

# A World-Class Education While Getting to Know the United States

Every year, over half a million international students choose to study in the United States. And the United States is eager to host them. Regardless of what you may have heard, about 80 percent of all student visa applications are approved.

Moreover, in the last two years, U.S. consulates have made important changes to accommodate international students. They now offer special visa interview appointment times or, at some locations, set aside times when students can come in without any appointment at all.

The State Department is also working with the governments of other countries to develop reciprocal programs allowing student visas to remain valid for lengthier periods, as well as providing for multiple entries in order that international students can more easily travel home for visits during school breaks.

Understanding that students have to meet very specific deadlines, the State Department has encouraged consulates to find even more ways to expedite student visa applications.

More than 620,000 foreign students enrolled in America's schools of higher education last year, and another 322,000 came as part of various academic exchange programs.

These international students attend U.S. colleges



Photo Courtesy of the University of Georgia/ Paul Efland

The University of Georgia Chapel was completed in 1823.



AP/WWP Photo by Rex Arbogast

Two U.S. presidents, eight U.S. Supreme Court justices, and 29 Nobel Prize winners have graduated from Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey.

and institutions for the same reasons that Americans do: academic excellence, unparalleled choices in types of institutions and programs, and great flexibility in designing courses of study.

In addition to world-class instruction in both traditional and cutting-edge fields of study, the higher education programs in the United States are valued for their commitment to fostering the ability to think independently—through logical examination, rational analysis, and lively discussion.

Like our culture, our academic environment is widely diverse. You can attend a small college where you will come to know practically every-

one on campus, or a large university in which the student population of a single dormitory alone equals that of a small village. There are urban and rural colleges, and colleges around which small towns have evolved. There are state schools, subsidized by taxpayers, which have more open admissions policies, and private schools that are more selective and, generally, more expensive. There are schools steeped in tradition and those that pride themselves on modernity, two-year and four-year colleges, liberal arts and scientific research schools, single-gender and coeducational institutions. Whatever academic experience you are looking for, with its 3,700 colleges and universities from which to choose, the United States has it.

America holds education in high esteem, which is one of the reasons we have many of the best colleges and universities in the world. We, indeed, welcome talented students from around the globe as a means of enriching mutual understanding and fostering universal advancement. We encourage you to apply.

The various degree- and non-degree programs offered at U.S. colleges, the types of schools available, an explanation of American educational philosophy, and much more information is available at <http://educationusa.state.gov>.



AP/WWP Photo by Angela Rowlings

Sixty-one current or former members of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.) community have won the Nobel Prize. The Boston-based university admitted its first students in 1865.

While at a U.S. college or university, you will have the opportunity not only to learn more about your chosen area of study but also, through travel and daily contact with Americans, come to really know more about life in the United States—much more than you can ever learn as a tourist on a short-term visit.

This can be exciting, but can also pose challenges: the food and perhaps the climate may be completely different; you will have to make new friends and will miss the familiarity of home; the behavior and attitudes of the Americans you meet may puzzle or even frustrate you. In addition to your school lessons, you will need to learn such basics as how to get around, use a U.S. bank, take care of your shopping needs, and comprehend measurements that are not based on the metric system.



AP/WWP Staff photo by Paul Sakuma

Seventeen Nobel laureates teach on the Stanford University faculty.

Obviously, both a sense of adventure and humor will serve you well.

Use this opportunity to see America and its people close-up to test your preconceptions. We think you will find us more complex than you might imagine.

So keep an open mind. As the United States was built by waves of immigrants bringing their own values and cultures, the people of this country are enormously diverse in their opinions and standards and simply cannot be reduced to a few stereotypes. Yes, there are representative qualities—it is not unusual to find that, in general, Americans are informal in dress and manner with each



Marsha Miller/The University of Texas at Austin PA Office

The University of Texas at Austin is known for its outstanding library system and nationally ranked academic programs.

other, that they are sometimes competitive, that they place a premium on time and schedules, and that they value individual independence. It is also not unusual to find that Americans are, in general, friendly and open, humorous and generous, achieving, and inclusive team players. Keep in mind, however, that there are plenty of Americans who exhibit only some or none of these “typical” traits—just like people in your country.

Remember that many others have gone through the same thrilling and anxious experience of studying in the United States and that most feel the experience was very rewarding academically and personally. Rest assured the university will work to help you come to feel at home in your U.S. college community.

International students can find excellent information on understanding life in the United States at <http://educationusa.state.gov/life.htm>. ■