

US Government-sponsored Exchange Programs

I am a junior in college, where can I learn about the UGRAD Program?

The UGRAD Program is the Global Undergraduate Exchange Program of the U.S. State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. It provides scholarships for one semester or one academic year of U.S. study in a non-degree program. The goal of the program is to provide a diverse group of students, from non-elite and under-represented groups from across East Asia, with a substantive exchange experience at a U.S. college or university. The program is funded and organized by the U.S. State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). Global UGRAD Program participants must return to their home countries upon completion of the program and may not stay on for degree study in the U.S.

The Global UGRAD Program for East Asia builds upon the successful model of a one semester/one academic year undergraduate program that ECA recently launched for students from other parts of Asia, the Middle East and Africa. These exchanges exemplify ECA's ongoing commitment to provide a large and diverse group of promising students with in-depth exposure to U.S. society and culture through substantive academic experiences at college and universities across the U.S.

The Global UGRAD Program provides one semester and academic year scholarships to outstanding undergraduate students from non-elite, under-represented sectors of society for non-degree undergraduate study at accredited U.S. two and four year institutions. In consultation with U.S. diplomatic posts overseas, ECA in Washington D.C. will approve a final list of candidates from among the following countries: Burma, China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, etc.

For the academic year 2008-09, the Program will place approximately 90 participants at U.S. colleges and universities. There will be approximately 40 academic one year scholarships (10 months) and 50 one semester scholarships (5 months). The length of the scholarship will depend upon the student applicant's interests and availability, as well as placement options in the U.S. All students will be provided ample opportunity to interact with their university environment, including taking part in community service activities. In addition, all participants will be eligible for two to four weeks of intensive English language instruction in the U.S. prior to the start of the academic portion of their program.

Scholarships will be granted to students who are currently enrolled in an undergraduate degree program in an eligible country, and who have completed their first, second, or third year of undergraduate study. Candidates should be highly motivated students from non-elite and non-privileged backgrounds, represent a mix of urban and rural backgrounds, have an interest in community service, have strong English language skills, and who have little or no experience in the U.S. and elsewhere outside their native countries.

Do you have a list available of U.S.-sponsored exchange programs?

We recommend you refer to the following websites:

www.iie.org

www.nafsa.org

www.ciee.org/study/index.htm

Currently the US government does not sponsor these programs as they all go through different

universities but the organizations with the websites above will help you.

Besides, we hope the following link on cultural exchanges will be helpful, too.

<http://exchanges.state.gov/education/citizens/culture/>

How can I get to know and attend a residency program in U.S.?

As you are interested in medical programs in the U.S., please check the Graduate Medical Education Directory or use the [Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education](#) (ACGME) database and visit your **Worldwide Edu Consultants** for Education in USA for assistance.

After being certified, foreign doctors can apply directly to program directors by using the ERAS (Electronic Residency Application Service). This service has been developed by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC, www.aamc.org) to transmit residency applications, letters of recommendation, dean's letters, transcripts, and other supporting documents to residency program directors via the Internet. Residency program coordinators can access the ERAS system and check how many requests they have received. Programs then begin categorizing the applicants according to their ECFMG test scores, previous clinical experience, recommendation letters, community service (volunteer work), etc. The applicants are then invited for interviews.

Regular residency programs (3-4 years) in areas such as Internal Medicine, Family Medicine and Pediatrics take only 3 years; Surgery is 5 years; Psychiatry is 4 years; and Neurosurgery is 7 years. For subspecialties such as Cardiology, applicants must take a 3 year program of Internal Medicine and then Cardiology for an additional 3 years.

Applicants need to be qualified to meet the selection criteria. The ACGME has endorsed general competencies for residents in the areas of:

- Patient Care
- Medical Knowledge
- Practice-Based Learning and Improvement
- Interpersonal and Communication Skills
- Professionalism
- Systems-Based Practice

The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) is responsible for the accreditation of post-MD medical training programs within the United States. There are 8,300 residency programs in 126 specialties and subspecialties in the U.S. Therefore, program directors look for the above competencies when interviewing applicants.

Could you please introduce the legal system in the U.S. as part of the governmental information?

The legal system in the United States, on the federal level and in almost all states, is based on the British system of common law. One state, Louisiana, has a system modeled on the French legal code.

The U.S. first professional degree, the juris doctor (J.D.), provides an education strongly focused on preparation for U.S. practice, with little opportunity for comparative or specialty study. For this

reason, and because preparation in U.S. law will not easily transfer toward practice in other countries, the J.D. is usually inappropriate for foreign nationals. Although law schools offer individual courses that emphasize particular subject areas such as environmental law or taxation, there are no J.D. programs concentrating on any single specialty.

J.D. degree programs involve three years of study, and are entered following four years of undergraduate study in any major. Competition for admission is intense for both U.S. and international students. Requirements generally include fluency in English, an excellent undergraduate academic record, and a satisfactory score on the Law School Admission Test (LSAT). (See <http://www.lsac.org> for LSAT registration information.)

To practice in the United States, graduates must also pass the bar examination and other requirements of the state where they wish to work.

The master of comparative law (M.C.L.), also known as the master of comparative jurisprudence (M.C.J.), is a particularly appropriate degree program for international lawyers. Recognizing that legal systems in many countries differ from common law as practiced in the United States; these programs acquaint lawyers from other countries with U.S. legal institutions and relevant specialties of U.S. law. Another graduate option is the master of laws (L.L.M.), a degree offered in a variety of specialties or as a self-designed program, with appropriateness for the international practitioner varying from program to program. Programs in international law or international business law may also be of interest. Almost all master's programs in law last one year and admit students only for the fall semester. Programs can be planned according to the interests of the student.

During study, international lawyers have the opportunity to observe courts and government agencies in the United States. Entrance requirements include a first degree in law, a strong academic background, letters of reference, a statement of purpose and/or writing samples, and a high level of English proficiency as demonstrated by the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) for students whose law degree was not in the English language. Most graduate law programs do not require standardized admissions tests.

Your nearest **Worldwide Edu Consultants** for Education in USA may be able to provide information on other options, such as tours to visit U.S. legal institutions.

I am interested in program information that help disabled people. Can you help me?

Mobility International USA (MIUSA) has a very helpful sampling of Disability Studies programs on U.S. campuses. Prospective international students interested in Disability Studies but have specific specialties in mind (i.e. public policy, development, HR) should check if these universities also offer courses in other departments which could be combined with this program. You might also find it useful to browse the [MIUSA webpage for international students](#).

Worldwide Edu Consultants for Education in USA, Student Resource Center, [Studying in the United States with a Disability: FAQ](#), is available online, Volume 2, Issue 3, page 9. You can also find helpful information on our site entitled: [Opportunities in the United States for Non-US Citizens](#).

Many qualified people with disabilities in your country may not come to you because they do not think that coming to the US is an option for them. Show them that international exchange to the United States is an option for everyone! We encourage you to use our searchable database of disability organizations around the world at <http://www.miusa.org/orgsearch> to seek out disability contacts in your communities. The database will also be a helpful resource for students with disabilities coming to your country from the United States.

Contact:

National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange

Mobility International USA

132 East Broadway, Suite 343

Eugene, Oregon 97401

Tel: +1 541-343-1284 (Tel/TTY)

Fax: +1 541-343-6812

Website: <http://www.miusa.org/ncde>

The Fulbright Program is very famous, how could I participate in?

The worldwide Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence Program brings visiting scholars and professionals from abroad to lecture at U.S. colleges and universities. Fulbright Scholars-in-Residence can have a significant impact on U.S. colleges and universities. In addition to teaching courses, scholars give campus-wide and community lectures, help initiate international programs and contribute to curriculum development. Although preference is given to proposals in the humanities or social sciences, other fields focusing on international issues will be considered.

Under the Scholar-in-Residence (SIR) Program, interested institutions submit proposals to invite scholars to teach one or more courses and to be in residence for a semester or an academic year. Proposals are welcome from individual institutions, as well as from consortia of two or more institutions. Institutions may suggest suitable candidates or have CIES recruit scholars from a particular world area.

Small liberal arts colleges, community colleges, and minority-serving institutions are given priority in applications to host a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence. Proposal guidelines and application forms may be downloaded from: <http://www.cies.org/sir/>. Or we recommend you contact the Fulbright Commission in your country.

Can I transfer in the U.S.?

Students transfer every year from other countries into U.S. degree programs, and within the US from one institution to another and successfully go on to complete their degrees. However, the structure of degrees in other countries rarely matches the structure of U.S. degrees, making the transfer process more complicated. For example, if in your country you study only one subject for your degree, the courses you have taken will not match up with the varied subjects a U.S. undergraduate student takes to meet his or her general education requirements. The types of institutions in other countries also vary from those in the United States, as do other details.

The transfer institution needs to consider a number of factors when granting credit for the courses you have taken at a non-U.S. institution. There are typically three factors that U.S. universities usually consider:

Is your university or college recognized by the ministry of education in your country? U.S. colleges are looking for institutions that are recognized by a ministry of education; however, if some other authority approves your college, it may still be acceptable. Decisions vary from college to college and often depend on what the situation would be for a similar college in the United States.

How similar is the nature or character of the courses you have taken to those offered at the transfer institution? U.S. schools usually assess similarity by looking at information from course descriptions,

syllabi, or catalogs. If your institution is not well known in the United States, the college may have to do a more detailed evaluation with you when you arrive, and only then decide whether and how to grant transfer credit.

How applicable are your courses toward the degree, and in particular the major, that you wish to pursue? This will often involve evaluation of the courses by both the admissions office and the academic department to which you wish to be admitted. They will look at whether courses can be accepted for transfer credit first, and then at whether they can count toward the requirements for a specific major. Again this decision may not take place until after you have arrived, and the decision may vary from college to college. Applying courses toward a particular major is most difficult for professional programs such as engineering, architecture, or journalism, where course requirements are carefully structured and often dictated by accrediting bodies for the profession.

In addition, to make the transfer process run as smoothly as possible, you are advised to make sure all academic records provided are official and bear the original stamp or seal of the issuing institution. Submit course descriptions in English for all post-secondary courses taken. These descriptions should also include:

- summaries or outlines of the major topics covered in each course (If an outline is not available, write a summary yourself and have it certified by the school as accurate.);
- the number of units or hours required in lecture and laboratory for each course on a weekly basis;
- the length of the term or academic year, and, if it is not given elsewhere, the year in which you took the course.

Prepare a list of textbooks used in each course as this will help in any decisions that are made after you arrive at the campus about whether to grant credit for particular courses. Provide information on the total number of courses, credits, or units required for the diploma or degree program from which you are transferring.

Students who transfer into a U.S. institution may also be able to receive credit for their secondary school work if it is considered to be comparable to introductory college-level work in the United States. Ask each college about their policies on transfer credit.

I have already graduated and now I'm working. I would like to know if I can get a free education in USA? What should I do? I want to learn English.

We will do our best to help you in your search for information on studying in the U.S. If you have not already done so, we would like to invite you to visit our **Worldwide Edu Consultants for Education in USA** website i.e. www.wweconline.com which contains much useful information.

Please take the time to look at the "Useful Information", "Links" and "News" sections of our [VCO website](#) as you may find the answers to many of your questions in the resource areas.

To find the **Worldwide Edu Consultants for Education in USA** advising center in your area please search the following website: www.wweconline.com

How can I find agencies to work with in other countries? We are an exchange program in USA and need to find students from other countries that will use our agency to come to the states and attend a private school.

We would like to invite you to visit our Education USA website which contains much useful information. <http://www.wweconline.com>

Please take the time to look at the "Useful Information", "Links", "News" and especially the "Free Downloads" located on the main page of our [VCO website](#). For specific answers to Visa questions please email the Visa department at: amvisa@state.gov and you will get a reply within one business week.

We normally only answer questions for students who wish to study in the U.S. However the following information may be useful to you:

The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) is a non-profit organization designated by the US Department of State to administer international work and study exchange programs. Established in 1947, CIEE is a world-leader in student exchange services, helping nearly 45,000 students and young professionals each year to grow personally and to develop their potential through participation in a wide variety of work and study programs.

The Trainee Program - a category of the J-1 Visa - constitutes one of CIEE's core areas of competency. During its nearly 20 years as administrator of this program, CIEE has supported more than 50,000 participants in their endeavor to expand their knowledge and skills and to enhance their professional qualifications. The knowledge and experience accumulated over this time, along with an enduring commitment to quality, has allowed CIEE to remain the largest sponsor in this category and an overall leader in program administration.

CIEE's office in Portland, Maine manages the activity of the Trainee Program. A team of Host Company Account Managers, Program Admissions Officers, and Customer Support staff stand ready to assist each Trainee and his or her Host Company throughout the program.

Website for CIEE - www.ciee.org

To learn more about the J-1 Visa or the Exchange Visitor Program, please visit the following website of the US Department of State. <http://exchanges.state.gov/jexchanges/index.html>

How do I apply for a US government-sponsored teaching exchange programs?

Please take the time to look at the "Useful Information", "Links", "News" and especially the "Free Downloads" located on the main page of the [VCO website](#). You will find answers to many of your questions in these resource areas. To find an educational advising center in your area please search the **Worldwide Edu Consultants** for Education in USA.

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To learn more about the J-1 Visa or the Exchange Visitor Program, please visit the following website of the US Department of State. <http://exchanges.state.gov/jexchanges/index.html>

Can you please reply to me on FLEX - Future Leaders Exchange Program? Thank you!

The Future Leaders Exchange is a federal government program that provides opportunities for high school age students (ages 15-17) from Eurasia to spend a year in the United States, living with a family and attending a U.S. high school. American Council's placement organization works with local coordinators in communities across the United States and through those coordinators, finds appropriate family and school placements. Local coordinators lead a pre-arrival orientation with the host family, a post-arrival orientation with the student, and provide monthly reports on each student's behavior and adjustment. More information at www.americancouncils.org.

Sometimes our own country has governmental exchange programs with the U.S., can you please advise more information?

Here is a comprehensive list of all foreign Embassies in the U.S.

<http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/dpl/32122.htm>

We would suggest you get in touch with the **Worldwide Edu Consultants** for Education in USA [advising center](#) to learn more information about the programs they may have.

I've heard of some changes to Optional Practical Training (OPT) – available to F-1 students after completion of their course of study – from the U.S. government, can you confirm?

USCIS has recently announced major changes that will affect the F-1 students. The information below briefly outlines each change. USCIS continues to release updates on the new OPT provisions.

New deadline for applying for post-completion OPT

F-1 students can now apply for post-completion OPT up to 60 days following their program completion date. Keep in mind, however, USCIS still adjudicates I-765 applications within 90 days, and 12 months of post-completion OPT can only be used within the 14 months following the program completion date. Therefore, it is still best to plan ahead when applying for OPT.

Additionally, all OPT applications must be properly filed within 30 days from the date on which the ISO recommends the OPT in SEVIS. If the OPT recommendation in SEVIS is dated more than 30 days prior to the USCIS receipt date, the application may be denied.

Limits on periods of unemployment during post-completion opt

As of April 8, 2008, F-1 students on post-completion OPT are limited to 90 days of unemployment for each period of OPT at each academic level. STEM students on 17-month OPT extension (see Page 2) are given an additional 30 days of unemployment for a total of 120 days over the entire post-completion OPT period. Periods of unemployment during post-completion OPT prior to April 8, 2008 will not count. Current interpretations of the new provision do not outline unemployment limits for pre-completion OPT.

Students who exceed the unemployment limit may be denied future immigration benefits which require valid F-1 status. The new provision also allows ICE/SEVP to terminate student records based on excessive unemployment.

17-month extension of OPT for STEM degree-holders currently on OPT

The one-time 17-month OPT extension applies to F-1 students currently on OPT based on completion of a degree earned in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields; the new provision allows for a maximum of 29 months of OPT. USCIS created the extension so that employers

may have a chance to file H-1B petitions, on behalf of STEM students, in two consecutive fiscal years if necessary.

In the United States, each academic degree program or major has an accompanying Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code. For F-1 students, the CIP code is used in SEVIS as confirmation of the academic degree program or major name. A student's CIP code must appear on the STEM Designated Degree Program List in order to be eligible for the 17-month OPT extension.

To check your eligibility, locate your CIP code on the top of page 3 of your Form I-20 and review the [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#)

I'm an English major student in China, 20 years old. I'm looking forward to your reply on funding options for studying in the U.S.

Since you have not completed a university degree you will probably have to start as an undergraduate student. There is funding for overseas students. Several hundred colleges and universities will offer some scholarships. The following are some websites you can do some research for funding. To get the most current information about US institutions that offer scholarships to international students, we invite you to visit the [Worldwide Edu Consultants](#) for Education in USA [advising center](#) nearest you.

WEBSITES FOR UNDERGRADUATE FUNDING

Scholarship search engines

<http://www.collegeboard.org/fundfinder/html/ssrchttop.html>

<http://www.collegenet.com>

Scholarship and loan research network

<http://www.srnexpress.com>

Access information on scholarships, fellowships, internships, grants and loans.

<http://www.fastweb.com>

Scholarship database

<http://www.studentservices.com/search/major-search.cgi>

Comprehensive information on aid for college and university study.

<http://www.finaid.org>

Partial list of awards for undergraduate international

<http://www.bibl.u-szeged.hu/oseas/aid/html>

The following are some websites that you can do research to find colleges & universities:

University Search Engines

<http://www.collegenet.com>

<http://www.collegeview.com>

<http://www.collegeboard.com>

<http://www.petersons.com/educationusa>

Applying to American colleges and universities is a long process, from 12-18 months. The deadline for submitting all documents can be three to nine months before the intended start date of study. Students should research and make a list of schools that they intend to apply to, as it is important to apply to more than one school. This list should consist of schools that fit their academic profile, as well as schools that are considered a stretch and schools that are considered safe. Students should try to look past the “big name” schools (like Harvard, Yale, and Stanford) to the many other universities that might be a better fit and will offer a good education. Students interested in studying in English as a Second Language program will have to demonstrate a clear need and prove that language learning options at home have been exhausted.

I don't want to go to a study abroad agent, how can I find accurate information on advising center?

To find an educational advising center in your area please visit our **Worldwide Edu Consultants for Education in USA website** i.e. www.wweconline.com

I'm trying to find trustful Au Pair programs, please advise.

IIE has had some connections with Youth for Understanding International Exchange (YFU), which is a non-profit educational organization which offers opportunities for young people around the world to spend a summer, semester or year with a host family in another culture. Their main site is www.yfu.org.

One other organization you may want to look at for some information is the [International Au Pair Association](#).

I've heard of a program called Cultural Academic Student Exchange. Can I trust it?

Cultural Academic Student Exchange (CASE) is a full member of the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET - <http://www.csiet.org/mc/page.do>) advisory list.

CSIET is a private, not-for-profit organization whose mission is to identify reputable international youth exchange programs, and it's one we recommend people check before enrolling - or paying for - exchange programs. CASE is also a State Department Designated Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor, so it should be reputable.

We've always been advised only to apply to accredited schools, where can I find official information on U.S. accreditation?

Accreditation is a status which indicates that an institution or program is accomplishing its mission and meeting the standards of a non-governmental association and is likely to do so for the foreseeable future. “Recognized by the US Government” means “delegated by the US government to assess and certify the quality of an institution an association accredits.”

Most authoritative source is at the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (www.chea.org). Also, see “[If You Want to Study in the US](#)” vol. 3 (on-line, in different languages).

Good morning, is there any chance I can get financial assistance from the US Embassy? I'm a professional.

There's a Humphrey Fellowship that provides working people in developing countries with financial aid. Studies should aim at graduate programs in the U.S. For more information, please visit the [Humphrey Fellowship website](#).