government and Private Funding

Governments in SSA 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 to this publication as well as to the EducationUSA website.

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

**Angola.** Angola has a new Presidential Scholarship offered by the Institute for Scholarship Management, offering 300 scholarships for graduate students. Awardees can choose their destinations based on a list of 600 universities from the Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities and must produce an acceptance letter from one of these institutions within one year of receiving the scholarship. While many students opt for Brazil and Portugal to be able to study in Portuguese, and some go to China or Cuba due to their specialties (e.g., medical school), EducationUSA has already supported nine students who were awarded this scholarship who chose the United States as their study destination.

**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, though this funding is limited and highly competitive.

## 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. 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 SSA 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 Master of Business Administration (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 the region’s economy grows, investment in the growth of ICT infrastructure will increase rapidly, and the continent will see higher demand for software developers, systems and

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

Country	2018/19	2022/23	% Change
Ghana	3,661	6,468	77%
Somalia	76	120	58%
Sierra Leone	181	280	55%
Ethiopia	2,061	3,006	46%
DR Congo	1,164	1,660	43%

77.0%

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



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 two 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)**

In 2024, SSA will host an inaugural in-person “Big Five” Fair Tour across the top five sending countries on the continent – South Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, and Nigeria. The tour will begin in Cape Town, South Africa, on September 5 and conclude in Lagos, Nigeria, on September 19. Cities in the tour include Cape Town, Addis Ababa, Nairobi, Kumasi, Accra, Abuja, and Lagos.

EducationUSA Sub-Saharan Africa will offer its fifth annual virtual fair in October 2024. Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) also host annual events, including virtual fairs or showcases. HEIs are also invited to participate in the Wednesday Webinar programs described above.

The semiannual “Meet and Greet” event is another opportunity to connect and engage with EducationUSA advisers from throughout the continent. For broader questions about the region, the two REACs for the region are available twice a year for open “REAC Office Hours,” and

they always welcome the opportunity to have individual consultations with HEIs, especially those new to the region.

HEIs are encouraged to join the closed [EducationUSA Africa Facebook Group](#) to stay up to date on events happening throughout the region. Institutions can also join or update their information on the [Sub-Saharan Africa listserv](#), which advisers use to email information about upcoming events and opportunities.

The number of fair tours and agency matchmaking events coming to the region is rapidly expanding. EducationUSA often collaborates with these third-party providers, and U.S. HEIs are encouraged to explore the various timeframes now available. EducationUSA is also curating a [list of events](#) in the region. While EducationUSA does not officially endorse any of these events, HEI representatives are encouraged to review the list for possible opportunities for their institution.

**U.S. Study Abroad in the Region**

According to the 2023 *Open Doors* report, 4,614 U.S. students studied in the SSA region in AY 2021-2022. The top three study abroad destinations continued to be South Africa, Kenya, and Ghana, with South Africa being number 18 in the world.

The State Department’s USA Study Abroad branch is collaborating with government and higher education stakeholders throughout the region to build capacity for U.S. study abroad programming. USA Study Abroad’s [Increase and Diversify Education Abroad](#)

[for U.S. Students \(IDEAS\) Program](#) awarded 37 grants to U.S. colleges and universities in 2024 to develop study abroad programs across the world focusing on various foreign policy themes, including economic development and entrepreneurship, global health, and technology and innovation. Eleven U.S. colleges and universities are using 2024 IDEAS grants to expand their higher education partnerships and study abroad programming in eight countries across Sub-Saharan Africa. USA Study Abroad also provided funding to five U.S. embassies in the region in 2024 to implement U.S. Study Abroad Engagement Grant projects that will build foreign higher education institutions’ capacity to partner with U.S. colleges and universities and host more U.S. study abroad students.

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.

In the past, U.S. students, including Gilman Scholars, 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. Research local holidays and testing periods and avoid travel during these times.

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.

For additional guidance, HEI representatives can reach out to REACs and advisers to check for the best times to visit and interact with students.

# East Asia and Pacific

## Regional EducationUSA Profile

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

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### EducationUSA Advising Centers in the Region

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

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

### Regional Overview

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

#### Recent Trends

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

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

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

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

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

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

# East Asia and Pacific

there are 43 IB World Schools across the country.

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

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

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

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

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

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

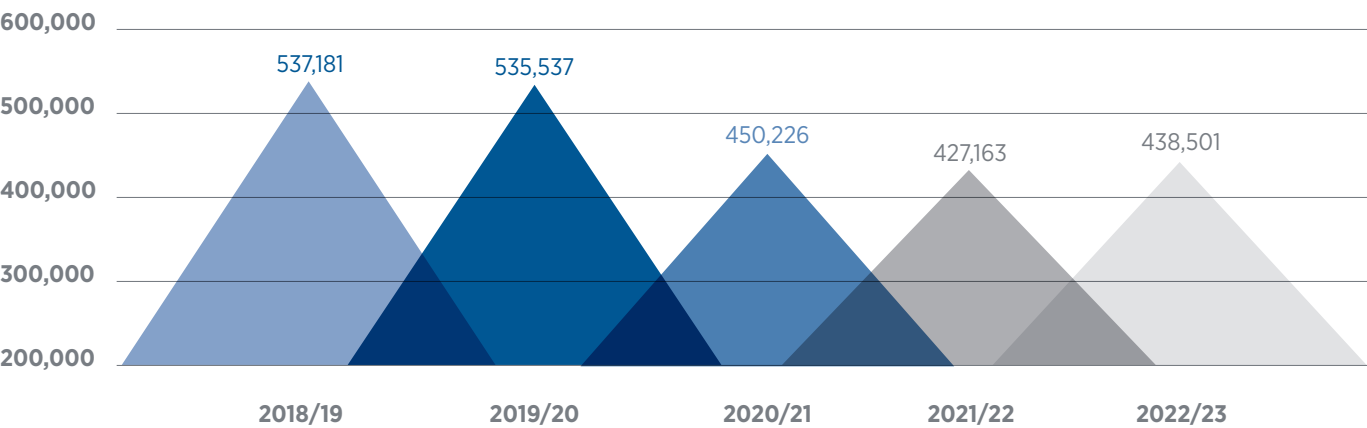
In addition to lower costs, parents and students may be attracted to more favorable visa policies, opportunities to work, and pathways to immigration. Some other study abroad destinations

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

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

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

## Student Mobility in the Region (Five-Year Trend)







### Top Senders and Countries to Watch

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# East Asia and Pacific



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

### What to Expect in the Next Three to Five Years

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

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

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

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

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

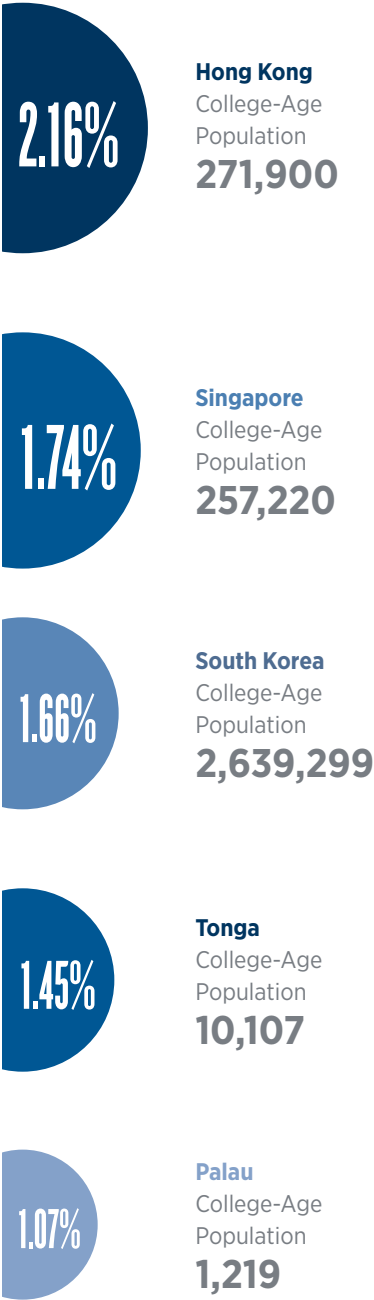
### Five Countries of Origin (with over 100 students) with Highest Percentage Growth, International Students in the Region (Five-Year Trend)

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

55.0%

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

## Virtual Engagement and Social Media Usage

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

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

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

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

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

Regional Student Totals		
Top Five Countries of Origin		
Country	2022/23	% Change
China	289,526	0%
South Korea	43,847	8%
Vietnam	21,900	6%
Taiwan	21,834	7%
Japan	16,054	19%

## East Asia and Pacific

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

### Successful Recruiting Strategies

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

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

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

### Institutional Partnerships

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

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

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

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

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





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

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

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

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

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

### **Foreign Government and Private Funding**

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

## East Asia and Pacific



to EducationUSA college fairs to engage with students.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

### Regional Economics and Market Demands

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

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

Several countries in Southeast Asia have made significant strides in economic

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## East Asia and Pacific

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

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

### U.S. Study Abroad in the Region

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

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

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

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

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

#### Times to avoid travel:

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

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





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

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

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## U.S. Study Abroad

### Top Five Receiving Countries in the Region

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

# Europe and Eurasia

## Regional EducationUSA Profile

Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bermuda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, 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, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom

88

### EducationUSA Advising Centers in the Region

39 Comprehensive  
29 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>

In Europe and Eurasia, EducationUSA centers are located at Fulbright Commissions, local nongovernmental organizations, universities and high schools, American Councils for International Education offices, binational centers, U.S. embassies and consulates, and American Spaces. EducationUSA offers advising programs in 45 countries and territories in the region and is staffed by 126 advisers across the region.

The EducationUSA Competitive College Club (CCC) and Opportunity Funds programs provide comprehensive support to students in EUR. CCCs are offered in 18 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 eight countries, and provides assistance to students who are academically gifted, but unable to afford the initial costs of applying to and enrolling in accredited higher education institutions (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 REAC: Regional Manager for details on cohort programs in the region and guidance on how to leverage them.

### Regional Overview

According to the *2023 Open Doors® Report on International Educational Exchange*, Europe saw an eight percent increase in student mobility to the United States from the previous year, with a total of 89,906 students. For the second year in a row, more than 80 percent of countries in the region experienced

positive growth. Denmark once again saw the largest percentage increase of 28 percent, followed by the Netherlands. A new positive trend emerged from the Caucasus in 2023. Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan each experienced more than 24 percent increases in students studying in the United States over the previous year.

An increasing number of students from Europe participate in exchange or non-degree programs. Last year, more than 14,000 Europeans enrolled in exchange and non-degree programs, a 23 percent increase over the previous year. In Finland, however, fewer university students are going abroad on exchanges. Statistics from the Finnish Board of Education show that the number of mobility periods lasting more than three months decreased in 2017 after a long steady period. One reason for this is the increased pace of study in Finnish universities due to new policies pushing students to graduate within a target time. According to the current criteria, the exchange period must not delay the completion of a degree, and it can be more difficult to get the study abroad period included as part of a degree. For other countries, high school exchanges in the United States increase motivation to return for later study. This is the case in Spain, which is the second-largest sending country to the United States for secondary school studies.

The number of graduate students coming to the United States from the EUR region increased by nearly three percent over the last year, according to the Open Doors data. The number of undergraduate students increased by four percent. This small growth occurred despite ongoing challenges, including





population declines, migration, 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, student displacement, and the ongoing war in Ukraine. The easing of immigration policies in Germany is making German universities more attractive to European students. The Netherlands is another strong competitor in the EU, but the country's housing shortage continues to lead students to explore other alternatives.

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.

This is the third year of the ongoing war in Ukraine. Around four million Ukrainians are internally displaced, and more than

six million people are refugees abroad, mostly in European countries. The martial law that restricts male students over 18 from leaving the country will likely remain in force for the foreseeable future. Furthermore, in April the draft age was lowered from 28 to 25. EducationUSA Ukraine continues to support students who are still in Ukraine or who are displaced in other countries in Europe by working closely with advisers in Poland and other countries in Europe that have a significant population of displaced Ukrainians.

A Russian law that went into effect in March 2024 makes it illegal for Russian citizens to engage in programming with American Councils, Cultural Vistas, and the Institute of International Education (IIE). Therefore, EducationUSA is no longer able to provide advising services to Russian citizens. In order to ensure that Russian students, their parents, and HEI representatives are aware of the law and understand their options, EducationUSA is encouraging Russian citizens to reach out directly to U.S. colleges and universities, their school's guidance or career counselor, or a reputable international student recruitment agent. For assistance recruiting Russian students, U.S. HEIs may reach out to EducationUSA adviser Alina Iacubov, who is based in Moldova.

### Recent Trends

Europe is going through a challenging period caused by several events such as the war in Ukraine, the conflict in the Middle East, the energy crisis, and widespread currency volatility, all of which negatively impact student mobility trends both within the region and to the United States. To successfully engage students during the recruitment process and attract them to U.S. campuses, it is important that U.S. HEIs understand the region's shifting higher education landscape and its impact on 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. Immediately after the pandemic, students from some countries in Europe shared concerns about the distance from home when studying in the United States; however, these concerns have become less prevalent. Several government agencies, such as Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalization (OeAd), have increased efforts to utilize Erasmus+ funding to establish partnerships between local and

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U.S. universities. U.S. institutions with EU institutional partners should reach out to these agencies for more information on these opportunities. Inflation and currency volatility will continue to contribute to economic uncertainty and should be factored into institutions’ recruitment strategies.

Due to high inflation rates, the cost of living in the United States is becoming unmanageable for many students. While many universities offer full- or partial-tuition scholarships or assistantships, there is less assistance available purely for living costs.

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.

In the UK, the 2024 general election is expected to alter the education landscape.

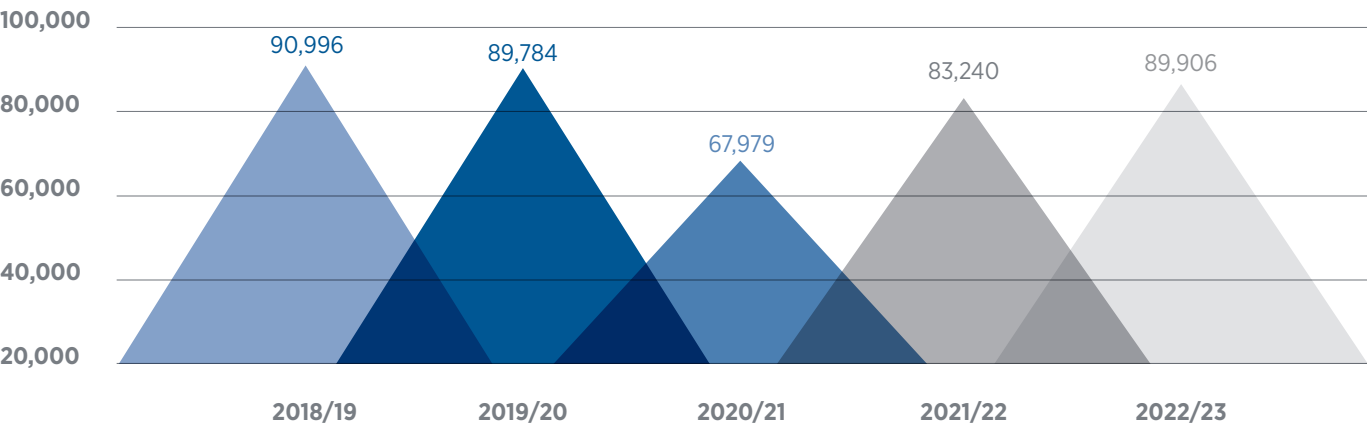
A Labor Party win could bring dramatic changes to the national school system and the higher education system. The UK’s teenage population is increasing, which will lead to more competition for places at UK universities at the undergraduate level. Students may turn to study in the United States if UK universities cannot accommodate them. Counselors at private high schools are already suggesting that private high school students and their parents are looking to “trade up” on their UK offers.

In Western Europe, especially In Denmark, there is a culture of taking several gap years before starting a bachelor’s degree program. This can create a significant age gap between American and Danish students at U.S. universities. Also, many young people in Denmark, especially those age 15-18, have expressed concerns about U.S. gun policy when meeting with advisers at outreach events.

Students in the region commonly study and achieve high levels of proficiency in English. Some countries, like Lithuania, report a rising number of private and international high schools. This indicates an increasing number of families with financial means who are ready to invest in their children’s education.

There are many scholarship programs available for secondary-level students in the region, 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 programs include the Kennedy-Lugar

## Student Mobility in the Region (Five-Year Trend)





Youth Exchange & Study (YES) Program 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.

**Georgia.** The 2023 *Open Doors* data showed a remarkable 26 percent surge in student mobility in Georgia. Particularly notable was a 36 percent increase in graduate studies and a 117 percent increase in non-degree programs, far surpassing Europe's nine percent average growth. This growth is a result of Georgia's dedication to internationalization in the last two decades, along with increased standards and quality of teaching across all major HEIs in Georgia. Georgia also climbed 13 positions in the global [EF English Proficiency Index](#) in just one year, ranking 32nd among 113 countries in 2023. Georgia was the leader among all Eurasia countries and surpassed some European nations like Spain and Italy.

Partnerships with U.S. institutions have contributed to the growth of Georgia's academic landscape. For example, San Diego State University Georgia has yielded more than 500

graduates with U.S. STEM undergraduate degrees. In addition, Webster University opened a Georgia campus in 2022, Fairleigh Dickinson University offers joint-degree programs, and Northern Kentucky University offers a joint master's degree in cybersecurity. U.S. and Georgian government initiatives, including educational and exchange programs, saw a surge in U.S.-bound applications, with EducationUSA Georgia witnessing a 40 percent increase in its graduate cohort advising. Students' career aspirations, particularly in STEM-certified fields (business, data analytics, entrepreneurship, and engineering), drove their university choices, emphasizing the importance of future prospects over institutional prestige. This creates opportunities for diversification in U.S. HEI choices and geography. Georgia's strategic positioning in the Caucasus region, coupled with impressive growth in student mobility in neighboring Azerbaijan, presents an opportunity for U.S. colleges and universities to engage with students. Leveraging virtual and in-person engagement strategies, such as information sessions, virtual fairs, and social media outreach, has proven effective in capturing Georgian students' interest.

**Hungary.** Over the past 10 years, Hungary's student mobility numbers have largely remained stable. The latest *Open Doors* report shows a seven percent increase in undergraduate students studying in the United States in AY 2022-2023. EducationUSA Hungary has been successfully leveraging established coordination with the Hungarian-American Fulbright Commission and the American Spaces network to reach target audiences, mainly high school students, all over the country through in-person and virtual programming. Each year, Fulbright English Teaching Assistants (ETAs) are placed at universities in cities that host EducationUSA advising centers and American Spaces. Closely collaborating with these U.S. Fulbright grantees, the advising centers offer onsite and outreach programming for high school groups, highlighting the diversity and unique features of U.S. higher education, and reaching more than 3,000 students annually all across the country. The ETAs are an integral part of Hungary's virtual Competitive College Club (CCC), which was launched

in 2023. Designed for 10th- and 11th-grade students, the CCC is an online cohort of about 20 students meeting twice a month to discuss the university admission process and campus life, among other topics. The sessions feature representatives of U.S. HEIs discussing such topics as financial aid, advantages of honors programs, and finding the right fit, and answering student questions. Hungarian students currently pursuing studies in the United States also share best practices and first-hand experiences with the cohort, both during the CCC and in follow-up sessions called "Inspirational Talks." The program allows U.S. HEIs to connect with highly motivated Hungarian students. Institutions wishing to participate in the program, either through their International Admissions Office or through a student from Hungary attending their school, should reach out to [EducationUSA Hungary](#).

**Slovakia.** Based on 2023 *Open Doors* data, the number of Slovakian students enrolled in higher education in the United States stands at only 296 students, marking a three percent decrease compared to the previous year. Nevertheless, under the right conditions, there remains a potential opportunity for growth. While affordability presents a challenge for U.S. HEIs seeking to recruit students from Slovakia, notable changes in the country's educational environment suggest a growing potential for increased interest in studying abroad. According to a November 17, 2022, article from *Balkan Insight* ("Slovakia Faces Tough Choices as Youth Continues to Leave"), about 17 percent of students from Slovakia are enrolled in a university abroad, the highest rate after Luxembourg among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, where the average stands at less than three percent. There is a clear inclination toward EU destinations like Czechia due to their greater affordability. Slovakia faces a shortage of scholarships for international study. To address this, U.S. institutions capable of establishing scholarship programs, joint-degree initiatives, or institutional partnerships could pave the way for future collaborations. Currently, partnerships between HEIs in the United States and Slovakia are limited, unlike Slovakia's extensive collaborations within the EU, which facilitate student participation

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in study abroad programs across EU member states.

## What to expect in the Next Three to Five Years

The region will continue to face growing competition not only from the EU, but also from Asian universities that are offering high-quality alternatives at a lower cost. Additionally, demographic changes are causing governments to change policies to support immigration. Germany recently eased naturalization laws in an effort to attract much-needed skilled workers as the country struggles with labor shortages. Foreigners will now be able to apply for a German passport after five years of residing in Germany, or, for exceptionally well-integrated applicants, after only three years. This is especially attractive to medical workers from non-EU countries who learn German at a very young age. They may choose to study, work, and then continue to reside in Germany rather than study in the United States. The government of Slovenia provides the generous Ad Futura scholarship for studying in the United States, and a growing number of Slovenian medical students use this funding for a short-term exchange program. As the number of such medical staff grows, interest in short-term exchange programs will continue to increase. Due to Germany's new law, students are now proactively looking at which immigration policies will better serve their future career and provide more open access to the labor market.

For the next several years, Europe and Eurasia will continue to feel the consequences of the war in Ukraine. The negative economic impact for many families across the region is evident. While students' ability to pay for study in the United States has decreased, their desire to find other countries in which to study and work has increased. For example, in the last year, students in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan have shown increased interest in U.S. study. Due to the war, currency fluctuation and high fuel and energy prices are new concerns, even in countries that have a stable economy, such as Germany.

There continues to be growing interest in promotion of renewable energy sources in the region, with most counties in the EU committing to be climate neutral by a certain year. For example, Germany is planning to be climate neutral by 2045. The war in Ukraine has reinforced the goal to reduce emissions and switch to renewable energy sources. Extreme heat and droughts in past summers have led to re-evaluation of resource use. Generation Z is particularly politically active in confronting the climate crisis.

## Virtual Engagement and Social Media Usage

Social media engagement and virtual programming are major components of EducationUSA outreach and advising in Europe. Instagram is the most commonly used platform, while Facebook's popularity is waning. A growing number of advising centers in the region are using LinkedIn for student recruitment,

especially when targeting graduate students. X (formerly Twitter) is becoming less popular. Other platforms used locally are Telegram in Ukraine, and Discord and the Messenger app in Poland. Many young people in the region now opt to use Messenger as an app separate from Facebook. Discord and TikTok are popular with younger audiences, though the EducationUSA network has not officially adopted them. TikTok is popular among high school and university students in the UK. Catchy videos, especially about the 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.

When organizing recruitment fairs, an increasing number of advising centers are adopting the hybrid format to target students not just in capital cities, but in smaller cities across the region. Prospective students prefer sessions that are short and interactive and that feature alumni, insights into the admissions process, and workshops on practical skills. EducationUSA advisers use a variety of platforms to engage students. For direct communication, the most common platforms include WhatsApp, Viber, and Telegram. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet are frequently used for webinars.

Effective virtual and social media engagement includes alumni success stories and showcases how career trajectories were influenced by student experiences at the U.S. college or

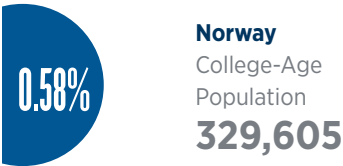
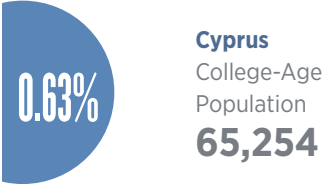
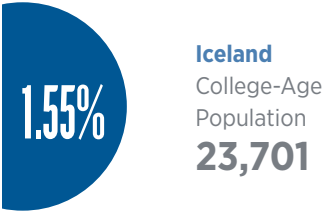
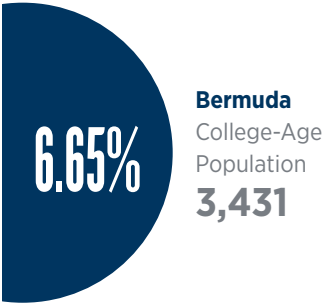
## Five Countries of Origin (with over 100 students) with Highest Percentage Growth, International Students in the Region (Five-Year Trend)

Country	2017/18	2022/23	% Change
Azerbaijan	489	901	84%
Georgia	574	832	45%
Armenia	328	457	39%
Ireland	1,180	1,141	22%
Montenegro	112	132	18%

84.0%

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: 2023 or most recent Population of the official age for tertiary education, both sexes

university. Instagram takeovers by students studying in the United States are well received, as is information about scholarship opportunities, optional practical training (OPT), and tagging EducationUSA centers in targeted countries. With media coverage highlighting political and social debates in the United States, it is important for U.S. schools to stress how their campuses address issues of safety and security. Transparency is important to gain trust among concerned European families, especially around issues of gun control and race relations.

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 strict 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

Face-to-face engagement remains a crucial recruitment strategy across the region. Representatives from U.S. HEIs are encouraged to visit target countries whenever feasible. While EducationUSA centers in Europe typically offer guidance on school visits and priority outreach markets within a specific country, participating in preplanned international student recruitment events that cover multiple cities and countries across Europe can have significant impact. Options include EducationUSA recruitment fairs as well as third-party events targeting students interested in U.S. higher education. In countries like Sweden, many local high schools, especially those with an international profile, plan their own university fairs in October and again in February or March. When travel is not feasible or recommended, EducationUSA provides virtual programming as a viable alternative. Currently, individual outreach visits and education fairs are not feasible in Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia. EducationUSA centers in these countries have planned events where U.S. HEI

representatives can meet with diaspora communities in cities across the Baltic states, Poland, and Georgia.

Student interest in PDF or hardcopy versions of “look books” and brochures is waning. Shipment costs and the logistical challenge of physical distribution also contribute to a trend toward social media content. Incorporating concise summaries, URLs, video links, and relevant hashtags will increase institutional visibility while promoting the United States as a destination of choice.

HEIs should highlight exchange programs and summer school opportunities in addition to full-degree programs. In Switzerland, for instance, fewer students pursue entire courses of study in the United States, but there is strong interest in short-term programs. Participation in exchange opportunities at the bachelor’s level can foster faculty and campus connections that influence students to return to the United States for master’s level coursework or doctoral programs.

Comprehensive messaging that emphasizes an institution’s return on investment and the breadth of its program offerings, irrespective of duration, proves highly effective for students in the region. Additionally, U.S. institutions should showcase efforts aimed at streamlining the application process for international students, such as waiving application fees or implementing test-optional policies. U.S. HEIs should clearly communicate any flexibility in their admissions procedures, as high school students and parents have expressed concerns regarding test-optional admission policies and how applications are ultimately reviewed. Prospective students are also

Regional Student Totals Top Five Countries of Origin		
Country	2021/22	% Change
United Kingdom	10,659	4%
Germany	9,751	14%
Turkey	8,657	2%
France	8,552	10%
Spain	8,548	5%



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looking for insights into how they can earn or save money while on campus, including opportunities for on-campus employment, OPT, teaching or research assistantships, fellowships, and leveraging student discounts. U.S. institutions are encouraged to promote 2+2 transfer agreements between community colleges and universities. Prior to traveling to the region, U.S. HEI representatives should collaborate with EducationUSA advisers to identify the most suitable programs to emphasize for students across the different European countries.

### **Institutional Partnerships**

There is a growing interest throughout the region in fostering collaborations to boost educational mobility and exchange opportunities for students and faculty. Countries like Germany, Denmark,

Norway, Sweden, and Luxembourg allow students to tap into national financial aid schemes to support their studies in the United States, particularly for short-term programs and exchanges. EducationUSA can help facilitate connections between U.S. and European HEIs, especially at annual conferences like the European Association for International Education (EAIE), which typically takes place in September.

The high cost of studying in the United States poses a challenge for European students, who are less accustomed to saving for higher education abroad. Socioeconomic factors can also hinder access to U.S. opportunities without substantial scholarship offers. Forging partnerships with European institutions that include agreements aimed at easing

financial burdens while providing quality exchanges, dual-degree opportunities, and short-term programs could allay some financial concerns. Transparency about costs is crucial to enhance institutional engagement, efficiency, and program success rates.

Within Europe, Erasmus+ funding provides significant support for education, training, and youth activities, and the program has seen a substantial budget increase. Exchange programs within the Erasmus framework are highly successful for European students. U.S. HEIs may be eligible to receive support from the Erasmus+ program and should engage directly with EU institutional partners for additional details about opportunities.

In Sweden, a substantial portion of higher education students study abroad, primarily through exchange programs, which are often integrated into their curriculum at lower costs compared to U.S. programs. Dutch universities, particularly those focused on research, prioritize quality partnerships over quantity, though universities of applied sciences are more open to new collaborations. Housing shortages in major Dutch cities pose challenges for students. U.S. HEIs might instead seek partnerships in the east, north, and south of the country. Virtual collaboration models like Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) are popular in countries such as Armenia, Serbia, and Ukraine. Given war-related hardships and restrictions on student and faculty mobility in Ukraine, COIL can be a highly effective practice for fostering institutional partnerships. Ukrainian universities are demonstrating readiness to further embrace this approach, actively seeking to implement virtual modules in collaboration with American partners.

Credit transfer is a key issue across Europe, with many institutions making efforts to streamline reciprocity regulations. Some countries seek transfer accords, which enable students enrolled in three-year bachelor's degree programs to complete their final year in the United States to earn a U.S. undergraduate degree. It is essential to clarify credit transfer policies up front to ensure students understand the terms and are able to evaluate if the opportunity is in their interest. Fulbright Commissions in EUR have been expanding mobility initiatives with local institutions,



emphasizing individual connections to foster long-term partnerships. Universities in Czechia are actively internationalizing with Fulbright support. In France, initiatives like the Transatlantic Mobility Program aim to support U.S. and French HEIs in developing study-abroad opportunities. The UK's Turing Scheme supports a "Global Britain," as noted by the UK government, "by providing an opportunity for UK organizations from the higher education, further education, vocational education and training and schools sectors to offer their students, learners, and pupils life-changing experiences to study or work abroad."

Consideration of overlooked institutions, including those offering professional bachelor's degrees, is vital when seeking partners. Special initiatives, like the Georgia-Bavaria higher education initiative, offer unique partnership opportunities. EducationUSA and U.S. diplomatic missions provide guidance on partnership prospects. The Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) is actively involved in education in countries like Austria, Bulgaria, France, Portugal, Spain, and Türkiye, facilitating partnerships and organizing U.S. pavilions at education fairs. Each country offers resources for partnership building, such as Germany's database of institutional partners and Poland's initiatives through the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA). Effective partnership management, including regular communication and gradual growth expectations, are essential for success.

### Foreign Government and Private Funding

All 45 countries in the EUR region 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 funds master's degrees for selected fields of study.

**Azerbaijan.** The Ministry of Education reopened its scholarship program for graduate-level studies at selected U.S. institutions. The Youth Foundation also provides scholarships for study at prominent universities around the world.

**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 offer scholarships for graduate studies, while the Fernand Lazard Foundation provides interest-free loans.

Additionally, the National Research Foundation supports doctoral studies.

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

**Czechia.** 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 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. The Monahan Foundation – in partnership with Fulbright France – provides funding up to USD\$25,000 for master's or doctoral degrees specifically in STEM fields.

**Finland.** The Fulbright Finland Foundation provides funding for students, scholars, teachers, artists, and other professionals.

## U.S. Study Abroad

### Top Five Receiving Countries in the Region

Destination	2021/22	% Change
Italy	30,610	1,296%
United Kingdom	27,503	1,606%
Spain	25,348	1,113%
France	14,397	1,305%
Germany	7,644	1,755%

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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.

The Baden-Wuerttemberg Scholarship offers assistance to students enrolled in universities within the German state of Baden-Wuerttemberg. The Fulbright program is augmented by German funding, making it one of the largest worldwide.

**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. The Pannónia Scholarship Program offers both short- and long-term mobility opportunities for Hungarian higher education students

and staff to study, research, teach, or do traineeships abroad in almost every country, including the United States. Additional details on scholarships are available on the [EducationUSA Hungary website](#).

**Iceland.** FaraBara 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. The George Moore Scholars Program provides comprehensive support to students pursuing master's degrees in the United States.

**Italy.** The Fulbright Program offers scholarships covering up to USD\$50,000 for select Italian students pursuing graduate studies in the United States. In

collaboration with the Italian Fulbright Commission, the Zegna Foundation offers full scholarships to economically disadvantaged 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. Students can apply to receive funds from 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 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.** The Dutch government offers low-interest loans, along with monthly stipends of up to 300 euros. Fulbright grants for graduate study cover up to USD\$35,000. KHMW-Eizenga scholarships provide up to USD\$50,000 for pursuing degrees in economics or a Master of Business Administration (MBA). Additionally, [Nuffic's scholarship database](#) lists 59 smaller private funds offering

scholarships for studying in the United States.

**Norway.** Lånekassen offers need-based financial assistance to Norwegian students, combining loans and grants for full-time academic programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Recently, Lånekassen reduced the grant component of the basic support provided to all students. The maximum grant portion of the basic support is now 40 percent for both undergraduate and graduate students.

**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. The Fulbright program offers grants of up to USD\$47,000 for graduate study or research.

**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, funded by the Slovak Ministry of Education, targets graduate students intending to pursue studies in economics, mathematics, statistics, and public policy.

**Spain.** Banco de España, Iberdrola, Fundación Rafael del Pino, Fundación Ramón Areces, and La Caixa offer partial or full financial assistance for graduate studies. The scholarships provided by each organization may specify whether they are limited to certain fields of

study or are open to applicants from all disciplines.

**Sweden.** The Swedish Board of Student Finance (CSN) serves as the government's academic financial aid program, offering grants and low-interest loans to cover various expenses such as tuition fees and living costs. The 2024 interest rate for student loans is 1.23 percent. Additional loans for insurance and flights are available to eligible students.

**Switzerland.** The Swiss Benevolent Society (SBS) of New York provides multiple scholarship opportunities including 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 have the option to apply for stipends and loans to facilitate semester or year-long study abroad programs.

**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.** Ukrainian Global University has funding which depends on what hosting universities can offer.

### Regional Economics and Market Demands

In Europe and Eurasia, the spectrum of workforce development and employment needs reflects the dynamic nature of the region's job market, which encompasses diverse sectors and professions. There



## Europe and Eurasia

is an emphasis on continuing studies and academic opportunities to help professionals who are already working in their fields level up with university degrees. Switzerland stands out for its robust workforce environment, attributed largely to its dual education system; however, there's a pressing demand for skilled professionals in the technology and IT sector to support burgeoning industries. IT specialists are in demand across Europe, especially in countries like Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, and Türkiye, where there is a surge in demand for experts in software, information technology, and robotics. STEM fields like industrial and mechanical engineering, as well as software engineering, remain crucial for expanding production capacity across the region. European employers are increasingly seeking data analysts to harness big data effectively, while communication specialists play a pivotal role in connecting technical teams with stakeholders.

In the UK, political and economic challenges have impacted student mobility, particularly a cost-of-living crisis in which double-digit inflation has led to a significant drop in real income. The UK will hold a general election in 2024 that could impact the education system at both the secondary and higher education levels.

Throughout Europe, demand for healthcare professionals remains high, highlighting a need for doctors, nurses, and psychologists. Countries like Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, and Türkiye also seek qualified healthcare workers, including healthcare technicians.

As industries become more technologically advanced, there is a growing need for a digitally literate workforce. Proficiency in English is also crucial for international business and collaboration. Spain has focused on investing in vocational programs, while the UK is enhancing technical skills through educational reforms and new training pathways. In Albania, significant emigration has led to a rise in demand for vocational workers, prompting the government to prioritize vocational studies even at the secondary education level. Primary and secondary school educators are in high demand throughout Europe, highlighting

the necessity for improved salaries and increased funding in the education sector.

The continuing conflict in Ukraine is expected to drive an increased demand for workers, especially in construction, mining, manufacturing, cybersecurity, transportation, logistics, and retail sectors, highlighting a need for skilled professionals in the post-conflict reconstruction phase. The ongoing conflict has brought cybersecurity to the forefront, particularly in northern and western Europe, and specifically in countries like Norway, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Iceland, and the UK.

Overall, these examples underscore the diverse and evolving workforce needs across Europe and Eurasia, emphasizing the importance of strategic investments in education and skill development to meet current and future market demands.

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

Throughout the year, the EUR region offers various opportunities for U.S. HEIs to engage with prospective students. EducationUSA oversees a range of sponsored events and sometimes organizes pavilions at national fairs and select third-party functions. Upon request, EducationUSA advisers may be able to provide a list of commercial fair opportunities in their country. For details on upcoming fairs organized by EducationUSA teams in Europe, including registration information, U.S. HEIs are encouraged to visit the [EducationUSA Fair Portal](#).

EducationUSA Western Europe Fairs comprises the EducationUSA Benelux Tour, UK College Day, and Spain Fair, and is now presented to U.S. HEIs as a collection of synchronized fair opportunities occurring in September. Strategically aligned with established third-party events in the region, these fairs offer a diverse range of opportunities for U.S. HEIs to connect with undergraduate and graduate markets. The EducationUSA Western Europe Fairs 2024 are set to occur in Luxembourg, Brussels, London, Madrid, and Utrecht, Netherlands, from September 23-30.

The EducationUSA EUR LLM Fair Tour typically takes place in November, just before the U.S. Thanksgiving holiday. This

tour covers Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, Lisbon, Madrid, and other cities. In some years, other countries such as Italy and Türkiye have participated. Focused specifically on LLM programs, the tour offers prospective students valuable insights into advanced legal studies.

EducationUSA participates in the annual European Association for International Education (EAIE) conference, which changes locations across Europe each September. In 2024, the EAIE conference is scheduled for September 17-20 in Toulouse, France. EducationUSA intends to host a private country briefing on the first day, providing valuable insights into U.S. higher education. Following this, there will be a networking event, offering U.S. HEIs the opportunity to foster partnerships and collaborative initiatives with European counterparts.

The EducationUSA Southeastern Europe Tour (SEE Tour) is usually scheduled in the spring. This tour typically encompasses student recruitment fairs in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia.

### **U.S. Study Abroad in the Region**

The EUR region has seen a remarkable increase in U.S. study abroad mobility, as evidenced by the 1,330 percent surge reported in the latest Open Doors data. The number of U.S. students studying in Europe and Eurasia rose from 9,647 in AY 2020-2021 to 138,007 in AY 2021-2022. Out of the top 25 destinations for U.S. study abroad students in AY 2021-2022, 14 were in Europe. This large increase can be attributed to renewed student enthusiasm in post-pandemic study abroad and the reinstatement of suspended study abroad programs. Among study abroad destinations in Europe, Italy, the UK, Spain, France, Germany, Ireland, Greece, and Denmark emerged as the top host countries, receiving over 120,000 of the almost 138,000 U.S. students in the region. Italy was the top choice globally for U.S. students studying abroad with 30,610 students. Overall, Europe hosts 73.1 percent of all U.S. study abroad students.

The State Department's USA Study Abroad branch is collaborating with government and higher education stakeholders throughout the region to build capacity for U.S. study abroad





programming. USA Study Abroad's **Increase and Diversify Education Abroad for U.S. Students (IDEAS) Program** awarded 37 grants to U.S. colleges and universities in 2024 to develop study abroad programs across the world focusing on various foreign policy themes, including economic development and entrepreneurship, global health, and technology and innovation. Ten U.S. colleges and universities are using 2024 IDEAS grants to expand their higher education partnerships and study abroad programming in ten countries across Europe and Eurasia. USA Study Abroad also provided funding to 14 U.S. embassies, consulates, and binational Fulbright Commissions in the region in 2024 to implement U.S. Study Abroad Engagement Grant projects that will build foreign higher education institutions' capacity to partner with U.S. colleges and universities and host more U.S. study abroad students.

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. In the past, 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. In addition, Virtual

Student Federal Service (VSFS) interns can aid advisers in Europe and Eurasia with virtual programs. Over 20 countries in the region collaborate with U.S. VSFS interns to enhance and diversify their advising services.

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

Typically, the optimal periods for engaging with students are from September to November and from February to May. U.S. HEIs are advised to avoid recruitment travel or virtual programming during July and August, as well as over the Christmas, New Year, and Easter holidays. Christmas and Easter dates may vary across countries due to differences in observance according to the Roman and Eastern Orthodox calendars. Local advisers can provide insights into national holidays and other factors like examination schedules that might impact students' availability. As a best practice, institutions should consult with EducationUSA advisers in their target countries before finalizing any travel or virtual outreach arrangements.

# 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  
10 Standard  
0 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. The region includes 27 centers (17 comprehensive and 10 standard) in 19 countries and territories with 33 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 Gulf countries strive 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 work in an environment of frequent change and opportunity. Despite a decade of overall population growth, the *2023 Open Doors® Report on International Educational Exchange* indicates a 1.5 percent decrease in students from the region studying in the United States during academic year (AY) 2022-2023 compared to the previous year. This is the sixth consecutive year of decline, with Bahrain (-4.1 percent), Oman (-5.7 percent), Qatar (-19.2 percent), Saudi Arabia (-12.2 percent), and the UAE (-7.2 percent) all decreasing as a result of scaled-back government scholarship programs, 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 a fourth year (-8.4 percent). In a surprising turn, student mobility from North Africa saw an overall increase of 7.2 percent for the first time in many years: Egypt (7.1 percent), Morocco (9.3 percent), Algeria (12.7 percent), and Tunisia (10.2 percent).





The Levant also saw growth in mobility. Specifically, Jordan saw a 7.5 percent increase, and Syria a 4.4 percent increase.

The MENA 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 help students identify 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, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian Territories, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and Yemen manage CCC programs. The EducationUSA Opportunity Funds program serves high-achieving prospective students who demonstrate financial need and operates at advising centers in Egypt, Iran, and Lebanon.

EducationUSA advising centers in MENA conduct strategic outreach in collaboration with public diplomacy and consular sections at 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. REAC: Regional Managers 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 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 needs.

Local and regional institutions attract students because of their cost, location, and partnerships with international institutions. Growth in student mobility from MENA depends partly on labor market demands, driving the need for specialized training unavailable in the region. The growth of online study opportunities 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. As nations move beyond the pandemic, it is unclear whether countries that require degree attestation will continue to recognize online coursework and degrees. Countries that successfully leverage digital education will likely see more opportunities to attract and retain international students in the future.

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

# Middle East and North Africa

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. 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, business, cybersecurity, tourism, antiquities, and a broad range of medical fields. Governments in the region are also pushing for growth in the number of students pursuing education-related 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 studying in the United States, particularly at the graduate level. U.S. institutions are encouraged to collaborate with the

region's ministries of education and higher 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

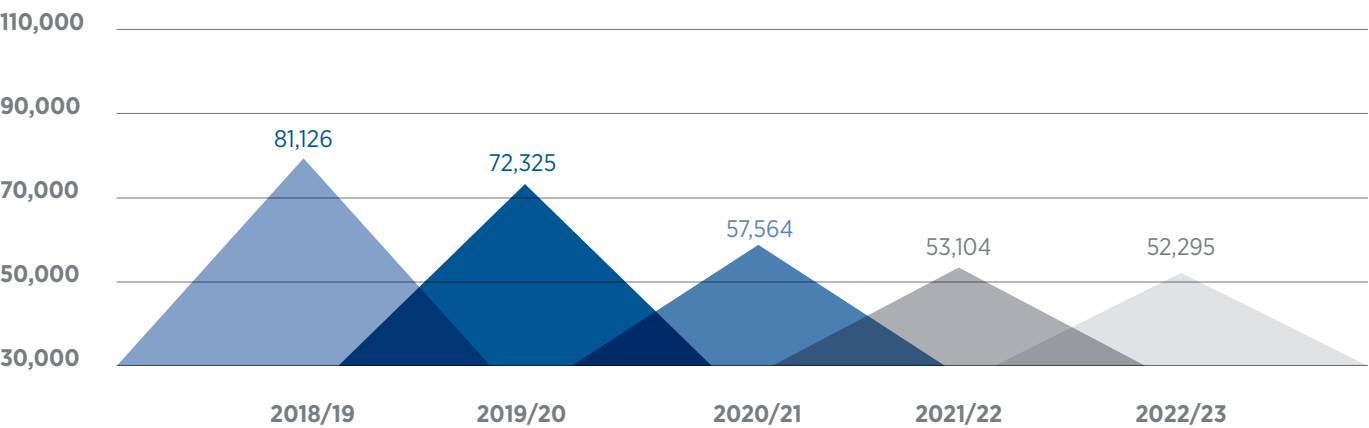
Many countries in the region are eager to include U.S.-trained professionals in their workforce development efforts. Governments support scholarships and short-term grants for local faculty to experience U.S. study tours, research projects, and short-term training programs for government officials and 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. According to the *Open Doors* data, there was a 4 percent increase in MENA students enrolled in OPT in AY 2022-2023.

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 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 regional educational hubs. 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 has 73 HEIs. Over half of these universities have a student body composed of students from outside the country. Outstanding students in the UAE are eligible for a five-year student visa extended to family members. This attracts 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 through Arkansas State University under the Global Studies Institute (GSI) umbrella. This model will transition over the next two years to all in-person classes.

Student recruitment practitioners from U.S. HEIs must often seek permission

## Student Mobility in the Region (Five-Year Trend)





from the local government before 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 international media coverage of shooting incidents on university campuses amplifies anxiety and fear. 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.

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 [EducationUSA website](#).

- 1. Saudi Arabia
- 2. Iran
- 3. Kuwait
- 4. Egypt
- 5. Jordan
- 6. Lebanon
- 7. Oman
- 8. Israel
- 9. Morocco
- 10. UAE

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, they 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 have contributed to a decrease in qualified scholarship applicants in the short term. EducationUSA Kuwait launched several new initiatives to promote study in the United States, including outreach at Kuwait’s largest mall and a wide-ranging 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. The U.S. embassy sponsored the participation

of a large group of students in the EducationUSA Academy Connects virtual precollege program.

As Saudi Arabia continues to implement its Vision 2030 plan for social and economic change, its government proactively seeks opportunities for training, apprenticeship, and in-person learning for recent graduates and rising leaders. There are growing opportunities for capacity building and exchanges in previously closed fields, such as the arts and tourism, and fields tied to targeted growth areas, such as space, conservation, and medicine. Significantly, Saudi entities are willing to fund such trainees, internships, or professional programs. The fields of interest include: space, including aerospace engineering and satellite data visualization technologies and interpretation; conservation, including wildlife management, marine sanctuaries, and national park management and interpretation; cybersecurity, including technologies to secure critical infrastructure and best practices on cyber policy, international security cooperation, and data protection; museum management, including conservation and public outreach strategies; film, with a particular emphasis on hands-on experience in “below the line” technical crew roles, such as production design, costume design, lighting, sound mixing, and visual effects; and medicine and public health education, including opportunities for job shadowing, research,

27.0%

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, International Students in the Region (Five-Year Trend)

Country	2018/19	2022/23	% Change
Algeria	238	302	27%
Lebanon	1,672	2,097	25%
Egypt	3,675	4,247	16%
Morocco	1,461	1,603	10%
Jordan	2,435	2,608	7%

## Middle East and North Africa



and clinical experience in nonmedical residency programs.

Due to continued domestic economic challenges, governments across the region have changed 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. HEIs should highlight programs that support priority fields, as identified by ministries of education and higher education, and be prepared to offer documentation demonstrating student compliance with scholarship requirements. In Oman, Saudi Arabia, 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. *Open Doors* reported a 16.7 percent decrease in non degree programs, with the largest drop from Gulf countries.

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 models for institutional structures and curricular development. STEM fields are the highest priority across the region. Many regional institutions 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.

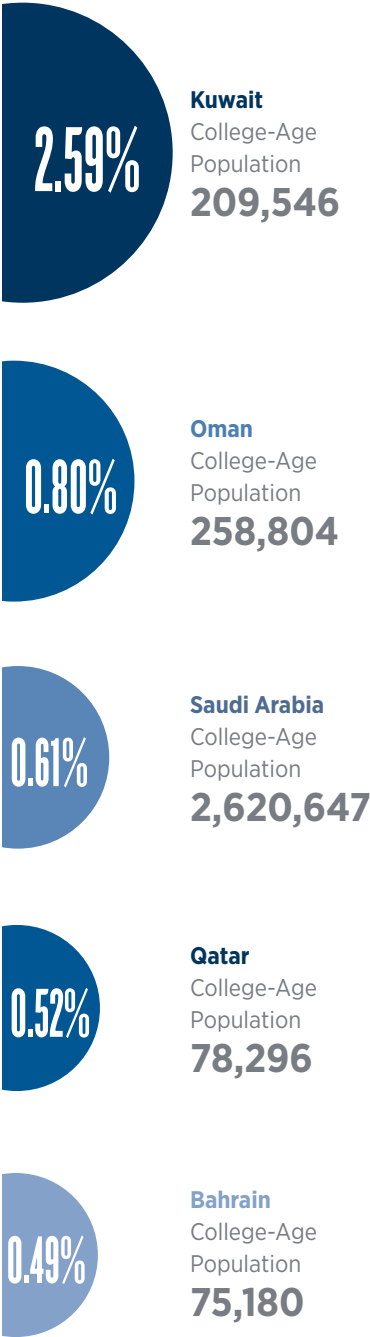
Several governments sponsor college and university fairs and value the participation of U.S. institutions. EducationUSA advisers can provide guidance on local conditions, participate in events, help obtain required approvals from local authorities, and facilitate communication with higher education ministries. 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 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 2024 [Digital Global Overview Report](#), there were 377.86 million internet users in the MENA region in January 2024. Internet connectivity is widely available in the region, although Syria, Yemen, Lebanon, Libya, Tunisia, and Iran have the slowest speeds for fixed connections. 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, the Palestinian Territories, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen.

Mobile-friendly content is recommended, as the average web traffic from mobile

# 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: 2023 or most recent Population of the official age for tertiary education, both sexes

devices across the region is close to 70 percent. The most used web browser is Chrome, with some usage of Safari, Edge, Samsung Internet, and Opera.

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

Virtual EducationUSA advising services are available to any/all students—including individuals who may currently reside in a secondary location that is not their country of origin. Iranian and other students may explore the online resources available at <https://educationusa.state.gov/> for information on both in-person and virtual services world-wide.

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 less popular in Kuwait than 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 provide 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, work 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 can be a driving force toward increasing the number of Kuwaitis pursuing study in the United States.

- 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 undergraduate students, 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

Regional Student Totals Top Five Countries of Origin		
Country	2022/23	% Change
Saudi Arabia	15,989	-12%
Iran	10,812	16%
Kuwait	5,427	-8%
Egypt	4,247	7%
Jordan	2,608	8%



# Middle East and North Africa

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 seek institutions that will accommodate their families. Institutions should consider crafting recruitment messages with these audiences in mind. If feasible, return to the region for yield events.
- U.S. HEIs can benefit from relationships with their 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 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 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 contact scholarship

organizations directly 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 inform local institutions about the U.S. higher education sector and provide 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 \(IVLP\)](#).

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 regional

collaboration. In many countries, the U.S. embassy or consulate can also connect interested parties. In Kuwait, there is a growing interest in establishing partnerships with technical colleges, aviation institutions, 2+2 programs, and short-term programs. 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 may be a great approach in some cases, issues with connectivity or staff continuity could present a challenge in countries like Yemen.

### 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 has 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 funders and organizations that offer scholarships to prospective students.

## U.S. Study Abroad

Top Five Receiving Countries in the Region		
Destination	2021/22	% Change
Israel	2,714	404%
United Arab Emirates	1,176	58,700%
Morocco	712	3,460%
Jordan	618	506%
Egypt	227	468%



**Bahrain.** Through the Crown Prince's International Scholarship Program (CPISP), the government of Bahrain has historically provided 10 scholarships to support overseas study for students, most of whom choose to study in the United States. This year the program will add 10 additional scholarships, bringing the total to 20. All scholarship students enter at the undergraduate level and can receive full funding through a doctoral degree. In addition, some qualified students apply for the program but are not selected. With the right resources, advice, and support, these high-caliber students could choose to study in the United States.

**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 UK 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 last year, after the Direct Entry Scholarship (DES), an external undergraduate scholarship for students, was put 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 in 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.

**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 5 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

## Middle East and North Africa

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, the 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 (Alrowad) supports students pursuing

bachelor's and master's degrees in various fields at 30 HEIs worldwide. The goal is to increase competitiveness in disciplines that support sustainable development and contribute to the kingdom's Vision 2030 initiative. The Supply Path (Emdad) 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 (Wa'ed) 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's website](#).

Other scholarship programs include the Ministry of Culture Scholarship, the Saudi Space Commission Scholarship, the AlUla Scholarship, NEOM, the Mawhiba foundation, 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 1,502 Emiratis studying in the United States in AY 2022-2023, 76 percent were undergraduate students, while just over 17 percent studied at the graduate level. There was a 27 percent increase in students staying for OPT and getting work experience before returning home. A majority of students received full scholarship support. Ten government-sponsored 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 scholarship students 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 1.9 billion-dirham 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 can then 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 connected ADEK with U.S. community colleges and homestay organizations, including 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 regional private firms offer scholarships to current and future employees working in STEM fields. Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, Dubai Police, SABIC, and Saudi Aramco have programs for high school students who are on track to become employees after obtaining a bachelor's degree in the United States.

### Regional Economics and Market Demands

Students in the MENA region have traditionally prioritized STEM fields when exploring programs of study. Most government scholarship programs in





Gulf countries specify approved majors based on labor market and workforce development needs. Some countries have developed nationalization practices to reduce the need for expatriate labor. Qatari and Emirati nationals, for example, are minority groups in their country's population, and expatriates fill many roles in the workforce. Still, 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, business, and 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, qualify for scholarships,

and attain a competitive advantage in the labor market. Peace studies are also gaining prominence, 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 aimed 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, issued six times per year, and via a closed

Facebook group, [EducationUSA in the Middle East and North Africa](#).

Throughout the year, EducationUSA advising centers offer country briefing webinars 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

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held in March at the Bahrain International Exhibition and Convention Center, and the [University of Bahrain Career Fair](#) takes place in April.

**Jordan.** EducationUSA will host a university fair November 15-16.

**Oman.** The annual [Global Higher Education Exhibition](#) (GHEDEX) in Muscat and Sohar is Oman's largest higher education expo. It takes place February 4-6 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 13-15.

**Qatar.** EducationUSA is hosting an education fair in September.

**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 Riyadh's International Convention and Exhibition Center.

**UAE.** [Najah Expo](#), the official government-sponsored education expo, typically attracts more than 1,600 visitors. It will occur in Abu Dhabi October 27-29 and in Dubai November 6-7.

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

**Government Scholarship Programs.** [ICEF](#) Middle East Scholarship Summit provides a unique opportunity for selected international educators to network with a large gathering of scholarship providers and universities sending students abroad from the Middle East.

**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 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 new to EducationUSA or first-time visitors can 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

For the first time, *Open Doors* data shows substantial growth in the number of U.S. students traveling to the MENA region for study abroad programs. 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. The 2023 *Open Doors* data indicates a rebound in the region, with 5,559 U.S. students studying in MENA in AY 2021-2022. Israel hosted 2,714 of these students, making it the leading study-abroad destination in the region and the 12th most popular in the world. The UAE and Morocco hosted the region's second and third most students. Saudi Arabia, which has welcomed international students for a long time, is making it a focus and priority to have more international students come for long- and short-term programs in religion, Arabic, and other fields. Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Education and Saudi

universities have shown interest in hosting American students and would welcome discussions about collaborations, especially with exchange programs. A new initiative, Study in Saudi, provides information about long- and short-term programs, deadlines, the application process, and Saudi universities. Students can learn more and apply through the [Study in Saudi website](#).

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

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,

## 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, Palestinian Territories, 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 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 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.

**Saudi Arabia.** The best time to visit is from October to February. Avoid traveling during Ramadan and the Eid holidays. Due to the large expatriate community, there are many international school calendars. 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 vacations in July and August. Saudi Arabia has simplified its visa process, making travel to the country much easier.

**Tunisia.** The best time to visit is from October to November and 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.

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.



# South and Central Asia

## Regional EducationUSA Profile

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

# 26

### EducationUSA Advising Centers in the Region

22 Comprehensive  
4 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 68 advisers at 26 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 29 advisers in India across six centers, 11 advisers in Pakistan across three centers, and eight advisers in Kazakhstan across three 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, rising food costs, and regional and domestic security issues. Turmoil in Afghanistan has also affected neighboring nations. U.S. higher education costs are becoming increasingly unaffordable for students in countries with

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

Given the current safety and security situation, 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 alumni. Turkmenistan hosts Opportunity Funds cohorts for graduate students, offering mentoring activities for one year. U.S. higher education institutions (HEIs) are encouraged to



declining currencies like Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

While SCA stretches from Kazakhstan in the north to 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 Kazakhstan 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. The U.S. government has a growing interest in expanding partnerships between U.S. and Uzbek universities. The U.S. embassy in Uzbekistan has 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 among Central Asian populations with a median age younger than 27 years; the burgeoning youth population faces limited postsecondary capacity and other barriers to access 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 2024 *Digital Global Overview Report*, internet usage has reached 76.2 percent in Central Asia and 51.5 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 UK, 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 options increasingly attractive. Linguistic and cultural ties draw many Central Asians to study in Russia and

# South and Central Asia

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 flexible student visa regulations.

Prospective students commonly rely on consultants or agents, especially in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan. Consultants and agents provide a range of services, from basic advice to the full completion of student applications. 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) *2023 Open Doors® Report on International Educational Exchange*, just over 30 percent of international students in the United States in the academic year (AY) 2022-2023 were from the SCA region. *Open Doors* reported a 33.2 percent increase in mobility from this region, with 316,466 students from SCA studying in the United States in AY 2022-2023.

Of the SCA students studying in the United States, approximately 59.7 percent are in graduate programs, and 25 percent

are enrolled in nondegree programs and Optional Practical Training (OPT). Undergraduate students represent 15.1 percent of international students from SCA. Student mobility to the United States increased in AY 2022-2023 across the 11 countries in SCA. According to *Open Doors* data, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan were among the top 20 sending countries in the world to the United States in AY 2022-2023. India and Nepal are the world's second- and 11th-largest senders, respectively, while Bangladesh and Pakistan are the 13th- and 16th-largest senders.

Bangladesh, India, and Nepal were among the top 15 sending countries of graduate students to the United States in AY 2022-2023, with 25.4 percent from India, 1.4 percent from Nepal, and 1.3 percent from Bangladesh.

Sri Lanka is recovering from its political and economic crisis. In recent years, defaults on foreign debt led to crippling power cuts and severe shortages of food, fuel, and other essential items such as medicines. One of Sri Lanka's major sources of income, tourism, was heavily impacted but is recovering. In 2023, the country welcomed 1.48 million tourists, up from 719,978 in 2022.

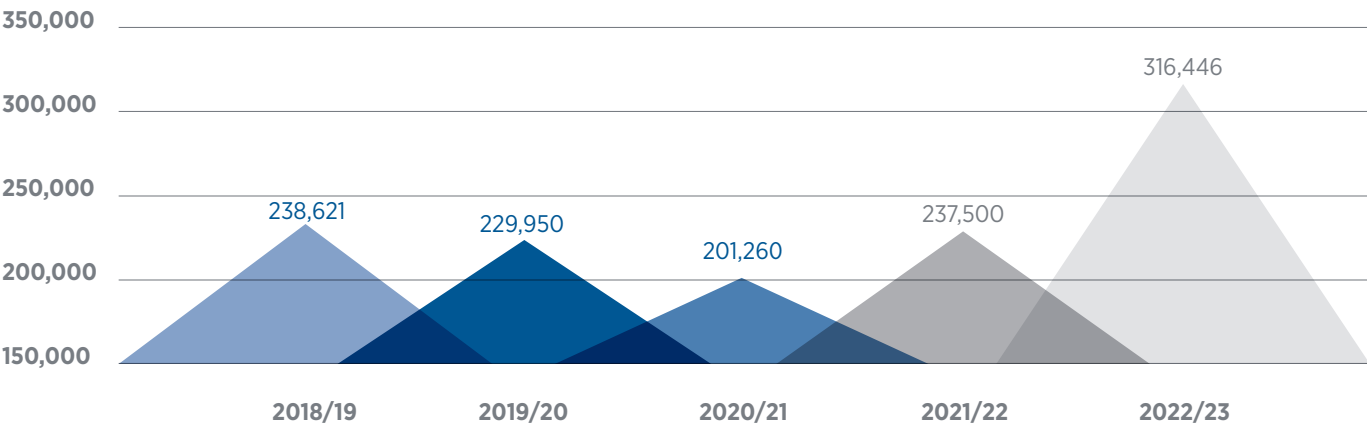
Several factors contributed to an increasing number of graduate students from the region. Local HEIs often require a foreign terminal degree when hiring faculty, fueling interest in foreign doctoral programs. A lack of opportunity to pursue research in their home countries

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 also drives 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 in surrounding communities. Many opt to apply to states and institutions with existing diaspora communities or sizable international student populations. Institutions are encouraged to address safety concerns and share success stories of international students thriving on campus and in the community.

## Student Mobility in the Region (Five-Year Trend)







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 35 million people, and 60 percent are

younger than 30. Almost half of Uzbek students in the United States pursue an undergraduate degree. English-language proficiency is rapidly expanding in the country, paving the way for more students to pursue educational opportunities in the United States. The country will seek partnerships and greater student exchange in the years to come. In February 2024, the president announced efforts to implement a new education system that bridges academic and vocational education components with a focus on job sectors such as textiles, engineering, construction, electrical industries, and machinery.

As Uzbekistan develops and the economy grows, more families will have funds to pay for quality education and will 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 diplomacy section at the U.S. embassy

in Tashkent recently completed a four-year, USD\$7 million English Speaking Nation (ESN) program, which provided professional development to more than 18,000 secondary school English teachers to improve their pedagogical skills. The number of private secondary schools continues to increase, with many focusing on English language and STEM education. Private schools and Uzbekistan's Presidential School system are one of the primary sources of international students from Uzbekistan due to the quality of education and English language proficiency. Uzbek universities seek partnerships with foreign institutions to support their government decreed internationalization efforts. Several U.S. institutions have recently signed agreements supporting student mobility and agricultural sciences.

Shared linguistic and historical roots as well as affordability have long made Russia the preferred study destination for Central Asian students; however, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and resulting economic instability and political concerns as well as increased hostility toward Central Asians following the Crocus City Hall terrorist attack are prompting families to look elsewhere for study and work

## South and Central Asia

opportunities. Affordable options and community colleges with matriculation agreements with four-year institutions are attractive to prospective students. 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 has increased demand for quality higher education. Interest in graduate studies overseas is expected to rise 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) replaced the 34-year-old previous policy, prioritizing establishing connections with HEIs in the United States. 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 among current Indian faculty, who are used to a three-year system and are 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. Only a few Indian HEIs 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 allows top-ranked foreign universities to set up 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, Viber, 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 191,000 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 institutions in 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

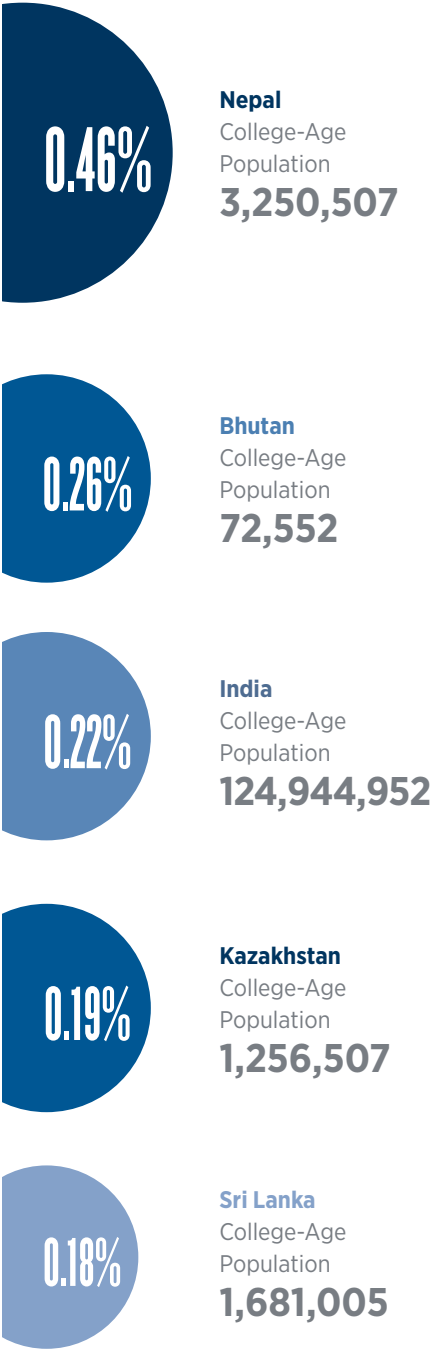
### Five Countries of Origin (with over 100 students) with Highest Percentage Growth, International Students in the Region (Five-Year Trend)

Country	2018/19	2022/23	% Change
Kyrgyzstan	290	705	143%
Uzbekistan	571	1,089	91%
Bangladesh	8,249	13,563	64%
Afghanistan	418	682	63%
India	202,014	268,923	33%

# 143.0%

**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: 2023 or most recent Population of the official age for tertiary education, both sexes

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 questions to HEI representatives to ensure they are well-informed when deciding where to apply.
- Consider organizing summer precollege or incubator 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.
- Look for armchair recruiting opportunities to engage with advising offices. In May 2024, Central Asia launched the first free “Meet and Greet” session, allowing HEI representatives to meet EducationUSA advisers from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. This will be an annual event.
- 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 alumni 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 REAC: Regional Managers and advisers in the region to organize a webinar for a specific country or group of countries. Collaborating with other HEIs will 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.

**Regional Student Totals  
Top Five Countries of Origin**

Country	2022/23	% Change
India	268,923	35%
Nepal	15,090	28%
Bangladesh	13,563	28%
Pakistan	10,164	16%
Sri Lanka	3,106	6%



## South and Central Asia

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 contact U.S. embassies and consulates in the region 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. Effective 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 in developing connections. Institutional partnership grants are sometimes supported by the United States-India Educational Foundation (USIEF) or the Institute of International Education India. 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 U.S. 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's 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).

**Central Asia.** Central Asian institutions 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.** Following Uzbekistan's reforms permitting international branch campuses to open, Russian, British, and U.S. campuses are now operating throughout the country. The U.S. Embassy funds semester long exchanges to the United States for approximately 30 Uzbek faculty members annually and provides strategies for successful engagement with the U.S. higher education sector and campus internationalization. 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 sends a significant number of students to Penn State University's MLL program through an MOU between the two universities.

### 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

that 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 a 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 seminomadic 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 [JN 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, established in February 2017, supports high-level human capital development as outlined in the government of Pakistan’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. More than 230 U.S. institutions are on the [approved scholarship list](#) for this program. 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 El-Yurt Umidi Foundation’s government scholarship program introduced new scholarships for the undergraduate level. The foundation offers scholarships for doctoral, master’s and bachelors degrees, as well as short-

term professional development programs, and six-month internship programs.

Currently, 190 scholarship holders are studying at 34 universities in the United States. In February 2024, El-Yurt Umidi Foundation transferred to the presidential administration’s control. The foundation will implement a new system for foreign studies, dedicating resources to train students in the much-needed fields of engineering and technology. The program is only able to offer funding to students attending universities ranked in the top 500 globally.

**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 new entrants to the job market and mid-career professionals. The number of startups in India is growing, and many aspiring business leaders choose programs that integrate tech and entrepreneurship.

India was one of the few countries where U.S. visa applications saw a major upswing after pandemic-related travel restrictions were lifted. The U.S. Department of State implemented the recommendations of a presidential commission, which 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 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, mining, 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. This large-scale infrastructure investment will expand China’s economic influence

U.S. Study Abroad

Top Five Receiving Countries in the Region		
Destination	2021/22	% Change
India	336	2,000%
Nepal	209	2,886%
Kyrgyzstan	120	300%
Kazakhstan	58	0%
Bhutan	25	0%

## South and Central Asia



in the region, creating jobs and 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, 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 in Kazakhstan 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 increase 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) covering all Kazakhstan regions. 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 them 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 nine cities. EducationUSA India hosts Chalo America, small-group tours in the spring across different cities, and alumni fairs in January and June. 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 EducationUSA 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. The tour traditionally takes place in either the spring or fall. 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.** T Begin Tour Group organizes a fair twice a year in fall and spring. For more information, [contact the EducationUSA Tashkent office](#).

#### U.S. Study Abroad in the Region

According to the 2023 *Open Doors* report, 804 U.S. students studied in the SCA region in AY 2021-2022. The top study-abroad destinations were Nepal, India, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan. India and Nepal hosted nearly half the study-abroad students in the region, followed by Kyrgyzstan.

The State Department's USA Study Abroad branch collaborates with government and higher education stakeholders throughout the region to build capacity for U.S. study abroad programming. In the summer of 2023, the [Increase and Diversify Education Abroad \(IDEAS\) Program](#) awarded 34 grants to U.S. colleges and universities to develop study abroad programming. One grant focused on developing a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) entrepreneurship course in Kyrgyzstan. In 2023, USA Study Abroad also awarded Study Abroad Engagement Grants to the U.S. embassy in Kyrgyzstan to train local HEIs 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.

### 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](https://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 refer to the U.S. embassy website for a list of holidays. HEIs should 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 or chapters in their recruitment efforts.

**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.

**Kyrgyzstan.** 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.

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.

# Western Hemisphere

## Regional EducationUSA Profile

Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Curaçao, 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

# 163

**EducationUSA**  
Advising Centers  
in the Region

80 Comprehensive  
55 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>

EducationUSA operates 163 advising centers in the Western Hemisphere (WHA) region. The centers 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 publication of the 2023 *Global Guide*, EducationUSA has opened five new centers in the region: one in São Luis do Maranhão, Brazil; two in Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil; one in Barranquilla, Colombia; and one in Querétaro, Mexico. In total, 174 advisers are employed throughout the region, over 40 percent of whom are based at American Spaces (most of which are BNCs).

EducationUSA advising centers in the region offer at least one annual pre-departure 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. In 2024, centers in Mexico and Colombia supported the Department of Commerce

and EnglishUSA's fairs to promote intensive English programs. 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 2023, EducationUSA in South America brought back its fair circuit, where 79 U.S. HEIs promoted opportunities to study in the United States to more than 12,500 students in 12 cities in the region. Also in 2023, the Andean region joined the Southern Cone's in-person Master of Laws (LLM) fair tour with 48 U.S. LLM universities in nine cities, interacting with 1,825 prospective students. In 2024, Mexico will join this tour, now called the Latin America LLM Tour, to bring LLM program opportunities to prospective Mexican students. In 2024, the spring EducationUSA Brazil Roadshow received 44 U.S. HEIs with stops in seven cities across Brazil, including new destinations in the south of the country, where there is a growing interest in agribusiness.

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 to 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. EducationUSA continues these practices post-pandemic in order to offer HEIs and students more opportunities for engagement.

Advisers report that the expansion of virtual engagement during the pandemic 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. Some of these Americans say their experience mentoring

international students with EducationUSA led them to careers with the U.S. Foreign Service.

Many universities in the WHA region 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, Mexico, Nicaragua,



# Western Hemisphere

Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. During the past year, more than 160 students from across the region were enrolled in the program.

### Regional Overview

WHA is a diverse region of 36 countries with 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, recently seeing a steady growth in numbers of undergraduate and graduate students. In the academic year (AY) 2022-2023, 109,821 students from the WHA region studied in the United States, representing more than 10 percent of the total international student population, according to the Institute of International Education's (IIE) 2023 *Open Doors® Report on International Educational Exchange*.

The post-pandemic 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 considering hybrid programs that will allow them to work in their home countries while experiencing U.S. studies. 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 disciplines in 2023 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 can be infrequent. Ground transportation may

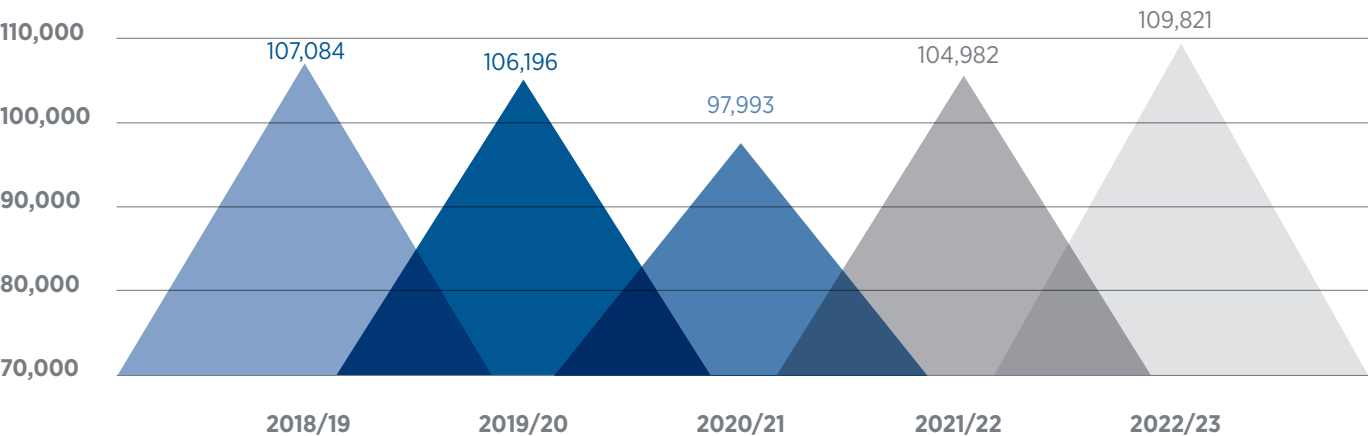
be the only option for traveling within smaller countries. Travelers to the region should refer to [U.S. Department of State travel advisories](#) for up-to-date guidance and recommendations, paying careful attention to local conditions.

### Recent Trends

EducationUSA advisers frequently address questions from students related to safety and security on U.S. campuses. Advisers work hard to dispel misconceptions, sharing examples of common campus security 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 studying in the U.S., many families in the region recognize its value and are willing to invest in it. Elections have polarized many countries in the region, influencing 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 States, students from these countries tend to be concentrated in border states.

## Student Mobility in the Region (Five-Year Trend)



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 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. Peru
6. Venezuela
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 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 in Mexico and Central America are popular models for supporting regional academic exchange initiatives. Canada announced they will limit the number of student visas for international students, and many

international students may consider applying to the United States instead.

[The U.S.-Caribbean Partnership to Address the Climate Crisis 2030 \(PACC 2030\)](#) is the U.S. government's flagship partnership with the Caribbean to advance climate adaptation and resilience and clean energy cooperation. U.S. HEIs interested in recruiting in the Caribbean should be aware of [PACC 2030](#) and the [Caribbean Basin Security Initiative \(CBSI\)](#), the two most important U.S. government policy priorities in the region, as there may be opportunities for HEIs to support these initiatives, particularly from the capacity-building perspective.

The United States is the top choice for Caribbean students who pursue higher education abroad. It is anticipated there will not be enough skilled labor to support the strong projected economic growth in several Caribbean countries. This demand for training and workforce development gives U.S. HEIs the chance to partner with local institutions to provide capacity-building opportunities and to contribute to the region's economic and workforce development.

The Andean region continues to face socio-political instability in most of its countries, in many cases triggered by the pandemic's economic impact. This political instability will continue to impact the region for the next several years, likely leading to 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 in which 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 already show growing interest in studying in the United States. According to the 2023 *Open Doors* report, most countries in the region recorded a double-digit percentage increase in students studying in the United States over the last year, with Peru leading the trend with 19.3 percent growth. This growth in the region will likely continue. At the 2023 EducationUSA South America fair circuit,

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fairs in Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru saw an average of 1,450 students participating in each stop. To meet increased demand in advising services, EducationUSA is opening new centers in Peru and Colombia. In spring 2024, EducationUSA opened a center in Barranquilla, Colombia, which will ensure that EducationUSA reaches the Colombian Caribbean.

In the next several years, local governments will continue to prioritize improving student access to local HEIs. Ecuador has eliminated the national entry exam to make it easier for students to access higher education. Each institution will have the flexibility to implement admissions requirements depending on their institutional needs. The Government of Colombia is redirecting funds to local public universities with the goal of increasing access to tertiary education for local students. Local HEIs continue their internationalization efforts and are looking 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.

EducationUSA has expanded its presence in Paraguay with the hiring of three new advisers, all of whom are graduates of U.S. HEIs, for Asunción and the new triborder office in Hernandarias, which serves Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay. Paraguay and Uruguay will also host stops on the South America LLM Fair this year. EducationUSA increased its number of offices in Brazil to 44, including the newly inaugurated offices at the State University of Piauí, the Federal Institute of Maranhão, and the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte and Federal Institute of Rio Grande do Norte in Natal, the northeast of Brazil. A new office will open in São Paulo, linked with the state of São Paulo's Centro Paula Souza, which encompasses 73 universities and 227 schools with 327,000 students. In 2024, a new EducationUSA center opened at the Catholic University of Chile in Santiago with U.S. embassy and EducationUSA staff at an event commemorating the "U.S. Day," attracting hundreds of students.

Universities and schools in the region are now accepting educational tours, so look for upcoming recruitment trips to Southern Cone countries. Brazil organized an EducationUSA Roadshow in 2023, hosting 27 U.S. colleges and universities in five cities over 12 days with 6,253 students registered for the fairs. In 2024, Brazil hosted 44 colleges and universities in seven cities including in the south. 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. The South America Fair in August and September and the LLM Fair in October will include stops in all Southern Cone countries. Argentina and Brazil had polarized elections, which has 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 X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, and blogs. Advisers use WhatsApp to disseminate information about upcoming events and for cohort advising. Advisers conduct virtual advising and virtual office

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

Country	2018/19	2022/23	% Change
Dominica	227	459	102%
Peru	3,409	5,170	52%
Nicaragua	443	598	35%
St. Kitts and Nevis	147	186	27%
Argentina	2,407	2,979	24%

102.0%

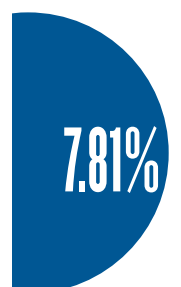
Dominica has the largest percentage growth in the region over the last five years (with over 100 students)



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



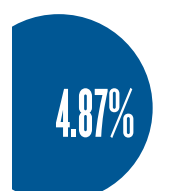
**Dominica**  
College-Age  
Population  
**5,704**



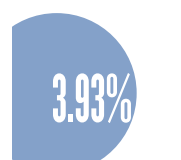
**Bahamas**  
College-Age  
Population  
**33,358**



**St. Kitts and Nevis**  
College-Age  
Population  
**3,155**



**Cayman Islands**  
College-Age  
Population  
**2,980**



**British Virgin Islands**  
College-Age  
Population  
**2,087**

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

hours using platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet. Facebook ads and Facebook Live are also effective outreach tools in the 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 contact REAC: Regional Manager [Giselle Dubinsky](#).

EducationUSA Canada provides webinars, live broadcasts on social media, and other innovative virtual programming to introduce Canadians to U.S. study options and the [5 Steps to U.S. Study](#). EducationUSA Canada offers in-person opportunities through guidance counselor forums, school visits, and fairs run in major Canadian cities.

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](#).

EducationUSA advisers have added subtitles in Portuguese and Spanish to nine of the new EducationUSA thematic campaign videos in all Southern Cone countries, and consular offices at U.S. embassies and consulates have agreed to broadcast these videos in visa waiting rooms. 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, reaching out

to niche audiences such as agribusiness audiences in off-the-beaten-track cities.

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.

### Successful Recruiting Strategies

- Interact with students through EducationUSA webinars and in-person presentations at advising centers.
- 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.

### Regional Student Totals Top Five Countries of Origin

Country	2022/23	% Change
Canada	27,876	3%
Brazil	16,025	8%
Mexico	14,541	0%
Colombia	9,096	13%
Peru	5,170	19%

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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 communication between students and advisers helping students with their applications.
- Institutions should work to make their website more international 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 relevant and sustainable for both institutions.

Organize meetings with local institutional representatives to outline priorities, explore opportunities, and discuss sustainability. Contact a REAC to develop an initial strategy prior to engaging prospective partners. In some cases, EducationUSA can also share local institution 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.

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs' signature education initiative – *100,000 Strong in the Americas* – catalyzes resilient interregional partnerships to expand regional education cooperation and create access to innovative, inclusive educational exchange and training programs. *100K Strong* partnerships across sectors build on regional alliances between governments, industry, and academic networks to strengthen institutional capacity and ensure the United States is preferred for educational exchange and training programs. *100K Strong* partnerships ensure a greener, more inclusive, democratic, and prosperous Hemisphere.

From 2013-2023, the *100K Strong* Initiative awarded 335 grants of USD\$25,000 to USD\$50,000 each to close to 600 HEIs working in teams across 26 countries and 49 U.S. states and engaging more than 10,000 students and faculty. Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, and Guatemala are leading *100K Strong* countries, partnering with a diversity of U.S. HEIs to design and carry out innovative, inclusive exchange programs. The *100K Strong Network*, managed by Partners of the Americas in coordination with the WHA Bureau at the U.S. Department of State, provides an online platform comprised of 4,500 members, including close to 2,000 U.S. universities and colleges.

EducationUSA advisers actively promote and support *100K Strong* partnerships and funding opportunities for HEIs in the U.S. and throughout Latin America. Learn more by visiting the [100K website](#).

**Foreign Government and Private Funding**

**Argentina.** The present government dissolved the Ministry of Education and created a Secretariat of Education. The Secretariat 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 Institute for Agricultural and Technological Research (INTA) and the Williams Foundation award research grants to local scholars. Instituto Argentino del Petróleo 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 AWG17,000 (Aruban florin) and AWG15,375 per academic term for up to eight terms at a two 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.** The Bolivian government offers 200 fully funded graduate scholarships per year. Students must have an admission letter to access this opportunity. Universities in the top 500 of the [Shanghai Ranking](#) are eligible to receive students under this scholarship program.

**Brazil.** Brazil is the ninth top sending country worldwide of students to the United States, and U.S. universities and colleges are increasing their recruitment efforts in the country. The Brazilian government increased in-country teaching assistantship (TA) scholarships in science by 300 percent and is directing funds to support science in the country. Many schools are offering dual high

school diplomas from a U.S. high school and a Brazilian high school. EducationUSA has created a new pool of students at high schools, and advisers organize workshops for high school counselors. The Fulbright Commission in Brazil works with the Ministry of Education's Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES) program 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 Opportunity Funds undergraduate program together with ECA.

**Canada.** The Killam Fellowships Program, administered by Fulbright Canada, provides USD\$6,000 per semester for student exchange between U.S. and Canadian universities for one to two semesters. More information is available on the [Fulbright Canada website](#). The [Fulbright-MITACS Globalink program](#) provides CAD\$7,500 to U.S. 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	2021/22	% Change
Costa Rica	4,751	741%
Mexico	2,832	1,042%
Ecuador	2,283	1,475%
Peru	1,368	22,700%
Argentina	1,041	17,250%



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opportunity for U.S. HEIs to recruit fully-sponsored Chilean students. Becas Chile accepts applications for scholarships to fund doctoral studies abroad beginning in March and ending in April. Final results are shared in June. For master's programs abroad, the application period starts in March and ends in April, with final selection in July.

**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 certain 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.

**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 supported seven students with awards of approximately USD\$40,000 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 loans 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 HondurFuturo 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. 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). 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 COMEXUS, 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. BECAL has established a partnership with the Paraguay Kansas Committee that funds 34 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 13 Fulbright-CAL scholarships co-funded by the Paraguayan government: 10 are for master's programs (two master's in education and eight master's in science, technology, and innovation), two for doctoral programs, and one for postdoctoral programs. Moreover, there are four 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 90 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 to apply for 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 program that awards approximately 150

graduate scholarships abroad 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 program uses a list of approved universities based on international rankings. 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 two 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. The Uruguayan government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), the National Administration of Public Education (ANEP), and Ceibal, co-funds together with the U.S. Embassy in Montevideo an exchange program for Uruguayan educators administered by the Fulbright Commission.

**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 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

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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. 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, non-degree, 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 countries' websites and social media accounts for other local in-person and virtual opportunities. Additional activities include participation in beginner adviser training, thematic sub-regional 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 in the spring. In April 2024, EducationUSA Brazil hosted an in-person roadshow with stops in seven cities, with the participation of 44 U.S. colleges and universities. Contact [Marina Martins](#) for more information.

**Canada.** EducationUSA Canada holds an annual fair in May to recruit undergraduate students. This event features 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. In spring 2024, EducationUSA Canada hosted a fair in Ottawa. Contact EducationUSA adviser [Jenika Heim](#) for more information.

**Caribbean.** In 2023, EducationUSA Trinidad and Tobago hosted their annual in-person fair. This fair draws 5,000 to 6,000 students in-person. EducationUSA is exploring the possibility of creating an EducationUSA Caribbean fair tour in fall 2025. Contact REAC [Giselle Dubinsky](#) for more information.

**Colombia STEM Fair.** This annual STEM-focused fair tour takes place in March and includes stops in various cities in Colombia. In March 2024, 20 U.S. institutions joined the event and met with more than 2,000 students in Bogotá, Bucaramanga, Cali, and Pereira. Contact fair coordinator [Karina Otalora](#) for information on future Colombia fairs.

**EducationUSA Central America Fairs.** In recent years, EducationUSA Central America has organized theme-based, multi-country fairs during the spring or summer. For example, in August 2023, EducationUSA Costa Rica and Panama hosted their third iteration of the virtual science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) open house, featuring 35 U.S. HEIs. The event was designed to promote undergraduate and graduate STEAM programs and offer updated information about student visas and about applying to Optional Practical Training (OPT) programs. It also provided opportunities for group conversations between U.S. HEIs and potential students. Contact REAC [Giselle Dubinsky](#) for information about future fairs in Central America.

**High School Counselor Training Workshops.** EducationUSA Barbados, 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 Latin America LLM Fair Circuit.** EducationUSA plans to offer the Latin America LLM Fair in person from October 6-30, including stops in Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Brasília, São Paulo, Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Asunción, Santiago, Lima, Quito, and Bogotá. Contact EducationUSA adviser [Marina Martins](#) for more information.

**EducationUSA South America Fair Circuit.** EducationUSA will offer this in-person circuit from August 25 to September 16. It will include stops in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Brasília, Asunción, Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Santiago, Santa Cruz, Lima, Quito, and Bogotá. Institutions promoting undergraduate, graduate, and short-term programs are encouraged to participate. Contact fair coordinator [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 BNCs 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

U.S. study abroad to the Western Hemisphere (WHA) region has rebounded from the sharp decline shown in the 2022 *Open Doors* report. According to 2023 *Open Doors* data, the number of U.S. students studying in the region increased by 1,111.7 percent, with 20,060 U.S. students studying in WHA in AY 2021-2022. The region hosted 10.63 percent of the total U.S. study abroad population. Costa Rica received the most U.S. study abroad students in the region and the seventh most in the world. Mexico (11th), Ecuador (14th), Peru (20th), Argentina (23rd), and Belize (25th) also placed within the top 25 most popular study abroad destinations for U.S. students in AY 2021-2022.

The State Department's USA Study Abroad branch is collaborating with government and higher education stakeholders throughout the region to build capacity for U.S. study abroad programming. USA Study Abroad's [Increase and Diversify Education](#)





**Abroad for U.S. Students (IDEAS) Program** awarded 37 grants to U.S. colleges and universities in 2024 to develop study abroad programs across the world focusing on various foreign policy themes, including economic development and entrepreneurship, global health, and technology and innovation. Nine U.S. colleges and universities are using 2024 IDEAS grants to expand their higher education partnerships and study abroad programming in seven countries across the Western Hemisphere. USA Study Abroad also provided funding to eight U.S. embassies and binational Fulbright Commissions in the region in 2024 to implement U.S. Study Abroad Engagement Grant projects that will build foreign higher education institutions' capacity to partner with U.S. colleges and universities and host more U.S. study abroad students.

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](https://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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