

# Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study



ENGLISH LANGUAGE &  
SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS





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# Your 5 Steps to U.S Study

## WANT TO LEARN MORE

## ABOUT STUDYING

## IN THE UNITED STATES?

*"In the United States, you have the opportunity to customize your educational program. This flexibility is not available in other places."*

- Student from Libya

Join the [EdUSA Connects Webinar Series](#), offered by EducationUSA, to hear directly from U.S. college and university representatives. Topics range from admissions, financial aid, student visas, and beyond. Mark your calendar today to [join an upcoming webinar](#).

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*"The U.S. campus is like a global village where you meet people from so many places. You'll be amazed at how much you have in common and excited to learn about the differences."*

- Student from Trinidad





WHAT  
DO YOU  
WANT TO  
STUDY?





# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

10 - 12 months prior to U.S. study:



### Get Started Today!

More than 57,000 international students participate in Intensive English Programs (IEPs) in the United States each year.

*"I studied English in the United States for four months in 2007. The EducationUSA Adviser and I spent lots of time investigating programs and departments, accommodations and visa arrangements. EducationUSA Advising Centers can help you make the most of U.S. intensive English language programs."*

- Intensive English student from Colombia



**EdUSA Connects Session –**  
*Intensive English Programs in the U.S.*  
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**Have you thought about what is most important to you?**  
To help you decide, ask yourself the questions listed within **Define Your Priorities (Pg. 3)**.



**IMPROVE YOUR ENGLISH**

The United States is the most popular destination for international students interested in learning English or improving their English skills. Consider a variety of factors and make sure you find the right Intensive English Program (IEP) for you.

## GOOD TO KNOW

*If you plan to move to a college or university degree program in the United States, be sure to research the integration of the IEP into campus life.*



10 - 12 months prior to U.S. study:



### What are ESL Programs?

English as a Second Language, or ESL, programs offer international students the chance to learn English or improve their English language skills. Courses are offered at hundreds of U.S. educational institutions and range from academic English for university-bound students to language and culture courses for travelers.

#### Intensive English Programs (IEPs)

- Can be taken for personal or professional reasons and not for academic credit.
- May also be taken to prepare for U.S. college or university admissions, and some IEPs offer “bridge programs” that help students transfer into an academic program.
- May include classes designed for any level of English proficiency.
- Usually require 20–30 hours per week of intensive English language study.

#### College American Language and Culture Programs

- Are usually taken for academic credit to prepare for, or as part of, a U.S. college or university degree program.
- Often require an intermediate or advanced level of English language proficiency before enrollment.
- May be taken to improve a specific academic skill, such as reading, writing, or grammar.
- Will assist with adjustment to U.S. culture and campus life.

## GOOD TO KNOW

You may also hear English language programs in the United States called ESOL Programs, or English for Speakers of Other Languages.



*“When researching Intensive English Language programs, you need to think about your needs and your goals. Location, cost, the quality/accreditation of the program, and the levels of English offered are all important considerations, as is the timeline in which you hope to complete the program.”*

- Director, English Language Center,  
University of Central Missouri



**BECOME FLUENT**





### Define Your Priorities

When searching for English as a Second Language (ESL) programs in the United States, it is important to first decide what is most important to you. This will help guide you through each of **Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study**. Please answer the following questions with as much information as possible.

#### Why do you want to study in the United States?

Every student is different, and it is important to think about your own primary reasons to study English in the United States. These reasons may change over time, but they will help guide your ESL program search.

**As you begin to search for an EST program in the United States, you should think about:**

#### Your Short-term Goals

- What is the purpose of your English language study? Select all that apply.

##### Academic

Are you planning to transfer to a U.S. academic program after your English study? Do you need to improve your scores on any English language tests?

Please explain.

##### Professional

Do you need to study English for your current job or future employment?

Please explain.

##### Personal

Are you interested in English language for personal reasons, such as a general interest, cultural experience, or other personal goals?

Please explain.

- How long do you plan to study English in the United States?

Less than 1 month

1–6 months

6 months–1 year

Over 1 year

#### Your Past Experience

- Have you studied English in your home country or abroad?

Yes

Please explain.

No



### How will you pay for your studies in the United States?

Tuition, fees, and living costs vary greatly between U.S. institutions, making English language study affordable to many international students each year.

- In total U.S. dollars, how much money will you and/or your family be able to pay for an ESL program??
  - Less than \$1,000**
  - \$1,000–\$5,000**
  - \$5,000–\$10,000**
  - More than \$10,000**

### Which kind of ESL program is best for you?

The type, level, and size of ESL programs vary in the United States.

**As you begin to narrow down your choices, you should think about:**

#### Program Type

When choosing a program type, think about your reasons to study English. The program should help you reach your goals.

- Which program type would be a good match for you?
  - U.S. College or University**  
Offered by a U.S. college or university and can be on-campus or off-campus. A private English language provider may also offer programs at a U.S. college or university.
  - Independent Language School**  
Offered by a private English language school. If your goals are academic, ask if you can transfer to a U.S. college or university program after the English language program.

#### Program Level

ESL programs range from beginning to advanced levels, and they should help improve your English reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking skills.

- Which level best describes you?
  - Beginning**  
Basic or no understanding of the English language.
  - Intermediate**  
Understanding of the English language in conversation and academics, but often requires assistance.
  - Advanced**  
Understanding of the English language in conversation and academics, with little to no need for assistance.



### Program Size

How comfortable will you be in a small, medium or large program? The program size can impact your options and the learning environment.

- Which of the following would be best for you?

- Small (less than 100 students)**
- Medium (100-500 students)**
- Large (more than 500 students)**
- No Preference**

### How easily will you adjust to your new community and environment?

The United States is a very diverse country, offering a variety of climates, cultural heritage, and landscapes from coast to coast. Imagine yourself studying in the United States and think about the environment you want.

**As you imagine the environment you want, you should think about:**

### Region

The United States is often divided into four distinct regions. Refer to the map below to see the different regions.

- Which region would be best for you?

- West**

- The largest region of the United States covering more than half its land area, making it the most geographically diverse area. It is known for mild and damp climates to very dry and hot ones, with greater access to mountain ranges, desert areas, forests, and the Pacific coastline.

- Midwest**

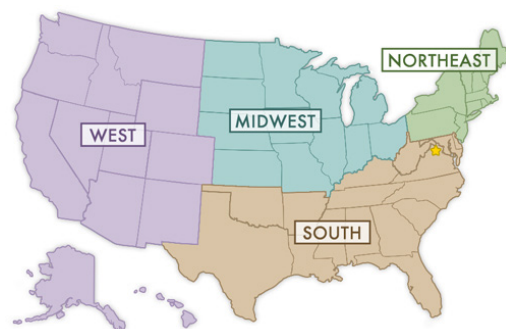
- Also called "Middle America," it is known for low-lying plains, small hills, and access to large freshwater lakes bordering Canada. Seasonal climate change, ranging from mild summers to cold winters with heavy snowfall, is also common in the Midwestern states.

- South**

- A region known for its sub-tropical climate with humid summers and mild winters. Southern states have diverse landscapes, including mountains, wetlands, arid deserts, and the Gulf of Mexico coastline.

- Northeast**

- Comprised of the New England and Middle Atlantic states, this region is known for its forested interior and rocky Atlantic coastline. Seasonal climate change, ranging from mild summers to cold winters with heavy snowfall, is also common in the Northeastern states.





# English Language | Step 1 - Research Your Options

## Setting

Virtually every U.S. state includes a setting that can range from an urban city, suburban residential area, or a rural countryside. U.S. colleges and universities may be located in any one of these settings.

- Which setting would be best for you?

### Urban

- Cities with larger populations providing convenient access to banking, stores, the arts, entertainment, public transportation, and international airports. Urban areas may have higher average living costs.

### Suburban

- Residential areas close or farther from cities, with moderate populations and more spread-out restaurants and shopping areas. Suburban areas may have more moderate average living costs.

### Rural

- Countryside areas with smaller towns of fewer people and areas of land used for mining and agriculture. Rural areas may have lower average living costs.

## Housing

The type of housing you choose will depend on your personal needs and the options available.

- Which housing option is best for you?

### On-campus Housing

#### Residence Halls and Dormitories

- Furnished with basic needs such as a bed, closet, desk, and chair. Rooms are usually shared with other students and can be a great place to meet new friends quickly.
- Some dormitories may be for men only or women only, and some may allow both men and women in the same dormitory residence.

#### Married Student Housing

- Demand for housing for married couples is usually high, so you should ask about this as early as possible.

### Off-campus Housing

#### Apartments

- The student finds his/her own apartment and typically pays a deposit, monthly rent, and utility fees.

#### 'Co-op' Housing

- Co-ops are usually large houses where a group of students live together, sharing the costs and taking turns to do the cooking and cleaning.

#### American Host Family

- Living with an American family can be an enriching experience and can be less expensive than other off-campus housing options.
- Host family options may not be available at all colleges or universities, so it is important to check with the campus adviser if you are interested.







### Campus Life

Activities available in the local area may also be an important part of your U.S. experience. Will you be in a location that offers activities that interest you?

- Which activities will you want to be able to access?

**Sports**

Which ones?

**Arts**

Which ones?

**Clubs and organizations**

Which ones?

**Hobbies**

Which ones?

**Other**



10 - 12 months prior to U.S. study:



### Research and Narrow Your Choices

After you define your priorities and identify the factors most important to you, use other resources to narrow down your choices.

- **American Association of Intensive English Programs (AAIEP)**  
Nearly 300 AAIEP members offer accredited intensive English programs located in college and university settings or city centers across the United States.
- **University and College Intensive English Programs (UCIEP)**  
UCIEP is an independent consortium of university and college-administered intensive English programs in the United States.
- **Intensive English USA: Directory of Intensive English Programs in the U.S.**  
Intensive English USA is the leading source of information for international students who are researching study abroad opportunities in the United States.

### GOOD TO KNOW

*For more information on selecting the best program for you, contact an adviser at your nearest EducationUSA Advising Center.*



*"The teachers are very helpful in English language classes. They try to make it easy for you."*

- Student from Libya

## 2 Complete Your Application

# Education Just Ahead

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

6 - 10 months prior to U.S. study:

12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

### Plan Ahead!

Confirm the application and admissions process with the IEPs that interest you.

*"After I was accepted at my university, I wanted to enroll in an IEP nearby because I still didn't feel confident with my English. All of my paperwork was in order for the university, so the application and admission process was easy."*

- IEP student from Taiwan



Admission requirements vary, but most IEPs require that students have completed secondary school and are able to prove they can pay the full cost of the program. As part of the application, you may be asked for additional information such as educational transcripts or documentation of English proficiency. You may also be required to agree to devote the majority of your time to language studies while in the program.

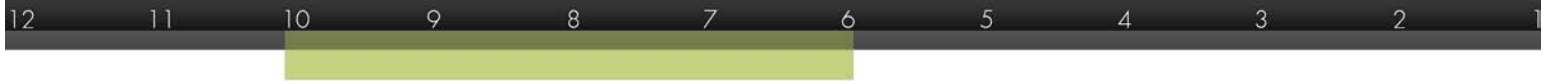
### Learn about Conditional Admission

#### What is conditional admission?

Some institutions in the United States offer conditional admission to their academic programs. Applicants whose academic or professional qualifications are very good, but whose English language skills need improvement, may be offered conditional admission. This does not automatically mean they have been accepted into the academic programs offered by the college or university.



6 - 10 months prior to U.S. study:



Before being granted full admission and being permitted to enroll in academic courses, students who receive conditional admission must:

- Complete additional English language courses, or
- Submit an acceptable score from a standardized English language proficiency test (such as the TOEFL or IELTS), and
- Submit any other remaining requirements as indicated in the conditional letter of admission.

## GOOD TO KNOW

*Because it may be more difficult to obtain a visa based on conditional or provisional admission, be sure to read the documents you receive from the admissions office carefully and be prepared to explain the conditions of admission during your visa interview. It is important to have the admission letter and immigration form from the IEP as well as the conditional letter of admission with you at the visa interview.*

Some international students may be required to take English language placement tests after they arrive on campus. Based on the results of those tests, students then enroll in their regular programs of study and/or they may need to enroll in additional English language courses.





# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

3 - 6 months prior to U.S. study:



### Invest in Yourself!

The cost of an Intensive English Program in the United States will vary based on the institution and program.

*"Be realistic about how much you need and what you can really afford."*

- International studies student from Ghana



**EXPLORE THE MANY OPTIONS**

If you know you want to attend an IEP in the United States, start your financial planning as early as possible.

## GOOD TO KNOW

*Financial aid is usually limited for IEP students.*

### Make Your Budget

As you work to develop a budget for your IEP studies, keep in mind that your overall costs are comprised of **tuition, fees, and living expenses.**

Many programs require an application fee, which is often nonrefundable, and a tuition deposit. Be sure to find out the total cost of a program before you apply.

## GOOD TO KNOW

*Location matters! Depending on where you live and study, costs for housing and food vary greatly in the United States. Suburban or rural areas in the South and Midwest of the United States generally have the lowest cost of living.*

**Tuition:** The money an institution charges for instruction and training (does not include the cost of books).

**Fees:** An amount charged by colleges and universities, in addition to tuition, to cover costs of institutional services.

**Living Expenses:** Expenses such as housing and meals, books and supplies, transportation, personal expenses, health insurance, etc.

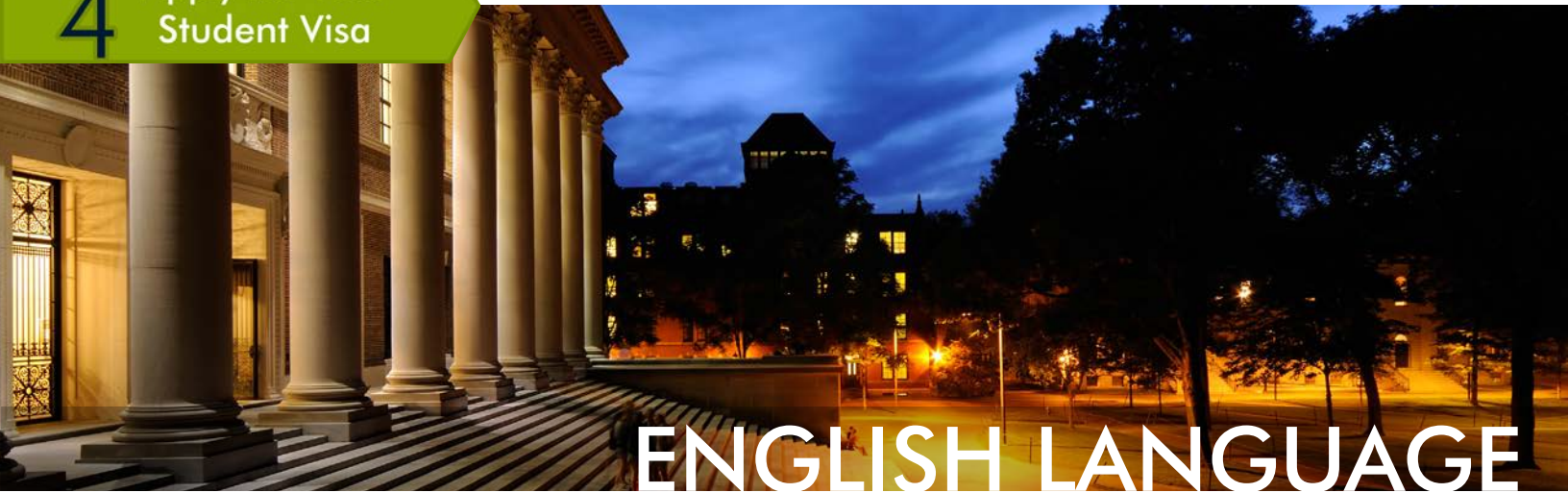


# Notes



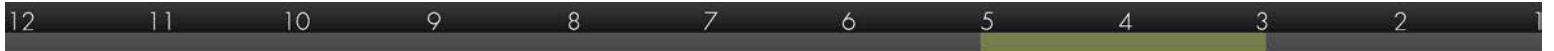
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# 4 Apply for Your Student Visa



# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

3 - 5 months prior to U.S. study:



### Be Prepared for the Student Visa Process!

Become familiar with the student visa requirements in your country and allow plenty of time to prepare your application.

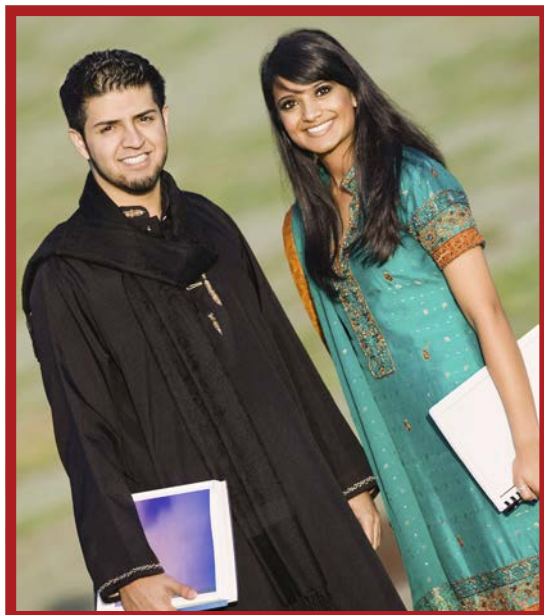
*"Because interviews are short, do your best to explain why you want to study in the United States, how you plan to support yourself while in school, and what your plans are for when your studies are finished."*

- Vice Consul, U.S. Consulate Monterrey, Mexico



**EdUSA Connects Session –**  
*International Students Demystify the Visa Process*

**Watch Now** - <http://bcove.me/9qcywo3s> >>



Did you know that the U.S. Department of State issues student and exchange visitor visas at a worldwide acceptance rate of about 85%? You will first need to receive an admission letter and a certificate of eligibility for nonimmigrant student status from your U.S. institution before you can begin the visa application process.

## GOOD TO KNOW

*Information about the student visa process is accurate as of print date and is subject to change. Visit [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for more information, or consult your nearest U.S. embassy/consulate or EducationUSA Advising Center.*



3 - 5 months prior to U.S. study:



### Know More about Visa Types

The **U.S. Department of State** ([www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)) issues visas in U.S. embassies and consulates abroad.

- A visa **does not** guarantee entry into the United States.
- A visa **does** allow a foreign citizen to travel to a U.S. port-of-entry and request permission from a U.S. immigration officer to enter the United States.

### GOOD TO KNOW

*Is your spouse, or child under the age of 21, joining you in the United States? Learn more about the F-2 visa*

**To study at an IEP, you will most likely need to apply for an F-1 visa.**

F-1 Student Visa. The most common visa for those who want to study in the United States. It is for individuals who want to study at an accredited U.S. college or university or study English at a university or intensive English language institute.





3 - 5 months prior to U.S. study:



### Follow the Step-by-Step Visa Application Process

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) is a program within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that manages the **Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)** ([www.ice.gov/sevis/](http://www.ice.gov/sevis/)). SEVIS is the internet-based system that maintains records of foreign students and exchange visitors before and during their stays in the United States.

#### STEP 1: Receive your certificate of eligibility for nonimmigrant student status: Form I-20

- To apply for a visa, you must first have received a Form I-20. The U.S. academic institution or program sponsor will provide you with the appropriate form only after you have:
  - Been admitted to a SEVP-approved institution or accepted in an exchange program.
  - Provided evidence that you can meet all the costs of the program.
- The academic institutions that admit you will send you a Form I-20.

### GOOD TO KNOW

*Once you receive the required documentation, you can make an appointment with the U.S. embassy or consulate to apply for a visa. Even if you do not intend to begin your program for several months, it is best to apply as early as possible. Your visa can be issued up to 120 days before your arrival in the United States.*

#### STEP 2: Pay SEVIS fee

- You must pay a SEVIS fee and fill out other visa application forms prior to your visa interview. Go to the **SEVIS I-901 fee processing website** ([www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.jsp](http://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.jsp)) for complete information about paying your SEVIS fee. Follow the instructions carefully. For more information, you may also visit the Study in the States website for students.

#### STEP 3: Schedule Your Interview

- Refer to the **U.S. nonimmigrant visa website** ([www.studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students](http://www.studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students)) to complete the required application forms.
- It is best practice to ensure your passport is valid for at least six months beyond the end of your study in the United States and that your name is spelled correctly and appears the same on all documents.
- Be sure to have your Form I-20 SEVIS receipt.
- Confirm you have the required documents and schedule your visa interview following the instructions on the website of your nearest U.S. embassy or consulate ([www.usembassy.gov](http://www.usembassy.gov)).
- During the interview, be prepared to answer questions regarding ties to your home country, your English language skills, your academic background, the program in the United States to which you have been admitted, and proof of your financial ability.

### GOOD TO KNOW

*Any inconsistencies can delay the issuance of your visa. Visa interview scheduling is done online or by phone at most U.S. embassies and consulates.*

Consult an EducationUSA adviser who can help you to understand visa requirements, prepare for your interview, or answer other questions about the student visa process. Your answers to the questions asked in Step 1: Research Your Options will also help you prepare for your visa interview.



3 - 5 months prior to U.S. study:



### Learn about Visa Considerations for Students with Disabilities



Students with disabilities who require personal assistance should refer to **International Participants with Disabilities and Community Resources** ([www.miusa.org/ncde/tipsheets/communityresources](http://www.miusa.org/ncde/tipsheets/communityresources)) for more information. It is also important for students with disabilities to **learn more about finding a health insurance policy** ([www.miusa.org/ncde/tipsheets/insurance](http://www.miusa.org/ncde/tipsheets/insurance)) with enough coverage for their time in the United States. Individuals who may need to return to their home countries periodically for medical care should be aware of program and visa requirements regarding leaving and reentering the United States.

Remember, individuals who enter the United States on a student visa must maintain a full course load. U.S. disability laws sometimes provide accommodations to students with chronic illnesses or other disabilities that allow them to take a reduced course load due to random or recurring health episodes. However, international students are only allowed a total of 12 months of less than full-time status for illness or medical conditions.

### GOOD TO KNOW

*Individuals with disabilities can petition for an extension, but the process can take several months to complete and entails a fee.*

# 5 Prepare for Your Departure



# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

2 - 4 months prior to U.S. study:



### The Journey of a Lifetime!

Studying in the United States is a memorable and rewarding experience—congratulations on taking this exciting step towards your future!

*“Find out about airline and immigration policies and procedures so you do not panic if something strange happens—luggage, passports, what you can and what you cannot bring. It’s always better to know everything beforehand.”*

- Computer Science student from Brazil



**EdUSA Connects Session –  
Pre-Departure Orientation**

**Watch Now - <http://bcove.me/5xmcpef8> >>**



In planning your move to the United States, you may want to ask for assistance from an EducationUSA Advising Center in your home country and from the program’s sponsor in the United States.

### Attend Pre-departure Orientation

Pre-departure orientations are offered by EducationUSA Advising Centers to students making final preparations to depart for their studies in the United States.

EducationUSA Advisers and students who have returned from the United States provide information and resources that will help prepare you for new experiences and skills to adjust to new challenges. Topics discussed include cultural differences, motivation, changes from your home environment, academic systems and expectations, housing, and coping in a new cultural setting.





2 - 4 months prior to U.S. study:



### Gather Pre-departure Materials and Important Documents

Before you leave your home country, take the time to double-check that you have gathered all the documents you will need for your travel and stay in the United States.



- **Passport and nonimmigrant visa.** Hand-carry your passport and certificate of eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019) with you at all times during your travel. On the plane before you land, you will complete the Arrival-Departure Record (I-94 form) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection will take your biometric fingerprints and photograph. Part of the I-94 will be stapled into your passport. **Do not lose it!** The stapled portion will be removed when you leave the United States.
- **Certificate of eligibility.** Confirm you have the immigration form (Form I- 20) issued by the school or program you will be attending.
- **Contact information.** Have the name and phone number of your international student adviser on campus, in case you need to call him/her upon arrival in the United States

- **Birth certificate and marriage certificate,** if applicable. Be sure to obtain notarized translations of these certificates if they are not in English.
- **Medical documents.** Bring certificates of immunizations and vaccinations, prescriptions and medical and dental records.
- **Academic transcripts.** Bring your official transcripts, outlines, or descriptions of courses you have taken, and contact information for your U.S. campus.
- **IEP acceptance letter.**
- **Certification of financial support.** You should have an original signed statement of support from your sponsor, as well as an original bank statement from your sponsor, if you are entering the United States on an F-1 student visa.

### GOOD TO KNOW

Many U.S. colleges and universities have specific immunization requirements you must meet before you can enroll in class. Keep track of your immunizations using the standard International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis, or "yellow card," issued by the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](http://www.who.int/ith/en/) ([http://www.who.int/ith/en/.](http://www.who.int/ith/en/))



2 - 4 months prior to U.S. study:



### Make Travel Arrangements and Depart for the United States

Before you make travel arrangements, confirm with the university or your program sponsor when you are expected to arrive.

#### GOOD TO KNOW

*You should not make your travel reservations until you have received your U.S. visa. You are not allowed to enter the United States earlier than 30 days prior to the beginning date on your immigration form.*

*Be sure you know how to get from the airport to the institution where your program is to be held.*

#### Arrive On Campus

Once you arrive on campus, you should immediately report to the office responsible for assisting international students. It is helpful to bring your passport and other immigration documents with you on your first visit.



#### GOOD TO KNOW

*Ask your international student adviser for specific information regarding health insurance at the college or university you will be attending. Nearly all international students purchase health insurance through their universities.*

*Students with disabilities can refer to Mobility International USA for more information about community resources in the United States.*

Additionally, you will need to make plans to:

- **Obtain health insurance.** This insurance provides coverage for medical care. The United States does not have a government medical plan of health care service that covers the whole population. Most people have private health insurance.
- **Attend on-campus orientation,** as required by the university or program sponsor.
- **Move into your housing.**



*"At orientation, you meet many new students, and you realize you are not alone."*

- Student from India





WHAT  
DO YOU  
WANT TO  
STUDY?



# SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS

10 - 12 months prior to U.S. study:



## Get Started Today!

Short-term programs are an excellent way for international students to experience living in the United States.

*"Don't try to choose based only on one aspect or criterion; look at the program as a whole."*

- Business Student from Sri Lanka



**WHAT INTERESTS YOU?**

## Have you thought about what is most important to you?

To help you decide, ask yourself the questions listed within [Define Your Priorities \(Pg. 29\)](#).

The United States offers an incredible diversity of short-term study programs lasting 12 months or less. Search to find the programs that meet your personal and professional needs.



# Short-Term Programs

## Step 1 - Research Your Options

10 - 12 months prior to U.S. study:



### What are Short-Term Programs?

Many short-term study programs, lasting 12 months or less, are available in the United States - for example, university exchange programs, professional non-degree programs, or internships.

#### Exchange Programs

- Exchange programs in the United States offer opportunities to live, learn, and enrich yourself in a diversity of cultural settings.

#### Non-Degree (Special Student) Programs

- Have you completed secondary school or an undergraduate degree? Or are you pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree?
- Many U.S. universities allow students to take degree-level courses without enrolling in a full degree program.

#### Internships

- As a way to provide a true learning experience for international students that reinforces their academic studies, the U.S. Department of State created an internship category within the Exchange Visitor Program.

#### Distance Education

- With access to the internet or postal mail, students can participate in a formal learning program with other students and instructors located in different places...even on different continents.
- Undergraduate and graduate degree programs may also be taken via distance education either in part or in full at some U.S. institutions.



*"Through a short-term exchange program, I spent two weeks studying in the United States. It was the best experience I could have hoped for!"*

- Student from Peru





# Short-Term Programs

## Step 1 - Research Your Options

10 - 12 months prior to U.S. study:



### Exchange Programs

Exchange programs offer students the opportunity to explore their personal interests while spending a summer, a semester, or an academic year in the United States.



#### University Exchange Programs

Under partnership agreements between their universities, American and international students can trade places and experience living in each other's countries and studying at each other's universities. This study might be part of a degree program in your home country, or you might take just a few courses at a U.S. university—at the undergraduate or graduate level—for your personal or professional enrichment.

### GOOD TO KNOW

*Advisers at your nearest EducationUSA Advising Center are available to answer questions and provide information about university exchange programs that might be available to you.*

#### Professional Exchange Programs

Short-term professional exchange programs vary widely. Some participants are able to accept a wide range of work, while others are restricted to experiences within a chosen career or a specific job.

#### J-1/Professional Exchange Programs include:

- **Summer Work/Travel.** Permits postsecondary students to work in the United States during summer vacations. Maximum program duration is four months.
- **Camp Counselor.** Allows foreign participants to work at U.S. summer youth camps for up to four months.
- **Intern.** Allows current university students and recent graduates to pursue an internship with a U.S. business or non-profit organization for periods of up to 12 months.
- **Trainee.** Allows eligible foreign participants the opportunity to develop professional skills with a U.S. business or organization for periods as long as 18 months.
- **Teacher.** Allows qualified, experienced teachers to teach full time in U.S. primary or secondary accredited schools for up to three years.
- **Au Pair.** Allows foreign participants ages 18-26 to live with an American family and provide up to 45 hours per week of childcare in the home. The program also includes a mandatory educational component conducted outside the home.

#### Additional Resources

- **U.S. Department of State J-1 Exchange Visitor Program** (<http://exchanges.state.gov/>)
- **Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange** (<http://www.alliance-exchange.org/>)





# Short-Term Programs

## Step 1 - Research Your Options

10 - 12 months prior to U.S. study:



### Vocational and Technical Exchange Programs

To learn a new skill or update an existing one, consider a short-term program at a two-year community college or junior college, a vocational or technical institution, or a private training center. Programs range from several days to more than a year and are designed to meet specific, practical training requirements that prepare students for employment. Common vocational and technical exchange programs include data processing, culinary arts, construction, automotive mechanics, game design, and secretarial services.

## GOOD TO KNOW

**Accreditation:** System of recognition and quality assurance for institutions and programs of higher education in the United States.

*Before you apply to a technical or vocational program, be sure that the program, and any certificate or diploma you might earn, will be recognized upon return to your home country and that the institution you are considering holds the appropriate type of U.S. **accreditation**.*





# Short-Term Programs

## Step 1 - Research Your Options

10 - 12 months prior to U.S. study:



### Non-Degree (Special Student) Programs

Non-degree programs allow students to take degree-level courses without enrolling in a full degree program. These “special students,” as they are known, are able to take classes in a specific department, in several departments throughout a university or even at several universities in a local area.



### GOOD TO KNOW

*Refer to college or university catalogs for general information on the opportunities and requirements for non-degree study.*

#### Summer Session Study

Some universities in the United States offer classes during six-to ten- week “summer sessions” in the break between May and August. These sessions are a great way to experience living and studying at a U.S. university, while building knowledge and skills in a specific area.

Classes may be taken on an **audit** or **credit basis**. Check the university’s summer session brochure or website for eligibility requirements and application procedures.

#### Professional Short-Term Study

Several training institutions in the United States offer short-term, intensive training programs for professionals that lead to a certificate verifying knowledge and skills gained during the program. Such programs last between a few days and an academic year, and meet daily for six to eight hours. The programs are practical and experiential, with an emphasis on case studies and activities outside the classroom.

### GOOD TO KNOW

*To learn more about professional short-term study opportunities, contact your nearest EducationUSA Advising Center, your employer, professional associations, or government agencies in your country.*

*For specific information and application procedures, contact the university admissions office and the appropriate department directly.*

#### Visiting Fellows & Scholars

Many U.S universities offer opportunities for those who already hold a doctoral degree to pursue further research. They may also allow visiting fellows to audit graduate-level courses while having access to academic facilities for personal research.

**Audit:** To take a class without receiving credit toward a degree.

**Credit Basis:** Units that universities use to record the completion of courses (with passing grades) that are required for an academic degree.



# Short-Term Programs

## Step 1 - Research Your Options

10 - 12 months prior to U.S. study:



### Internships

In 2007, the U.S. Department of State added an internship category to the Exchange Visitor Program. The goal is to provide participants with broad exposure to U.S. culture and society, and to foster greater appreciation among Americans for the participant’s home country.



All internship participants must secure a J-1 (Exchange Visitor) visa and must have an internship before applying for the visa. To secure the visa, participants need:

- A U.S. sponsor organization designated by the U.S. Department of State.
- A DS-2019 form; provided and completed by the U.S. sponsor.
- A DS-7002 form (Training/Internship Program Plan); describing the content of the internship program. This form is completed by the sponsor and the U.S. employer and signed by the sponsor, employer, and participant.
- Standard U.S. visa application forms, a valid passport and required photographs.

Internship participants must have sufficient English language ability to participate effectively in the internship AND:

Must be currently enrolled in and pursuing studies at a foreign degree- or certificate-granting post-secondary academic institution outside the United States.

OR

Must have graduated from a foreign degree- or certificate-granting post-secondary academic institution outside the United States no more than 12 months prior to his or her exchange visitor program start date.

Maximum duration of internship programs is 12 months.



10 - 12 months prior to U.S. study:



### 10 Tips for Applying for a U.S. Internship

1. **Write an American-style resume and cover letter** that provides information on your educational background and work experience.
2. **Be proactive!** Internships will not come to you—you must go out and find them!
3. **Brush up on your English language skills** to stand out and express yourself clearly in a competitive field.
4. **Have realistic expectations** and set reasonable goals for yourself.
5. **Plan ahead** by starting the process of finding an internship at least 6 months prior to when you want to go to the United States. Also, start saving now so that you have money available to cover expenses when you find an internship. Internships may be paid or unpaid depending on the position and company.
6. **Think of the internship as an educational investment** for your future career and take advantage of this “real-world” classroom that builds on your academic studies.
7. **Think about different sizes of companies** and look to small- and medium-sized companies where interns are often given more responsibility and more challenging projects.
8. **Explore different regions of the United States.**
9. **Take initiative and be open to new experiences and challenges** to have the most successful internship.
10. **Tell potential employers about the J-1 visa**, which enables you to legally intern in the United States for a minimum of 6 weeks and up to 12 months.



# Short-Term Programs

## Step 1 - Research Your Options

10 - 12 months prior to U.S. study:



### Distance Education



Many distance education programs require occasional on-campus attendance; for the most part, programs can be accomplished through:

- Mail and post offices.
- Telephones and voicemail.
- One-way or interactive radio, television, satellite, audio or video transmission.
- DVDs or CD-ROMs.
- Email and the internet.

Why do students enroll in distance education?

- They cannot attend a campus away from their home.
- They have child-care or eldercare obligations.
- They cannot take time away from their current job in order to enhance their future possibilities.
- The program may be offered at a location that is not feasible to attend for economic, cultural, or political reasons.

Distance education programs allow students and instructors to be in different places AND:

Instruction may be given at a particular time and specific location.

OR

Instruction can be received by students wherever and whenever they desire, as long as they have access to the internet or, in the case of correspondence education, to the mail.

Research the history and quality of distance education programs to determine their value to you.

Consider the following:

- How long has the institution been enrolling students in this program?
- How often, and through what means, is the program and curriculum reviewed?
- How does the variety of courses offered compare with similar programs at other institutions?
- What is the average length of time it takes for a student to complete this program?
- What have graduates of this program gone on to do, particularly in terms of transferring to other degree programs or finding employment?
- How can you contact some of these graduates and their employers to talk about their learning experiences and their preparation for a career?
- Where can you find evaluations of this program?
- Will this program be recognized in your home country?



EdUSA Connects Session –  
Distance Education

Watch Now - <http://bcove.me/1ca4a58z> >>



### Define Your Priorities

When searching for a short-term program in the United States, it is important to first decide what is most important to you. This will help guide you through each of ***Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study***. Please answer the following questions with as much information as possible.

#### Why do you want to study in the United States?

Every student is different, and it is important to think about your own primary reasons to study in a short-term program in the United States. These reasons may change over time, but they will help guide your short-term program search.

***As you begin to search for a short-term program in the United States, you should think about:***

#### Your Short-term Goals

- What is the purpose of your short-term study? Select all that apply.
  - Academic**  
Are you planning to transfer academic credit from this program back to an institution in your home country?  
Please explain.
  - Professional**  
Do you need to learn a new skill or update an existing one?  
Please explain.
  - Personal**  
Are you interested in gaining a new cultural experience or accomplishing other personal goals?  
Please explain.
- How long do you plan to study in the United States?
  - Less than 1 month**
  - 1–6 months**
  - 6 months–1 year**
  - Over 1 year**

#### Your Past Experience

Do you have, or are you currently pursuing, any academic degrees or training?

- Yes**  
Please explain
- No**





# Short-Term Programs | Step 1 - Research Your Options

## How will you pay for your short-term program in the U.S.?

Short-term programs in the United States offer a wide range of tuition and living costs, making them affordable to many international students each year.

- In total U.S. dollars, how much money will you and/or your family be able to pay for a short-term program in the United States?
  - Less than \$1,000**
  - \$1,000–\$5,000**
  - More than \$5,000**

## Which kind of short-term program is best for you?

The United States offers several different short-term program options for international students.

**As you begin to narrow down your choices, you should think about:**

### Program Type

When choosing a program type, think about your reasons to study in a short-term program. The program should help you reach your goals.

- Which program type would be a good match for you?
  - University Exchange**  
Under partnership agreements between their universities, American and international students can trade places and experience living in each other's countries and studying at each other's universities.
  - Non-Degree Program**  
Non-degree students may take classes in a specific institution and department or at several institutions and departments in a local area.
- Which of the following non-degree programs interest you? Select all that apply.
  - Summer Session Study**  
Classes offered at a U.S. institution during six- to ten-week sessions during the break between May and August.
  - Professional Short-Term**  
Intensive training programs at a U.S. institution for professionals that lead to a certificate of knowledge in the field of study.
  - Visiting Fellows & Scholars**  
For students who already have a doctoral degree and want to pursue further research. These programs may also allow visiting fellows to audit graduate-level courses with access to academic facilities for personal research.





# Short-Term Programs

## Step 1 - Research Your Options

### **Professional Exchange Program**

Short-term professional exchange programs vary widely. Some participants are able to accept a wide range of work, while others are restricted to experiences within a chosen career or a specific job. These programs are known as “J-1 professional exchange programs” because participants in a professional/work exchange travel to the United States on a J-1 visa.

Which of the following professional exchange programs interest you? Select all that apply.

#### **Summer Work/Travel**

Permits students to work in the U.S. during summer vacations for up to four months.

#### **Camp Counselor**

Permits foreign nationals to work at a U.S. summer camp for up to four months.

#### **Intern**

Permits students who are currently enrolled or have recently graduated from a foreign university to pursue an internship in the U.S. with a business or non-profit organization for up to 12 months.

#### **Trainee**

Permits foreign nationals to develop professional skills with a U.S. business or organization for up to 18 months.

#### **Teacher**

Permits foreign teachers to teach full time in U.S. primary or secondary accredited school for up to three years.

#### **Au Pair**

Permits foreign nationals ages 18-26 to live with an American family and provide up to 45 hours per week of childcare in the home. The program also includes a mandatory educational component.

### **Distance Education**

With access to the internet or postal mail, students can participate in a formal learning program with other students and instructors located in different places.



# Short-Term Programs

## Step 1 - Research Your Options

### How easily will you adjust to your new community and environment?

The United States is a very diverse country, offering a variety of climates, cultural heritage, and landscapes from coast to coast. Imagine yourself studying in the United States and think about the environment you want.

### *As you imagine the environment you want, you should think about:*

#### Region

The United States is often divided into four distinct regions. Refer to the map below to see the different regions.

- Which region would be best for you?

**West**

- The largest region of the United States covering more than half its land area, making it the most geographically diverse area. It is known for mild and damp climates to very dry and hot ones, with greater access to mountain ranges, desert areas, forests, and the Pacific coastline.

**Midwest**

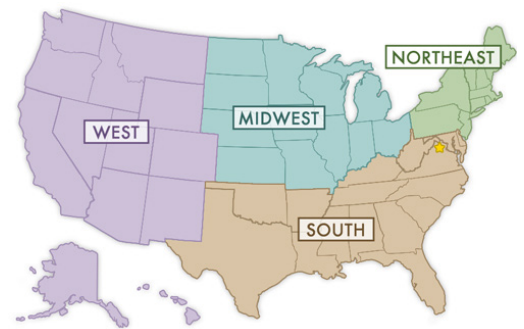
- Also called “Middle America,” it is known for low-lying plains, small hills, and access to large freshwater lakes bordering Canada. Seasonal climate change, ranging from mild summers to cold winters with heavy snowfall, is also common in the Midwestern states.

**South**

- A region known for its sub-tropical climate with humid summers and mild winters. Southern states have diverse landscapes, including mountains, wetlands, arid deserts, and the Gulf of Mexico coastline.

**Northeast**

- Comprised of the New England and Middle Atlantic states, this region is known for its forested interior and rocky Atlantic coastline. Seasonal climate change, ranging from mild summers to cold winters with heavy snowfall, is also common in the Northeastern states.





# Short-Term Programs | Step 1 - Research Your Options

## Setting

Virtually every U.S. state includes a setting that can range from an urban city, suburban residential area, or a rural countryside. U.S. colleges and universities may be located in any one of these settings.

- Which setting would be best for you?

### Urban

- Cities with larger populations providing convenient access to banking, stores, the arts, entertainment, public transportation, and international airports. Urban areas may have higher average living costs.

### Suburban

- Residential areas close or farther from cities, with moderate populations and more spread-out restaurants and shopping areas. Suburban areas may have more moderate average living costs.

### Rural

- Countryside areas with smaller towns of fewer people and areas of land used for mining and agriculture. Rural areas may have lower average living costs.

## Housing

The type of housing you choose will depend on your personal needs and the options available.

- Which housing option is best for you?

### On-campus Housing

Residence Halls and Dormitories

- Furnished with basic needs such as a bed, closet, desk, and chair. Rooms are usually shared with other students and can be a great place to meet new friends quickly.
- Some dormitories may be for men only or women only, and some may allow both men and women in the same dormitory residence.

Married Student Housing

- Demand for housing for married couples is usually high, so you should ask about this as early as possible.

### Off-campus Housing

Apartments

- The student finds his/her own apartment and typically pays a deposit, monthly rent, and utility fees.

'Co-op' Housing

- Co-ops are usually large houses where a group of students live together, sharing the costs and taking turns to do the cooking and cleaning.

American Host Family

- Living with an American family can be an enriching experience and can be less expensive than other off-campus housing options.
- Host family options may not be available at all colleges or universities, so it is important to check with the campus adviser if you are interested.



# Short-Term Programs

## Step 1 - Research Your Options

### Campus Life

Activities available in the local area may also be an important part of your U.S. experience. Will you be in a location that offers activities that interest you?

- Which activities will you want to be able to access?

#### **Sports**

Which ones?

#### **Arts**

Which ones?

#### **Clubs and organizations**

Which ones?

#### **Hobbies**

Which ones?

#### **Other**





10 - 12 months prior to U.S. study:



## Identify Programs

### How do you find a university exchange?

Contact the office responsible for international programs at your institution to ask about exchange agreements with any U.S. universities. If programs exist, find out how the exchange program operates and whether you can participate. Or, if you are applying to study at colleges and universities in your home country and know you would like to spend time studying in the United States, find out whether they operate any U.S. exchange programs.

### How do you find an internship?

Students who have studied or had a previous exchange experience in the United States often make contacts that will lead to an internship. In addition, U.S. companies working in your country may have interest in hosting interns in the United States. Some sponsors post available internships on their websites, and most give tips on how students can find their own placements.



## Compare Programs

Consider what is most important to you and compare short-term study programs of interest based on the following:

- Application deadlines
- Eligibility and admission requirements
- Accreditation of the programs or institutions
- Costs
- Availability of and/or assistance finding housing
- Local environment (including geographic location, climate and access to public transportation)
- Other benefits (such as orientation programs and social activities)

You should also learn about the history of the program:

- How long has the program existed?
- Who are the typical participants?
- What careers or jobs have past participants found after completing the program?
- If it is not an international exchange program, how experienced are the program administrators in dealing with participants from outside the United States?



# Notes



Lined area for taking notes, consisting of multiple horizontal lines.

# Education Just Ahead

## SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS

6 - 10 months prior to U.S. study:



### Plan Ahead!

Confirm the application and admissions process with the short-term study programs that interest you.

*"After completing one short-term program in the United States, I returned home and started working with an EducationUSA Adviser as I thought about applying to other programs in the United States."*

- Business student from Sri Lanka



Application and admission procedures vary based on the program, so be sure to verify requirements with the programs of interest to you.

### Follow General Application Guidance

**Before applying to a short-term program, think about:**

- What are your educational goals for completing the program? Is earning a degree important to you, or do you want to take a few classes to learn a new skill or to complete a certificate program to increase your professional status?
- What are the total costs of the program? Do the fees include books and shipping, if necessary? Are there any additional expenses? Is there any financial aid available?
- What academic or technical assistance is offered throughout the program





# Short-Term Programs

Step 2 - Complete Your Application

**6 - 10 months prior to U.S. study:**



**Before applying to a distance education program, think about:**

- Do you have a place at home or at work that you can claim as your own for extended periods of study and communication with the program? Will family members or others around you respect your need to spend time on your own?
- Is occasional attendance on the campus in the United States possible for you? Or do you require a program that can be completed entirely from your home country without traveling to the United States?
- If the program is given at a particular time, would the time difference between your country and the campus in the United States prevent you from participating?
- How is the program information delivered, and what equipment will you need to receive it? If it is a computer-based program, does the computer that you use meet the requirements of the program?
- Will the information be delivered to you in enough time (for example, if it is delivered by mail) for you to complete the course?





## SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS

3 - 6 months prior to U.S. study:



### Invest in Yourself!

The cost of a short-term study program in the United States will vary based on the institution and program.

*"Be realistic about how much you need and what you can really afford."*

- International studies student from Ghana



### EXPLORE THE MANY OPTIONS

The cost of short-term study in the United States varies considerably. Costs are determined by the institution's tuition charges and other fees, as well as by the program type, program length and the materials you will be required to purchase. Remember to include the cost of traveling to and from the United States, living expenses such as room and board, and health insurance as you prepare your budget.

## GOOD TO KNOW

*Funding from universities, scholarship organizations or grant-giving bodies is difficult to obtain for short-term study in the U.S. because much of this type of funding is given to degree-seeking students or to researchers.*

**Tuition:** The money an institution charges for instruction and training (does not include the cost of books).

**Fees:** An amount charged by colleges and universities, in addition to tuition, to cover costs of institutional services.

**Living Expenses:** Expenses such as housing and meals, books and supplies, transportation, personal expenses, health insurance, etc.

### Make Your Budget

As you work to develop a budget for your short-term studies, keep in mind that your overall costs are comprised of **tuition**, **fees**, and **living expenses**.





### University Exchange Programs

You may be able to apply for funding for an undergraduate exchange program from your home university or institute, even if study abroad is not a requirement for your program of study. Funding from U.S. institutions for short-term study of this kind is very limited. If you are not eligible to receive funding from your own school or from the U.S. institution, you might try to obtain funding from social, community, or non-governmental organizations; from multinational companies; or from local businesses.

### Non-degree Programs

Non-degree, or “special students,” are usually, though not always, ineligible to receive university-sponsored financial assistance such as scholarships or assistantships. Funding may be available from independent foundations and organizations, such as **Fulbright Commissions** ([fulbright.state.gov/participating-countries/fulbright-commissions](https://fulbright.state.gov/participating-countries/fulbright-commissions)), that award scholarships for postgraduate study.

### Distance Education Programs

Costs for distance education vary considerably. Distance education can save you the expenses of travel, room and board, but the actual academic fees usually correspond to those of traditional learning. If any period of residency on campus is required during the course of the program, you should include those costs in your budget as well. You should also inquire about the costs of the learning materials needed to complete each course, and allow for the shipping fees and import duties that you might face.

## GOOD TO KNOW

*Location matters! Depending on where you live and study, costs for housing and food vary greatly in the United States. Suburban or rural areas in the South and Midwest of the United States generally have the lowest cost of living.*

# 4 Apply for Your Student Visa



3 - 5 months prior to U.S. study:



### Be Prepared for the Student Visa Process!

Become familiar with the student visa requirements in your country and allow plenty of time to prepare your application.

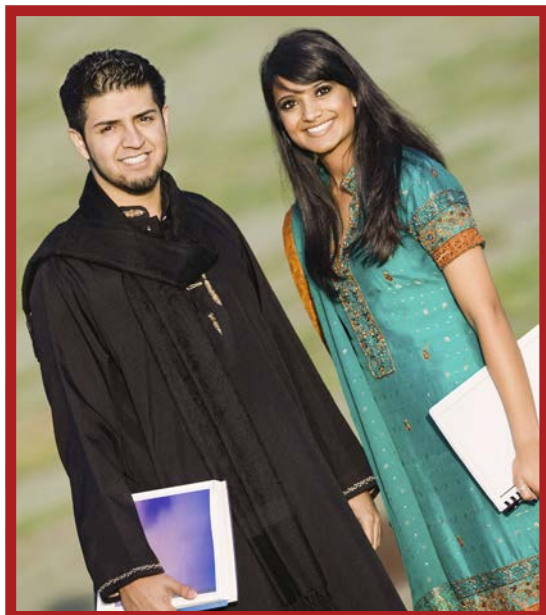
*"Because interviews are short, do your best to explain why you want to study in the United States, how you plan to support yourself while in school, and what your plans are for when your studies are finished."*

- Vice Consul, U.S. Consulate Monterrey, Mexico



**EdUSA Connects Session –**  
*International Students Demystify the Visa Process*

**Watch Now** - <http://bcove.me/9qcywo3s> >>



Did you know that the U.S. Department of State issues student and exchange visitor visas at a worldwide acceptance rate of about 85%? You will first need to receive an admission letter and a certificate of eligibility for nonimmigrant student status from your U.S. institution before you can begin the visa application process.

## GOOD TO KNOW

*Information about the student visa process is accurate as of print date and is subject to change. Visit [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for more information, or consult your nearest U.S. embassy/consulate or EducationUSA Advising Center.*



3 - 5 months prior to U.S. study:



## Know More about Visa Types

The **U.S. Department of State** ([www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)) issues visas in U.S. embassies and consulates abroad.

- A visa **does not** guarantee entry into the United States.
- A visa **does** allow a foreign citizen to travel to a U.S. port-of-entry and request permission from a U.S. immigration officer to enter the United States.

## GOOD TO KNOW

*Is your spouse, or child under the age of 21, joining you in the United States? Learn more about the J-2 visa or M-2 visa.*

**To study in a short-term program, you will most likely need to apply for J-1 or M-1 visa.**

- **J-1, Exchange Visa.** This visa is for people who will be participating in an exchange program, including those programs that provide high school and university study.
- **M-1, Student Visa.** This visa is for those who will be engaged in non- academic or vocational study or training in the U.S.
- If you are going to the U.S. primarily for tourism, but want to take a short course of study that is recreational, and the course is less than 18 hours per week, you may be able to do so on a visitor (B) visa. If your course of study is 18 hours or more a week, you will need a student visa. When traveling to the U.S. to attend seminars, conferences or a program of study for academic credit then you will need a student visa. A consular officer will determine the visa category you will need based on the purpose of your travel, and your supporting documentation.
- Many accredited U.S. colleges and universities now offer entire distance education programs of study entirely online. If you are accepted to one of these programs, you will not have to apply for a visa, since you physically will not be taking classes in the United States. However, if your online degree program requires you to take a seminar in the U.S. for academic credit, then you'll need a student visa. Again, a consular officer will determine the visa category you will need based on the purpose of your travel, and your supporting documentation.



3 - 5 months prior to U.S. study:



### Follow the Step-by-Step Visa Application Process

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) is a program within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that manages the **Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)** ([www.ice.gov/sevis/](http://www.ice.gov/sevis/)). SEVIS is the internet-based system that maintains records of foreign students and exchange visitors before and during their stays in the United States.

**STEP 1: Receive your certificate of eligibility for nonimmigrant student status: either Form I-20 (for F or M visa) or Form DS-2019 (for J visa).**

- To apply for a visa, you must first have received a Form I-20 or Form DS-2019. The U.S. academic institution or program sponsor will provide you with the appropriate form only after you have:
  - Been admitted to a SEVP-approved institution or accepted in an exchange program.
  - Provided evidence that you can meet all the costs of the program.
- The academic institutions that admit you will send you a Form I-20 (for F or M visa) or Form DS-2019 (for J-visa) depending on the visa that matches your study status.

### GOOD TO KNOW

*Once you receive the required documentation, you can make an appointment with the U.S. embassy or consulate to apply for a visa. Even if you do not intend to begin your program for several months, it is best to apply as early as possible. Your visa can be issued up to 120 days before your arrival in the United States.*

**STEP 2: Pay SEVIS fee**

- You must pay a SEVIS fee and fill out other visa applications forms prior to your visa interview. Go to the **SEVIS I-901 fee processing website** ([www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.jsp](http://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.jsp)) for complete information about paying your SEVIS fee. Follow the instructions carefully. For more information, you may also visit the Study in the States website for students.

**STEP 3: Schedule Your Interview and Apply for Your Visa**

- Refer to the **U.S. nonimmigrant visa website** (<https://ceac.state.gov/GENNIV/>) to complete the required application forms.
- It is best practice to ensure your passport is valid for at least six months beyond the end of your study in the United States and that your name is spelled correctly and appears the same on all documents.
- Be sure to have your Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 and your SEVIS receipt.
- Confirm you have the required documents and schedule your visa interview following the instructions on the website of your nearest U.S. embassy or consulate ([www.usembassy.gov](http://www.usembassy.gov)).
- During the interview, be prepared to answer questions regarding ties to your home country, your English language skills, your academic background, the program in the United States to which you have been admitted, and proof of your financial ability. **Consult an EducationUSA adviser who can help you to understand visa requirements, prepare for your interview, or answer other questions about the student visa process. Your answers to the questions asked in Step 1: Research Your Options will also help you prepare for your visa interview.**

### GOOD TO KNOW

*Any inconsistencies can delay the issuance of your visa.*

*Visa interview scheduling is done online or by phone at most U.S. embassies and consulates.*





3 - 5 months prior to U.S. study:



### Learn about Visa Considerations for Students with Disabilities



Students with disabilities who require personal assistance should refer to **International Participants with Disabilities and Community Resources** ([www.miusa.org/ncde/tipsheets/communityresources](http://www.miusa.org/ncde/tipsheets/communityresources)) for more information. It is also important for students with disabilities to **learn more about finding a health insurance policy** ([www.miusa.org/ncde/tipsheets/insurance](http://www.miusa.org/ncde/tipsheets/insurance)) with enough coverage for their time in the United States. Individuals who may need to return to their home countries periodically for medical care should be aware of program and visa requirements regarding leaving and reentering the United States.

Remember, individuals who enter the United States on a student visa must maintain a full course load. U.S. disability laws sometimes provide accommodations to students with chronic illnesses or other disabilities that allow them to take a reduced course load due to random or recurring health episodes. However, international students are only allowed a total of 12 months of less than full-time status for illness or medical conditions.

### GOOD TO KNOW

*Individuals with disabilities can petition for an extension, but the process can take several months to complete and entails a fee.*





# SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS

2 - 4 months prior to U.S. study:



## The Journey of a Lifetime!

Studying in the United States is a memorable and rewarding experience—congratulations on taking this exciting step towards your future!

*“Find out about airline and immigration policies and procedures so you do not panic if something strange happens—luggage, passports, what you can and what you cannot bring. It’s always better to know everything beforehand.”*

- Computer Science student from Brazil



**EdUSA Connects Session –**  
*Pre-Departure Orientation*

**Watch Now -** <http://bcove.me/5xmcpef8> >>



In planning your move to the United States, you may want to ask for assistance from an EducationUSA Advising Center in your home country and from the program’s sponsor in the United States.

## Attend Pre-departure Orientation

Pre-departure orientations are offered by EducationUSA Advising Centers to students making final preparations to depart for their studies in the United States.

EducationUSA Advisers and students who have returned from the United States provide information and resources that will help prepare you for new experiences and skills to adjust to new challenges. Topics discussed include cultural differences, motivation, changes from your home environment, academic systems and expectations, housing, and coping in a new cultural setting.



2 - 4 months prior to U.S. study:



### Gather Pre-departure Materials and Important Documents

Before you leave your home country, take the time to double-check that you have gathered all the documents you will need for your travel and stay in the United States.



- **Passport and nonimmigrant visa.** Hand-carry your passport and certificate of eligibility (I-20 or DS-2019) with you at all times during your travel. On the plane before you land, you will complete the Arrival-Departure Record (I-94 form) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection will take your biometric fingerprints and photograph. Part of the I-94 will be stapled into your passport. **Do not lose it!** The stapled portion will be removed when you leave the United States.
- **Certificate of eligibility.** Confirm you have the immigration form (Form I- 20) issued by the school or program you will be attending.
- **Contact information.** Have the name and phone number of your international student adviser on campus, in case you need to call him/her upon arrival in the United States

- **Birth certificate and marriage certificate,** if applicable. Be sure to obtain notarized translations of these certificates if they are not in English.
- **Medical documents.** Bring certificates of immunizations and vaccinations, prescriptions and medical and dental records.
- **Academic transcripts.** Bring your official transcripts, outlines, or descriptions of courses you have taken, and contact information for your U.S. campus.
- **Acceptance letter.**
- **Cerification of financial support.** You should have an original signed statement of support from your sponsor, as well as an original bank statement from your sponsor, if you are entering the United States on an F-1 student visa.

### GOOD TO KNOW

Many U.S. colleges and universities have specific immunization requirements you must meet before you can enroll in class. Keep track of your immunizations using the standard International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis, or "yellow card," issued by the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](http://www.who.int/ith/en/) ([http://www.who.int/ith/en/.](http://www.who.int/ith/en/))



2 - 4 months prior to U.S. study:



### Make Travel Arrangements and Depart for the United States

Before you make travel arrangements, confirm with the university or your program sponsor when you are expected to arrive.

### GOOD TO KNOW

*You should not make your travel reservations until you have received your U.S. visa. You are not allowed to enter the United States earlier than 30 days prior to the beginning date on your immigration form.*

*Be sure you know how to get from the airport to the institution where your program is to be held.*

### Arrive On Campus

Once you arrive on campus, you should immediately report to the office responsible for assisting international students. It is helpful to bring your passport and other immigration documents with you on your first visit.



### GOOD TO KNOW

*Ask your international student adviser for specific information regarding health insurance at the college or university you will be attending. Nearly all international students purchase health insurance through their universities.*

*Students with disabilities can refer to Mobility International USA for more information about community resources in the United States.*

Additionally, you will need to make plans to:

- **Obtain health insurance.** This insurance provides coverage for medical care. The United States does not have a government medical plan of health care service that covers the whole population. Most people have private health insurance.
- **Attend on-campus orientation,** as required by the university or program sponsor.
- **Move into your housing.**



*"At orientation, you meet many new students, and you realize you are not alone."*

- Student from India



# Notes



Lined area for taking notes, consisting of multiple horizontal grey lines.

A large, stylized red star with a dark blue outline is centered on the page. The word "GLOSSARY" is written in white, bold, uppercase letters across the middle of the star.

# GLOSSARY





# Glossary

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**academic adviser (AA):** A member of a college faculty who helps and advises students solely on academic matters.

**academic year:** The period of formal instruction, usually September to May; may be divided into terms of varying lengths—semesters, trimesters, or quarters.

**accreditation:** Approval of colleges and universities by nationally recognized professional associations or regional accrediting bodies.

**ACT:** A multiple-choice test of English, math, reading, and science reasoning (plus an optional writing component) used for admission into undergraduate programs.

**add/drop:** A process at the beginning of a term whereby students can delete and add classes with an instructor's permission.

**advance registration:** A process of choosing classes in advance of other students.

**affidavit of support:** An official document proving a promise of funding from an individual or organization.

**assistantship:** A study grant of financial assistance to a graduate student that is offered in return for certain services in teaching or laboratory supervision as a teaching assistant, or for services in research as a research assistant.

**associate degree:** A degree awarded after a two-year period of study; it can be either terminal or transfer (the first two years of a bachelor's degree).

**attestation:** Official affirmation that a degree or transcript is genuine. Usually signed by a recognized expert or witness.

**audit:** To take a class without receiving credit toward a degree.

**authentication:** Process of determining whether something is, in fact, what it is declared to be. Incoming students are often required to provide a document of authentication for academic transcripts or previous degrees when applying to a program of study in the United States.

**bachelor's degree:** A degree awarded upon completion of approximately four years of full-time study.

**campus:** The land on which the buildings of a college or university are located.

**CGFNS:** Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools.

**class rank:** A number or ratio indicating a student's academic standing in his or her graduating class. A student who ranks first in a class of 100 students would report his or her class rank as 1/100, while a student ranking last would report 100/100. Class rank may also be expressed in percentiles (for example, the top 25 percent, the lower 50 percent).

**coed:** A college or university that admits both men and women; also refers to a dormitory that houses both men and women.





# Glossary

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**college:** A postsecondary institution that provides an undergraduate education and, in some cases, master's and doctorate degrees. College, in a separate sense, is a division of a university; for example, College of Business.

**college catalog:** An official publication giving information about a university's academic programs, facilities, entrance requirements, and student life.

**community college:** A postsecondary institution that offers associate degree programs, as well as technical and vocational programs.

**core course:** Courses that provide the foundation of the degree program and are required of all students seeking that degree.

**course:** Regularly scheduled class sessions of one to five hours (or more) per week during a term. A degree program is made up of a specified number of required and elective courses and varies from institution to institution.

**credits:** Units that most colleges and universities use to record the completion of courses (with passing grades) that are required for an academic degree.

**day student:** A student who lives in accommodations that are not administered by the college and are off the campus grounds. He or she travels to campus every day for classes.

**degree:** Diploma or title conferred by a college, university, or professional school upon completion of a prescribed program of studies.

**department:** Administrative subdivision of a school, college, or university through which instruction in a certain field of study is given (such as English department or history department).

**designated school official (DSO):** A Designated School Official (DSO) is the person on campus who gathers and reports information on international students to the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) and assists international students in the visa and employment authorization process. Your DSO's name will be listed on your I-20 or DS 2019.

**dissertation:** Thesis written on an original topic of research, usually presented as one of the final requirements for a doctoral degree (Ph.D.).

**doctoral degree (Ph.D.):** The highest academic degree conferred by a university to students who have completed graduate study beyond the bachelor's and/or master's degree. Students should demonstrate their academic ability through oral and written examinations and original research presented in the form of a dissertation.

**dormitories:** Housing facilities on the campus of a college or university reserved for students. A typical dormitory would include student rooms, bathrooms, common rooms, and possibly a cafeteria. Also known as "dorms" for short.

**ECFMG:** Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates.

**ECFVG:** Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates.



# Glossary

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**electives:** Courses that may be chosen from any field of study. Electives give students an opportunity to explore other topics or subjects of interest.

**ERAS:** Electronic Residency Application System for obtaining a residency position in the field of medicine in the United States.

**extracurricular activities:** Nonacademic activities undertaken outside university courses.

**faculty:** People who teach courses at U.S. colleges and universities. Faculty members may include professors, associate professors, assistant professors, and instructors.

**fees:** An amount charged by universities, in addition to tuition, to cover costs of institutional services.

**fellowship:** A form of financial assistance, usually awarded to a graduate student. Generally, no service is required of the student in return.

**final exam:** Often referred to as a “final,” a final exam is a cumulative exam on a particular course subject encompassing all material covered throughout the duration of the course.

**financial aid:** A general term that includes all types of money, loans, and work/study programs offered to a student to help pay tuition, fees, and living expenses.

**fraternities:** Male social, academic, and philanthropic organizations found on many U.S. campuses.

**freshman:** A first-year student at a secondary school, college, or university.

**full-time student:** One who is enrolled in an institution taking a full load of courses; the number of courses and hours is specified by the institution.

**Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT):** A standardized test for MBA applicants that measures basic verbal, mathematical, and analytical writing skills that have been developed over a long period of time through education and work.

**grade/grading system:** The evaluation of a student’s academic work.

**grade point average (GPA):** The combined average of a student’s grades for all academic coursework completed. In the United States, grades are usually assigned in letters and are based on a 4.0 GPA scale.

Grade	GPA
A	4.0 (excellent)
B	3.0 (good)
C	2.0 (satisfactory)
D	1.0 (needs improvement)
F	0.0 (fail)

**graduate:** A student who has completed a course of study, either at secondary school or college level. A graduate program at a university is a study course for students who already hold a bachelor’s degree.



# Glossary

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**Graduate Record Examination (GRE):** A standardized test of verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and analytical writing that measures readiness for graduate-level study.

**high school:** The U.S. term for secondary school.

**higher education:** Postsecondary education at colleges, universities, professional schools, technical institutes, etc.

**honors program:** A challenging program for students with high grades.

**institute:** A postsecondary institution that specializes in degree programs in a group of closely related subjects; for example, Institute of Technology.

**International English Language Testing System (IELTS):** An English language proficiency examination of applicants whose native language is not English.

**international student adviser (ISA):** The person at a university who is in charge of providing information and guidance to international students in areas of government regulation, visas, academic regulations, social customs, language, financial or housing problems, travel plans, insurance, and legal matters.

**junior:** A third-year student at a secondary school, college, or university.

**language requirement:** A requirement of some graduate programs that students must show basic reading and writing proficiency in a language other than their own to receive a degree.

**Law School Admission Test (LSAT):** A standardized test that provides a standard measure of acquired reading and verbal reasoning skills that law schools can use as one of several factors in assessing applicants.

**lecture:** Common method of instruction in college and university courses; a professor lectures in classes of 20 to several hundred students. Lectures may be supplemented with regular small group discussions led by teaching assistants.

**liberal arts and sciences:** Academic studies of subjects in the humanities, the social sciences, and the physical sciences with the goal of developing students' verbal, written, and reasoning skills.

**living expenses:** Expenses such as housing and meals, books and supplies, transportation, personal expenses, health insurance, etc.

**maintenance:** Refers to the expenses of attending a university, including room (living quarters) and board (meals), books, clothing, laundry, local transportation, and incidentals.

**major:** The student's field of concentration. Major courses represent 25-50% of the total number of courses required to complete a degree. Most students pursue one major, but some pursue double majors.

**major professor/thesis adviser:** For research degrees, the professor who works closely with a student in planning and choosing a research plan, in conducting the research, and in presenting the results. The major professor serves as the head of a committee of faculty members who review progress and results.



# Glossary

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**master's degree:** Degree awarded upon completion of academic requirements that usually include a minimum of one year's study beyond the bachelor's degree.

**Medical College Admission Test (MCAT):** A standardized, multiple-choice examination designed to assess problem solving, critical thinking, writing skills, and knowledge of science concepts and principles prerequisite to the study of medicine.

**midterm exam:** An exam administered after half the academic term has passed that covers all class material up until that point.

**minor:** The student's secondary field of concentration. Students who decide to pursue a minor will usually complete about five courses in this second field of study.

**notarization:** The certification of a document (or a statement or signature) as authentic and true by a public official (known in the United States as a "notary public") or a lawyer who is also a commissioner of oaths.

**NRMP:** National Resident Matching Program.

**Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE):** An English language proficiency examination that measures English ability through tasks that reflect real-life settings.

**placement test:** An examination used to test a student's academic ability in a certain field so that he or she may be placed in the appropriate courses in that field. In some cases, a student may be given academic credit based on the results of a placement test.

**plan of study:** A detailed description of the course of study for which a candidate applies. The plan should incorporate the objectives given in the student's "statement of purpose."

**postdoctorate:** Studies designed for those who have completed their doctoral degree.

**postgraduate:** Usually refers to studies for individuals who have completed a graduate degree. May also be used to refer to graduate education.

**prerequisites:** Programs or courses that a student is required to complete before being permitted to enroll in a more advanced program or course.

**qualifying examination:** In many graduate departments, an examination given to students who have completed required coursework for a doctoral degree, but who have not yet begun the dissertation or thesis. A qualifying examination may be oral or written, or both, and must be passed for the student to continue.

**registration:** Process through which students select courses to be taken during a quarter, semester, or trimester.

**residency:** Clinical training in a chosen specialty.





# Glossary

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**resident assistant (RA):** A person who assists the residence hall director in campus dormitories and is usually the first point of contact for students who need assistance or have questions about campus life. RAs are usually students at the college who receive free accommodation and other benefits in return for their services.

**Responsible Officer (RO):** A Responsible Officer is the exchange program staff person who gathers and reports information on exchange visitors to the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) and assists in the visa process. The RO's name is listed on the DS-2019.

**rolling deadline:** Institutions accept applications and admit students at any time during a specific time period until all available spots are filled.

**sabbatical:** Leave with pay granted to give a faculty member an extended period of time for concentrated study.

**SAT:** A primarily multiple-choice test of mathematics and English that is used for admission into an undergraduate program.

**SAT subject test:** A multiple-choice test that measures your knowledge in specific subject areas.

**scholarship:** A study grant of financial aid, usually given at the undergraduate level, that may take the form of a waiver of tuition and/or fees.

**school:** A term that usually refers to elementary, middle, or secondary school. Also used in place of the words "college," "university," or "institution," or as a general term for any place of education; for example, law school, or graduate school.

**semester:** Period of study lasting approximately 15 to 16 weeks or one-half the academic year.

**seminar:** A form of small group instruction, combining independent research and class discussions under the guidance of a professor.

**senior:** A fourth-year student at a secondary school, college, or university.

**Social Security Number (SSN):** A number issued to people by the U.S. government for payroll deductions. Anyone who works regularly must obtain a Social Security Number. Many institutions use this number as the student identification number.

**sophomore:** A second-year student at a secondary school, college, or university.

**sororities:** Female social, academic, and philanthropic organizations found on many U.S. campuses.

**special student:** A student who is taking classes but is not enrolled in a degree program.

**Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS):** An Internet-based system that maintains records of foreign students and exchange visitors before and during their stay in the United States. It is part of the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) managed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.



# Glossary

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**subject:** Course in an academic discipline offered as part of a curriculum of an institution of higher learning.

**syllabus:** An outline of topics covered in an academic course.

**teaching assistant (TA):** A graduate student who acts as an instructor for an undergraduate course in his or her field, in return for some form of financial aid from the university.

**tenure:** A guarantee that a faculty member will remain employed by a college or university until retirement except in the case of very unusual circumstances. Tenure is granted to senior faculty members who have demonstrated a worthy research and publication record. Its purpose is to preserve academic freedom.

**terminal program:** Associate degree program leading to a specific career upon graduation.

**Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL):** An English language proficiency examination of applicants whose native language is not English.

**thesis:** A written work containing the results of research on a specific topic prepared by a candidate for a bachelor's or master's degree.

**transcript:** A certified copy of a student's educational record.

**transfer:** The process of moving from one university to another to complete a degree.

**transfer program:** Associate degree program allowing the student to transfer into the third year of a four-year bachelor's degree program.

**tuition:** The money an institution charges for instruction and training (does not include the cost of books).

**university:** A postsecondary institution that offers both undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

**USMLE:** U.S. Medical Licensing Examination.

**withdrawal:** The administrative procedure of dropping a course or leaving an institution.

**zip code:** A series of numbers in mailing addresses that designates postal delivery districts in the United States.





EducationUSA is a network of hundreds of advising centers in 170 countries supported by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, which strives to foster mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. EducationUSA Advising Centers actively promote U.S. higher education around the world by offering accurate, comprehensive, and current information about educational institutions in the United States. To find an advising center, visit [www.educationusa.state.gov](http://www.educationusa.state.gov).