



# Global Guide 2021



2021 GLOBAL GUIDE



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# Introduction to EducationUSA

**Mission and Structure:** EducationUSA is the U.S. Department of State’s global network of international student advising centers located in more than 175 countries and territories. The Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) oversees the network as part of its mission to promote U.S. higher education and exchanges to international students and build mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. EducationUSA’s more than 430 centers are located at U.S. embassies and consulates, Fulbright Commissions, binational cultural centers, nongovernmental organizations, and foreign universities and libraries.

## Regional Educational Advising Coordinators

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

## Programs and Services

EducationUSA advising centers offer a variety of services to assist both international students and the U.S. higher education community. For international students, advising centers provide information about the breadth of U.S. higher education as well as the application process through group advising sessions, virtual advising, individual appointments, and pre-departure orientations. Basic services for students are free of charge. The U.S. higher education community looks to the EducationUSA network for current information and guidance to help develop regional and country-specific

recruitment strategies, create programs and products to connect with student audiences abroad, and obtain information about application and admission issues that may impact overseas candidates. EducationUSA advisers use their expertise to assist U.S. institutions in making connections with local universities and schools for recruitment, study abroad programs, and the establishment of university partnerships. EducationUSA also works with recruitment agents representing accredited U.S. higher education institutions (HEIs), incorporating them into public events, information sessions, and consultations.

## Opportunity Funds Program

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

Opportunity Funds students, please contact [edusaopportunity@state.gov](mailto:edusaopportunity@state.gov).

## Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study

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

## U.S. Study Abroad

The U.S. Department of State has a dedicated team focused on increasing and diversifying American student mobility through various programs and initiatives that support individual American students and U.S. and foreign HEIs in establishing or expanding study abroad programs. In addition, EducationUSA advisers globally are excellent resources in developing study abroad programs for Americans, as they are experts on the national education systems in their respective countries and have strong relationships with local universities and schools. For more information, visit the USA Study Abroad [website](#).





**8.5 million+**

Social Media "likes"

**496,000+**

Webinar participants

**4.8 million+**

Video views

# Resources for U.S. Higher Education Institutions

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

## Benefits of Internationalization

International students enrich U.S. classrooms, campuses, and communities with unique perspectives and experiences that expand American students' horizons. They enhance the research and teaching capacity of U.S. institutions, increasing their prestige and position in the competition for global talent. The knowledge and skills all students develop on an internationalized American campus prepare them to become the next generation of world leaders who work across languages, cultures, and borders to solve shared global challenges. International students and their families also benefit the U.S. economy. The U.S. Department of Commerce estimates that international students contributed more than \$44 billion to the U.S. economy in tuition, room and board, and living expenses during calendar year 2020, making U.S. higher education one of America's leading service export industries.

## Promoting Diversity of U.S. Higher Education

With the goal of promoting the diversity of U.S. higher education to help international students find their best fit academically, financially, and socially, EducationUSA advocates for study at the more than 4,000 accredited U.S. HEIs and supports

HEIs that are working to increase their capacity to host international students. According to data from the *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, in academic year (AY) 2019-2020, one of every three students studied in only three states: California, New York, or Texas. Apart from the excellent institutions in these three states, there are many high-quality institutions across the country, including community colleges, looking to welcome international students. EducationUSA is committed to helping these and other institutions, such as Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), meet their internationalization goals.

## Research on American and International Student Mobility

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

universities, foreign governments, and the media rely on these comparative statistics to analyze trends in student mobility.

## EducationUSA Adviser and REAC Expertise

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

- Join U.S. higher education professionals, REACs, and advisers from key overseas markets at the annual EducationUSA Forum in Washington, DC (held virtually in 2020 and 2021) or regional forums held overseas.
- Participate in EducationUSA international student recruitment fairs throughout the year. EducationUSA fairs connect U.S. HEIs with local students interested in opportunities to study in the United States.
- Engage with EducationUSA virtually through participation in virtual fairs, webinars, consultations, and other events worldwide.
- Host EducationUSA advisers for visits and training programs on your campus, either virtually or in person. Ensuring



that advisers have access to current information and skills-based training is essential to the success of the EducationUSA network. The following opportunities are available:

- » Host an EducationUSA Adviser Training Institute: Each EducationUSA Adviser Training Institute is composed of an initial introductory segment held either virtually or in Washington, DC, at the U.S. Department of State, and a second segment of campus-based training, either virtually or in person. Further information, including the application to host on-campus training for EducationUSA advisers, is available on the EducationUSA [website](#).
- » Engage in campus visits/higher education association conferences: Experienced advisers represent EducationUSA at a variety of U.S. higher education association conferences each year, either virtually or in person. Before or after these conferences, advisers often visit colleges and universities, either virtually or in person. Calls for campus hosts to welcome EducationUSA advisers for these visits are publicized on the EducationUSA [website](#) and in the monthly EducationUSA newsletter for [higher education professionals](#).

- Offer to serve as a subject matter expert in EducationUSA adviser training programs.
- Direct students accepted to study at U.S. HEIs to EducationUSA pre-departure orientations in their home countries.

#### HEI Exclusive Website Access

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

#### Strategies for International Student Recruitment

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

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



- Visit EducationUSA advising centers to engage student audiences and gain exposure for your institution or program. (Contact individual advising centers for details on reopening and options for in-person visits.) REACs and advisers can help you make the most of your international recruitment efforts, whether in person or virtual. Contact local centers in advance to arrange meetings or school visits, schedule presentations with students, or attend a college fair.

- Encourage international alumni to get involved with EducationUSA advising centers. Word of mouth is an important factor in building institutional name recognition overseas, and alumni can be excellent ambassadors. EducationUSA advisers can assist in setting up alumni presentations.

- Leverage state and regional consortia relationships with the EducationUSA network to promote an institution to students abroad. EducationUSA works with approximately 30 state and

regional consortia that promote U.S. cities, states, and regions as destinations for international students.

### Enhanced Outreach and Networking

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

- Hosting or attending an EducationUSA Seminar: These day-long seminars, held virtually or in person, convene HEIs, U.S. Department of State officials and other U.S. government representatives, higher education associations, and other higher education experts to share best practices in campus internationalization, learn about U.S. government resources for promoting U.S. colleges and universities to students overseas, and discuss ways to build networks for both international student recruitment and support. Institutions new to international student recruitment and underrepresented institutions are especially encouraged to attend.
- Enabling U.S. higher education professionals to access the EducationUSA network of advisers and REACs
- Connecting with Washington, DC-based EducationUSA staff
- Connecting with U.S. Embassy representatives
- Facilitating connections with foreign HEIs and organizations
- Participating in EducationUSA webinars as content experts
- Subscribing to the *U.S. Higher Education Monthly Update*
- Scheduling visits to EducationUSA centers
- Accessing special programming, such as EducationUSA seminars, the Opportunity Funds program, regional fairs, and other events
- Providing social media platforms that help schools engage prospective international students



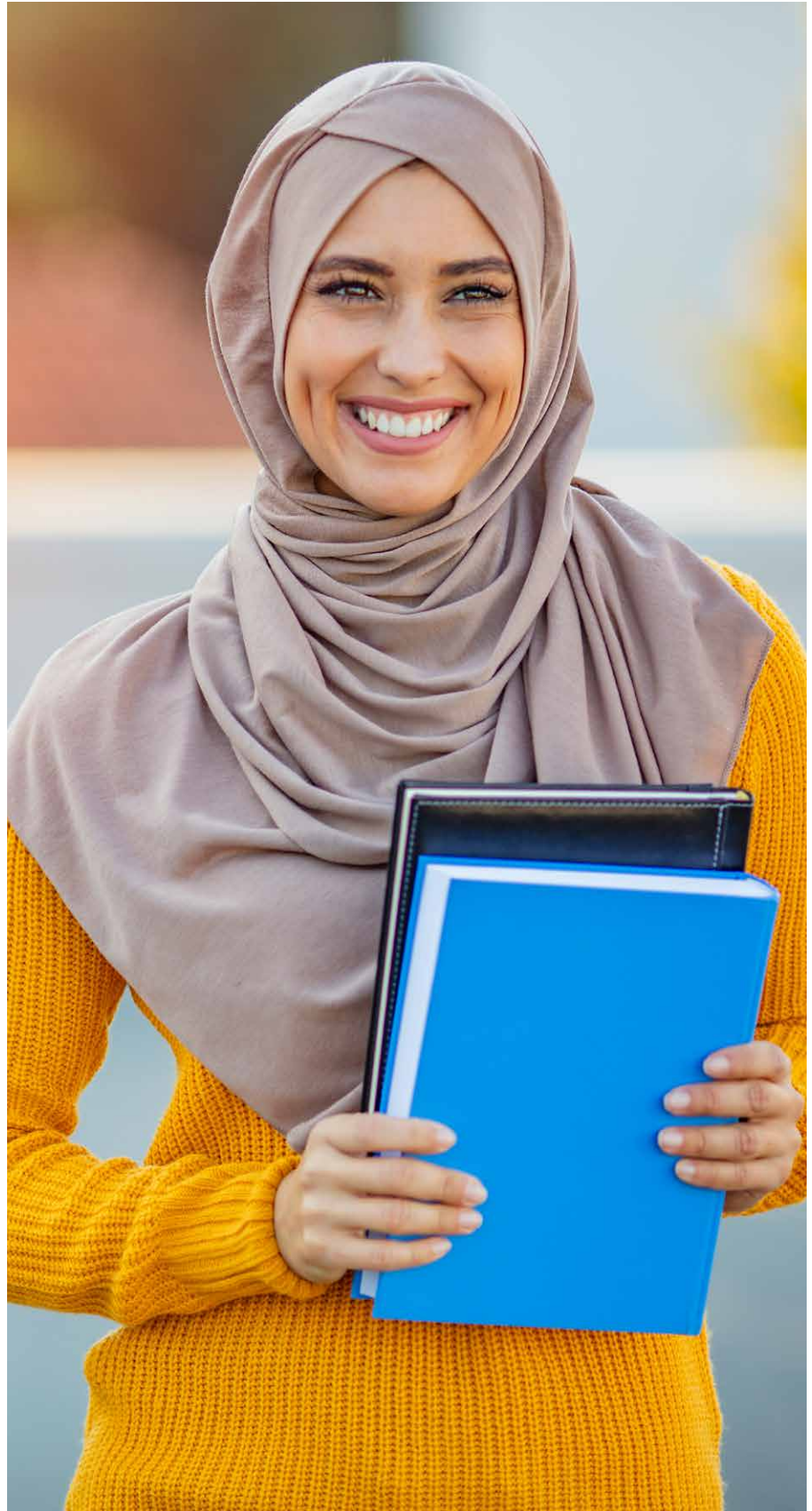
### Dedicated Domestic Outreach Team

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

- Offering EducationUSA Seminars
- Expanding best practices in internationalization
- Identifying and sharing best practices in international student campus integration
- Supporting collaboration and networking among U.S. HEIs
- Featuring U.S. HEI representatives as guest speakers on our live EducationUSA Interactive programs
- Promoting the diversity of U.S. higher education, including the U.S. community college system and 2+2 model for international student transfer to a four-year college or university

### Expanded Collaboration with Stakeholders

EducationUSA is committed to working with the full array of institutions, organizations, and individuals that advance opportunities for qualified international students to study in the United States. This includes agents identified by accredited U.S. HEIs as their representatives overseas. Please visit the [website](#) for more information on EducationUSA's agent policy. EducationUSA content and other relevant resources—including this annual publication, the *Global Guide*; *Student Mobility Facts and Figures information sheets*; the *Open Doors Report*; and the EducationUSA website—are available to the public, including agents.



# EducationUSA By the Numbers

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

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

Individual advising appointments	69,884
Advising by phone or SMS (each conversation)	182,171
Advising by email	340,489
Group advising attendees	400,788
Walk-ins/library/computer users	119,131
U.S. institution representatives	17,073
Online Course attendees	46,965
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,176,501</b>

## Number of Event Attendees, by Outreach Activity

Education fairs (in-person and virtual)	256,884
American Corners/Centers	32,473
Local universities/secondary schools	110,171
Other fairs/conferences/seminars	40,962
Host government events	2,090
Embassy/consulate events	4,271
Public locations	7,024
Other activities	55,050
<b>Total</b>	<b>508,925</b>

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

Social networks - page likes	8,495,214
Instagram followers	1,462,448
Videos/video channels views	4,792,735
Skype/WhatsApp/IM advising	472,361
Blog followers	182,768
Twitter/microblog followers	1,392,198
EducationUSA webinar participants	496,173
EducationUSA Interactive Session views	11,353
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,305,251</b>

## Website visitors (center and flagship websites)

<b>Total</b>	<b>2,485,310</b>
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**Grand Total** **21,475,988**

# Regional Educational Advising Coordinator (REAC) Map



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





# EducationUSA Worldwide Advising Centers

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

## Types of Center (By color)





Reference Centers

Comprehensive Centers

Standard Centers



# EducationUSA Advising Centers

## Comprehensive

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

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

## Standard

- Adheres to the EducationUSA's **Principles of Good Practice**
- Maintains an up-to-date library of reference books/materials
- Employs, at a minimum, one adviser, and offers hours sufficient to meet local demand at a standard service level
- Employs advising staff proficient in spoken and written English
- Offers individual advising
- Provides information on financial aid
- Describes and compares U.S. and host country educational systems
- Maintains relationships with local high school counselors and university administrators
- Displays U.S. college- and university-provided materials

- Provides access to internet-based videoconferencing equipment
- Offers pre-departure information/orientations
- Participates in college fairs, hosting the EducationUSA booth
- Provides briefings on the local education system for visiting U.S. representatives
- Provides information on Ministry of Education recognition/certification of local high schools and universities
- Organizes general U.S. higher education orientation sessions, often featuring visiting U.S. school representatives

## Reference

- Adheres to the EducationUSA's **Principles of Good Practice**
- Maintains an up-to-date library of reference books/materials
- Employs no adviser or offers only minimal personal assistance to students

# Social Media

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

## Platforms and Trends

Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn are the most widely used social media platforms by EducationUSA centers around the world. EducationUSA’s Twitter and YouTube pages are also commonly used. In 2020, the flagship EducationUSA Facebook page generated close to 180,000 engagements, whereas the flagship Twitter account’s following grew to more than 26,000. The flagship EducationUSA Instagram account was relaunched in 2019, and over the course of 2020 saw its following increase by 87.5 percent to more than 75,000. The EducationUSA LinkedIn account had 9,500 followers at the end of 2020. EducationUSA continues to leverage Facebook Live and virtual meeting platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet to expand and enhance outreach.

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

## Global Marketing Campaign

EducationUSA’s global marketing campaign is focused on promoting the United States as the top study abroad destination for international students, with specific messaging on how a U.S. education can help position students for a successful future. The digital advertising campaign was piloted across key social media platforms in three countries for four weeks spanning October and November. Forthcoming products of this campaign include marketing assets, multiple messaging pillars, and digital tool kits designed to strengthen the EducationUSA brand while serving as a resource for the U.S. higher education community to leverage.

## EducationUSA Interactive Webinars

The EducationUSA Interactive series, produced in collaboration with the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Global Public Affairs Interactive Team, consists of studio-produced Facebook Live programs (hosted on EducationUSA’s Facebook page). These videos feature international students, U.S. higher education representatives, and other experts discussing timely themes such as American campus culture, the financing of U.S. study, college and university admissions, and the U.S. visa process. Other topics have included student athletes, Muslim student experiences, LGBTI campus communities, support for international students with disabilities, and community colleges. The Interactives attract viewers from around the world, who can engage with panelists

in real time. Interactives are available for viewing on YouTube, as are digestible clips of individual questions and answers for quick and easy reference.

## EducationUSA Website

EducationUSA’s mobile-friendly [website](#) serves as the central information hub for the EducationUSA network. There, international students and their parents can find reliable information about studying in the United States. Advisers regularly post information to the site about upcoming in-person and virtual events, making it the best place to find listings of EducationUSA events worldwide. In addition, social media posts from EducationUSA’s Instagram account are pulled onto the homepage, creating a more interactive and dynamic site. Furthermore, with links to social media on each page, users can share pertinent information about study in the United States with their own social network. The site also provides resources for U.S. higher education institutions, as well as foreign institutions and government users. Higher education professionals can request a login to access REAC contact information, subscribe to the monthly newsletter, and submit scholarship opportunities and news stories targeted to the international student audience for posting to the site. All users can now access yearly *Student Mobility Facts and Figures* sheets for countries and locations worldwide.



**Facebook**  
Likes: 7.9 million+



**Twitter**  
Followers: 1.3 million+



**Instagram**  
Followers: 1.4 million+

# EducationUSA Regional Reach

## Contacts Made in 2020 by Region

Region	Sub-Saharan Africa	East Asia and Pacific	Europe and Eurasia	Middle East and North Africa	South and Central Asia	Western Hemisphere
<b>Total contacts made through advising centers (both in-person and virtual)</b>	<b>198,873</b>	<b>145,327</b>	<b>172,594</b>	<b>104,201</b>	<b>240,487</b>	<b>315,019</b>
<b>Advising center-based contacts</b>	196,979	144,012	169,838	102,986	236,214	309,399
<b>U.S. institution representative contacts</b>	1,894	1,315	2,756	1,215	4,273	5,620
<b>Total contacts made through outreach activities</b>	<b>76,533</b>	<b>54,243</b>	<b>65,795</b>	<b>27,284</b>	<b>135,142</b>	<b>149,928</b>
<b>Education fairs (in-person &amp; virtual)</b>	22,921	10,812	46,534	17,865	33,489	125,263
<b>American Corners/Centers</b>	8,305	8,039	4,914	442	9,181	1,592
<b>Local universities/secondary schools</b>	22,896	18,542	9,848	3,367	41,258	14,260
<b>Other fairs/conferences/seminars</b>	942	10,640	1,969	4,027	21,206	2,178
<b>Host government events</b>	358	333	65	6	6	1,322
<b>Embassy/consulate events</b>	485	738	957	313	918	860
<b>Public locations</b>	14	1,481	192	108	4,769	460
<b>Other activities</b>	20,612	3,658	1,316	1,156	24,315	3,993
<b>Total contacts made through virtual platforms</b>	<b>2,516,482</b>	<b>2,284,927</b>	<b>2,337,573</b>	<b>2,551,688</b>	<b>4,609,152</b>	<b>2,402,294</b>
<b>Social media platforms</b>	2,435,907	2,127,576	2,303,963	2,543,086	4,477,376	2,318,035
<b>Webinars</b>	80,575	157,351	33,610	8,602	131,776	84,259
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>2,791,888</b>	<b>2,484,497</b>	<b>2,575,962</b>	<b>2,683,173</b>	<b>4,984,781</b>	<b>2,867,241</b>

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



For the fifth year in a row, over one million international students studied in the United in the 2019-2020 academic year. The U.S. Departments of State and Commerce are committed to ensuring that the United States remains the top destination of choice for millions of globally mobile international students. The departments' activities complement one another, and they collaborate wherever possible to strengthen inbound student mobility through a diverse range of activities and events.

## EducationUSA

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

The EducationUSA network also provides strategic guidance on international student recruitment and support and campus internationalization to all accredited U.S. colleges and universities through a suite of basic services that are free of charge.

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

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

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

## U.S. Commercial Service

U.S. education service exports ranked sixth among service exports in 2020. International students studying in the United States contributed over \$37.35 billion to the U.S. economy in tuition and living expenses during the 2020 calendar year, for a trade surplus of \$30.83 billion.

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

The U.S. Commercial Service is the trade promotion arm of ITA. The U.S. Commercial Service has 1,330 trade professionals located in Washington, DC and over 100 cities throughout the United States, and in U.S. embassies, consulates, and business centers in more than 75 countries. These professionals are dedicated to helping U.S. education service providers get started in exporting and developing partnerships in new global markets.

The U.S. Commercial Service and ITA's Global Education Team assist U.S. educational institutions in building a recruitment pipeline and partnership channels through various program offerings unique to the education sector. The U.S. Commercial Service provides counseling on market potential for programs and develops market research for the education industry. Support offered includes pre-scheduled meetings with potential partners, virtual events, trade missions, assistance at trade shows, and single school promotions. The U.S. Commercial Service also supports the U.S. educational state consortia across the United States with development, promotion, and strategic planning for international recruitment and highlights their states as study destinations. ITA's Global Education Team launched USA: A Study Destination to assist the U.S. international education industry to compete, increasing trade and investment opportunities for institutions and study states.

To find out more about how the U.S. Commercial Service and its Global Education Team can help you achieve export success, please visit [trade.gov/education-industry](https://trade.gov/education-industry).



# Sub-Saharan Africa

## Regional EducationUSA Profile

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

# 54

### EducationUSA Advising Centers in the Region

38 Comprehensive  
14 Standard  
2 Reference

Sub-Saharan Africa is a dynamic and diverse region with growing youth populations, many of which are expected to pursue higher education opportunities outside of their home countries. The Population Reference Bureau projects that the African population will more than double to 2.6 billion by 2050, growth which will account for more than half of the expected global population increase during that time.

The EducationUSA network across Sub-Saharan Africa is comprised of 54 advising centers, including 38 comprehensive, 14 standard, and two reference centers, and 64 EducationUSA advisers throughout the region. All standard and comprehensive centers offer EducationUSA general information and subject-specific sessions, respond to queries from U.S. colleges and universities, offer opportunities for higher education institutions (HEIs) to make presentations to public audiences, and contribute to pre-departure orientations. Most comprehensive centers offer an EducationUSA Scholars Program, which helps academically gifted international students access U.S. higher education opportunities. The EducationUSA Opportunity Funds program, serving high-achieving prospective students who demonstrate financial need, currently operates at 14 advising centers in Botswana, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Of the 54 EducationUSA advising centers in the region, 46 are located in U.S. embassies and consulates, with an additional seven centers located in American Corners and one at an independent non-governmental organization (NGO).

### Regional Overview

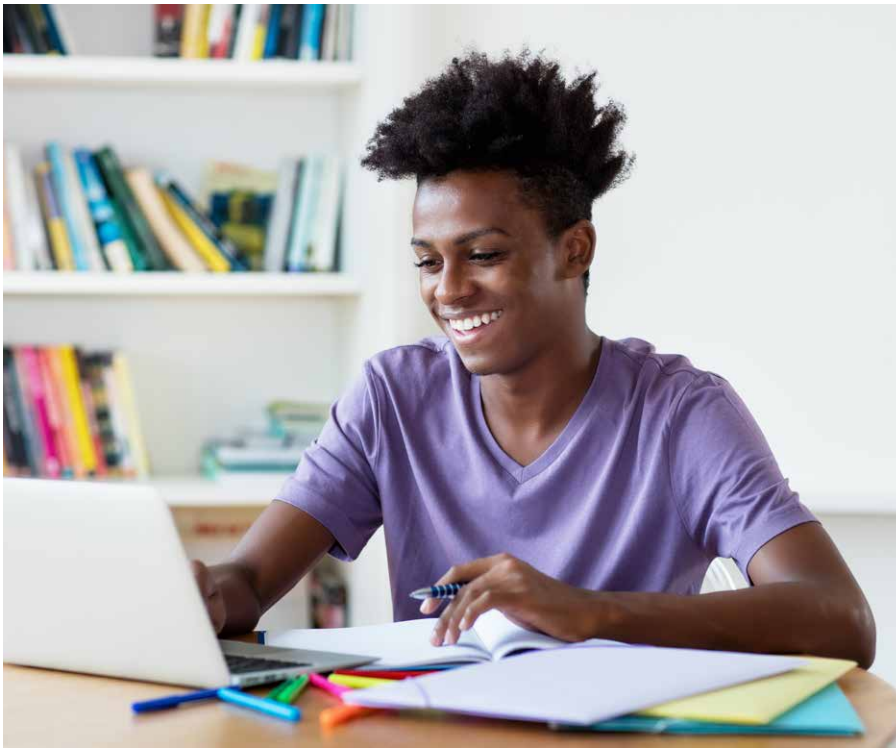
Over one billion people live in Sub-Saharan Africa, almost 20 percent of whom are youth between the ages of 15 and 24. Sub-Saharan African students are highly mobile and seek higher education opportunities abroad. Most countries in the region are unable to meet the demand for higher education from high school graduates, leading many students and their families to consider options outside of their home countries within Sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.

According to the *2020 Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, Sub-Saharan Africa was the only geographic region to show growth (+3.5 percent) in student mobility to the United States from the previous year. Since 2014, the number of students from the region studying in the United States has increased by 34 percent. Ten countries (Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, South Africa, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Côte D'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Cameroon) send more than 1,000 students each and account for 78 percent of the Sub-Saharan African students studying in the United States. The top five countries account for 63 percent of the Sub-Saharan African



<sup>1</sup> "Africa" in this section refers to the 51 countries of Sub-Saharan Africa





Furthermore, technological advances have increased the need for coursework and training in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields to meet local workforce development needs. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute of Statistics, there are currently more than 200,000 students from Sub-Saharan Africa studying abroad, with the top destinations being France, the United States, and South Africa.

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

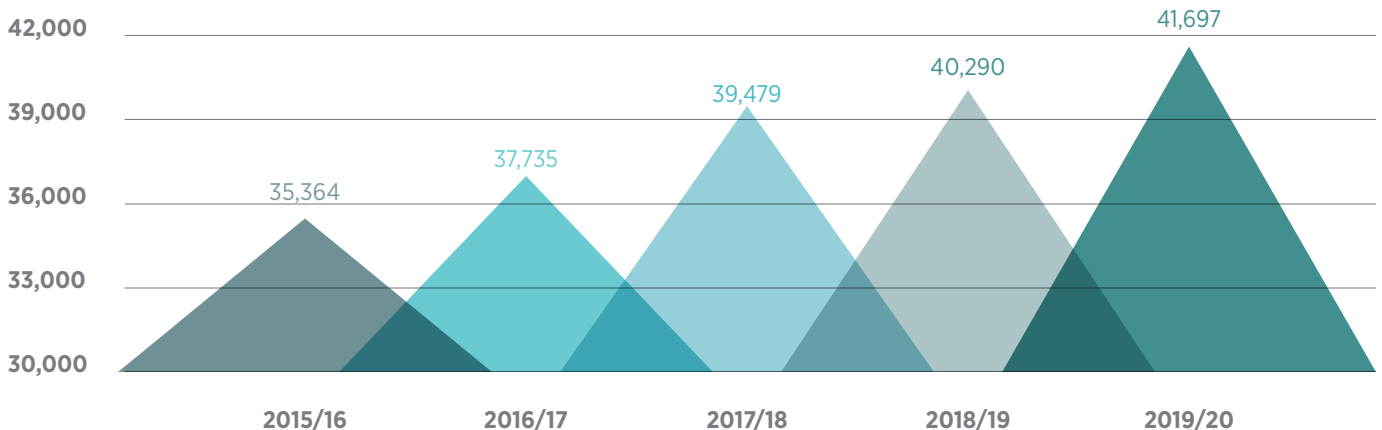
Agriculture, oil and gas, tourism, and technology are the dominant industries in the region, leading many students to pursue studies and careers in STEM fields. Expertise in agriculture and agricultural engineering, water dam construction, and irrigation

students studying in the United States. Over the past five years, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Liberia, Namibia, Rwanda, South Sudan, and Somalia have all experienced increases of 50 percent or more in the number of students studying in the United States. In the academic year (AY) 2019-2020, more than 41,000 Sub-Saharan African students studied in the United States.

According to the most recent *Open Doors* data, over 13,000 U.S. students studied in Sub-Saharan Africa in AY 2018-2019.

The demographic youth bulge, along with Sub-Saharan African students' interest in pursuing higher education abroad, make the region an important recruitment destination for U.S. HEIs.

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



## Sub-Saharan Africa

development are particularly sought after in Eritrea, Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, EducationUSA in Sub-Saharan Africa shifted to virtual advising to continue engaging and supporting students. The region continues to host U.S. admissions representatives for virtual recruitment programs to showcase the strength and diversity of U.S. universities and colleges. Some of the platforms used for virtual advising include Facebook, Google Meet, Instagram, Twitter, Viber, WhatsApp, and Zoom. Prospective students in the region have continued to participate in virtual programs, with Facebook Live being the preferred platform as it allows students to access archived recordings.

While the region is home to diverse educational systems, most require students to sit for senior-year national

exams. In West Africa, students take the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). Kenya requires the Kenya Certificate for Secondary Education, and South Africa mandates that students take government-administered matriculation exams. All francophone countries continue to require the French baccalaureate, or the “bac.”

Mobile phone usage is ubiquitous in Sub-Saharan Africa, and most students apply to U.S. universities through their phones. Mobile-friendly websites are critical to reaching these students and ensuring that institutional information is available and accessible. Because costs associated with mobile device data plans can limit the number of students able to participate in virtual activities and the amount of time they can remain engaged, shorter presentations are preferred. Unreliable electrical service can also present a challenge in some

parts of the region. Many students rely on EducationUSA advising centers to access books, test preparation materials, technology, workstations, and free internet connections. However, as of late spring 2021, advising centers remain closed due to the pandemic, presenting a temporary barrier to student access.

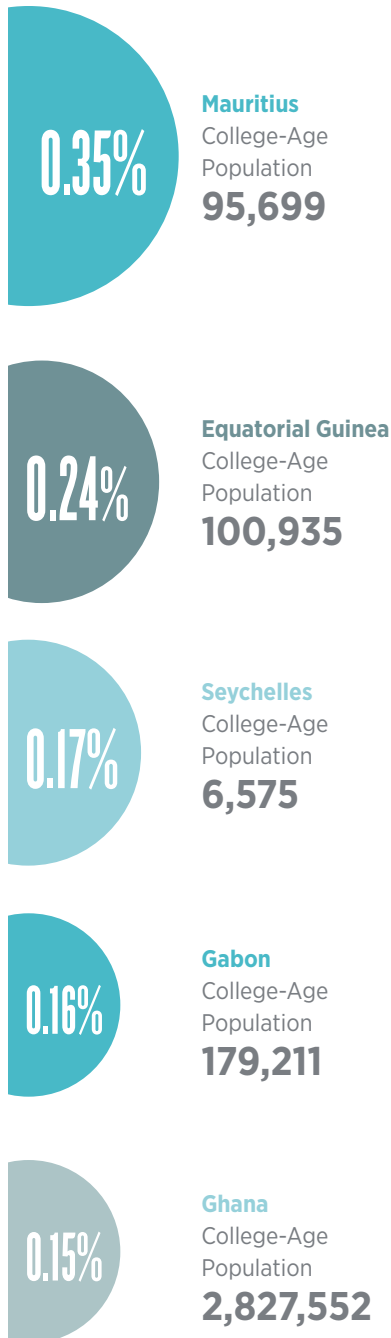
### Recent Trends

Interest in graduate study among Sub-Saharan African students continues to grow. Graduate study in the United States is particularly desirable because of the breadth of programs offered, in contrast to more limited curricula at institutions in students' home countries. Students from smaller countries often seek graduate programs abroad. According to *2020 Open Doors Report* data, the number of graduate students from the region increased by more than 8 percent over the past year, compared with declines in the number of students pursuing





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



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics; Indicator: 2018 Population of the Official Age for Tertiary Education, Both Sexes

undergraduate-level or non-degree study. Participation in Optional Practical Training (OPT) increased by almost 18 percent.

Countries outside the region are also stepping up their recruitment efforts to attract students from Sub-Saharan Africa. France remains the top study destination for students from francophone Africa, but China, Russia, and Brazil are increasingly recruiting students from across the continent. Similarly, Canada, where students are eligible to receive Canadian permanent residency upon graduation, has recently become a top-five destination for African students. Graduate students from the region actively pursue scholarships, with funding from the Erasmus Program, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), and the Commonwealth Scholarship among the most popular.

Parents generally have a favorable view of the United States and support their children studying at U.S. institutions. However, some parents have expressed concern about health and safety, and these considerations increasingly factor into decision-making. Providing clear information about safety measures, regulations, and policies on campus, particularly for residence halls, will help students and parents make informed decisions and understand how seriously U.S. institutions take safety and security.

### Top Senders and Countries to Watch

Below are the top 10 countries in the region by number of students studying in the United States. Click on a country to access the *Student Mobility Facts and Figures* sheet for that country. All EducationUSA student mobility fact sheets are available [here](#).

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

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

**Malawi and Uganda.** EducationUSA advisers are working to increase awareness of and interest in U.S. higher education opportunities, and particularly graduate programs.

**Tanzania.** As a top study destination in the region for American students, Tanzania is a prime location in which to pursue institutional bidirectional student exchange partnerships.

**Mauritius.** Over the past five years, Mauritius has seen significant growth in both the number of students studying in the United States and the number of American students studying at local institutions.

**Niger.** Over the past five years, Niger has seen significant growth in the number of students studying in the United States and pursuing OPT.

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

Africa is home to the world's fastest-growing college-aged population. The United Nations' *2019 Revision of World Population Prospects* projected that by 2030, one in every four people aged 15 to 24 will live in Africa. This demographic trend has increased and will continue to increase the need for tertiary education across the continent,

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

Country	# Of Students	% Change
Nigeria	13,762	2.5%
Ghana	4,221	15.3%
Kenya	3,710	7.5%
Ethiopia	2,356	14.3%
South Africa	2,224	8.9%
Rwanda	1,444	11.8%
Zimbabwe	1,377	2.5%
Côte d'Ivoire	1,257	-9.7%
DR Congo	1,198	2.9%
Cameroon	1,027	-13.6%

## Sub-Saharan Africa



become the most mobile tertiary students in the world. About 5 percent of the over 8 million tertiary students on the continent have crossed a border in the course of their higher education studies, compared to the global average of 2.4 percent.

Due to linguistic and historical ties, France is the most popular destination for students from Sub-Saharan Africa, currently hosting about 110,000 students, or over a quarter of the region's globally mobile students. In the past 10 years, though, African students have increasingly studied in destinations such as China, the United States, Malaysia, Canada, India, and Saudi Arabia. The number of Sub-Saharan African students studying in China has risen exponentially in the past decade, due largely to offers of full scholarships. At the same time, the number of students from the region studying in the United States has also risen steadily, showing that the United States remains a desirable study destination for students from the region.

In addition to capacity constraints, many students and families in the region perceive foreign degrees to be of higher quality than those conferred in Africa. The ICEF Monitor notes that in the competition for employment, students prioritize degrees that provide an edge over candidates with similar qualifications. As a result, many affluent, urban, and middle class families opt to send their children abroad for undergraduate and graduate studies.

Economic instability and high unemployment contribute to students' interest in pursuing overseas study. According to World Education Services,

and local educational institutions lack the capacity to accommodate this rapidly increasing demand. As a result, many students in the region are likely to pursue both undergraduate- and graduate-level study outside their home countries in the coming years. Campus France notes that while some students in the region pursue studies in other African countries,

about three-quarters of the students from Sub-Saharan Africa who earn their degree outside their home country earn it outside Africa. U.S. HEIs should consider this demographic trend as they formulate international student recruitment plans.

According to Campus France, university students in Sub-Saharan Africa have

### African Students by Level of Study in the Region

Associate	5,791
Bachelor	20,794
Master	13,014
Doctorate	8,109
All Other	3,651

Source: SEVIS, March 2021

### Regional Student Totals Top Five Countries of Origin

Country	2019/20	% Change
Nigeria	13,762	2.5%
Ghana	4,221	15.3%
Kenya	3,710	7.5%
Ethiopia	2,356	14.3%
South Africa	2,224	8.9%

more than 40 percent of Sub-Saharan African students cite future career prospects as the most influential factor in their decision to study outside their home country.

### Virtual Engagement and Social Media

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, EducationUSA in Sub-Saharan Africa shifted entirely to virtual advising and engagement. Advising centers collaborate and organize two webinars each month in which U.S. HEIs are invited to participate. In addition, some EducationUSA advising centers offer additional webinars through which HEIs can connect directly with students. Advisers continue to offer monthly general information sessions and EducationUSA Scholars Program advising sessions virtually. Students' limited access to mobile device data has proved a persistent challenge throughout the pandemic, and some U.S. embassies in the region subsidize data packages for EducationUSA advising cohorts to ensure access to virtual programs. Students prefer to have advising content live-streamed on Facebook because they can access content asynchronously at their convenience. In addition, most advisers in Sub-Saharan Africa use WhatsApp for presentations and to communicate with students due to its low bandwidth requirements.

The global pandemic has highlighted the importance of online connectivity for student recruitment, and mobile technology has proven to be the most affordable and accessible means through which to engage the majority of Sub-Saharan African students. At the end of 2019, 477 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa subscribed to mobile services, accounting for 45 percent of the population. The 2020 GSMA [Mobile Economy Report](#) predicts that half the population of the region will have a mobile connection by 2025, highlighting the need for recruitment plans in the region to accommodate mobile devices.

### Successful Recruiting Strategies

- Engage parents, welcome their questions, and clearly explain the benefits of studying in the United States. Parents are often the primary decision-makers on study abroad opportunities.
- Make information as accessible as possible, bearing in mind that mobile

phones are the primary communication tool for most students. Avoid sending information in large data files or through websites that are difficult to navigate on mobile devices. Make sure your institution's information is transparent and includes the total cost of attending your institution.

- For populations in which many students have significant financial need, consider consolidating multiple smaller scholarships into fewer more substantial awards (e.g., one USD\$30,000 scholarship rather than six USD\$5,000 awards) to ensure more comprehensive support. This demonstrated commitment to meaningfully supporting students from the region will have a direct effect on others considering the institution.
- Partner with a small group of HEIs for student engagement activities to showcase the diversity of U.S. institutions and attract a broader array of prospective students.

- Share information about the application process and highlight unique characteristics of your institution.
- Consider working with the EducationUSA Africa Adviser Webinar Team to plan events for the entire region. If you are seeking to engage students in specific subregions and/or demographic groups, the Webinar Team can also assist.
- Consider waiving application fees and/or enabling payment from mobile money accounts to mitigate additional expenses associated with bank checks and barriers to traditional money transfers.
- Offer flexibility in testing requirements and communicate such policies clearly to potential applicants.
- Engage currently enrolled students and/or alumni from Sub-Saharan Africa who can share their experiences and ensure that critical peer-to-peer voices

## U.S. Study Abroad

### Top Five Receiving Countries in the Region

Destination	2018/19	% Change
South Africa	5,278	-12.0%
Ghana	2,147	-2.9%
Tanzania	1,334	-14.3%
Kenya	926	-0.1%
Uganda	797	-4.8%

### Five Countries (with over 100 students) with Highest Percentage Growth, U.S. Students in the Region (Five-Year Trend)

Country	2014/15	2018/19	% Change
Ghana	737	2,147	191.3%
Senegal	199	376	88.9%
Rwanda	275	460	67.3%
Uganda	527	797	51.2%
Madagascar	114	168	47.4%

## Sub-Saharan Africa

are available to prospective students, demonstrating that U.S. study is a realistic and rewarding objective.

- Work with Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs) and advisers to include as many prospective students as possible in virtual outreach programs, using platforms that are easily accessible and low/no cost for students.
- Direct admitted students to EducationUSA pre-departure orientation sessions (usually held each July).

### Institutional Partnerships

Many institutions and governments in Sub-Saharan Africa are open to partnerships with U.S. HEIs. For information on existing partnerships, please contact the appropriate REAC.

### Foreign Government and Private Funding

Funding from governments in Sub-Saharan Africa is limited, but growing. Various sources of private sector funding are well established in the region. Examples of both types of funding opportunities are listed by country below.

The newsletter from [Opportunities for Africans](#) contains various scholarship opportunities for African students.

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

**Cabo Verde.** The Global Scholarship Program and Research Grant Program are initiatives of the government of Cabo

Verde aimed at supporting graduate students. Launched in 2019, the Global Scholarship Program funded three students for their master's programs at Bridgewater State University. The Research Grant Program funded five students for the MIT Management Training at the Global Executive Academy.

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

**Mauritius.** The Mauritian government provides funding for students to study in the United States or other countries through the Mauritian State Scholarships. Two students each year (one male and one female) are offered 100 percent funding for study in any country. The government of Mauritius also provides partial scholarships to more than 500 students each year, including some for students with disabilities and students who demonstrate financial need.

**Nigeria.** EducationUSA Nigeria and Coca-Cola entered into a partnership in 2019 to support successful EducationUSA Opportunity Funds program students from Nigeria with airfare to the United States and a "settling-in allowance" upon admission to a U.S. higher education institution. Coca-Cola is considering expanding the program to other Sub-Saharan African countries after evaluating Nigeria's success and impact.

**Togo.** The Ministry of Higher Education and Research of Togo has begun supporting two Opportunity Funds students'

participation in the Aviation Maintenance Technician Program in partnership with Lane Community College. The total financial aid from the government of Togo is USD\$16,600 per year for each student.

### Regional Economics and Market Demand

Although the fastest-growing employment sectors in the region vary by location, certain fields of study are in greater demand overall. In 2020, Africa.com compiled a list of the most [in-demand fields](#) in Africa, predicting that STEM fields, agriculture, and tourism, among others, will likely remain popular as students seek skills in sectors with strong employment prospects.

Agriculture is a crucial sector of the economy in Africa and is likely to become even more critical as the continent continues to face a rapidly growing population and the challenges that accompany urbanization. Mining is a key pillar of many economies in the region and offers a broad array of employment opportunities, including careers for engineers, geologists, information and communications technology professionals, and human resource professionals. As Africa's middle class continues to grow, banking and finance are also likely to remain important economic drivers. Institutions offering MBA programs and programs in financial management, insurance, and banking are likely to be of interest to students from the region. HEIs are encouraged to contact REACs and EducationUSA advisers to learn more about regional and country-level economics and educational programs that are responsive to local workforce development needs.

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

Country	2015/16	2019/20	% Change
South Sudan	36	102	183.3%
Namibia	76	121	59.2%
Rwanda	928	1,444	55.6%
Ethiopia	1,517	2,356	55.3%
Madagascar	126	181	43.7%

# 183.3%

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





### Regional EducationUSA Events

Upcoming events include:

August 2021: Business School Virtual Fair (open to students throughout the region)

October 2021: Two-Day Virtual Fair; day one for undergraduate students and day two for graduate students (open to students throughout the region)

April 2022: Second annual Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) Showcase

June 2022: Second annual Sub-Saharan Africa Community College Fair

U.S. HEIs are encouraged to contact REACs regarding upcoming engagement opportunities. HEI representatives can also visit the [EducationUSA website](#) and subscribe to the EducationUSA HEI newsletter, which includes periodic regional programming updates.

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

According to the *2020 Open Doors Report*, in AY 2018-2019, Sub-Saharan Africa hosted 13,455 U.S. study abroad students. Almost half these students studied in South Africa.

In 2020, U.S. Embassy Kampala received a U.S. Study Abroad Engagement Grant from the USA Study Abroad Branch at the U.S. Department of State to carry out capacity-building projects to promote U.S. study abroad in Africa. In addition,

the State Department's [IDEAS program](#) awarded grants to five U.S. HEIs to develop or diversify study abroad programming in Kenya, Ghana, and Malawi. Study abroad in the region was also supported through the global webinar series, "[Internationalization of Higher Education in the COVID-19 Era](#)."

U.S. study abroad students are welcome to join EducationUSA programming activities throughout the region. U.S. institutions are encouraged to provide information and resources to study abroad participants

prior to their departure from the United States so that they can promote the institution to local audiences. Students have delivered general presentations about their institutions, joined conversation groups, assisted with mock admissions interviews, and participated in alumni fairs and other events that allowed them to engage with local high school and university students.

### Regional Calendar and Best Times to Interact with Students

U.S. HEI representatives are encouraged to note travel warnings posted at [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov). The best times to plan in-person travel for recruitment are when schools are in session.

**East Africa:** March to June and October to November

**Southern Africa:** February to May and July to August

**West and Central Africa:** January to March, May to mid-July, and October to November

It is best to avoid travel to the region during Ramadan, Easter, Christmas, exam periods (April to June and November to December), and national elections. Contact the EducationUSA adviser in your target country for additional guidance.

Virtual sessions to engage students can be planned in coordination with EducationUSA advisers. These sessions usually highlight EducationUSA's *Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study* and feature HEI representatives or panels of experts presenting on general topics relevant to prospective students.

# East Asia and Pacific

## Regional EducationUSA Profile

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

# 71

### EducationUSA Advising Centers in the Region

29 Comprehensive  
24 Standard  
18 Reference



EducationUSA advising centers in East Asia and the Pacific (EAP) cover a vast geographic area, and advisers cater to a diverse student population with a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds, financial need, and academic goals. EducationUSA operates 71 centers throughout the region, with more than 80 advisers hosting in-person, virtual, and hybrid advising sessions. In addition, advisers organize information sessions and events to promote U.S. higher education and related topics. Larger-scale events include in-person and virtual university fairs, high school counselor and local educator training, and student application workshops involving coordination across multiple countries. Most EducationUSA advising centers in the region are located at U.S. embassies and consulates; others are based at Fulbright Commissions, American Spaces, local colleges, libraries, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). EducationUSA centers in the EAP region enjoy a close working relationship with embassy Public Affairs Sections, often conducting joint programming and outreach to students. Three EducationUSA Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs) cover the region to provide training and support to advisers and regional expertise to U.S. higher education institutions (HEIs) and other stakeholders.

### Regional Overview

The EAP region is home to a quarter of the world's population and includes many of the top places of origin for international students studying in the United States. With a total sending population of 535,482 in academic year (AY) 2019-2020, the region accounts for just under half of all international students in the United States, according to the *2020 Open Doors Report*

### *on International Educational Exchange.*

While the overall student mobility numbers remained mostly flat in AY 2019-2020, growth is slowing due to increased competition for globally mobile students, demographic shifts within the region, and an array of additional factors. Regardless, students from the region remain strongly interested in studying in the United States.

U.S. HEIs recruiting in EAP are encouraged to focus on major cities in the top sending countries and areas of China, the Republic of Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, and Japan, but also to include less commonly visited locations, where the student market is less saturated. Increasing competition from HEIs in Australia, Canada, China, and the United Kingdom makes it all the more critical that U.S. HEIs target their messaging for these audiences and continue to communicate the unique benefits afforded by a U.S. education. Representatives should also consider secondary and emerging markets, which offer opportunities to diversify inbound international student populations. Business and management remain the most popular fields of study among students from EAP, followed by science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and creative arts and design. In China, creative arts/design has overtaken engineering and math for second place, according to a recent EducationUSA study.

While cost has always been a factor for students and parents, concerns about health, safety, and whether students will be welcome on campus and in their communities are now at the forefront of many peoples' minds. Community colleges and the 2+2 model continue to emerge as affordable paths to the United States. In addition, programs like the American



Degree Transfer Program, which enables Malaysian students to complete a portion of their bachelor's program in Malaysia and then transfer to a partner institution in the United States, remain popular options. Regardless of cost, all U.S. institutions should focus on a welcoming message that highlights on-campus support services and community-building initiatives for international students. HEI representatives should remember that parents are often closely involved in decision-making and should therefore tailor outreach and messaging to both prospective students and their parents.

#### Recent Trends

After a decade of strong growth in student mobility from EAP to the United States, the number of students from the region started to flatten in AY 2018-2019. Recent decreases in undergraduate, graduate, and non-degree students from across the region, along with increases in Optional Practical Training (OPT), point to both the demand for work experience and the need to invest in new student recruitment.

Higher education opportunities closer to home in strong postsecondary sectors across Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, Australia, New Zealand, and China have generated considerable interest—especially in light of pandemic-related concerns and

barriers to travel. China has ramped up promotion of full scholarships for students in select countries that have also recently seen high levels of infrastructure and development investment from China. In Oceania, students from the Pacific Islands are attracted to scholarship opportunities in China, Australia, Taiwan, and other areas. As many non-anglophone countries in the region emerge as study abroad options, intra-regional student mobility within EAP will likely gain momentum and increase competition for globally mobile students from the region.

For the 11th consecutive year, China has remained the largest sender of international students to the United States, with 372,532 students studying at U.S. HEIs in AY 2019-2020. The U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis noted that Chinese students contributed approximately USD\$15.9 billion to the U.S. economy in 2019. According to *2020 Open Doors Report* data, China is the largest global sender of students, including undergraduate, graduate, and non-degree students, to the United States. The number of Chinese students participating in OPT increased by almost 2 percent in AY 2019-2020; only India has a larger number of students participating in OPT.

After declines between 2017 and 2019, the number of Indonesian students studying in the United States flattened in AY 2019-2020. The number of Indonesian students pursuing undergraduate study, graduate study, and OPT programs increased, whereas non-degree programs saw a 2.7 percent decline. The pandemic has had a significant impact on the Indonesian economy. Many academic and English language testing centers have closed, and virtual learning—while increasing access in many locations—has presented a serious challenge to the large number of Indonesian students with limited access to reliable internet connections. However, interest in U.S. higher education remains strong, and the market for U.S. graduate programs in particular remains largely untapped in Indonesia.

The number of International Baccalaureate (IB) programs across EAP has increased in recent years—not only in international and foreign schools, but also in public and private schools. In addition to Japan's ambitious IB expansion plans, the Republic of Korea hopes to implement IB programs in high schools in Daegu, Jeju, and other cities with the goal of providing an internationally recognized education qualification.

# East Asia and Pacific

## Top Senders and Countries to Watch

Below are the top 10 countries and areas in the region by number of students studying in the United States. Click on a country/area to access the *Student Mobility Facts and Figures* for that country/area. All EducationUSA student mobility fact sheets are available [here](#).

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

In addition to these top sending countries/areas, HEIs are encouraged to consider the following locations in their recruitment plans:

**Mongolia.** Mongolian students are increasingly interested in study abroad, including in the United States, and the government of Mongolia has launched several initiatives to support international student mobility. Community colleges and 2+2 programs are a potential growth area for this emerging student population.

**New Zealand.** The number of New Zealand students pursuing higher education in the United States has gradually increased every year over the past decade, and the United States is now the most popular study destination for New Zealanders. The

opportunity to play sports on campus is a key driver for undergraduate students.

**Papua New Guinea.** With a population of more than eight million and strong student interest in studying in the United States, Papua New Guinea is one of the many Pacific Island countries that U.S. HEIs are encouraged to consider adding to recruitment plans. A new U.S. marine base due to open in 2024 will increase mutual interest in Papua New Guinea, neighboring islands, and other parts of Oceania.

**Philippines.** The Philippines is the second most populous country in Southeast Asia, with a population of more than 100 million people, of which almost 20 percent are between the ages of 15 and 25. English is among the official national languages, making the Philippines one of the most important student recruitment markets in Southeast Asia.

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

As the region recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, non-degree programs and vocational training will attract more interest as governments prioritize economic recovery and address workforce development needs. As governments across the region seek qualified training providers, this trend will offer opportunities for U.S. institutions that can provide practical training with American and multinational companies.

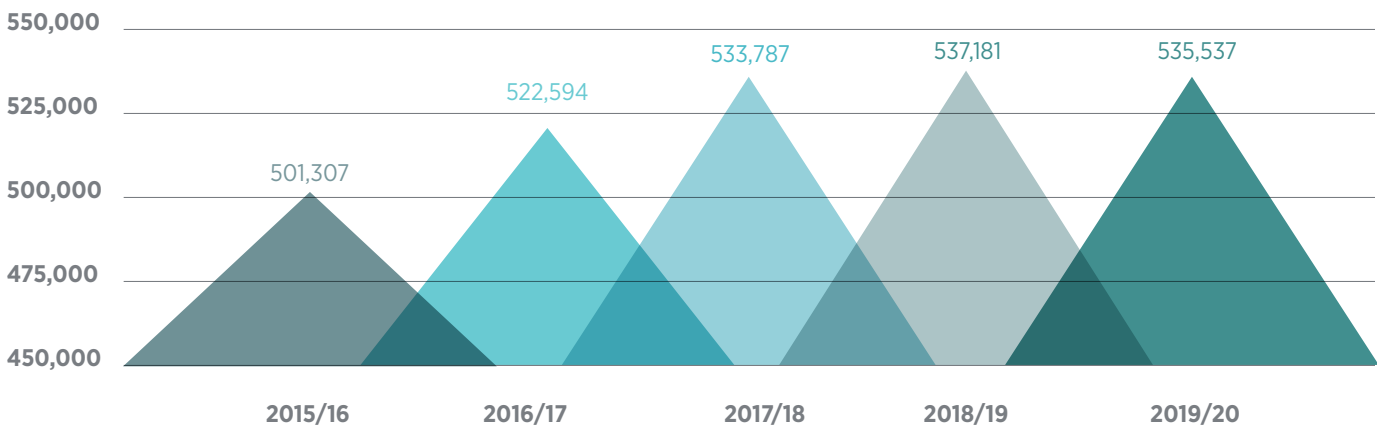
Given pandemic-related economic pressures, affordability of academic

programs and prospects for employment post-graduation will become even more critical considerations for students weighing study abroad options. Prospective students will encounter a wider array of options from locations both within the region and beyond.

China will remain a crucial student recruitment market in the region, and given the leveling off of growth in student mobility between China and the United States, HEIs are encouraged to maintain outreach engagement with students at all levels of study. Data from the *2020 Open Doors Report* indicate that while Chinese students pursuing graduate degrees and OPT increased 2.8 percent and 1.9 percent respectively mobility among undergraduates fell by half a percent and declined among non-degree-seeking students by 7.8 percent. According to a market study EducationUSA China conducted in 2020 on the perceptions of Chinese secondary students and their parents of studying in the United States, while a significant number of high school and middle school students who intended to study abroad changed their plans after the pandemic, 89 percent of families from first-tier cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen still reported plans to study abroad. Some 65 percent of students from these cities stated they would choose the United States over other destinations.

In Southeast Asia, the U.S. Department of State launched the Billion Futures Scholars program to increase Southeast

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





Asian student mobility to the United States, building on the more than half-million ASEAN students who have studied in the United States over the past 10 years. The program will also help support U.S. universities to diversify their international student populations by attracting students from across the 10 ASEAN member nations and Timor-Leste. Under the Billion Futures Scholars program, the U.S. Government plans to expand support for Southeast Asian students through two existing programs: the Global Undergraduate Exchange Program (UGRAD), which provides single-semester scholarships to undergrads for non-degree study, cultural enrichment, and community service; and the Fulbright program for graduate studies.

According to the *2020 Open Doors Report*, the number of students from Taiwan studying in the United States has continued to grow. Taiwan has adopted several initiatives that may lead to even greater student mobility to the United States, including the establishment of a goal to become a Mandarin/English bilingual population by 2030. In addition, in December 2020, the United States and Taiwan signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the U.S.-Taiwan Education Initiative, which will increase two-way educational exchanges. The initiative provides a framework to allow more teachers of Mandarin from Taiwan to teach in the United States and encourages American students and teachers to learn Mandarin and teach English in Taiwan. The Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs has pledged USD\$1 million to help increase the number of American students coming to Taiwan. Similarly, the U.S. government has increased funding for the Fulbright program in Taiwan in recent years.

### Virtual Engagement and Social Media

As high-speed internet becomes more widely accessible across the region, opportunities for online student recruitment events will also become more prevalent. Engagement with students through social media, and video outreach through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Zoom, YouTube, and Google, are important strategies for U.S. HEIs to reach students across the region. Video content is particularly appealing to prospective students from EAP, especially if the content includes currently enrolled students or recent alumni from their



home countries. Audio content via podcasts and other platforms has also increased in popularity.

Social media is an important communication tool for Chinese students and parents to obtain information about studying in the United States. Because many commonly used platforms like Facebook and Google are unavailable in China, HEIs should consider platforms like Weibo and WeChat, which are widely used among students in China. While EducationUSA China has launched several social media campaigns highlighting measures U.S. universities have taken to keep their international students safe during COVID and what to expect before departing for U.S. programs in 2021, it is helpful for U.S. universities to build their own Chinese-language webpages and social media accounts to provide accurate and comprehensive information to prospective students and parents. U.S. HEIs should also actively engage with local high school counselors via WeChat messaging to establish relationships across the vast secondary sector.

Both China and the Republic of Korea continue to be regional leaders in 5G connectivity, and Thailand is a leader in 5G access within ASEAN. Some U.S. HEIs offer virtual reality experiences to allow students to learn about campus life and connect with the institution from afar in a more convenient and engaging way. As 5G connections become more widely accessible in the region, and as the pandemic continues to impact in-person travel, virtual reality experiences are likely to become a more common recruitment tool.

### Successful Recruiting Strategies

- Provide clear messaging about safety. Parents are increasingly concerned about public health, campus safety, and reports of bias and discrimination against Asians as well as Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders. U.S. institutions are encouraged to directly address these concerns in their messaging and to dispel misconceptions about U.S. campus life while also highlighting specific programs and services for international students that ensure their success and well-being on campus.
- Provide detailed information about financial assistance and scholarships and, when possible, produce materials in local languages.
- Provide specific and up-to-date information about student internships, work-study, and other opportunities such as OPT and Curricular Practical Training (CPT), while drawing connections between these opportunities and future employability through alumni testimonials and success stories. Many students in the region lack awareness of OPT and CPT programs.
- Community colleges should provide detailed information about articulation agreements, and both two- and four-year institutions should highlight the academic rigor and cost-effectiveness of the 2+2 model.
- When attending educational fairs in the region, whether virtually or in person, community colleges should consider a joint presence and/or presentation with four-year articulation agreement

## East Asia and Pacific

partners to provide students a full understanding of 2+2 options.

- If available, highlight e-sports, especially if funding is available. The Republic of Korea and others in the region are leaders in e-sports competition and game development, and students throughout the region increasingly demonstrate interest in the gaming space.
- U.S. institutions are encouraged to promote linkages with local universities that allow students to begin coursework in their home country and complete a degree program at a U.S. institution.
- Information on college and university websites should be easy to navigate and mobile-ready; when possible, offer foreign language translations of online content or landing pages for targeted markets.
- Provide virtual campus tours or virtual reality experiences for a more engaging, interactive experience that does not require in-person travel.
- Influencer culture is thriving across the region: encourage alumni, current students, and student ambassadors to share positive experiences with your institutions via social media.
- In preparation for a return to recruitment travel and in-person events, HEIs should build, strengthen, and maintain relationships with stakeholders in EAP. This may include making calls to

former students and parents, offering workshops for local schools, and considering in-country representation.

- Plan beyond the general informational session. With an abundance of information sessions and after many months of online schooling, students have become more judicious in choosing from online programming options. Examples include skill-building workshops, sessions on field-specific topics, or events that are shorter but offer options for additional engagement. Career-focused sessions, even informal ones, have also proven successful, especially when they involve EAP alumni.

### Foreign Government and Private Funding

A wide range of government and private funding is available to students in the EAP region. Many government scholarships are merit-based and are designed to support high-achieving students. Some scholarships involve a service requirement, obligating recipients to work in the civil service of their home country after earning their degree.

The government of Thailand provides more than 500 scholarships per year to Thai citizens through the Royal Thai Government Scholarship Program. The organization hosts its annual education fair in November. More information is available on the [website](#).

Many ASEAN countries are prioritizing skilled workforce development. The

government of Brunei continues to offer fully funded scholarships for overseas study at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture supports non-degree study through the **Endowment Fund for Education** and graduate-level study through a graduate degree scholarship program. While the Cambodian government does not provide direct funding to support students studying abroad in the United States, external scholarships like **SHE-CAN** and the **Open Society Scholarship Programs** provide support to qualified students. The Malaysian government provides scholarships such as the Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam (JPA) Public Service Department Scholarship and Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA: an agency under the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development) Scholarship to high-achieving students. Public and private sector entities including Khazanah, Petronas, and Bank Negara offer additional funding opportunities.

While more than 90 percent of Chinese students studying abroad globally are self-funded, the China Scholarship Council offers government scholarships for Chinese and American students and faculty. This includes funding for Americans earning a degree for academic credit in China and for Chinese students studying abroad. The Chinese government has increased its efforts to attract foreign students by offering full scholarships, and it prioritizes students in countries affiliated with the Belt and Road Initiative.

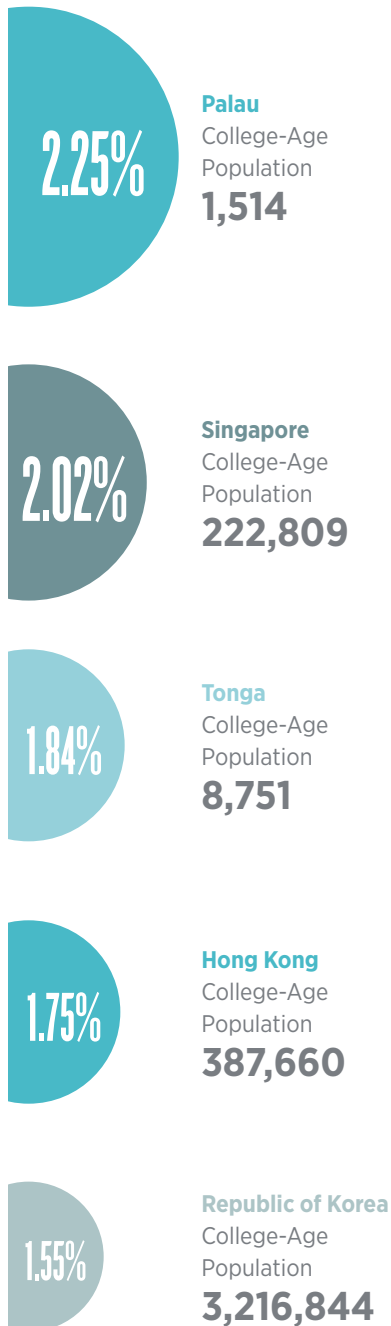
### Five Countries of Origin (with over 100 students) with Highest Percentage Growth, International Students in the Region (Five-Year Trend)

Country	2015/16	2019/20	% Change
Laos	63	131	107.9%
Burma	1,194	1,828	53.1%
Cambodia	499	742	48.7%
Tonga	130	161	23.8%
New Zealand	1,608	1,856	15.4%

# 107.9%

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

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



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics; Indicator: 2018 Population of the Official Age for Tertiary Education, Both Sexes

In the Republic of Korea, the Kwangjeong Lee Educational Foundation (KEF) provides full scholarships for students pursuing degrees overseas at the undergraduate through doctoral levels. The ILJU Academy and Culture Foundation provides scholarships valued at up to USD\$120,000 for students in doctoral programs. Please visit the EducationUSA website for additional information on scholarships for Korean students.

In February 2021, the Japan-U.S. Educational Commission announced the Fulbright-Mikitani Memorial Grant, which will provide nearly USD\$1 million to support five to six future Japanese participants in the U.S. Fulbright program.

### Regional Economics and Market Demand

Economic recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 will be a key priority for countries in the region, and many are likely to focus on developing skilled workforces that are positioned to fill key economic needs in the years to come.

Early in 2021, ASEAN member countries adopted a five-year Digital Economy Master Plan, a key component of which is workforce development in the technology sector. As part of this plan, Brunei will prioritize education and training in logistics and transportation, energy, business, tourism, finance, education, and health care. Malaysia will also make strategic investments in business and entrepreneurship education to further drive economic development. Several EducationUSA centers in ASEAN countries are well positioned to support U.S. HEIs as they establish new partnerships to advance regional economic and educational initiatives.

The number of students from Vietnam participating in OPT in AY 2019-2020 increased by just under 9 percent—a significant increase that attests to students’ interest in gaining work experience before returning home.

In AY 2019-2020, the number of New Zealand students studying in the United States increased by 0.8 percent to 1,856 students, pushing the United States ahead of Australia as the most popular study abroad destination for New Zealanders. Currently, New Zealand students study at nearly 500 HEIs across the United States. According to the National Collegiate

Athletic Association (NCAA), New Zealand is a top-10 sending country for student-athletes to the United States and sends the second most student-athletes to the NCAA per capita after Canada.

The Pacific Islands face a range of challenges, from pollution and climate change to natural disasters, driving a need for professionals trained at U.S. institutions in related fields of study. Cybersecurity is another area of growing interest in the region, as recent upgrades to internet infrastructure have exposed new vulnerabilities against which governments must protect.

### Institutional Partnerships

Many HEIs across the region have active institutional partnerships with U.S. institutions. Periodic conferences focused on various aspects of higher education provide important platforms for engagement with postsecondary sector counterparts in EAP. The annual Asia-Pacific Association for International Education (APAIE) conference is one such event and focuses on partnerships with institutions in the region. Every year, EducationUSA hosts a pavilion at the APAIE conference through which U.S. HEIs can join a shared booth space to engage with stakeholders interested in developing and furthering partnership initiatives.

Institutional partnerships are particularly well-established in more developed economies such as Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, and the Republic of Korea, where local institutions have been actively working with American counterparts for many years on a range of initiatives, including student and scholar

## Regional Student Totals Top Five Countries of Origin

Country	2019/20	% Change
China, People’s Rep of	372,532	0.8%
South Korea	49,809	-4.7%
Vietnam	23,777	-2.5%
Taiwan	23,724	1.5%
Japan	17,554	-3.0%

## East Asia and Pacific

exchange programs, joint research, and curriculum design. Institutions in these countries prioritize campus internationalization and are interested in both sending and receiving international students and scholars.

Southeast Asia offers the most growth potential for institutional partnerships. Government ministries of education, seeking long-term improvements in higher education systems, are often the driving force behind partnerships. The Philippines, through the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED), is particularly proactive in investing in higher education institutional partnerships. Local institutions and government agencies in Malaysia and Indonesia have also recently expressed increased interest in partnership development.

In the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and Palau, the highest level of educational credential available locally is a community college degree. Since these postsecondary systems are largely based on the American model, U.S. institutions may find transfer agreements with institutions in the Pacific Islands a particularly good fit. Scholarships are available for transfers, and students from these islands do not need a visa to work, study, or travel to the United States.

### Regional EducationUSA Events, Fairs, and Conferences

The EAP region hosts a range of events throughout the year, often coordinated across multiple countries to maximize student participation and efficiency in travel and access for U.S. HEI representatives. While all EducationUSA centers shifted to virtual engagement during the pandemic, some centers have re-opened for in-person activities with limited capacity and in compliance with local conditions and regulations. The EducationUSA Southeast Asia Fair Tour, normally held each spring, is the network's largest fair in the region. In coordination with EducationUSA centers throughout the region, the fair was offered virtually in 2020, and a larger virtual fair is planned for August 2021. Embassy Beijing hosted its first on-compound college fair in October 2020, combining in-person U.S. university booths with a virtual college fair to link students across China with U.S.-based university representatives. Countries in EAP have also started to host their own virtual fairs focused on community

colleges, law schools, STEM, and business programs.

International Education Week and the release of the annual *Open Doors* report both take place in November, making this a prime time to collaborate with EducationUSA in EAP. In 2021, EAP REACs will organize a weeklong virtual program involving more than 50 U.S. university representatives. For details, please contact the EAP REACs at [EAP@educationusa.org](mailto:EAP@educationusa.org).

The EAP REACs organize training sessions each month for EducationUSA advisers from across the network on special topics of U.S. higher education. The network collaborates closely with U.S. university representatives to design these sessions, offering U.S. HEI representatives opportunities to engage multiple country advising teams at once. These sessions often lead to follow-up opportunities to work with individual advising centers for further collaboration.

### Regional Calendar and Best Times to Interact with Students

Spring and fall are the best times to visit most countries in the EAP region. Visitors should consider the lunar calendar, religious and cultural events, and diverse academic calendars within the EAP region. The specific dates of holidays and exam periods shift each year, so it is advisable to check with local EducationUSA centers to ensure a productive outreach itinerary.

Virtual engagements should be scheduled to accommodate local time zones. Unfortunately, U.S. school representatives often must host sessions outside of normal business hours in the United States to effectively reach prospective students in EAP.

HEIs should contact EducationUSA centers directly to inquire about availability to host information sessions. Due to high demand, it is advisable to contact centers early. EducationUSA centers in the region regularly organize center-based programs such as cohort advising sessions and academic workshops. U.S. representatives should consult with centers to inquire about opportunities to join regional programming.

#### **Times to avoid travel:**

- The Lunar New Year and the surrounding days are marked by closures and heavy holiday travel in much of the region.
- In April, Songkran holidays are celebrated in Laos and Thailand, Chaul Chnam Khmer or Songkran in Cambodia, and Thingyan in Myanmar.
- Ramadan and a period of approximately two weeks after the end of Ramadan should be considered in countries with large or predominantly Muslim populations like Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia, among others.
- Chuseok or Autumn Festival holidays are celebrated in the Republic of Korea, China, and Taiwan. They involve time off work and school, during which many people travel.
- Major exam periods for high school students in the Republic of Korea are in mid-spring and fall (dates vary from year to year).
- Winter break (late December through late February) takes place in the Republic of Korea for high schools; advanced planning and promotion are advised to ensure an audience during this period.
- In Australia, avoid mid-April (around Easter), early to mid-July, late September to early October, and late December to the end of January.
- For the southern Pacific islands avoid late November to the end of January (all schools are closed for summer holidays).
- In Japan, Golden Week (the first week of May) and Obon (the second week of August) holidays are popular times for Japanese domestic and international travel.



HEIs are encouraged to contact REACs regarding upcoming engagement opportunities. U.S. HEI representatives can also visit the EducationUSA [website](#) or subscribe to the EducationUSA HEI newsletter, which includes periodic regional programming updates.

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

According to 2020 *Open Doors Report* data, more than 50,000 U.S. students studied in the EAP region in AY 2018-2019, comprising almost 15 percent of all U.S. students studying abroad. Some of the most popular destinations included China, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea. China remained the number one receiver of U.S. students in EAP and the seventh largest in the world. In AY 2018-2019, several locations saw significant increases in the number of U.S. study abroad students, including the Republic of Korea (+16 percent), Laos (+40 percent), Hong Kong (+24.5 percent), Malaysia (+57.5 percent), Singapore (+27.9 percent), and Taiwan (+48.2 percent).

In 2020, U.S. embassies or consulates in Malaysia, New Zealand, Australia, and Fiji received Study Abroad Engagement Grants from the USA Study Abroad Branch at the Department of State to carry out capacity-building projects to promote U.S. study abroad. In addition, the State Department's [IDEAS program](#) awarded grants to three U.S. HEIs to develop or diversify study abroad programming in Thailand and South Korea. Study abroad in the region was also supported through the global webinar series, "[Internationalization of Higher Education in the COVID-19 Era](#)," including a series of events focused on Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji.

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



## U.S. Study Abroad

### Top Five Receiving Countries in the Region

Destination	2018/19	% Change
China, People's Rep of	11,639	0.2%
Australia	10,665	3.2%
Japan	8,928	5.4%
South Korea	4,558	16.0%
New Zealand	4,233	9.0%

### Five Countries (with over 100 students) with Highest Percentage Growth, U.S. Students in the Region (Five-Year Trend)

Country	2014/15	2018/19	% Change
Mongolia	71	132	85.9%
Malaysia	152	241	58.6%
Hong Kong	1,508	2,314	53.4%
Japan	6,053	8,928	47.5%
Taiwan	880	1,270	44.3%

# Europe and Eurasia

## Regional EducationUSA Profile

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

# 99

### EducationUSA Advising Centers in the Region

41 Comprehensive  
32 Standard  
26 Reference

In Europe and Eurasia, EducationUSA centers are located at Fulbright Commissions, local non-governmental organizations, universities and high schools, American Councils for International Education offices, binational centers, U.S. embassies and consulates, and American Spaces. EducationUSA offers advising programs in 46 countries and territories in the region and is staffed by 150 advisers across the region.

The Europe and Eurasia region remains relatively stable in terms of mobility to the United States. Overall, there was a 1.3 percent decrease in mobility from Europe and Eurasia between 2019 and 2020, according to the *2020 Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*. At the same time, approximately 52 percent of countries in the region saw growth in student mobility to the United States. Countries with the largest percentage increases were primarily smaller countries in southern Europe and Eurasia, such as Albania, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kosovo, Latvia, Montenegro, and North Macedonia. Notably, Spain also saw a nearly 9 percent increase in student mobility to the United States.

The number of graduate students from Europe and Eurasia continues to decline. There was a 2.3 percent decrease over the past year, and the five- and 10-year trends show decreases of 9.2 percent and 22.2 percent, respectively. The number of undergraduate students from Europe and Eurasia studying in the United States during academic year (AY) 2019-2020 also decreased, but only by 0.8 percent. Twenty-five countries in the region exhibited positive growth in undergraduate numbers, including 17 countries with increases in community

college enrollments. These declines can be attributed to an array of causes, such as ongoing population declines, access to shorter undergraduate and graduate degree options closer to home, and more options at local and regional institutions for English language academic programs in non-English-speaking countries.

Students and families in the region continue to prioritize return on investment and value U.S. academic experiences for hands-on learning and work opportunities. Optional Practical Training (OPT) remains a primary draw for students and stabilizes mobility numbers from the region. According to the *2020 Open Doors Report*, the number of students participating in OPT grew by almost 23 percent in the past five years and close to 70 percent over the last 10 years.

Compared to other world regions, students from Europe and Eurasia tend to be less sensitive to the U.S. political and social landscapes, which are rarely deciding factors for students considering study in the United States. However, students and parents consistently express general concerns about safety and security in the United States. Recently, the availability of new, lower cost study opportunities in countries such as Germany have also resulted in greater competition for students from this region.

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





less-traditional study abroad destinations across the region. EducationUSA advisers or their host institutions are often engaged in training and workshops for local institutions on local postsecondary sectors and strategic partnerships.

Access to testing continues to be a major issue for the region as nearly all countries have implemented COVID-19-related lockdowns during peak testing months. High school applicants are especially impacted as exams often required for undergraduate admissions to U.S. institutions are offered on a limited basis. Students took advantage of at-home testing options where available, but they also reported widespread technical difficulties with testing platforms, electronic devices, and the speed and bandwidth of personal internet connections. Graduate applicants eagerly explored test-optional admissions policies in this past admissions cycle, but EducationUSA advisers regularly reported that high school students and their parents expressed concerns about the legitimacy of test-optional admissions. Some students with the financial means to do so traveled abroad to take these exams.

Advisers have continued to offer virtual cohort programming throughout the

pandemic, with programs receiving record numbers of applications for AY 2020-2021 advising. The EducationUSA Competitive College Club (CCC) and Opportunity Funds programs continue to provide comprehensive support to students in Europe and Eurasia. CCCs are currently offered in 14 countries in the region and assist students in preparing for the admission process and U.S. classroom experience. The EducationUSA Opportunity Funds program, serving high-achieving prospective students who demonstrate financial need, is available to citizens and officially recognized refugees in 10 countries and provides assistance to students who are academically gifted but unable to afford the initial costs of applying to and enrolling in accredited U.S. higher education institutions (HEIs) in the United States. Engaging with EducationUSA cohort programs is an excellent way to identify talented students who have demonstrated a strong commitment to U.S. study. Please contact EducationUSA Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs) for details on cohort programs in the region and guidance on how to leverage them.

In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of natural disasters, armed conflicts, and large protests have impacted the region over the past year.

Most educational institutions were closed for in-person study during the pandemic, and many offered virtual classes with varying degrees of success. Despite widely available internet service in Europe and Eurasia, access to online coursework varied across the region, and even within countries and cities. Many educational institutions did not have sufficient virtual infrastructure to effectively transition to online instruction, and instructors faced challenges in providing courses online. Some students also reported additional barriers due to a lack of internet connections and devices sufficient to accommodate multiple family members simultaneously working and studying from home.

Students and institutions also face obstacles in accessing the academic records required for the U.S. application process—a longstanding challenge exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, it has been essential for U.S. institutions to maintain maximum flexibility when requesting these documents.

Barriers to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic have caused some students to defer U.S. study for a year, begin their studies online, or even pursue an education in their home country. However,

## Europe and Eurasia



despite challenges, EducationUSA advisers report that most admitted students were eager to start their studies in the United States. Of the 46 countries surveyed in the region, only one EducationUSA advising center indicated that COVID-19-related concerns were a significant factor impacting student interest in the United States.

### Recent Trends

The COVID-19 pandemic will have deep and long-lasting implications across Europe and Eurasia. Uncertainty related to the pandemic persists, including how long travel restrictions will remain in place, whether new vaccination travel

requirements will be implemented, and how student attitudes toward study in the United States may shift. Economic challenges resulting from the pandemic may also result in fewer financial resources to support study abroad from both public and private sources, including personal funds.

Perceptions about the cost of studying in the United States remain a challenge, especially given the prevalence of high-quality, lower-cost academic programs across Europe. Additionally, Erasmus+ programs provide robust support for study abroad closer to home, although European students may apply some

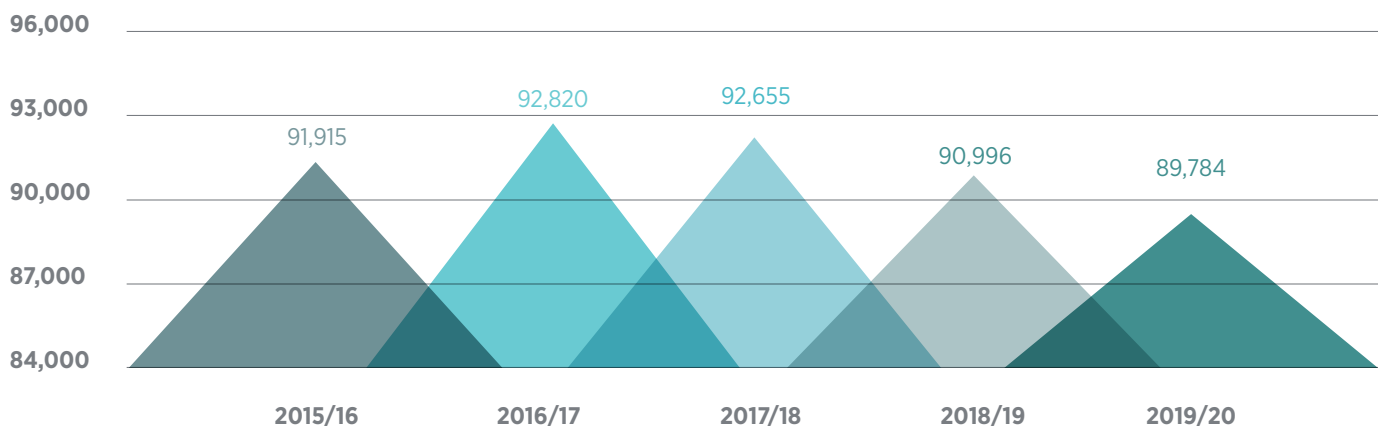
support from that program to study in the United States. Local currency fluctuations, especially for the euro, pound sterling, lira, and ruble, have also reduced student purchasing power in many instances.

Students in the region commonly study and achieve high levels of proficiency in English. Spain has attempted to increase students' English language proficiency by expanding bilingual education programs in primary and secondary schools. Mobility to countries where the student's native languages are spoken remains appealing to some students as well, such as French students who choose to study abroad in Quebec.

Some countries, such as Germany, may attract increasing numbers of internationally mobile students from the region due to low-cost or no-cost study options, while others—such as the Netherlands—draw international student populations due to large diaspora populations. Some countries in the region also employ innovative practices to attract students. For example, Charles University in Prague offers free tuition to international students who choose to study in Czech and offers a one-year Czech language program prior to admission.

Student interest in shorter study abroad experiences may also increase. The UK's new Turing Scheme, for example, will provide support to British students to study abroad, including in the United

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





States, for non-degree exchanges or short-term academic experiences. Additionally, the region continues to serve as a significant hub for student athletes. Spain, for example, is the fifth largest sending country of student athletes after the United States, Canada, UK, and Germany, with a total of 1,210 in 2019. Countries in the Balkans region also send significant numbers of student athletes to U.S. institutions.

China is an emerging competitor for students from Europe and Eurasia, offering increasing numbers of scholarships while also establishing a postsecondary presence in the region, as evidenced by Fudan University's plans to open a campus in Budapest in 2024. Increased competition for students from China and other top sending countries in Asia will make Europe and Eurasia essential recruitment destinations for U.S. institutions in the years to come.

Demographics vary across the region, with some countries such as Bulgaria facing significant declines in the number of 15-to-24-year-olds over the past five years. Meanwhile, Turkey, the third most populous country in the region, is home to a rapidly increasing number of people in this age group. Populations in other countries, such as Czechia, have stabilized.

Large scholarship programs for secondary-level students continue, including the Department of State's FLEX program, which serves students primarily from the former Soviet countries. Others include the Amancio Ortega Foundation, which provides full scholarships to 600 Spanish high school students each year to study in the United States or Canada, and the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange program for German students. These programs will continue to influence student mobility trends at the postsecondary level throughout the region.

### Top Senders and Countries to Watch

Below are the top 10 countries in the region by number of students studying in the United States. Click on a country to access the *Student Mobility Facts and Figures* sheet for that country. All EducationUSA student mobility fact sheets are available [here](#).

1. [United Kingdom](#)
2. [Turkey](#)
3. [Germany](#)
4. [France](#)
5. [Spain](#)
6. [Italy](#)
7. [Russia](#)
8. [Sweden](#)
9. [Netherlands](#)
10. [Greece](#)

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

**Azerbaijan.** Student mobility from Azerbaijan to the United States has continued to increase, with Azerbaijan being one of the few countries in the region to exhibit positive one-year, five-year, and ten-year mobility growth trends across undergraduate, graduate, non-degree, and OPT categories. While the rate of population growth has slowed, Azerbaijan continues to experience year over year population increases. **Projections** from the U.S. Census Bureau predict a steady increase in population until at least 2060. According to the *2020 Open Doors Report*, 571 Azerbaijani students studied in the United States in AY 2019-2020, with undergraduate students making up the majority of these students. Colleges and universities in Azerbaijan are eager to develop institutional partnerships to increase dual-degree programs and short-term exchange options for students and faculty.

**Czechia.** The EducationUSA advising center based at the Czech Fulbright Commission has expanded engagement with students both from Prague and other cities in the past two years via an active Instagram account, virtual webinars, library of digital materials and video content, and ongoing advising activities. Interaction with local teachers and guidance counselors through the Czechia's extensive Fulbright English Teaching Assistant program and alumni network, as well as the establishment of a Czech Advisors Network, have further supported these efforts.

**Iceland.** Pursuing higher education in the United States remains a desirable option for Icelandic students. Currently, Iceland has the highest per capita student mobility to U.S. colleges and universities in the Europe and Eurasia region, and

the number of Icelandic students has increased by 3.7 percent in the past five years. Most Icelandic students finance their studies through a government-funded student loan program that fully covers educational expenses at European institutions but covers only a portion of the expected cost of U.S. higher education. American institutions should consider creating partnership programs with Icelandic institutions or Fulbright Commission and/or offering tuition waivers to attract highly interested students.

**Portugal.** EducationUSA Portugal offers cohort advising programs for undergraduate and graduate students seeking to study in the United States. Because these cohort programs have been integral to Portugal's success in sending more than 900 students to the United States annually over the past six years, they will be offered again virtually in 2021.

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

The COVID-19 pandemic will continue to negatively impact the region's economy in 2021, as virus numbers result in lockdowns and vaccination rollout timelines vary across the region. Cost will remain an important consideration for families as economies slowly recover. U.S. HEIs offering flexible admissions policies, application fee waivers, in-state tuition, and a clear return on investment will be well-positioned to attract students from the region.

Demographics will also remain a key factor in student mobility from the region in the coming years. According to **Eurostat's** 2019 report, the child (0-14) and youth population (15-29) in the European Union (EU) will continue to shrink due to low birth rates. As local institutions vie for fewer students, competition is likely to be a concern. U.S. HEIs are encouraged to implement comprehensive approaches to engaging in Europe and Eurasia that focus on institutional partnerships, dual-degree programs, short-term programs, and both in-person and virtual study abroad options.

The final adoption of a Brexit agreement between the UK and the EU will impact international students interested

## Europe and Eurasia

in studying in the UK. In a report commissioned by the UK's Department for Education, London Economics researchers predict that UK institutions could experience as much as a 57 percent decrease in EU students following Brexit. While UK institutions will likely remain attractive to EU students, they will no longer study tuition-free or have automatic access to post-study work experiences. Despite the challenges posed by Brexit, the UK has increased efforts to compete for international students through programs like the [Turing Scheme](#), through which U.S. HEIs can support student mobility between the United States and the UK.

### Virtual Engagement and Social Media

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, EducationUSA advisers in Europe and Eurasia offered robust virtual programming and advising services and regularly hosted webinars with speakers from U.S. HEIs. When the EducationUSA network pivoted fully to virtual advising due to the pandemic, it became clear that session formats and materials had to be modified to maintain and grow student audiences. Sessions featuring alumni, insights into the admissions process, and workshops on practical skills have been particularly well-attended.

The most popular social media platforms across the region for student engagement remain Facebook and Instagram, and both are used in almost every country. Facebook is primarily used for programming and live events rather than to establish initial contact with students. EducationUSA

Russia makes extensive use of VKontakte to reach Russian-speaking audiences.

EducationUSA advisers use a variety of other platforms to engage students. For direct communication with students, the most common platforms include WhatsApp, Viber, and Telegram. Zoom and Google Meet are used frequently for webinars. Twitter usage continues to wane and be reserved more for professional and networking purposes. Slack usage has become increasingly prevalent for EducationUSA Serbia's student activities, office hours, and Q&A sessions.

Effective virtual and social media engagement should include student success stories, student-led Facebook Live and Instagram Live events, Instagram "takeovers" by students studying in the United States, information about scholarship opportunities, and OPT. The EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) applies in much of the region and governs the collection and storage of personal data gathered through engagement on virtual and social media platforms. Non-EU countries also have restrictive privacy laws, so U.S. institutions should review these rules and requirements when engaging.

Virtual and social media practices vary across the region. EducationUSA advisers can recommend the most effective platforms for reaching students and can provide instructions for sharing social media content or scheduling virtual events.

### Successful Recruiting Strategies

It has been over a year since any in-person outreach or recruitment events have taken place in the region, but a return to in-person activities is anticipated in 2021 as vaccines become more available. In-person engagement remains a critical component in a successful recruitment strategy for the region, and U.S. HEI representatives are encouraged to visit the region as soon as it is safe to do so.

The [European Association for International Education \(EAIE\)](#) holds an annual conference that brings together higher education professionals from around the world. This year's event was slated to take place in Gothenburg, Sweden, in September 2021 but was transitioned to a fully virtual format. The EducationUSA Europe and Eurasia Regional EducationUSA Forum is scheduled for November 2021 in Belgrade, Serbia, and registration for the event will open in mid- to late-spring. This event will convene nearly 100 EducationUSA advisers from around the region to share recruitment best practices and engage with, and learn from, the U.S. higher education community. More information will be posted to the [EducationUSA website](#) as details are finalized.

EducationUSA advising centers in Europe and Eurasia have a robust social media presence and the capacity to host virtual events. Due to increased demand, and to maintain audience engagement, advisers often collaborate to host regional events. U.S. HEI representatives are encouraged to contact REACs to learn more about

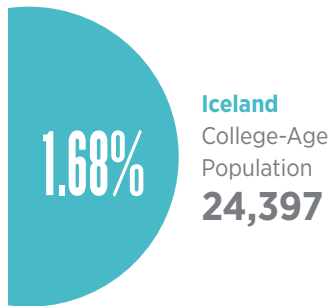
### Five Countries of Origin (with over 100 students) with Highest Percentage Growth, International Students in the Region (Five-Year Trend)

Country	2015/16	2019/20	% Change
Albania	705	1,095	55.3%
Azerbaijan	391	571	46.0%
Armenia	270	339	25.6%
Belarus	323	388	20.1%
Spain	6,640	7,954	19.8%

# 55.3%

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

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



**Iceland**  
College-Age Population  
**24,397**



**Cyprus**  
College-Age Population  
**57,992**



**Norway**  
College-Age Population  
**347,806**



**Sweden**  
College-Age Population  
**594,891**



**Greece**  
College-Age Population  
**536,831**

*Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics; Indicator: 2018 Population of the Official Age for Tertiary Education, Both Sexes*

participating in these multicountry virtual programs.

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

Messaging focused on the return on investment offered by the institution is particularly effective for students in the region. Marketing materials should feature alumni and demonstrate the ways in which their career paths were informed by their experiences at the institution. As applicable, institutions are also encouraged to highlight steps they are taking to simplify the application process for international students, such as waiving application fees or offering test-optional policies. High school students and parents continue to express trepidation about test-optional admission policies and how they are implemented on campus, so HEIs are encouraged to clearly articulate any flexibilities in their admissions process. U.S. institutions can also benefit from sharing all of the ways international students can earn and/or save money while on U.S. campuses, including through on-campus work, teaching or research assistantships or fellowships, and by leveraging student discounts.

Students and parents may still be apprehensive about traveling to the United States due to media coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic, social and political issues being openly debated in the U.S., and general safety concerns, including gun violence. U.S. HEIs should be transparent and candid about how their campus has addressed these issues and is ensuring the safety and well-being of all students. Students and their families are also eager to learn about the steps institutions have taken to guide and support international

students throughout the pandemic and how they approach crisis management.

### Institutional Partnerships

A growing number of countries in Europe and Eurasia are investing in partnerships that support educational mobility and exchange for students and faculty. In addition to economic pressures stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, several countries in southern and eastern Europe face brain drain issues, prompting governments to invest in short-term exchange programs that will make students more competitive in the local job market upon their return.

EducationUSA is uniquely positioned to facilitate engagement between U.S. institutions and HEIs in the region. Throughout the past year, institutions in Europe and Eurasia continued to develop their partnerships initiatives virtually. Ukraine focused on Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), a collaboration between Ukrainian and American faculty to develop joint virtual modules that can be integrated into existing courses. Greece pivoted to a virtual format for its International Academic Partnership Program (IAPP), launched in spring 2020, and administered by the Institute of International Education (IIE). IAPP is a comprehensive program that guides colleges and universities through the development of a strategic plan to increase meaningful, long-lasting academic partnerships with institutions in a focus country. In 2020, Belarus organized two U.S. mobility workshops involving a Russian and English language exchange between a Belarusian and a U.S. HEI. Turkey and other countries in the region organized virtual workshops with expert speakers on internalization of

### Regional Student Totals Top Five Countries of Origin

Country	2019/20	% Change
United Kingdom	10,756	-3.5%
Turkey	9,481	-6.7%
Germany	9,242	0.6%
France	8,471	-2.8%
Spain	7,954	9.5%

## Europe and Eurasia

higher education. Countries in Western Europe have organized several U.S. higher education engagement events in 2021 to help facilitate new partnership initiatives. Nearly 300 U.S. institutions have participated in these events as of April 2021.

Credit transfer continues to be a major concern for institutions in the region. European and Eurasian HEIs are advocating for simpler and more flexible reciprocity regulations. Some countries, like Albania, continue to pursue transfer agreements for students in three-year bachelor's degrees programs to attend their senior year in the United States and obtain a U.S. undergraduate degree.

Fulbright Commissions in Europe and Eurasia are enhancing their programs to initiate mobility collaboration with local institutions. Individual connections between research groups and faculty can be the best strategy to develop long-term partnerships that include student exchange agreements and tuition waivers. Czech universities have been actively internationalizing in particular, thanks in part to support from Fulbright capacity-building programs and the Czech National Agency for International Education and Research. Other successful examples include the Transatlantic Mobility Program in France and the Fulbright International Education Administrator program. Finnish institutions also provide short-term opportunities for U.S. students in exchange for longer-term exchange placements for Finnish students in the U.S. When identifying prospective partners, consider institutions that may have been left out of the institutional partnerships arena, including institutions that offer several professionally oriented bachelor's degrees. In some cases, unique opportunities exist for larger-scale partnerships, such as the regional higher education initiative between the U.S. state of Georgia and Bavaria. EducationUSA advisers and the U.S. embassies and consulates can advise U.S. institutions on potential partnership opportunities.

The Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) is very active in the region, and in some countries like Austria, Bulgaria, France, and Turkey, education is a primary focus. FCS can offer matching programs to help identify prospective local higher education partners or organize U.S. pavilions at some

of the largest higher education fairs in the region.

**Foreign Government and Private Funding Erasmus+.** Erasmus+ provides a wide range of opportunities to students, educators, and administrators. Signature initiatives include Jean Monnet Activities, Horizon 2020, and Marie Curie Fellowships. All EU countries have Erasmus+ program administrators who can provide additional information about how U.S. HEIs can engage with these programs.

**Albania.** The Excellence Fund for Albanian students offers funding to graduate students. The Albanian American Development Foundation fully funds master's degrees for selected fields of study.

**Armenia.** More than 15 private foundations provide scholarships for Armenians to study in the United States. All details are listed on the EducationUSA Armenia [page](#).

**Austria.** The Marietta Blau Grant for Ph.D. students and the Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education, Science, and Research offers additional support that can be accessed through a comprehensive grant [database](#).

**Baltic-American Freedom Foundation.** The Baltic-American Freedom Foundation funds citizens of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to participate in research and internships in the U.S. focused on economic growth and democratic processes. Awards range from USD\$30,000 to USD\$60,000.

**Belgium.** The Belgian American Educational Foundation provides scholarships for graduate studies, the Fernand Lazard Foundation offers interest-free loans, and the Research Foundation—Flanders supports doctoral studies.

**Bermuda.** Bermuda has a comprehensive [website](#) that provides information on all private and government-funded opportunities.

**Croatia.** U.S. Mobility Micro-Grants cover up to USD\$500 for application costs to U.S. universities (for bachelor's and master's programs). Additional details on scholarships are available on the EducationUSA Croatia [center page](#).

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

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

**France.** The French government offers grants to support undergraduate-level study. The Monahan Foundation provides funding of up to approximately USD\$50,000 for master's or doctoral degrees in STEM fields.

**Finland.** The League of Finnish-American Societies (SAM) provides funding for doctoral students. The Finnish government also supports study abroad at up to USD\$490 per month as a living allowance and USD \$860 per month for academic expenses.

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

**Germany.** The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) provides scholarships for non-degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Arnold Heidsieck scholarships cover one year of undergraduate studies in the humanities. The Association of German-American Clubs provides 30 scholarships each year that cover most fields of study. Baden-Württemberg scholarships provide support for students at universities in that German state.

**Greece.** Greece currently offers scholarship support for U.S. study at the graduate level only. Additional details on scholarships



are available on the [EducationUSA Greece website](#).

**Hungary.** The government of Hungary offers the Stipendium Peregrinum to support undergraduate or graduate studies abroad. Additional details on scholarships are available on the [EducationUSA Hungary center page](#).

**Iceland.** [FaraBara](#) posts general information about studying abroad. The Thor Thors program awards scholarship funding ranging from USD\$2,000 to USD \$5,000 for graduate studies. The Leifur Eiriksson Foundation awards USD\$25,000 for graduate studies.

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

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

**Kosovo.** The Kosovo American Education Fund (KAEF) provides scholarships for master's-level study in the United States.

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

**Luxembourg.** The Information and Documentation Centre for Higher Education (CEDIES) oversees a program from which all residents can receive USD\$5,000 to USD\$14,000. This aid is provided in the form of grants and minimal-interest loans with generous repayment provisions.

**North Macedonia.** The Ministry of Education and Science awards academic scholarships of up to US\$40,000 per year to support study in a limited number of fields of study. Additional details on scholarships are available on the [EducationUSA North Macedonia center page](#).

**Netherlands.** Low-interest loans are available through the DUO (government)

program. KHMW-Eizenga scholarships provide up to USD\$50,000 to pursue a degree in economics or a Master of Business Administration (MBA). The Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, VSBfonds, and Vrijvrouwe van Renswoude foundations also provide support for graduate students.

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

**Poland.** The [National Science Centre of Poland](#) offers funding for pre-doctoral and doctoral students. The [Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange](#) supports research at the doctoral, post-doctoral, and experienced researcher levels. The [Kosciuszko Foundation](#) provides support for Polish nationals to pursue research or study in the United States.

**Serbia.** The Ministry of Youth and Sports awards graduate scholarships and

scholarships for designated performing arts schools around the world, with funding of as much as USD\$11,000 per year.

**Slovenia.** The [Ad Futura Programme for International Mobility](#) offers students as much as USD\$33,000 annually for the duration of their academic program. This scholarship program funds undergraduate studies in STEM fields or graduate studies in all fields except the fine and performing arts. The Ministry of Culture awards other generous scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students in the fine and performing arts, cultural management, and other fields.

**Slovak Republic.** The Martin Filko Scholarship supports graduate study in economics, mathematics, statistics, and public policy. The [Tatra Banka Foundation](#) offers grants at all academic levels. The maximum funding amount is 5,000 euros per student to support IT projects.

## U.S. Study Abroad

### Top Five Receiving Countries in the Region

Destination	2018/19	% Change
United Kingdom	39,358	-0.1%
Italy	39,043	5.7%
Spain	33,849	4.4%
France	18,465	7.4%
Germany	12,029	-1.8%

### Five Countries (with over 100 students) with Highest Percentage Growth, U.S. Students in the Region (Five-Year Trend)

Country	2014/15	2018/19	% Change
Ukraine	7	100	1328.6%
Bulgaria	42	155	269.0%
Portugal	423	1,096	159.1%
Slovenia	47	118	151.1%
Iceland	513	1,286	150.7%



## Europe and Eurasia



**Spain.** La Caixa, Rafael del Pino, and Fundación Ramón Areces all provide support for graduate studies. The Banco de España provides grants of up to USD\$29,000 to support graduate-level study in economics.

**Sweden.** CSN is the government's academic financial aid program. It provides grants and low-interest loans covering tuition, fees, and living expenses.

**Switzerland.** The Swiss Benevolent Society of New York (SBS) offers the Medicus Student Exchange Scholarship, the SBS Outstanding Scholastic Achievement Award, and the SBS Merit Scholarship.

Students can apply for stipends and loans to support semester- or year-long study abroad.

**Turkey.** The Turkish Ministry of Education offers scholarships supporting graduate-

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

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

**Ukraine.** **WorldWideStudies** provides up to USD\$50,000 to cover tuition, books and materials, and health insurance for

students in master's degree programs. Priority fields include agriculture, environmental studies, ecology, law and public administration, alternative energy, and aerospace engineering.

Please click [here](#) for information on additional scholarships available to students in the region.

### Regional Economics and Market Demand

While the IT and software development fields have historically been the disciplines of choice across the region, demand may increase for programs in health care and the life sciences due to the salient public health issues laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic. In Hungary, recent policy changes have made health care professions more desirable. In Finland, there is a growing need for nurses and health care workers, social work specialists, speech and hearing specialists, and general practitioners. Skilled labor also continues to be in high demand for the region, especially in the manufacturing and construction fields. Countries in eastern and southern Europe such as Serbia and Croatia have begun to promote vocational education opportunities among youth.

The government of Turkey recently announced a new grant program to further develop agriculture, farming, and entrepreneurship. Sustainable agriculture is a top field for Moldova, along with proper waste disposal and viticulture. Ukraine, Spain, and France are also seeking to strengthen their agribusiness and agriculture sectors.

The IT sector continues to be one of the fastest-growing sectors in Europe and Eurasia. In southern and eastern Europe, a growing number of students who have earned degrees abroad are returning home to launch startups and will require expertise in the use of technology. Demand is high for developers and experts in cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and gaming. In Iceland, the top employment workforce development needs are all connected to the digital revolution as the country more fully embraces digitization and automation.

### Regional EducationUSA Events, Fairs, Conferences, and Center Events

The Europe and Eurasia region offers a wide variety of opportunities for HEI engagement, and advisers plan

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

EducationUSA tentatively plans to host a virtual booth at the 2021 **EAIE** conference and a full U.S. pavilion at the 2022 conference in Barcelona, Spain. U.S. HEIs have reported that exhibiting at the EducationUSA pavilion led to an increase in their institution's visibility, more students from Europe on their campuses, and an increase in exchange-related income for their institutions.

The **EducationUSA Europe and Eurasia Regional Forum** is scheduled to take place in early November 2021 in Belgrade, Serbia. This event is an excellent opportunity to network with EducationUSA advisers from the region, REACs, U.S. government colleagues, and local higher education counterparts, and to gather in-depth information about trends in the region. This regional forum will also offer specialized conference workshops and opportunities for U.S. HEIs to represent their institutions at a student recruitment fair.

The **11th Annual EducationUSA Eurasia and Central Asia Tour** is expected to take place in October 2021. For updates, visit the ["Find an Event" page](#) on the EducationUSA website.

The **7th Annual EducationUSA European LLM Tour** is scheduled for November 2021. Contact REAC Assistant Irina Redkina ([iredkina@educationusa.org](mailto:iredkina@educationusa.org)) for more details.

The **9th Annual EducationUSA Russia Winter Tour** is slated for February 2022 and will include stops in Moscow, Novosibirsk, St. Petersburg, Vladivostok, and Yekaterinburg. This event is a smaller tour of five to 10 institutions. The registration deadline will likely be in December, and tour information will be available on the fair's [website](#) soon.

The **9th Annual EducationUSA Southeastern Europe Tour** is scheduled for the second half of 2021 and will include fairs in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia.

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

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

In AY 2018-2019, Europe and Eurasia hosted almost 200,000 U.S. students, accounting for 55.7 percent of all U.S. study abroad. According to the *2020 Open Doors Report*, the overall number of U.S. students studying in the region increased by 3 percent from the previous year. The top five destinations globally continue to be the UK, Italy, Spain, France, and Germany. Other European countries in the top 25 worldwide include Ireland, Greece, Czechia, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Austria. Greece (+12 percent) and France (+7 percent) saw notable increases in the number of U.S. students in AY 2018-2019. Other countries in the region have also seen significant increases in inbound student mobility from the United States, including Armenia, Kosovo, Turkey, Slovakia, Estonia, Bulgaria, Portugal, Ukraine, Iceland, and Slovenia.

In 2020, U.S. embassies and Fulbright Commissions received a U.S. Study Abroad Engagement Grant from the USA Study Abroad Branch at the U.S. Department of State to carry out capacity-building projects in support of American students or study abroad in Azerbaijan, Cyprus,

Czechia, Finland, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, and Ukraine. In addition, the State Department's **IDEAS program** awarded grants to seven U.S. HEIs to develop or diversify study abroad programming in Italy, North Macedonia, Portugal, Spain, and the UK. Study abroad in the region was also supported through the global webinar series, **"Internationalization of Higher Education in the COVID-19 Era,"** with specific programming focused on Greece, Portugal, and Spain.

EducationUSA centers have collaborated with local universities, embassies, and Fulbright Commissions to support these initiatives.

U.S. study abroad students are welcome to join EducationUSA programming activities throughout the region. U.S. institutions are encouraged to provide information and resources to study abroad participants prior to their departure from the United States so that they can promote the institution to local audiences. Students have delivered general presentations about their institutions, joined conversation groups, assisted with mock admissions interviews, and participated in alumni fairs and other events that allowed them to engage with local high school and university students. A growing number of Virtual Student Federal Service (VSFS) interns have been assisting advisers in Europe and Eurasia with their virtual programs. More than 20 countries in the region work with U.S. VSFS interns to diversify their advising services.

## Regional Calendar and Best Times to Interact with Students

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

# Middle East and North Africa

## Regional EducationUSA Profile

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

# 27

### EducationUSA Advising Centers in the Region

17 Comprehensive  
9 Standard  
1 Reference

EducationUSA advising centers in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are located at U.S. embassies and consulates; America-Mideast Educational and Training Services, Inc. (AMIDEAST) offices; American Centers; and a World Learning center in Algeria. Although all centers currently offer virtual advising, EducationUSA advising centers for Iran, Libya, Syria, and Yemen have historically been and remain fully virtual operations. The region includes 27 centers (17 comprehensive, nine standard, and one reference) in 19 countries and territories with 30 advisers who provide up-to-date services and programming.

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

MENA is a dynamic and complex region that can be divided into three

subregions: North Africa, the Levant, and the Gulf. While these subregions share many common characteristics, each also possesses distinct features. Students across North Africa have historically chosen study options in Europe, while many countries in the Gulf region are striving to expand capacity within their own higher education sectors and retain domestic students. Newly expanded higher education options within the region are likely to attract some MENA students who otherwise may have pursued options abroad.

EducationUSA advisers in the MENA region work in an environment of frequent change and opportunity. Despite overall population growth in the past decade, the *2020 Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange* indicates a 10.8 percent decrease in students from the region studying in the United States during academic year (AY) 2019-2020 compared to the previous year. This is the fourth consecutive year of decline in the number of students from the region, with Iraq (-22 percent), Libya (-16.9 percent), Qatar (-19.7 percent), Saudi Arabia (-16.5 percent), and the UAE (-12.2 percent) all decreasing as a result of scaled-back government scholarship programs, recent changes in mandatory military service requirements, growing higher education options in the region, and increased competition from other countries. After a decade of consistent growth, student numbers from Kuwait have also dropped for the second year in





a row (-8.9 percent). However, numbers from some locations grew, including Egypt (+5 percent), Lebanon (+2.2 percent), Morocco (+2.6 percent), and the Palestinian Territories (+2.1 percent).

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

EducationUSA advising centers in MENA conduct strategic outreach in collaboration with public affairs and consular sections of embassies and consulates. Approximately half of the advising centers in MENA are based at an embassy or consulate and are located within Public Affairs sections. Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs) and EducationUSA advisers hold regular education briefings and webinars for U.S. HEIs about local educational systems, trends, opportunities, and recruitment strategies. For example, through the 50 state webinar campaign, EducationUSA Saudi Arabia seeks to introduce local students to U.S. HEIs in all U.S. states through programming and Facebook Live presentations.

### Regional Overview

The United States remains a top higher education destination for students from MENA, despite recent declines in the overall number of students from the MENA region enrolled at



U.S. institutions. The decline in new enrollments is primarily the result of scaled-back government scholarship programs in the Gulf region. Some governments in the region have revised and/or restructured these programs, in some cases due to economic pressures related to declining oil prices and the COVID-19 pandemic. Some governments have also made changes to the lists of approved institutions for scholarship programs. For example, Saudi Arabia's Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program eliminated Phase Three of its award, which included the elite scholarship, and Kuwait eliminated dentistry and pharmacy scholarship programs to the United States. However, scholarship opportunities remain available to many students in the region and are designed to support emerging labor market demands.

Local and regional institutions are attractive to students across the region because of their cost, location, and partnerships with local institutions, especially given the travel challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Opportunities for growth in student numbers from MENA depend in part on labor market demands driving the need for specialized training not available in the region. The growth of online study opportunities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has created opportunities for hybrid programs and partnerships between U.S. institutions and institutions in the region. The future of online higher education will continue to influence students' study abroad plans and preferred coursework

modalities. Countries that successfully leverage digital education in the years to come will likely see more opportunities to attract and retain international students.

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

Most countries in the region have engaged with the U.S. government and U.S. colleges and universities to expand local higher education capacity through institutional linkages. Many universities in the Gulf are interested in collaborating with U.S.-educated faculty to develop institutional capacity and are eager to connect with U.S. institutions

## Middle East and North Africa

for joint research and teaching opportunities. Although students in the Gulf region have adequate access to universities in their home countries, they are also interested in U.S. study, particularly at the graduate level. U.S. institutions are encouraged to collaborate with Ministries of Education in the region to implement programs that create pipelines of students equipped with skills that will prepare them for educational opportunities in the United States.

### Recent Trends

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

Students across MENA pursue study abroad in a range of countries. Some choose Canada because of the perception that the country offers lower tuition rates and a less complex student visa process. The UK is attractive to some students because of geographic proximity and strong historical ties to

Gulf countries such as Bahrain, Qatar, and the UAE. For students from North Africa, France remains a viable option due to geographic proximity and linguistic affinity.

As compared to five years ago, students in the MENA region now have more opportunities to study closer to home, and increasing numbers are choosing institutions in Oman, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the UAE. Competition for international students in the Gulf is growing as Qatar, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia establish themselves as educational hubs in the region. Over the past year, several Gulf nations eased visa and employment restrictions on foreign nationals, allowing them to remain in-country while working to support their studies. U.S. branch campuses in the region—including six in Qatar and three in the UAE—are growing in popularity. Many American-style HEIs in the region have recently attained accreditation from one or more U.S. accrediting organizations, including one in Egypt, two in Lebanon, one in Morocco, one in Qatar, one in Saudi Arabia, and six in the UAE. Qatar introduced a new model of live-to-classroom distance learning, and three U.S. institutions currently offer undergraduate and graduate programs locally under this Global Studies Institute (GSI) umbrella.

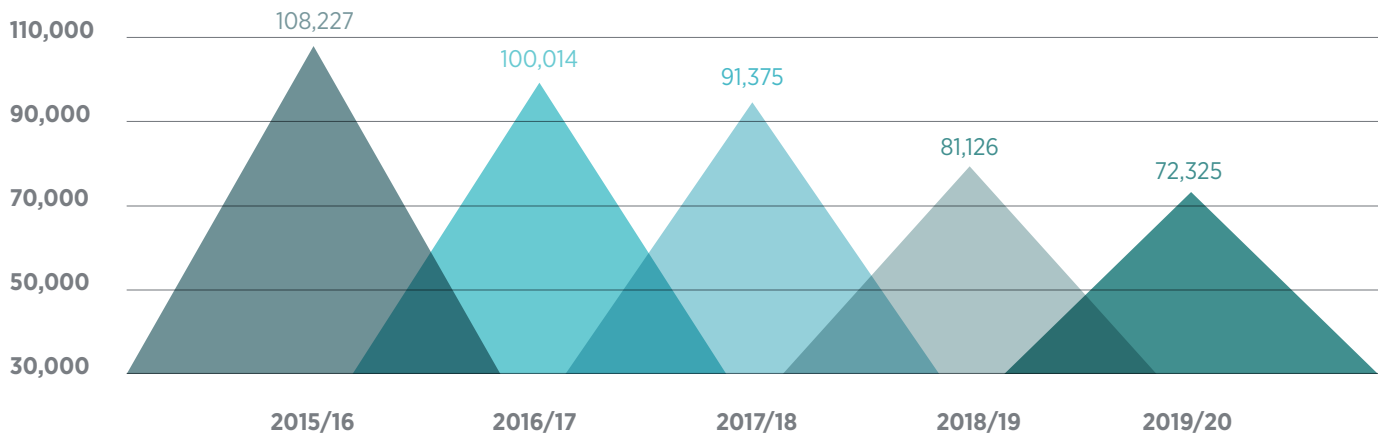
Student recruitment practitioners from U.S. HEIs are often required to seek local government permission before entering secondary schools.

The security process required to gain access takes time, especially in STEM-focused and other government schools. These secondary institutions prepare students who are highly qualified for merit-based U.S. scholarships—though some also demonstrate significant financial need. Some countries, such as Jordan, Kuwait, and the UAE, require student recruitment fair organizers to collaborate with a local agency. Government permission is also often necessary to host virtual fairs, especially in countries that have approved institution lists.

Students in the MENA region express concern about Islamophobia, safety, and other social issues in the United States. U.S. institutions should address these issues directly by sharing relevant information about campus culture, the local community, and public safety. HEIs are also encouraged to continue engaging with the global #YouAreWelcomeHere campaign to demonstrate institutional commitment to celebrating diversity, providing a welcoming campus environment, and offering support services to students. Personal connections are critical in establishing positive, realistic impressions of the United States and U.S. HEIs are encouraged to consider in-person visits to the region as travel restrictions are lifted and conditions allow.

Prior to 2020, online learning, distance learning, and homeschooling were widely available or accepted in most Gulf countries. In response to COVID-19 restrictions, several countries in the

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





region quickly assembled task forces to develop strategies for online instruction and secure platforms to support remote learning. Schools in some countries lacked the resources to provide online learning and completely halted all public school instruction for weeks or months at a time. Many countries did not anticipate how long the pandemic would limit in-person instruction, and the inability to provide consistent access to education has widened the digital divide and exacerbated educational disparities.

### Top Senders and Countries to Watch

Below are the top 10 countries in the region by number of students studying in the United States. Click on a country to access the Student Mobility Facts and Figures sheet for that country. All EducationUSA student mobility fact sheets are available [here](#).

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

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

As more English language curriculum is introduced in schools across North Africa, many students are learning English at an earlier age, leading to a continued decline in demand for

intensive English programs (IEPs). Similarly, government scholarship programs in the Middle East have begun to prioritize local and regional opportunities to study English over English as a second language (ESL) training programs in the United States. The Middle East saw a 29 percent decline in the number of IEP student weeks from 2017 to 2018, and North Africa saw an 8 percent decline. There was also a 32 percent drop in students enrolling in U.S. IEP programs from North Africa and an 18 percent drop in students from the Middle East. Local institutions will likely seek more ESL-focused faculty exchange and training partnerships with U.S. HEIs in the coming years.

Kuwait is the region's third-largest sender of international students to the United States. Although qualified students can receive fully funded government scholarships, students must achieve a minimum score on a standardized English exam to qualify for the benefit, which limits the pool of eligible students. Recent COVID-19-related interruptions to the academic year may contribute to a decrease in eligible scholarship applicants in the short term.

Due to recent domestic economic challenges and evolving regional relationships, governments across the region have implemented changes to scholarship designs, titles, and foci while also establishing stricter eligibility requirements and limitations on location of study that will impact students' choice

of institution. In many cases, scholarship recipients are limited to specific fields of study at institutions on government-approved lists, significantly impacting the number of eligible students as well as their academic disciplines and study destinations of choice. HEIs should highlight programs that support priority fields, as identified by the Ministries of Education, and be prepared to offer documentation that demonstrates student compliance with scholarship requirements. In Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, students no longer apply directly to scholarship programs, and an offer of admission must be granted from an eligible institution first. This change has resulted in fewer students studying in the United States and a corresponding decline in students enrolling in U.S.-based English language institutes prior to their studies.

MENA governments look to the United States for educational expertise and are eager to send students abroad to gain the knowledge and skills needed to contribute to development and reform at home. American institutions should expect more interest in partnerships, linkages, and U.S. faculty visits to the region, as local institutions see their U.S. counterparts as models for institutional structure and curricular development. STEM fields are the highest priority across the region, and many institutions in the region have allocated funding to send faculty to the United States for teacher training and advanced research.

Weakening currencies in Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Yemen have

# 51.3%

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

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

Country	2015/16	2019/20	% Change
Algeria	158	239	51.3%
Lebanon	1,486	1,709	15.0%
Egypt	3,442	3,859	12.1%
Jordan	2,330	2,441	4.8%
Palestinian Territories	468	478	2.1%

## Middle East and North Africa



led to reduced purchasing power, causing students to consider academic options that include full scholarship offers. In contrast, many Gulf countries such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE have experienced greater currency stability, resulting in more flexibility for students to explore study opportunities abroad regardless of financial aid. In 2018, several Gulf countries attempted to boost non-oil economies by implementing a value-added tax (VAT) of 5 percent on most goods and services. In July 2020, Saudi Arabia further increased the VAT to 15 percent. Additional economic pressure caused by the pandemic has resulted in many families, particularly in the Gulf, struggling to pay high private school fees. However, economic challenges have not affected all families equally, and many continue to have the resources to support their child's higher education. HEIs should consider the broad range of economic situations in the MENA region in their outreach strategies to attract a diverse array of top students (government scholarship recipients, self-funded students, and those requiring financial support).

Many governments sponsor college and university fairs and value the participation of U.S. institutions. Due to the pandemic, these programs have transitioned to fully online engagements and virtual fairs for students across the MENA region. Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE regularly sponsor virtual events, and EducationUSA advisers can provide guidance on participation, required approvals from local authorities,

and facilitating communication with ministries of higher education. U.S. institutions can also send faculty to EducationUSA-sponsored events, during which EducationUSA advisers can arrange faculty-to-faculty dialogues and provide guidance on strategies for engaging counterparts in collaborative research projects and other joint ventures. Provided that they have authorization from the college or university, alumni of U.S. institutions are also welcome to attend and represent their alma maters as well.

### Virtual Engagement and Social Media

According to the *Digital 2021 report* by We Are Social and Hootsuite, there were 316.1 million internet users in the MENA region in 2020. Internet connectivity is widely available in the region, although Yemen, the Palestinian Territories, and Libya have the lowest levels of connectivity. Prior to the pandemic, many people accessed the internet in public spaces like cybercafes or university campuses, but mobile device usage has increased over the past year, due in part to COVID-19-related limits on access to public spaces. Bandwidth sufficient to participate in webinars or download large files is a challenge for those in areas affected by power outages, slow connection speeds, or limitations on connectivity. These issues are particularly pressing in Algeria, Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen.

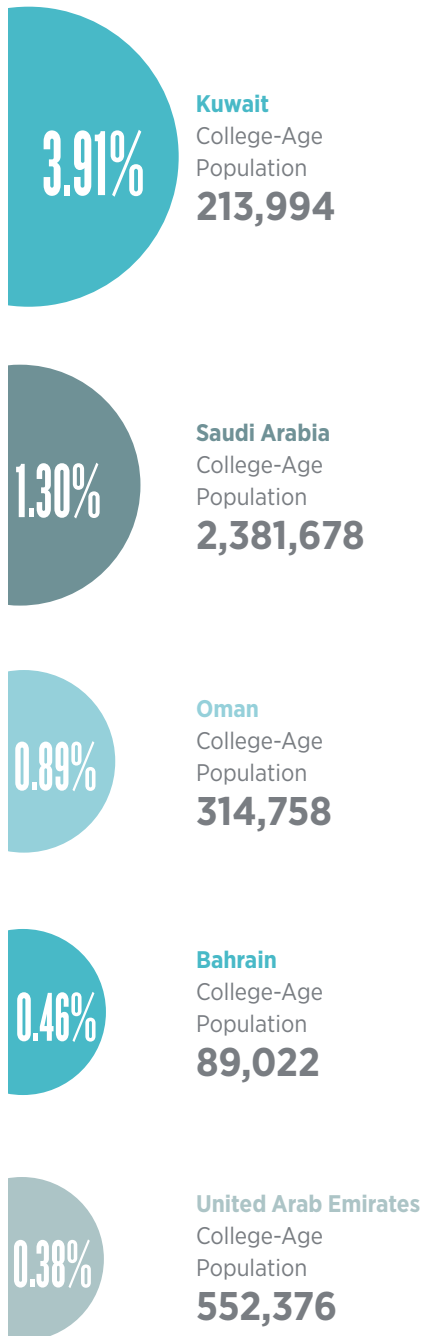
As a result of the global pandemic, all EducationUSA centers shifted to fully virtual operations in March 2020. Most advisers had previously incorporated online elements in their programming,

which allowed for a smooth transition to virtual-only advising. This shift has also enabled advisers to reach new audiences in geographic areas not frequently visited through in-person programming. The most popular platforms used for webinars include Zoom, Facebook Live, and Google Meet. YouTube is popular for viewing pre-recorded sessions, and Instagram Live and IGTV have also become more widely used in the region. Use of Clubhouse, a new audio platform, is increasingly prevalent, and some advisers have begun hosting programs related to U.S. study on the platform. Interestingly, Snapchat seems to attract more female users in the region compared to other social media platforms. WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger are also frequently used.

Even prior to the pandemic, EducationUSA advising for Iran was an exclusively virtual operation, so advisers were well positioned to build on an already robust online presence. With an updated website, new student videos, and a series of webinars, the EducationUSA Iran office provides information about U.S. higher education via a dedicated website in both Farsi (Persian) and English. The adviser meets with Iranian students and school representatives through virtual campus visits, online consultations, and at EducationUSA conferences. To effectively reach Iranian nationals residing all around the world, EducationUSA Iran has also leveraged global advertising campaigns through outlets such as Radio Javan. Iranian students' interest in U.S. undergraduate programs has been on the rise, and 23 percent of current inquiries to the advising center are about undergraduate study options. Telegram and Instagram are top platforms for Iranians whose access to some social media platforms, including Facebook and YouTube, is limited. It is strongly recommended that HEIs keep social media platforms updated and boost posts related to Iranian students. HEIs can gather more information and additional guidance on the [EducationUSA Iran website](#).

EducationUSA webinars offer opportunities to engage students in creative ways while informing them about educational opportunities in the

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



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics; Indicator: 2018 Population of the Official Age for Tertiary Education, Both Sexes

United States. EducationUSA centers in the MENA region continue to develop innovative approaches to student outreach, including the recent launch of mobile applications in Bahrain and the UAE that provide students and parents with information about upcoming EducationUSA programs.

### Successful Recruiting Strategies

HEIs are encouraged to consider high school guidance counselors as a resource and conduit through which to reach larger student audiences. The EducationUSA network has also enhanced efforts to engage these key stakeholders to provide them with information about the U.S. higher education sector and college advising resources. Local counselors meet frequently to share best practices in the admissions process and to discuss topics such as applying for student visas, writing school profiles, meeting institutional application deadlines, and identifying institutions that best meet students' needs. When possible, coordinate with other recruitment colleagues to organize virtual school visits, as not all schools can accommodate the high demand for engagement and coordinate with each institution individually.

It is helpful to translate websites and promotional materials into Arabic, Farsi, and/or Kurdish and to record videos featuring currently enrolled students from MENA as a means to engage parents and students with limited English language skills. High-quality video and photo content can convey a sense of the campus and local communities that will resonate with students and their families. Students, particularly those at the undergraduate level, are eager to learn about campus life, including housing arrangements and dining options that meet religious needs. Institutions are also encouraged to highlight student support services, such as academic tutoring, extracurricular activities, social programs, public safety precautions, and medical services on campus.

Parents and family members in the MENA region often play important roles in students' decision-making about institutions and programs of study. In some cases, graduate students will be accompanied by dependents and seek

institutions that can accommodate their families. Institutions are encouraged to consider crafting recruitment messages with these audiences in mind.

U.S. HEIs can benefit from relationships with international alumni, as well as from visiting alumni when recruiting abroad. Alumni may offer helpful insights into their experiences as students, hold key positions in the public and private sectors, and appreciate the opportunity to engage with admissions officers from their alma maters. Don't underestimate word of mouth when it comes to recruitment plans.

Engaging currently enrolled international students is another helpful strategy for gathering useful guidance on reaching prospective students from their home countries and regions during recruitment and student orientation seasons. EducationUSA invites all students and alumni to submit an **interest form** to connect with EducationUSA advisers eager to develop joint programming, student success profiles, and other engagement opportunities.

Although EducationUSA advisers can offer guidance and advice about Gulf scholarship programs, U.S. institutions are encouraged to reach out directly to scholarship organizations with specific questions.

North Africa is a largely untapped market for international students, and HEIs are encouraged to contact EducationUSA for assistance in planning a trip or virtual engagement focused on Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, or Tunisia.

### Regional Student Totals Top Five Countries of Origin

Country	2019/20	% Change
Saudi Arabia	30,957	-16.5%
Iran	11,451	-5.7%
Kuwait	8,375	-8.9%
Egypt	3,859	5.0%
Oman	2,808	-5.2%

## Middle East and North Africa

### Institutional Partnerships

HEIs throughout MENA are eager to explore partnerships with U.S. institutions that provide opportunities for reciprocal student and scholar exchanges, joint research ventures, and dual-degree programs. EducationUSA REACs and advisers can provide information to local institutions about the U.S. higher education sector and strategic guidance on establishing successful partnerships. Beyond EducationUSA advising services, the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs facilitates other in-person and virtual exchanges to support student mobility, institutional partnerships, and higher education capacity building, including the [Fulbright Program](#) and the [International Visitor Leadership Program](#).

In contrast to the United States, national governments across the MENA region include ministries that centralize the curriculum, accreditation, training,

and strategic priorities for each country's education sector. As a result, governments are a key stakeholder for any institution seeking to establish partnerships with local universities. EducationUSA REACs and advisers can facilitate engagement among institutions interested in collaboration in the region. In many cases, the U.S. embassy or consulate in that country can also connect interested parties.

While many institutions in the region are interested in establishing partnerships, it is crucial that all parties clearly outline goals and expectations. U.S. HEIs should be prepared to highlight their strengths and offer suggestions for mutually beneficial arrangements. For example, many countries in MENA are interested in partnerships for English language instruction—which could be accomplished through faculty exchanges, specific in-country workshops, or virtual initiatives. In addition, research collaborations are of great interest in the MENA region.

### Foreign Government and Private Funding

Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE currently fund government-sponsored scholarship programs. These governments maintain lists of approved receiving institutions, which can present a barrier for institutions not already authorized to enroll students funded through these programs. One strategy to raise awareness of U.S. institutions and increase the chance of inclusion on these lists is to visit these countries' cultural missions in Washington, DC, and conduct outreach by email or phone. Proactive engagement can offer U.S. institutions the opportunity to inform government authorities about their programs of study, express interest in hosting students from the region, and explain how U.S. institutions are prepared to be effective and qualified hosts for their students.

**Bahrain.** The government of Bahrain, through the Crown Prince's International Scholarship Program (CPISP), provides scholarships supporting 10 students' overseas study each year. Most of these students choose to study in the United States. All scholarship students enter at the undergraduate level and can receive full funding through completion of a doctoral degree.

**Oman.** Since 2012, Oman's Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) has increased the number of scholarships for Omanis to pursue undergraduate and graduate studies in the United States. A majority of Omanis studying in the United States benefit from some type of scholarship program, and most scholarships are awarded to support "Omanization," an initiative to increase the number of Omani citizens employed in industries of strategic importance to Oman. For undergraduate study, there are three types of government-funded scholarships: STEM; Education, Social Sciences, Art, and Management (ESAM); and Direct Entry. The MoHE selects the receiving institutions for all students awarded STEM or ESAM scholarships, but Direct Entry scholarship recipients can select their institution from an approved list. At the graduate level, the MoHE offers a National Postgraduate scholarship.

## U.S. Study Abroad

### Top Five Receiving Countries in the Region

Destination	2018/19	% Change
Israel	3,532	5.3%
Morocco	1,749	24.0%
Jordan	1,064	4.6%
United Arab Emirates	955	1.7%
Egypt	248	101.6%

### Five Countries (with over 100 students) with Highest Percentage Growth, U.S. Students in the Region (Five-Year Trend)

Country	2014/15	2018/19	% Change
Egypt	109	248	127.5%
Oman	92	149	62.0%
United Arab Emirates	619	955	54.3%
Morocco	1,413	1,749	23.8%
Jordan	985	1,064	8.0%



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

**Qatar.** The government of Qatar offers scholarships to Qatari students pursuing studies outside of Qatar. Factors considered for eligibility include high school exit scores, English language proficiency, and unconditional acceptance to a government-approved U.S. university and field of study. In addition, male students must complete one year of national service or be given a waiver before they can pursue postsecondary studies. While female students have the option to complete national service, they are not required to do so before continuing their education. For this program, students must also commit to work at one of 30 government entities upon graduation. Other companies (e.g., Qatar Airways and Sidra Medical Center) and industries



(e.g., the banking sector and the gas and petroleum sector) offer their own scholarship programs, but most adhere to the requirements of the government program.

**Saudi Arabia.** The United States remains the top destination for Saudis studying abroad. Students who value a U.S. degree seek government and private scholarships, but those who have the financial means often self-fund their U.S. education. The government of Saudi Arabia has restructured its scholarship program to better align with the country's economic and workforce development goals. In fall 2020, the Ministry of Education (MOE) announced the Tamayuz Scholarship, a new opportunity within the existing Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program to support study abroad. The scholarship offers 32 specializations at 66 institutions around the world, 60 of which are in the United States. Eligible students must receive unconditional admission from an approved institution in select disciplines. In addition to the Tamayuz Scholarship, the government of Saudi Arabia announced the Cultural Scholarships Program, which supports students pursuing bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. programs in culture and the arts at universities around the world. The MOE is also working to develop additional scholarships, including the Qiddiya General Entertainment Authority (GEA) Scholarship, the Royal

Commission for AIUa Scholarship, and the NEOM Scholarship.

**UAE.** The United States remains the destination of choice for Emirati students who study abroad. Of the 2,074 Emiratis studying in the United States in AY 2019-2020, almost 80 percent pursued undergraduate studies, while just over 12 percent studied at the graduate level—and the majority at both levels were supported through full scholarships. UAE students are eligible for 10 full scholarships to study in the United States, some of which are specific to a particular emirate, and benefits can differ depending on the government entity awarding the scholarship. The MOE scholarship program is open to all UAE students. Students on a UAE MOE scholarship are eligible for full tuition, a monthly stipend of more than USD\$3,200, an annual airline ticket, funds for books and clothing, medical insurance, and other benefits. UAE students on scholarships must attend one of the 50 U.S. universities on the MOE-approved list and pursue majors approved by the scholarship-granting institution. To qualify, students must gain admission at an approved institution, have sufficient English language proficiency, and achieve a high grade point average in grade 12. Similarly, the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) restricts its scholarships to a list of 150 schools, based on a variety of academic rankings.

## Middle East and North Africa

The approved majors are determined by projected UAE job market needs and tend to favor STEM fields.

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

### Regional Economics and Market Demands

Students in the MENA region have traditionally prioritized STEM fields when exploring programs of study. In Gulf countries, most government scholarship programs specify the approved majors based on labor market and workforce development needs. Over the past several years, Ministries of Labor have implemented policies to nationalize employment and sectors covered by third-country nationals. Nationalization practices have been developed to shift the need for expatriate labor in many jobs. Nationals in Qatar and the UAE, for example, are the minority groups in their country's population. As a result, expatriates are necessary to fill many roles, but Ministries of Labor are seeking to expand employment of citizens in priority fields and encouraging nationals to pursue those areas of study. These areas include innovation, entrepreneurship, space science, alternative and renewable energy, engineering, artificial intelligence, health, music, performing arts, sciences, and business information technology.

In addition to the popular STEAM fields, some emerging sectors, including cybersecurity and English language instruction, offer opportunities for U.S. recruiters. Peace studies is also gaining prominence as a discipline, especially in current and former conflict zones. New fields of study are also emerging in Saudi Arabia as the country opens its borders to outside visitors and tourists who are driving demand for expertise in managing historical sites, national parks, theme

parks, and concerts across the country. In March 2020, the Saudi Ministry of Tourism launched a campaign titled "Your Future Tourism," which aims to create 100,000 jobs by the end of 2021, and one million jobs by the end of 2030.

### Regional EducationUSA Events

EducationUSA centers in the region organize in-person and virtual events throughout the year. Consult the EducationUSA website and Facebook pages for information about the growing number of webinars, fairs, and workshops offered in specific countries across the region. REACs also share regular updates via the MENA newsletter for HEIs, which is issued six times per year, or via a closed Facebook group, "EducationUSA in the Middle East and North Africa" Throughout the year, centers offer country briefing webinars to provide information about local education systems, challenges and opportunities, and country-specific developments that impact student recruitment. EducationUSA hosted the first virtual fair for the MENA region in December 2020, and advisers plan to offer more opportunities to engage online in the future. U.S. HEI representatives can further engage by meeting with U.S. embassy public affairs and consular staff (subject to scheduling availability), making a presentation at an EducationUSA advising center, and visiting local high schools or universities, and they are encouraged to contact EducationUSA centers to explore options. Upcoming fairs and exhibitions in which EducationUSA is participating are highlighted below.

### Fairs and Conferences

EducationUSA REACs maintain a [list](#) of fairs and opportunities for U.S. HEIs to engage in the region.

**Bahrain.** The EDUTEX Bahrain Education and Training Exhibition is usually held at the Bahrain International Exhibition and Convention Center in March. The University of Bahrain Career Fair takes place in April.

**Egypt.** The AMIDEAST Egypt StudyUSA Fair is planned for October 2021.

**Oman.** The [Global Higher Education Exhibition](#), Oman's largest higher education expo, is held annually in October and April.

**Qatar.** The third annual [University Expo Qatar](#) is scheduled for October 24-25, 2021.

**Saudi Arabia.** The International Exhibition and Conference on Higher Education is an MOE-hosted university fair that draws the participation of hundreds of local and international universities. The fair is held every other year but has been temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**UAE.** NAJAH, the official government-sponsored education expo, typically attracts more than 1,600 visitors. It will take place in Abu Dhabi October 28-30, 2021. NAJAH launched a virtual education connections hub in 2020 promoting fairs and featuring days dedicated to country-specific programming focused on the UAE and Qatar. NAJAH Dubai will debut as a part of the Dubai Expo from October 31 to November 1. In addition, the Sharjah International Education Fair will take place October 19-21, 2021, at the Sharjah Expo Centre.

[Expo2020 Dubai](#) is scheduled for October 1, 2021, through March 31, 2022. It will feature a designated EducationUSA booth in the [USA Pavilion](#). The Pavilion will offer opportunities to engage with students and EducationUSA staff and will highlight key educational events, including [NAJAH Dubai](#), International Education Week, and RewirEd Summit.

### All Countries

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

All centers conduct pre-departure orientations during the summer, and some centers in the Gulf also conduct orientations in January. American institutions are encouraged to advise accepted students to visit [educationusa.state.gov](#) or contact their local EducationUSA center for dates and times. Even students who are new to EducationUSA or who are first-time visitors are welcome to attend a pre-departure orientation.

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

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

The number of U.S. students studying in the Near East (MENA) region has

generally been relatively small compared with the number of U.S. students studying abroad in other regions. The region hosted only 2.1 percent of all U.S. study abroad students in AY 2018-2019. However, the number of Americans studying abroad in the region increased for the third year in a row. Key increases include Egypt (+101.6 percent), Lebanon (+28.1 percent), Oman (+55.2 percent), and Tunisia (+153.3 percent).

U.S. students also study or participate in exchange programs at the six American universities in Qatar. These universities have exchange programs with their home campuses and see a flow of students between the U.S. and Doha campuses throughout the year. There are fewer opportunities for U.S. students to study at other HEIs throughout the country because instruction is predominantly in Arabic. Recently, universities in Saudi Arabia have begun expressing interest in foreign student exchange programs and research partnerships.

In 2020, the U.S. embassies in Morocco and Israel received Study Abroad Engagement Grants from the USA Study Abroad Branch at the U.S. Department of State to carry out capacity-building projects to promote U.S. study abroad in the region. In addition, the State Department's [IDEAS program](#) awarded grants to three U.S. HEIs to develop study abroad programming in Egypt, Morocco, and Oman. Study abroad in the region was also supported through the global webinar series, "[Internationalization of Higher Education in the COVID-19 Era.](#)"

Although EducationUSA advising centers in the region do not host study abroad programs, some centers offer internship opportunities and are eager to work with American student volunteers. Study abroad staff can inform students about potential internships and connect students with a local advising center. U.S. study abroad students are welcome to join EducationUSA programming activities throughout the region. U.S. institutions are encouraged to provide information and resources to study abroad participants prior to their departure from the United States so that they can promote the institution to local audiences. Students have delivered general presentations about their institutions, joined conversation groups, assisted with mock admissions interviews, and participated in alumni fairs and other events that allowed them to engage with local high school and university students.

## Regional Calendar and Best Times to Interact with Students

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

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

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

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

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

**Jordan.** The best times to visit are from October to November and February to May. Avoid traveling during major religious holidays (e.g., Ramadan, Eid, Easter, Palm Sunday).

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

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

**Oman.** Visit during the Global Higher Education Exhibition, Oman's largest [higher education expo](#), which is typically held in April. Another good time to visit is during [EduTraC](#), which takes place in October in Muscat.

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

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

# South and Central Asia

## Regional EducationUSA Profile

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

# 33

### EducationUSA Advising Centers in the Region

- 21 Comprehensive
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- 3 Reference

EducationUSA advising centers in South and Central Asia (SCA) are located at U.S. embassies (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Uzbekistan) and consulates (India, Fulbright Commissions (India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka), American Councils for International Education offices (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan), and local nonprofit organizations (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, and Kazakhstan). There are 85 advisers at 33 EducationUSA centers in SCA, with several countries hosting multiple advising centers at various host institutions. India and Uzbekistan have recently added new centers as the region continues to respond to the demand for academic advising services and interest in U.S. higher education. The largest concentration of centers is in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Kazakhstan. There are 40 advisers in India across eight centers, 14 advisers in Pakistan across three centers, eight advisers in Bangladesh across four centers, and four advisers in Kazakhstan across four centers. Advisers in SCA function as mentors and local experts on the U.S. higher education sector, providing advising sessions, engaging with students virtually and in person, and conducting outreach activities.

The EducationUSA Opportunity Funds program, serving high-achieving prospective students who demonstrate financial need, currently operates at advising centers in Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Turkmenistan. Nepal and Pakistan host Opportunity Funds cohorts for undergraduate students. Cohorts engage in robust mentoring activities over a two-year period and interact with Opportunity Funds alumni. Sri Lanka and Turkmenistan host Opportunity Funds cohorts for graduate students, offering mentoring activities for up to one year.

U.S. higher education institutions (HEIs) are encouraged to reach out to the advising centers to learn more about how to support Opportunity Funds students through virtual programs and specialized scholarships.

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

### Regional Overview

SCA is a region of vast cultural and geographic diversity, and it is home to one of the largest youth populations in the world. Young people in the region are driven and eager to enter the workforce. Limited access to higher education is a significant challenge. People-to-people ties and international student exchanges are crucial in this region. South Asian economies are among the fastest growing in the world, and the region is a tremendous market for recruiting highly qualified students.

While SCA stretches from Kazakhstan in the north to Sri Lanka in the south, students from this region share common traits: They seek similar fields of study (notably, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics [STEM], and business) and look for





the development of practical skills that prepare them for future careers. Prospective students and their parents view the award of a scholarship—even a partial tuition award—as a prestigious achievement. However, differences among students across the region are also pronounced. SCA has many different educational systems, including local government-supported schools and private English-medium schools. In this region, students from Central Asia and Afghanistan are the most likely to seek out intensive English language programs abroad. In India and the rest of South Asia, students are able to master English in their home countries. In Uzbekistan, the U.S. government invests millions of dollars to partner with the Uzbek government on promoting the English language through education reforms, with a focus on textbooks, curriculum development, teacher training, and access to English language study. The burgeoning youth population, with a median age of less than 26 years, has resulted in limited postsecondary capacity and barriers to access to quality

higher education locally, thereby driving demand for academic opportunities abroad.

In many parts of SCA, the internet is widely and easily accessible, with most users accessing the web through mobile devices. According to the *January 2021 Digital Global Overview Report*, the number of internet users grew by 6.7 percent in Central Asia and 9.1 percent in South Asia. Internet connection speeds vary greatly across the region and between rural and urban areas. Disruptions to electrical service are becoming less frequent; however, some countries continue to face outages during peak summer and winter months. In addition, government-imposed restrictions limit online activity in some countries. Government limits on internet speed, certain applications, and services impact students' ability to access some online content, conduct research, sit for exams, and interact virtually. EducationUSA centers in the region offer students an alternative, reliable way to connect virtually and provide students

with access to computers with internet connectivity. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted many students' access to the internet in physical EducationUSA centers. Many people throughout the region lack internet access at home, meaning many students could not access virtual learning options or participate in virtual programming. The U.S. higher education system is well-positioned to provide training in fields that will equip graduates with practical skills to address these challenges.

Although the United States remains the top study destination for students from the region, students and families are attuned to political developments and discourse. Students are attracted to countries in which they anticipate the ability to obtain student visas, work, and in some cases, transition to permanent residency. Traditionally, students from the region have gravitated toward the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia. However, over the past few years, China, Japan, Malaysia, and India have begun to attract

## South and Central Asia

more students from SCA by offering government scholarships, affordable tuition, and employment opportunities to students from the region. Such offers, combined with proximity to the students' home countries, make these options increasingly attractive. Linguistic and cultural ties also draw many students from Central Asia to study in Russia and the former Soviet Union. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in particular have expanded higher education capacity in recent years and are becoming attractive to students who wish to stay closer to home. Arab Gulf States are also an option for students from the region given their proximity, multicultural environment, and new student visa regulations.

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

### Recent Trends

According to the Institute of International Education's (IIE) most recent 2020 *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, just over 20

percent of international students in the United States in academic year (AY) 2019-2020 were from the SCA region. *Open Doors* reported a 3.6 percent decrease in mobility from this region, with 229,950 students from SCA studying in the United States in AY 2019-2020.

Of the SCA students studying in the United States, approximately 44 percent are in graduate programs and 38 percent are enrolled in Optional Practical Training (OPT). Undergraduate students represent 17 percent of international students from SCA.

Kyrgyzstan (+23.1 percent), Kazakhstan (+11.3 percent), Bangladesh (+7.1 percent), and Tajikistan (+5.7 percent) all saw strong growth in the number of international students studying in the United States in AY 2019-2020. These increases can be attributed to growing interest in professional development as the workforce strives to keep up with changing economic trends. In addition to degree programs, students from the region pursue certifications, short-term exchanges, and summer courses.

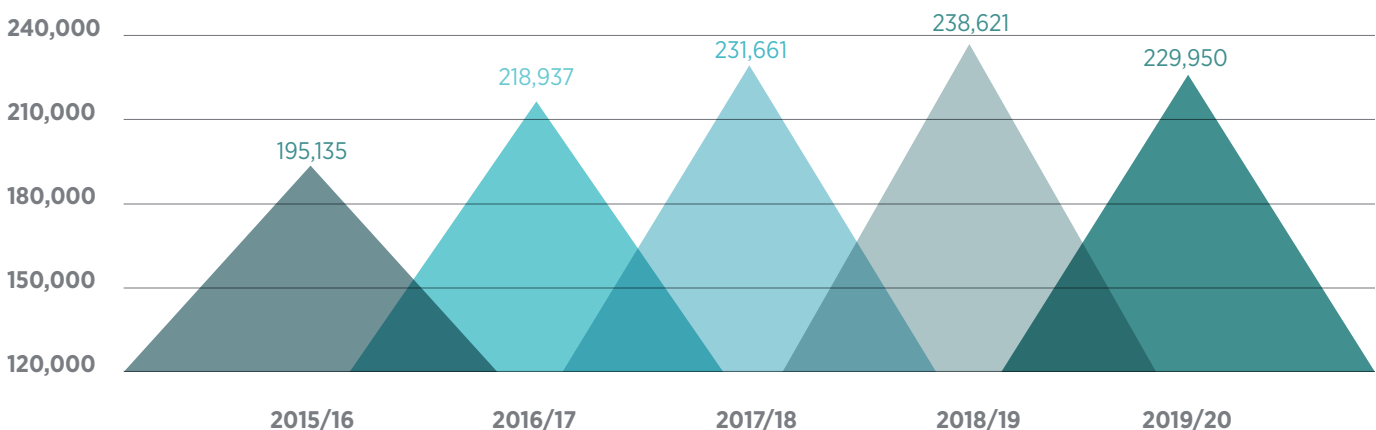
Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan were among the top 25 sending countries in the world to the United States in AY 2019-2020, according to the *Open Doors Report*. India and Nepal are the second and 12th largest senders from the region, respectively, while Bangladesh and Pakistan are the 17th and 22nd largest senders.

In AY 2018-2019, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka were among the top 25 sending countries of graduate students to the United States. In AY 2019-2020, Bangladesh (+9.6) and Pakistan (+6.1 percent) continued to see increases in the number of graduate students in the United States, while India (-5.7 percent) and Nepal (-4.1 percent) saw declines after years of steady increases.

Several factors led to growth in the number of graduate students from the region. Local HEIs often require a foreign terminal degree to join the faculty, fueling a growing interest in foreign doctoral (Ph.D.) programs. A lack of opportunity to pursue research in their home countries also leads many students to seek foreign research opportunities, especially in the United States. Savvy students understand that careers can be built on the important connections made during graduate studies, so they will prioritize a graduate degree abroad as a means to expand professional networks. The high cost of U.S. undergraduate education is also an important factor that can drive students to pursue fully or partially funded graduate study in the United States.

In some countries, private English language secondary schools focus on preparing students for undergraduate study abroad. Although such schools hesitate to sacrifice class hours to accommodate visiting college and university representatives, EducationUSA

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



advisers may be able to assist institutional representatives in securing a meeting. Advisers are well-placed, well-connected, and able to invite qualified students to meet U.S. HEI representatives at EducationUSA advising centers or during a college fair.

Students and their families are increasingly concerned about safety on U.S. campuses and in local communities. Many opt to apply to states and institutions with existing diaspora communities or institutions with large international student populations. Institutions are encouraged to address concerns about safety and demonstrate their successful integration of international students into the surrounding community.

Gap years are increasingly common among prospective students from the region. Local curricula are rigorous, making it challenging for students to prepare for the admissions tests required by U.S. HEIs.

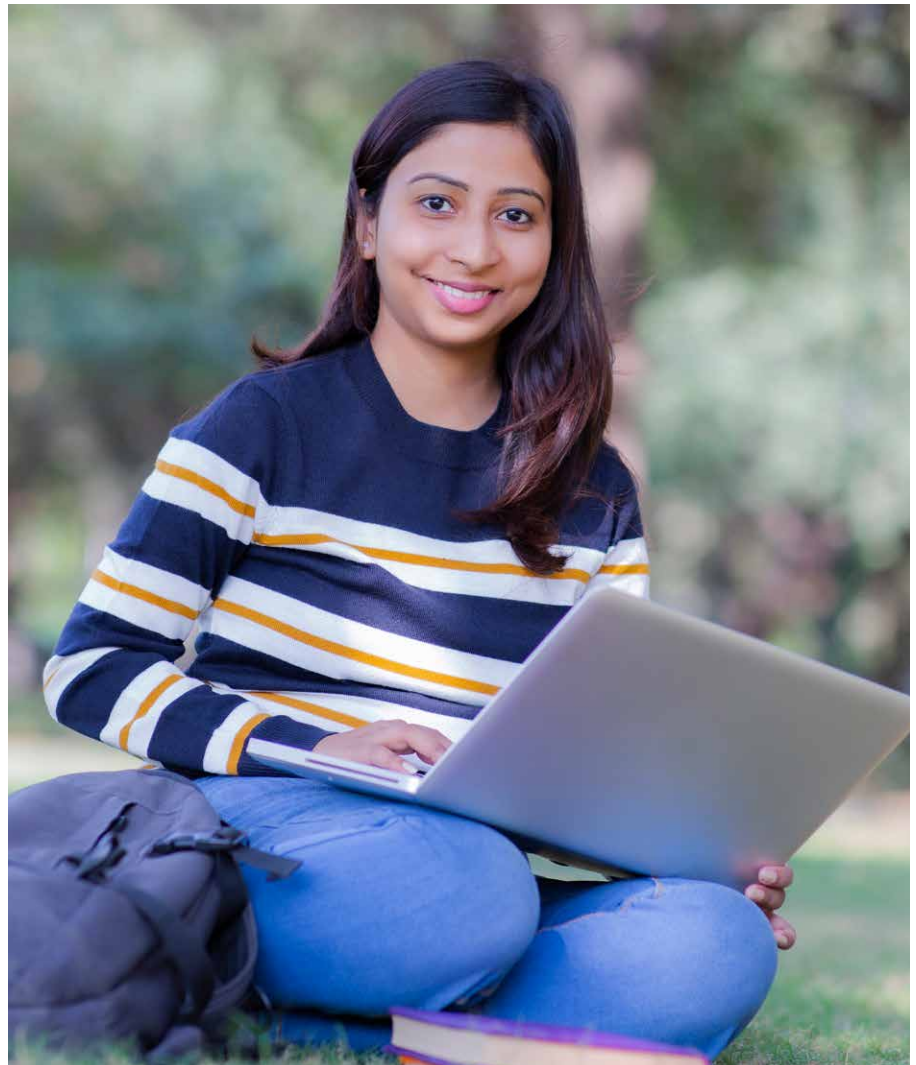
### Top Senders and Countries to Watch

Below are the top 10 countries in the region by number of students studying in the United States. Click on a country to access the *Student Mobility Facts and Figures* sheet for that country. All EducationUSA student mobility fact sheets are available [here](#).

1. India
2. Nepal
3. Bangladesh
4. Pakistan
5. Kazakhstan
6. Sri Lanka
7. Uzbekistan
8. Afghanistan
9. Kyrgyzstan
10. Turkmenistan

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

As South Asia's youth come of age, more students will study abroad. Across the region, competition for limited seats in engineering and business programs at respected local undergraduate institutions may result in an increase in undergraduate applicants to the United States.



Uzbekistan, Central Asia's most populous country, is home to more than 30 million people, more than 64 percent of whom are under the age of 30. Close to half of Uzbek students in the United States are pursuing an undergraduate degree, including many students at community colleges. English language instruction is improving in the country, which will likely open opportunities for more students to pursue educational opportunities in the United States. In February 2021, the U.S. embassy welcomed 27 English teachers and visiting scholars from the United States who are teaching at schools and universities across Uzbekistan. They are the first group of U.S. exchange participants to arrive in Central Asia since the COVID-19 pandemic started.

Uzbekistan's educational vision and priorities continue to evolve. In 2019,

the Ministry of Higher and Secondary-Specialized Education introduced a five-year Education Sector Plan focusing on expanding the English language curriculum, increasing technical and vocational training, opening new educational institutions, and diversifying available fields of study. The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent recently awarded a US\$5 million grant to create the English Speaking Nation (ESN) program. The number of private high schools continues to increase, many with a focus on STEM education. Uzbek universities seek partnerships with foreign institutions to support their internationalization efforts.

Both Afghanistan's government and private sectors are driving workforce development needs for professionals who can lead the country



## South and Central Asia

to an economically stable future. The government aims to raise university enrollment overall, with a focus on women and girls, and to expand graduate and doctoral programs. As the country rebuilds its educational infrastructure and increases capacity, local institutions will look to the United States and other countries to build partnerships and create linkages. The U.S. embassy in Kabul will continue to use the 25 Lincoln Learning Centers (LLCs) located across the country to promote EducationUSA activities through an organized series of virtual sessions on topics related to university admissions.

China's Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to develop infrastructure across SCA, includes education as a priority element. Prospects for future collaboration and Chinese government scholarships will attract prospective students to opportunities across East Asia. As a result, more opportunities for students will arise in China and participating countries.

### Virtual Engagement and Social Media

Across the region, the internet is widely available, but there are significant differences in speed and accessibility outside of big cities. Where it is available, the internet is most commonly accessed through mobile devices. According to *DataReportal.com*, the percentage of the population that uses social media is low in Pakistan (20 percent), Afghanistan (11.2 percent), and Tajikistan (10.4 percent). While virtual programming in countries with low connectivity was

nonexistent prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, over the past year, advisers in the region have reported that students in smaller towns and cities have connected with EducationUSA centers and programs online for the first time. The increase in virtual engagement offers an opportunity for U.S. institutions, including those that have not recruited in person in SCA in the past.

Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Zoom are popular social media platforms throughout the region and are among the most effective ways to promote study abroad programs, scholarships, and opportunities for international students at your institution. Telegram, a messaging app, is also a popular communication platform in Central Asia.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, EducationUSA has increased engagement in India via popular social media platforms (YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp) as well as new platforms, such as Instagram, on which EducationUSA India launched a new account in June 2020. The account currently has more than 1,500 followers, 7,280 profile visits, and has reached 2 million unique users. India and Nepal each developed an EducationUSA app, and EducationUSA Pakistan is in the process of creating one.

Internet bandwidth in some locations across the region cannot always sustain webinars and video conferencing sessions; however, messaging tools and social media announcements remain

highly effective. Messages highlighting student success stories and short, engaging bits of information are most popular.

EducationUSA Bangladesh's official Facebook page has more than 1.2 million followers, a 10 percent increase over the previous year. EducationUSA advisers across all four centers are also increasingly advising over the phone due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

EducationUSA advisers in India offer extended hours in the evening and on weekends for students who are not available during daytime hours. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp are incorporated into innovative programming to reach a wider audience.

In Afghanistan, where few people have reliable internet access, EducationUSA content is often shared via text messages. Internet connections are extremely expensive in Afghanistan and not easily accessible beyond the capital. EducationUSA advisers in Kabul can assist U.S. HEIs in developing recruitment plans that involve text messaging.

Turkmenistan has eased restrictions on popular social media platforms in the past year, and EducationUSA centers increasingly offer webinars and virtual meetings. However, students continue to primarily rely on traditional methods of advising: in-person sessions, telephone, and email. The February 2021 *Digital Global Overview Report* found that while the number of social media users

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

Country	2015/16	2019/20	% Change
Kyrgyzstan	227	357	57.3%
Bangladesh	6,513	8,838	35.7%
Nepal	9,662	12,730	31.8%
Pakistan	6,141	7,939	29.3%
Turkmenistan	216	272	25.9%

# 57.3%

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



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



**Nepal**  
College-Age Population  
**3,260,999**



**Sri Lanka**  
College-Age Population  
**1,532,299**



**Bhutan**  
College-Age Population  
**76,788**



**Kazakhstan**  
College-Age Population  
**1,170,714**



**India**  
College-Age Population  
**122,369,632**

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics; Indicator: 2018 Population of the Official Age for Tertiary Education, Both Sexes

in Turkmenistan more than doubled between 2020 and 2021, only 2.5 percent of the population uses social media.

Many prospective students from Pakistan continue to use websites such as Vimeo and Dailymotion to access information on educational opportunities. Due to government restrictions, TikTok is not accessible, and it therefore is not an effective communication tool for reaching Pakistani students. Internet service generally is reliable in major metropolitan areas but remains unreliable in smaller cities, towns, and remote regions of the country. YouTube is the most popular platform, and video conferencing traffic has increased significantly since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the newspaper *Dawn*, Zoom saw exponential growth in Pakistan, from just over 4,000 users in February 2020 to more than 80,000 by mid-April 2020.

### Successful Recruiting Strategies

- Connect with students through EducationUSA college and university fairs throughout the region. Graduate and undergraduate applicants appreciate the opportunity to meet institutional representatives virtually or in person, discuss study options, and pose their own questions to HEI representatives to ensure that they are well-informed when deciding where to apply.
- Initiate summer programs for high school students to create a pipeline toward degree-granting programs. This includes virtual programming, as competitive students increasingly leverage virtual opportunities to enhance their skills at a fraction of the cost of in-person programming.
- Meet EducationUSA advisers at centers in the region. Participate in informational seminars that showcase the breadth of U.S. higher education, highlight the strengths of U.S. educational institutions, or offer insights into specific fields of study. Although sessions must focus on broad topics of interest to prospective students rather than promoting a specific institution, the participation of college and university representatives will attract attention and may enhance recruitment efforts.

- Combine multiple partial financial aid awards into larger awards for fewer students. Providing larger awards attracts quality students, who in turn share their positive experiences with peers, encouraging the peers to apply. Word of mouth is the most effective recruiting tool in the region.
- Engage alumni and train them to their alma maters at EducationUSA recruitment fairs. Encourage authorized alumni to contact EducationUSA centers to meet students and conduct information sessions.
- Offer opportunities for parents of enrolled students to meet parents of prospective students to provide a sense of security to families anxious about sending children abroad.
- Share information about internship opportunities and other practical training experiences available at your institution. Students in the region are highly attuned to information about career prospects.
- Research and test virtual platforms that can facilitate communication with prospective applicants and their parents. Students appreciate opportunities to speak directly to admissions representatives and/or current students. Contact EducationUSA Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs) and advisers in the region for assistance in organizing a webinar for a specific country or group of countries. Collaborating with other HEIs is recommended to help centers accommodate the high demand for programming.

### Regional Student Totals Top Five Countries of Origin

Country	2019/20	% Change
India	193,124	-4.4%
Nepal	12,730	-3.8%
Bangladesh	8,838	7.1%
Pakistan	7,939	-0.2%
Sri Lanka	3,206	-3.8%

## South and Central Asia



- Showcase alumni success stories and career trajectories, emphasize the value of a degree from your institution, and highlight options for affordable financing and scholarships. These highlights generate strong interest on social media.

### Institutional Partnerships

While countries in SCA are eager to establish formal partnerships with U.S. institutions, needs and scope vary. Interested U.S. institutions are encouraged to work with REACs and EducationUSA advising centers, in collaboration with U.S. embassies, to assess and understand the needs of specific countries regarding institutional partnerships. Effective and successful institutional partnerships are those in which both institutions invest time and resources while also developing strategies to ensure the sustainability of these academic linkages.

**India.** U.S. institutions interested in partnerships in India should be prepared to invest time in developing such connections. Some U.S. institutions have found private universities to be interested in institutional partnerships, even though the preference is to work with the better known federally funded institutions. In most cases, institutional partnership grants that the U.S.-India Educational Foundation (USIEF) deemed successful were those in which the principal representative

of the U.S. institution had significant prior association with the Indian partner university. Prior association with HEIs in India and experience navigating complex institutional bureaucracies can be useful to both parties. U.S. university representatives are encouraged to explore mutually beneficial partnerships and collaborative opportunities, such as twinning programs, faculty and student academic exchanges, research and secondary school internships, and summer programs.

**Pakistan.** The U.S.-Pakistan university partnership initiative, funded by the public affairs section of the U.S. embassy in Islamabad, established 23 long-term relationships between Pakistani and American HEIs. These three-year partnerships promoted faculty professional development, curriculum reform, and joint research, and increased mutual understanding between Pakistan and the United States through sustainable peer-to-peer relationships. In 2020, the U.S. embassy public affairs section launched a follow-on program, the U.S.-Pakistan University Partnerships Grants Program 2020-2022 (UPGP) in collaboration with the U.S. Educational Foundation in Pakistan, which serves as the implementing partner of this program in Pakistan. Under this grants program, former participating partner university departments are eligible to apply for grants of up to USD\$50,000 in support of follow-on projects focused on

disseminating knowledge and expertise acquired during the partnership program to Pakistani universities beyond the cohort of institutions that joined the program. To participate in this program, university partners may contact the U.S. Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP) at [alumni@usefp.org](mailto:alumni@usefp.org).

**Central Asia.** Institutions in Central Asia are eager to explore partnerships focused on enhancing teacher preparation, teaching methodology, and training to support language teaching and learning. Regional embassies, in particular the U.S. Embassy in Kazakhstan, support partnerships through the University Partnerships in Central Asia (UniCEN) program to build capacity for substantive international engagement between HEIs in the United States and Central Asia. Since 2017, the program has provided support more than 40 projects led by U.S. HEIs focusing on improving teacher training. Uzbekistan was the first country in Central Asia to allow international branch campuses, ushering in Russian, British, and, recently, U.S. campuses.

### Foreign Government and Private Funding

Many national governments across SCA allocate funding each year for students to pursue higher education overseas. Despite such assistance, students with government funding often attend institutions closer to home—in countries

such as India, Turkey, and the UK—because of lower tuition, geographical proximity, and familiar cultural traditions. However, many students are eager to study in the United States, and institutions that can offer competitive tuition or discounts have a recruiting advantage.

**Kazakhstan.** Since 1993, the government’s Bolashak International Scholarship has funded postgraduate training to address a shortage of specialists in priority fields. Scholarships are available for those who are admitted to top global institutions for study toward master’s and doctoral degrees as well as for internships in engineering, medicine, and teaching. In AY 2019–2020, 329 students studied in the United States with support from the Bolashak International Scholarship. The program provides full funding for study in the United States, including a monthly stipend for living expenses, roundtrip airfare, textbook allowances, and health insurance.

**Pakistan.** In June 2016, the U.S.-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor was established to support the development of high-level human capital as outlined in the government of Pakistan’s Vision 2025 policy document. This initiative supports Pakistan’s efforts to strengthen its university system by increasing the number of Pakistani faculty who obtain a Ph.D. from U.S. universities. Over the next 10 years, the initiative aims to send 10,000 Pakistani scholars to U.S. universities. In the first phase, the Public Sector Development Programme will support 1,500 scholarships. Currently, 235 U.S. institutions are on the [approved scholarship list](#) for this program. The scholarship covers travel and living expenses, and, for some scholars, it also covers partial tuition.

**Uzbekistan.** The Islam Karimov Foundation, established in 2016 in honor of the late president, organizes a competition to select gifted young people to study in American and European master’s programs. The foundation’s grant supports study in natural sciences (renewable energy and chemistry), water and land resource management, engineering technology, food technology, food safety, food production and marketing, architecture

(urban development, and protection and restoration of architectural monuments), design (product design, industrial and architectural design), and fine arts. The grant covers full tuition and living expenses for up to two years. American Councils for International Education reopened its Uzbekistan office in August 2018, after being closed since 2006, and is the first nongovernmental organization (NGO) approved by the government to operate in Uzbekistan in the past 15 years. It is now one of five international NGOs registered in the country.

### Regional Economics and Market Demands

Most students in the SCA region gravitate toward STEM fields when looking for programs of study. Over 75 percent of Bangladeshi students studying in the United States in AY 2019–2020 pursued degrees in STEM fields, with many receiving partial or full funding for graduate degree programs. In India and

Pakistan, English language proficiency is strong and the local postsecondary sector offers high-quality undergraduate programs. As a result, students are drawn to graduate degrees that will enhance career opportunities. Program quality, research opportunities, and competitiveness are all factors that students consider when applying to U.S. institutions.

India continues to be one of the world’s fastest-growing economies. With the rise of the middle class, several sectors are exhibiting growth including service, technology finance (banking and insurance), information technology (robotics, cybersecurity, data science, machine learning, and blockchain), manufacturing, e-commerce, media, and entertainment. U.S. universities offer cutting-edge programs, with specializations catering to the current and future needs of these industries as well as much needed expertise and training for

## U.S. Study Abroad

### Top Five Receiving Countries in the Region

Destination	2018/19	% Change
India	3,366	-15.6%
Nepal	647	14.3%
Bhutan	122	17.3%
Kyrgyzstan	71	12.7%
Sri Lanka	67	-21.2%

### Five Countries (with over 25 students) with Highest Percentage Growth, U.S. Students in the Region (Five-Year Trend)

Country	2014/15	2018/19	% Change
Bhutan	41	122	197.6%
Kyrgyzstan	30	71	136.7%
Nepal	368	647	75.8%
Kazakhstan	55	49	-10.9%
India	4,438	3,366	-24.2%



## South and Central Asia

both new entrants to the job market and mid-career professionals. With the number of startups growing in India, aspiring business leaders are choosing integrated programs in tech and entrepreneurship.

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

China's Belt and Road Initiative will leave an indelible mark on the region for years to come. This large-scale infrastructure investment will expand China's economic influence in the region, creating jobs and attracting students from SCA to study in China to develop the expertise needed to support the initiative.

Many countries in SCA have struggled with weakening economies and currency devaluation. For example, the Kazakhstan tenge has lost nearly half its value against the U.S. dollar since 2014, resulting in greater barriers to U.S. study for Kazakh students due to cost. Pakistan also faces similar economic trends. While students and parents value the quality of a U.S. education, they are eager to learn about opportunities that meet their educational needs at a more affordable cost. Students from Central Asian countries have shown a growing interest in community colleges as they consider more affordable options to study in the United States. The number of students from these countries studying at U.S. two-year institutions in AY 2019-2020 attests to this trend, with over 13 percent of Kazakh, 37 percent of Kyrgyz students, and 30 percent of Tajik students studying in the United States studied at community colleges.

### Regional EducationUSA Events

HEIs can find country-specific information about upcoming in-person and virtual events, including fairs and webinars, on the [EducationUSA website](#). REACs

regularly host in-person and virtual workshops and trainings in the region. Contact the REACs to learn how you can participate these activities.

### Fairs and Conferences

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

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

**Central Asia.** The EducationUSA Central Asia tour includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. The tour consists of college and university fairs, secondary school visits, cultural activities, and visits to local universities. Many advising centers in the region have strong cohort advising programs composed of students seeking opportunities at the undergraduate level. The tour visits multiple cities, including Almaty, Astana, and Atyru, Kazakhstan; Bishkek and Osh, Kyrgyzstan; and Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The fair was last offered in person in 2019, when participating U.S. HEI representatives met with more than 5,000 students. EducationUSA Central Asia has hosted virtual fairs over the past year, with some events designed to highlight community colleges and 2+2 options.

**India.** The EducationUSA India fair tour, traditionally held in the fall, usually visits as many as 12 cities. EducationUSA India hosts Chalo America, small group tours in the spring, across different cities, as well as alumni fairs in December and January. EducationUSA India partners with Yocket to host separate undergraduate and graduate virtual fairs in the fall. In collaboration with EducationUSA centers in Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan, EducationUSA India organized virtual fall graduate and

undergraduate fairs reaching thousands of prospective students from these countries. For details about these events, contact [IndiaFairs@educationusa.org](mailto:IndiaFairs@educationusa.org).

### Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

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

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

**Turkmenistan.** The government of Turkmenistan sponsors an annual international exhibition and scientific conference in Ashgabat each November. The EducationUSA advising center in Ashgabat reaches thousands of high school and university students, parents, teachers, professors, and various organizations at this event.

**Uzbekistan.** Twice a year, Expocontact, under the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan, organizes an education and career fair with support from the Ministry of Higher and Secondary-Specialized Education of Uzbekistan. More than 30,000 high school students, university students, and faculty attend. This fair is held twice each year, usually in early April and mid-September. For more information, contact [Tashkent@educationusa.org](mailto:Tashkent@educationusa.org)

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

In AY 2018-2019, SCA overall saw a decrease of 10.8 percent in U.S. study abroad students compared to the previous year, with 4,386 U.S. students studying in the region. India continues to attract the largest number of study abroad students in the region, hosting more than 3,366



American students in AY 2018-2019, followed by Nepal, with 647 students. In AY 2018-2019, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Kyrgyzstan saw an increase in the number of American study abroad students.

Learning a language is a common reason for U.S. students studying abroad in the region. Russian is widely spoken in Kazakhstan, making this a destination for Russian language learning for foreign students. Tajikistan historically has been a popular destination for students to study Farsi.

The government of Kazakhstan recently introduced **Go Nomads**, a volunteer program for U.S. citizens to spend one to six months teaching English at local universities and colleges in Kazakhstan. The program supports the country's initiative to enhance trilingual capacity and increase the number of English language speakers.

U.S. embassies and Fulbright Commissions are eligible to receive Study Abroad Engagement Grants from the USA Study Abroad Branch at the U.S. Department of State to carry out capacity-building projects to promote U.S. study abroad. In addition, the State Department's **IDEAS program** can provide U.S. HEIs funding to develop or diversify study abroad programming in the region. Study abroad in the region was also supported through the global webinar series, "**Internationalization of Higher Education in the COVID-19 Era.**"

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

## Regional Calendar and Best Times to Interact with Students

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

**Afghanistan.** The best times to visit are October to November and February to April. U.S. HEI representatives are encouraged to note travel warnings posted at [travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov).

**Bangladesh.** The best times to visit are January to April and July to December. Avoid public holidays (e.g., Ramadan and Eid holidays).

**Bhutan.** The best time to visit is from March to June. Avoid travel between November and January during exams, school closings, and holidays.

**India.** The best times to visit India for recruitment purposes are July through November and mid-January through mid-February. States observe local as well as national holidays, so U.S. HEI representatives are encouraged to check the U.S. embassy in New Delhi's list of holidays for more information.

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

**Kyrgyzstan.** The best time to visit is October to February. Avoid exam times and school holidays, from May to August.

**Maldives.** The best times to visit are February to April and June to July, but be sure to avoid Islamic holidays. May and October, when high school exams are scheduled, are less ideal times to visit, and schools and universities are closed in November to January.

**Nepal.** Visit any time of the year except exam season, from May to June, and festival season, which is predominantly in October (but the time may vary each year).

**Pakistan.** The best time to visit is September to March. Avoid Ramadan, Eid, exams, and school holidays, which occur between May and August.

**Sri Lanka.** The best times to visit are January to February, May to July, and September to November. Avoid visiting during local exams and holidays in March, April, August, and December.

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

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

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

# Western Hemisphere

## Regional EducationUSA Profile

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

# 156

### EducationUSA Advising Centers in the Region

75 Comprehensive  
56 Standard  
25 Reference



EducationUSA advising centers in the Western Hemisphere (WHA) region are located at U.S. embassies and consulates, binational centers (BNCs), American Spaces, Fulbright Commissions, local higher education institutions (HEIs), national government ministries, public libraries, and nonprofit organizations. Ten new centers opened within the past year in Argentina (Buenos Aires), Aruba (Oranjestad), the Bahamas (Nassau), Brazil (two in São Paulo and one in Belo Horizonte), Ecuador (Ambato and Cuenca), Panama (Panama City), and Venezuela (Carabobo). In total, 163 advisers are employed throughout the region, over 40 percent of whom are based at BNCs.

EducationUSA advising centers in the region offer at least one annual pre-departure orientation, which is open to the public, either in person or virtually. During these orientations, advisers collaborate with consular officers, U.S. higher education admissions offices, international student services offices, and alumni to offer comprehensive information to students and their families. Centers in countries with foreign government scholarship initiatives (many examples of which are listed throughout this chapter) organize pre-departure orientations tailored to the needs of those programs.

EducationUSA fairs attract many qualified students at all levels of study and take place at least once a year in the Caribbean, Central America, Mexico, and South America. A key public diplomacy tool for U.S. and local governments, fairs often feature high-profile government officials. EducationUSA centers frequently support Education Trade Missions

and state educational consortia visits organized by the U.S. Department of Commerce. EducationUSA advisers also organize and support U.S. embassy- and consulate-organized alumni fairs, at which U.S. government officials share their experiences as college or university students with the public and distribute information about their alma maters. In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the WHA region organized its first region-wide virtual fair in lieu of in-person fairs. The fair featured over 100 U.S. HEIs and attracted over 12,000 students.

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

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



Advisers report that the expansion of virtual engagement during the pandemic has increased the volume of requests for advising services from more diverse student audiences. Advisers continue to find innovative ways to assist students virtually by providing them with the support they normally offer through in-person interactions. Advisers rely on social media tools (such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp) to promote and deliver EducationUSA services.

Advising centers in the region connect with currently enrolled international students in the United States as well as international alumni of U.S. institutions and U.S. government exchange programs to support activities such as alumni fairs, cohort advising, outreach to prospective students, and, more recently, video campaigns through which alumni share their experiences as international students. Fulbright English Teaching

Assistants (ETAs), Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs), Gilman Scholars, and other Americans studying or working abroad also collaborate with EducationUSA on various activities, including writing workshops, English tutoring, and outreach visits in remote areas.

Many universities overseas continue to express interest in developing and strengthening partnerships with U.S. HEIs to increase academic exchanges and support research collaboration between the United States and institutions in the WHA region. To strengthen internationalization efforts, EducationUSA advisers in several countries facilitate engagement between U.S. and local universities, offering capacity-building workshops on best practices for study abroad that are funded by the USA Study Abroad Branch of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA).

The EducationUSA Opportunity Funds program, serving high-achieving prospective students who demonstrate significant financial need, is available to students in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay. During the past year, 151 students from across the region were enrolled in the program.

### Regional Overview

The Western Hemisphere is a diverse region of 35 countries and a population of approximately 900 million. Five countries in WHA are among the global top 25 senders of international students to the United States (Canada, Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, and Venezuela). The region as a whole is second only to Asia in international student mobility to the United States. In academic year (AY) 2019-2020, over 106,000 students from the region



## Western Hemisphere



studied in the United States. The region has recently seen steady growth in the numbers of undergraduate and graduate students studying in the United States and represents just under 10 percent of the total international student population in the United States according to the Institute of International Education's (IIE) most recent *2020 Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*.

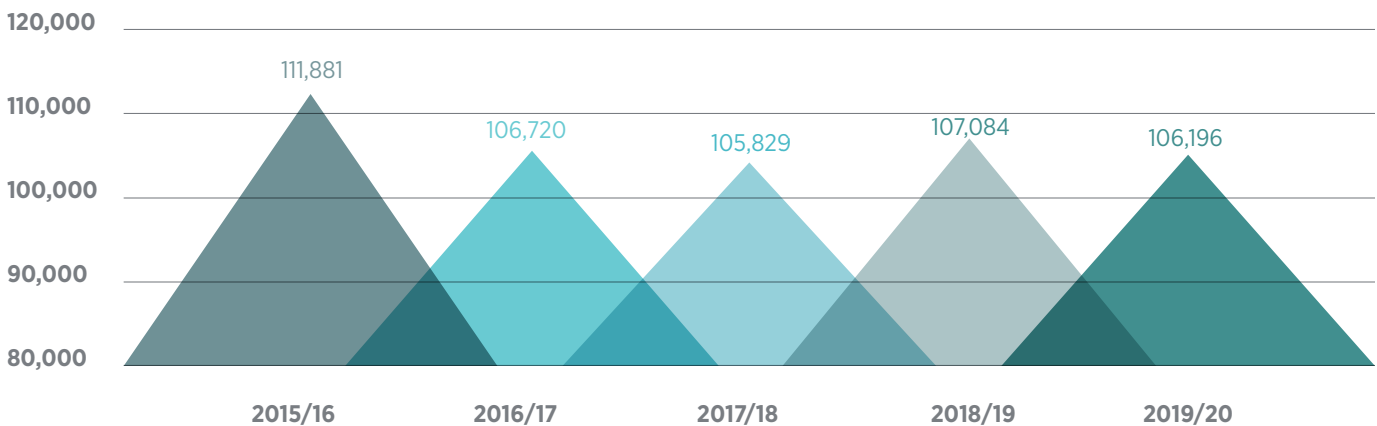
Prior to 2020, many countries in the region were already suffering from economic recessions, which the

COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated. This economic landscape has impacted students' short-term plans to study abroad as families are forced to reevaluate their finances. However, interest in studying in the United States remains high, and many students are interested in hybrid programs that will allow them to work in their home countries while also experiencing U.S. study. Countries in the region have diverse economies and deep disparities in purchasing power and in gross domestic product per capita. Access to

quality education at the primary school level and beyond is an issue for some communities across the region, and access to internet connectivity varies greatly. While an average of 77 percent of people in the region have internet access, connectivity ranges from 32 percent in Haiti to more than 93 percent in Canada.

Petroleum, mining, agriculture, manufacturing industries, and services (including banking and tourism) continue to be top employment sectors in many

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





countries in the region. As a result, the Americas continue to focus on expanding science, technology, and innovation initiatives and on developing a strong, capable workforce to grow local and regional economies. Advisers report that students' top choices of academic discipline in 2020 were business and entrepreneurship; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); and social sciences.

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

Flight options in the region can be limited, but direct travel between countries is possible through a few regional hubs. Flight availability between smaller cities is often infrequent. Ground transportation may be the only option for traveling within smaller countries. Travelers to the region should refer to U.S. Department of State travel advisories for up-to-date guidance and recommendations, paying careful attention to local conditions.

### Recent Trends

EducationUSA advisers continue to address questions from students related to security, and increasingly, health and safety on U.S. campuses in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Advisers work hard to dispel misconceptions, sharing examples of common campus security practices and highlighting the benefits of U.S. study. Advisers continue to amplify the #YouAreWelcomeHere campaign as well as the testimonials from international students currently enrolled on U.S. campuses. Such messages have been helpful in demonstrating U.S. institutions' dedication to welcoming international students and commitment to student success and well-being.

Local political and economic conditions continue to impact student mobility to the United States. Economic instability forces young professionals to delay graduate

studies or seek more affordable options in the region or in other parts of the world, while local security concerns drive parents to consider sending their children abroad for undergraduate studies. Despite financial barriers to U.S. study, many families in the region recognize its value and are willing to invest in it.

Offers of in-state tuition and the presence of diaspora communities continue to attract WHA students to the United States. As a result of Mexico and Canada's proximity to the United States, student interest is concentrated in states near the borders of those countries. An increasing number of international students appear to express a preference for institutions located in predominantly urban and coastal areas of the United States, where they anticipate the presence of diaspora and immigrant communities.

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

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

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

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

Students from the region continue to express interest in two-year institutions and the transfer process between U.S. community colleges and four-year institutions as an affordable option for study in the United States. Leading countries with high percentages of students enrolling in U.S. community colleges are Haiti and Venezuela, followed by Suriname, Nicaragua, Aruba, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia.

As students look for more affordable U.S. study options, EducationUSA advisers report an increased interest in short-term, in-person, and virtual programs including pre-professional experiences and internships.

### Top Senders and Countries to Watch

Below are the top 10 countries in the region by number of students studying in the United States. Click on a country to access the *Student Mobility Facts and Figures* sheet for that country. All EducationUSA student mobility fact sheets are available [here](#).

1. [Canada](#)
2. [Brazil](#)
3. [Mexico](#)
4. [Colombia](#)
5. [Venezuela](#)
6. [Peru](#)
7. [Jamaica](#)
8. [Ecuador](#)
9. [Bahamas](#)
10. [Chile](#)

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

**Argentina.** EducationUSA recently opened a new office based in the Catholic University in Buenos Aires (UCA). This expanded capacity will help Argentine students apply to U.S. institutions and

## Western Hemisphere

foster more partnerships between U.S. and Argentine HEIs for faculty professional development, student mobility, and internationalization initiatives.

**Aruba.** EducationUSA recently opened a new advising center based at the Ministry of Education. Increased interest from Aruban youth in pursuing studies in the United States has driven government efforts in support of outbound mobility. The Ministry is also working to establish agreements with U.S. HEIs to offer in-state tuition rates to Aruban students eligible for government financial aid.

**Dominican Republic.** With more than 50 HEIs, strong government support for international education, and a large youth population, the Dominican Republic offers exciting opportunities for academic mobility. Nearly 2 million people of Dominican descent live in the United States, resulting in strong cultural linkages. Dominican HEIs have created innovative joint 3+1 undergraduate and 1+1 or hybrid graduate degree programs with U.S. universities.

**Panama.** EducationUSA Panama's adviser currently works virtually, and the new advising center will physically open in fall 2021 as part of a new American Center at *City of Knowledge*. In addition, EducationUSA Panama promotes the diverse scholarship opportunities available to Panamanians for U.S. study, teaming up with local government programs and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to increase awareness. EducationUSA Panama is collaborating with the

Panama Canal Authority to launch a request for proposals for virtual research internships and other types of institutional partnerships with U.S. HEIs.

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

#### North and Central America and the Caribbean

- Online education and sustainable academic partnerships are gaining momentum, offering U.S. HEIs new opportunities for training and engagement. Programs offering skills development for students, faculty, and researchers such as virtual exchanges, research, and internships as well as joint degrees and short-term certifications will continue to be in demand.
- Mexico and most Central American countries continue to prioritize workforce development, and there is strong interest in short-term certificate programs and partnerships between local technical universities and U.S. community colleges. Public-private partnerships in Mexico and Central America are popular models for supporting regional academic exchange initiatives.
- **Caribbean 2020**, a U.S. government interagency strategy for engagement in the Caribbean, outlines education as one of six priority areas. The education priority focuses on support for public-private sector collaborations that facilitate higher education and workforce development in the United States and the Caribbean, as well as the

efforts of U.S. colleges and universities to recruit qualified students from the region.

#### South America: Andean Region

- As countries continue to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, they will likely focus on rebuilding existing education programs rather than creating new ones. Enrollment at local universities has decreased over the past year. Many students have been forced to postpone studies due to economic conditions, or they are waiting for universities to return to in-person instruction.
- In the coming years, governments in the region are likely to prioritize access to local higher education, but changes in government could influence higher education priorities in some countries. Ecuador and Peru held presidential elections in 2021, and Colombia will hold presidential elections in 2022. Due to changes in student attitudes toward studying abroad, outbound mobility from Bolivia is expected to increase. Short-term intensive English programs continue to be of interest to many students in the region.
- Though Venezuelans continue to prioritize the U.S. as a study destination, the humanitarian crisis has forced many students to seek more affordable and accessible opportunities in neighboring countries. Despite challenges, EducationUSA advisers in Venezuela and throughout the region continue to support Venezuelans who want to study in the United States.

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

Country	2015/16	2019/20	% Change
Dominica	238	576	142.0%
Sint Maarten	92	134	45.7%
Belize	308	388	26.0%
Nicaragua	395	489	23.8%
Bahamas	2,027	2,500	23.3%

# 142.0%

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

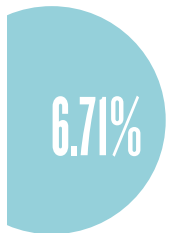
## Five Countries of Origin in the Region with Highest Per Capita College-Age Student Mobility to the United States



**Dominica**  
College-Age Population  
**7,490**



**Bahamas**  
College-Age Population  
**32,912**



**Bermuda**  
College-Age Population  
**3,742**



**St. Kitts and Nevis**  
College-Age Population  
**4,047**



**Sint Maarten**  
College-Age Population  
**3,283**

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics; Indicator: 2018 Population of the Official Age for Tertiary Education, Both Sexes

### South America: Southern Cone

- The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in significant changes to educational assessment, especially in terms of university entrance exams, in the countries of southern South America. Many countries had to create new flexible policies to accommodate online instruction, including postponing entrance exams or accepting results from entrance exams taken in previous years. These flexibilities will likely continue in the future.
- Across the region, increasing numbers of students have participated in EducationUSA virtual events. The EducationUSA Brazil Virtual Roadshow in spring 2021 received more than 10 times the number of student registrations as the in-person fairs in 2020. Several new advising centers have opened in this region over the past year, and these will help meet the increased demand for advising services.
- U.S. and local HEIs are collaborating on innovative recruitment activities in the region. Best practices include dual-degree agreements, online credit-bearing visiting student programs, and institutional partnerships that facilitate pathways for transfer between institutions in specific disciplines. Online collaboration has facilitated increased engagement between U.S. universities and students interested in certificate programs. As these students conclude undergraduate or certificate programs, many apply for graduate programs at the U.S. universities in which they were previously enrolled.

### Virtual and Social Media

EducationUSA centers in the region maintain active Instagram and Facebook accounts, with over 79,000 followers and 400,000 followers, respectively. Advisers also engage through other platforms, such as Twitter, YouTube, and blogs. Advisers use WhatsApp to disseminate information about upcoming events and for cohort advising. Advisers conduct virtual advising and virtual office hours using platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet. Facebook event ads and Facebook Live are also effective outreach tools in the region. The following examples highlight virtual initiatives in the WHA region:

- EducationUSA Colombia's artificial intelligence chatbot adviser, "Ed," is available 24 hours a day and can assist students in beginning plans for their studies using the *Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study* model.
- EducationUSA in North America, Central America, and the Caribbean established a regional working group of senior advisers to organize webinars, workshops, and showcases on diverse topics, providing opportunities for U.S. HEIs to share their expertise with students, parents, counselors, and teachers. In the second semester of 2020, the group hosted 34 regional events, featuring 60 different HEIs, resulting in 25,500 student engagements. All sessions are now available for students to watch on demand through EducationUSA's [YouTube channel](#). HEIs wishing to get involved can indicate interest by completing this [survey](#).
- EducationUSA Canada continues to leverage technology to reach students. Through weekly programs on Facebook and Instagram, EducationUSA Canada regularly provides information on *Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study* to large audiences. EducationUSA Canada also offers a virtual essay-writing boot camp every summer. This four-session program helps participants craft personal statements for college applications.
- EducationUSA Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay have developed online cohort advising programs to reach larger and more diverse student audiences. Social media campaigns on topics such as Black History and

## Regional Student Totals Top Five Countries of Origin

Country	2019/20	% Change
Canada	25,992	-0.5%
Brazil	16,671	3.8%
Mexico	14,348	-5.8%
Colombia	7,787	-3.4%
Venezuela	6,855	-11.7%

## Western Hemisphere



Women's History months have attracted significant student interest. Chilean advisers created a website highlighting International Education Week [events](#). Instagram Live sessions and social media "takeovers" by currently enrolled students are popular in the region.

- Due to increased demand from U.S. institutions for virtual engagement with Colombian students, EducationUSA Colombia created a [webinar request form](#) that allows EducationUSA to better coordinate and promote these events.
- To increase engagement with local audiences, EducationUSA Ecuador organizes virtual contests for prospective students interested in U.S. study. EducationUSA Bolivia and Venezuela host student Instagram "takeovers" at U.S. campuses. EducationUSA Peru regularly hosts live Q&A and group advising sessions for students through Facebook.
- Internet connectivity issues and local power outages in Venezuela make virtual activities challenging. During EducationUSA webinars and virtual

workshops, advisers also connect with students via WhatsApp, which is an accessible and reliable platform in Venezuela. Advisers have also begun using Telegram to promote activities and engage with students.

### Successful Recruiting Strategies

- Interact with students through EducationUSA webinars and in-person presentations at advising centers once local health, safety, and travel conditions allow.
- Supplement traditional recruitment activities by incorporating alumni into student engagement strategies. Consult local EducationUSA advisers when engaging alumni to represent your institution.
- Connect prospective students with currently enrolled international students on campus who are willing to share their personal experiences.
- Coordinate with other U.S. HEIs to offer group presentations, seminars, workshops, and mini-fairs at EducationUSA centers or during virtual

programs. Collaborative virtual sessions are particularly effective given the demand for EducationUSA services and students' limited time to participate in events.

- Contact EducationUSA advisers from "off-the-beaten-path" locations. These connections may yield new opportunities to reach diverse student populations interested in study in the United States.
- Distribute materials in local languages, including Dutch, English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish.
- Employ local-language-speaking representatives in recruitment efforts to engage parents in meaningful ways.
- In addition to international schools, consider recruiting qualified students from prominent national (i.e., public) secondary schools.
- Stay informed about faculty-led study abroad programs at your institution. Encourage professors and students to visit EducationUSA advising centers to meet local students when traveling abroad and ask students to share their experiences.
- Explore in-person and virtual internship opportunities at EducationUSA advising centers through which your students can gain skills, assist advisers, and help promote your institution locally.

### Institutional Partnerships

Many institutions in the region have established specific internationalization goals and are eager to explore institutional linkages, including faculty exchanges, research or internship programs, and group study abroad for both inbound and outbound students. Dual and/or joint degrees and collaborative online education are also increasingly common. Many local institutions seek language training for faculty to facilitate more instruction in English and attract U.S. and other international students.

Before pursuing new institutional partnerships, inventory faculty on existing relationships—formal and informal—with HEIs and their faculty counterparts in the region. Identify the types of programs



that are or would be relevant and sustainable for both institutions.

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

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

The 100,000 Strong in the Americas (100K) Innovation Fund is the U.S. Department of State’s signature hemisphere-wide education initiative. The 100K Innovation Fund is the public-private sector collaboration among the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs; U.S. embassies in the region; and leaders of NGOs, private sector organizations, foundations, regional governments, and HEIs focused on building 100K partnerships and innovative exchange and training programs in the Americas.

As of March 2021, the Innovation Fund had awarded 243 grants (USD\$25,000 to USD\$40,000 each) to 500 teams of HEIs working in 25 countries and 49 U.S. states. Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Guatemala are leading 100K grant recipient countries in the region. Thus far, the Innovation Network—managed by Partners of the Americas—consists of 2,300 regional HEIs and over 1,250 universities and colleges in the United States.

EducationUSA centers in Latin America promote 100K grant opportunities to increase HEI partnerships and training programs to and from the United States and the rest of the WHA region. Learn more and apply for 100K Innovation Fund opportunities at the [100K website](#).

**Foreign Government and Private Funding**

**Argentina.** The Ministry of Education’s Department of International Scholarships and International Cooperation (DGCIN) funds scholarships for graduate studies

in the United States, and also supports teaching assistants, researchers, teachers, and principals to enroll in short-term courses at U.S. HEIs. The City of Buenos Aires Magistrates’ Council awards Master of Laws (LLM) scholarships through the Fulbright Commission in Argentina. The National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET), the National Institute for Agricultural and Technological Research (INTA), and Bunge and Born Foundation award research grants to local scholars.

**Aruba.** The Government of Aruba provides loans to bachelor’s- and master’s-level students pursuing study overseas. Aruban students are eligible to apply for a starter package of 17,000 AWG and 15,375 AWG per academic term for up to eight terms at a 2 percent interest rate.

**Antigua and Barbuda.** Antigua and Barbuda offer a government-funded grant of approximately USD\$5,000 annually, as well as low-interest loans

to students pursuing post-secondary studies, including online study at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

**The Bahamas.** Lyford Cay Foundations Scholarships provide maximum awards of USD\$30,000 to approximately 100 Bahamian students each year to pursue undergraduate, graduate, and technical education abroad. In addition, the Ministry of Education has implemented a tiered system to award grants and merit-based scholarships ranging from USD\$7,500 to USD\$35,000 for study abroad.

**Barbados.** The Barbados Scholarships and Exhibitions are merit-based awards offered to approximately 30 undergraduate-level students with high scores on the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) or in an associate degree program at the Barbados Community College. The scholarship covers tuition and airfare and provides a stipend of approximately USD\$3,500 per year for study at home

**U.S. Study Abroad**

**Top Five Receiving Countries in the Region**

Destination	2018/19	% Change
Costa Rica	8,333	-4.0%
Mexico	6,340	6.3%
Peru	4,041	2.6%
Ecuador	3,675	-9.4%
Argentina	3,317	-12.8%

**Five Countries (with over 100 students) with Highest Percentage Growth, U.S. Students in the Region (Five-Year Trend)**

Country	2014/15	2018/19	% Change
Uruguay	116	212	82.8%
Cayman Islands	90	144	60.0%
Bermuda	119	190	59.7%
Colombia	664	1,030	55.1%
Mexico	4,712	6,340	34.6%

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or abroad. In addition, approximately 10 students per year receive National Development Scholarships, which provide financial support to students ages 18 to 40 who have been accepted by an accredited university abroad, including in the United States, at the undergraduate or graduate level.

**Bolivia.** Soberanía is a government scholarship program that offers up to USD\$50,000 per academic year for graduate studies at select international universities, including in the United States. Eligible fields of study include STEM, medicine, and law. In 2020, the scholarship program was put on hold, and there are no updates as to when it will resume. Contact [lapaz@educationusa.org](mailto:lapaz@educationusa.org) for updates.

**Brazil.** The Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) has sharply reduced the number of scholarships supporting study both within Brazil and abroad. The Fulbright Commission in Brazil works with CAPES to expand Fulbright's professional development support for public school teachers, and in 2019, Fulbright supported more than 1,000 Brazilian teachers' one-month teacher training programs at

U.S. HEIs. However, no teachers traveled to the United States in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. EducationUSA collaborates with the Lemann Foundation, which supports the participation of 20 graduate students in the EducationUSA Opportunity Funds program.

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

**Chile.** The National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research (CONICYT) was renamed the National Agency for Research and Development (ANID), which now administers Becas Chile and other programs that promote research opportunities in all disciplines, technological development, and scientific-technological innovation. In 2020, the

government of Chile suspended all Becas Chile graduate scholarships in order to support Gratuidad, the tuition-free program for low-income students studying at private universities in Chile.

**Colombia.** COLFUTURO, a nonprofit foundation established in 1991 with the support of the government of Colombia and the private sector, provides loan-scholarships for graduate study abroad. These loans can be converted to partial scholarships if graduates meet requirements such as working for the public sector upon graduation. ICETEX, the Colombian government entity that promotes higher education through national and international educational credits, offers loans for students to pursue graduate study abroad. The Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation (MinCiencias) offers scholarships for doctoral studies in the United States. Some of this funding is administered through the Fulbright Commission in Colombia as Fulbright doctoral grants.

**Costa Rica.** The Costa Rican USA Foundation for Cooperation (CRUSA) supports international exchange and student mobility initiatives in STEM fields using tools that include the EducationUSA

Opportunity Funds program. Starting in 2022, through collaboration with the BNC Centro Cultural Costarricense Norteamericano and its EducationUSA center, CRUSA plans to support approximately 31 students with awards of approximately USD\$40,000 to pursue technical degrees at community colleges.

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

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

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

**Honduras.** The government of Honduras' Becas Honduras 20/20 funds graduate

studies abroad through the **International Graduate Scholarships Program** initiative. Since 2017, over 1,240 students have received awards to cover airfare, room and board, tuition and fees, medical insurance, and materials. In 2021, the Becas 20/20 Program will only accept applications in health-related fields. HONDUFUTURO offers the same model of support as GuateFuturo, with loans of up to USD\$50,000. Students can obtain an additional 10 percent discount if, upon returning to the country, they immediately engage in employment for one full year as teachers in local universities. Those pursuing master's degrees in management or MBA programs are limited to 25 percent of the loan amount as a scholarship.

**Mexico.** The U.S. embassy in Mexico, with support from local higher education associations and in partnership with U.S. HEIs, offers a series of short-term programs focused on women and minority empowerment as well as research. In addition to managing traditional Fulbright exchanges, the Fulbright Commission in Mexico (COMEXUS) supports short-term programs in undergraduate research, teacher training, and professional internships, both in Mexico and the United States. The government of Mexico supports graduate students mainly via the Fulbright Commission, the National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT), and the Human Resources Development Fund (FIDERH). Local NGOs—such as the Mexican Foundation for Education, Technology and Science (FUNED) and the Becas Magdalena O. Vda. de Brockmann—offer scholarships and loans to Mexican graduate students.

**Panama.** The Panamanian government's National Secretariat for Science Technology and Innovation (**SENACYT**) administers several scholarship programs, including the Fulbright-SENACYT scholarship, at the undergraduate and graduate levels in a range of fields. The scholarship was recently expanded to include doctoral study, postdoctoral fellowships, and internships. To date, this program has provided full funding for over 700 Panamanian students in the United States. The Panamanian government institution, Institute for Training and Development of Human Resources (**IFARHU**), offers loans of up

to USD\$80,000 to support completion of undergraduate and graduate programs abroad as well as scholarships for short-term, intensive language training. IFARHU has established agreements with U.S. HEIs to provide merit-based scholarships for students with financial need, and can be used to cover the costs for English pathway programs.

**Paraguay.** The Paraguayan government's Programa Nacional de Becas en el Exterior don Carlos Antonio López (BECAL) scholarship program funds master's and doctoral students in education and STEM fields at specific U.S. HEIs. In 2020, the Paraguayan government allowed students to apply the scholarship to online short-term or professional programs. BECAL has established a partnership with the Paraguayan Kansas Committee, which funds 50 students from Paraguay to participate in a semester abroad at HEIs in Kansas. BECAL also co-funds the Fulbright Program (Fulbright-CAL), and EducationUSA co-organizes the BecasPy mentorship program to reach students from outside the capital to apply for the Fulbright-CAL.

**Peru.** PRONABEC is the government agency that manages multiple scholarship programs, including Beca Presidente de la República (soon to be renamed Beca Generación del Bicentenario), a full scholarship program for graduate studies abroad that awards approximately 150 scholarships each year. Reto Excelencia-SERVIR is a government loan-scholarship program that supports public servants pursuing graduate studies abroad. To date, more than 344 government employees have benefited from this opportunity. Contact [cusco@educationusa.org](mailto:cusco@educationusa.org) for updates on these two scholarships.

**Uruguay.** The government of Uruguay nominates candidates for U.S. embassy exchange programs and has recently engaged more closely on Fulbright academic programs. Every year, the National Agency for Research and Innovation (ANII) funds **Fulbright scholarships** for study at U.S. institutions to earn master's or doctoral degrees in subjects such as biotechnology, environmental sciences, information and communications technology, human and animal health, energy, education, creative



## Western Hemisphere

industries, agribusiness and agro-industry, transportation, and criminology. Of all ANII funds, 40 percent are dedicated to supporting students attending U.S. institutions.

### Organization of American States (OAS).

Students from member countries are eligible for **Rowe Fund loans**. These interest-free loans are available at the graduate level throughout the region and for undergraduate studies in English-speaking Caribbean countries. The Rowe Fund allows EducationUSA Opportunity Funds students from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Uruguay to apply for this loan without a cosigner.

### Regional Economics and Market Demand

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

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

### Regional EducationUSA Events

Refer to a specific country’s EducationUSA website and social media accounts to find current, country-specific information about upcoming fairs, webinars, center events, and other activities. Contact the REAC covering the region you are interested in engaging. Additional opportunities include participation in beginner adviser trainings,

thematic subregional workshops, and capacity-building workshops for local HEIs.

### Fairs and Conferences

**EducationUSA Western Hemisphere Regional Forum.** In March 2022, EducationUSA WHA will host a Regional Forum in San José, Costa Rica. This event will provide an excellent opportunity to network with EducationUSA advisers from across the region, REACs, U.S. government colleagues, and local higher education counterparts, and to gather in-depth information about trends in the region. More information on the EducationUSA Western Hemisphere Regional Forum is available on the EducationUSA [website](#).

**Brazil.** The **EducationUSA Brazil Roadshow** is an opportunity to recruit students, meet key leaders in internationalization, and establish partnerships. The Roadshow was offered as a webinar series in 2021 that addressed different themes related to applying to U.S. HEIs. As conditions allow, EducationUSA Brazil intends to resume the in-person Roadshow in seven cities throughout Brazil. Contact [roadshowbrazil@educationusa.org.br](mailto:roadshowbrazil@educationusa.org.br) for updates.

**Caribbean.** EducationUSA organizes recruitment fairs in the Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. EducationUSA is exploring a virtual subregional fair in place of the in-person Caribbean fair circuit in fall 2021 if travel to the region remains restricted.

**Colombia STEM Fair.** This annual STEM-focused fair takes place in March and typically includes stops in various cities within Colombia. In 2021, nearly 1,000 students joined the virtual event that featured 26 U.S. institutions and included presentations by local educational partners and the U.S. embassy. Contact [colombiatour@educationusa.org](mailto:colombiatour@educationusa.org) for information on future Colombia fairs.

**EducationUSA Central America Fairs.** Each year, EducationUSA Central America organizes theme-based, multi-country fairs during the spring semester. For example, in May 2021, EducationUSA Costa Rica and Panama hosted a virtual science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) Open House, featuring 30 U.S.-based HEIs. The event was designed to promote undergraduate

and graduate programs in STEAM and offered opportunities for group conversations between U.S. HEIs and prospective students. For information about future fairs in Central America, contact [centralamericafair@educationusa.org](mailto:centralamericafair@educationusa.org).

**High School Counselor Training Workshops.** EducationUSA Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Eastern Caribbean islands, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, and Trinidad and Tobago regularly organize training workshops on U.S. higher education for local high school counselors.

### EducationUSA LLM Webinar Series.

While historically this has been an in-person LLM tour across South America, EducationUSA plans to offer its second virtual hemisphere-wide regional event in fall 2021. Contact [llmfair@educationusa.org](mailto:llmfair@educationusa.org) for more information.

**WHA EducationUSA Virtual Fair.** While historically this has been an in-person fair circuit across South America, EducationUSA plans to offer its second virtual hemisphere-wide regional fair in fall 2021. Contact [southam@educationusafair.org](mailto:southam@educationusafair.org) for more details.

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

**Alumni Fairs.** EducationUSA regularly hosts alumni fairs featuring U.S. embassy and consulate officers sharing about their personal experiences at their alma maters. U.S. HEIs are encouraged to share informational materials with the organizers for use in these fairs.

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

In AY 2018-2019, 50,061 U.S. students studied abroad in the WHA region, which hosted 14.4 percent of the total U.S. study abroad population. Costa Rica continues to be the region’s top-receiving country—and tenth most





popular study abroad destination overall—hosting 8,333 U.S. students in AY 2018-2019. Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru are also leading destinations in the region, and all are ranked among the top 25 for U.S. students studying abroad. It is noteworthy that Antigua, Aruba, the Bahamas, Bolivia, Colombia, Dominica, El Salvador, and Uruguay were rapidly growing destinations in AY 2018-2019.

In 2020, U.S. embassies or Fulbright Commissions in Colombia, Honduras, and Uruguay received Study Abroad Engagement Grants from the USA Study Abroad Branch of the Department of State to carry out capacity-building projects to promote U.S. study abroad. In addition, the State Department's **IDEAS program** awarded grants to 13 U.S. HEIs to develop or diversify study abroad programming in Belize, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Panama, and Peru. Study abroad in the region was also supported through the global webinar series,

### “Internationalization of Higher Education in the COVID-19 Era.”

U.S. study abroad students are welcome to join EducationUSA programming activities throughout the region. U.S. institutions are encouraged to provide information and resources to study abroad participants prior to their departure from the United States so

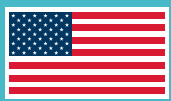
they can promote the institution to local audiences. Students have delivered general presentations about their institutions, joined conversation groups, assisted with mock admissions interviews, and participated in alumni fairs and other events that allowed them to engage with local high school and university students.

### Regional Calendar and Best Times to Interact with Students

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



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[EducationUSA.state.gov](https://EducationUSA.state.gov)