

The complete guide to **studying abroad**

Hoover Tower, Stanford University
- Palo Alto, California

Why study abroad?

Different styles of teaching and learning, experiencing another culture, a global community of friends... studying overseas can offer all of these things and more

How good is your Dutch? Is your Danish up to scratch? Don't worry, all the options described here are taught in English. Some universities even throw in free language lessons to help you cope with everyday life in a new country.

Of course, studying abroad will be different from university in the UK, so be prepared for some changes. It's a big step to uproot to another country all by yourself. The good news is that there are lots of people at international universities whose job it is to look after international students (that means you).

Some of the key differences are:

- Length of study
- Entry requirements
- Style of teaching & learning
- Application systems
- Costs

Financial considerations

The financial aspects of studying abroad are very different. You can't take a UK student loan with you, so you'll have to find other ways to fund your studies.

People typically use a combination of savings, income from part-time work (in countries where you are allowed to work) and sometimes scholarships, bursaries or financial aid. Even if you are lucky enough to get a scholarship or bursary, it may not cover the full amount of your costs.

In some European countries, you may

be able to apply to the host country for a student loan. This applies to the Netherlands, Denmark and Bulgaria.

Costs vary from country to country and sometimes from institution to institution. The UK doesn't have many private higher education institutions, but in some countries they are far more common. Private universities might charge higher fees but sometimes have more generous financial awards.

Typical annual fees for undergraduate degrees*

• UK	£9,000
• Netherlands	£1,500
• Ireland	£2,350
(student contribution)	
• Denmark	£0
• USA	£15,800
(public institutions)	
• Canada	£12,000
• Australia	£9,300+
• New Zealand	£9,500+

* Please note these are approximate fees for 2016 and may be subject to change

Is studying abroad right for you?

Moving thousands of miles and starting a new educational pathway isn't a decision to be taken lightly, so how will you know if this is the right option for you?



University of Copenhagen

Ask yourself:

- Am I prepared to do some thorough research beforehand?
- Can I move out of my comfort zone?
- Am I ready to start working right away?
- Will I have the confidence to speak up or ask for help if I need it?
- Can I handle a university experience that might be different from that in the UK?
- Can I handle being away from home, friends and family for long periods?
- Can I manage some uncertainty?

Where do UK students study?

- 1 USA
- 2 New Zealand
- 3 Ireland
- 4 France
- 5 Canada

Following closely behind, you'll find Germany, Australia, the Netherlands and Spain.

Education at a Glance 2014, OECD

This booklet features an introduction to some of the most popular countries for UK students to study, but don't limit yourself to these. You could study throughout the world: from China or Qatar to Brazil or South Africa.

Start your research - useful resources

- **Fulbright:** www.fulbright.org.uk
- **Study Options:** www.studyoptions.com
- **The Student World:** www.thestudentworld.edufindme.com
- **A Star Future:** www.astarfuture.co.uk
- **Eunicas:** www.eunicas.co.uk
- **Study Portals:** www.studyportals.com
- **THE World University Rankings:** www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings

Each country that takes international students will also have its own study website, for example:

- www.studyinholland.nl
- www.studyjapan.go.jp/en

Studying in Europe

Close to home and cheaper too - Europe has lots to offer, including a good-quality education

What's on offer?

There are more than 5,000 courses taught in English across mainland Europe with subjects ranging from animation to logistics.

The Bologna Process is a collective effort from public authorities, universities and teachers to help to make studying across Europe straightforward. It ensures consistency in the standards and quality of higher education qualifications - so a bachelor's degree is comparable in level wherever in Europe you study.

A number of European countries (Finland and the Netherlands, for example) split their education between research-

based universities and polytechnics (or universities of applied sciences), providing professionally-oriented higher education.

European countries are becoming increasingly well-represented on international league tables like the Times Higher Education World University Rankings. Germany has 20 universities in 2015-2016'S top 200 and the Netherlands features 12.

Be aware that courses in Europe might have narrower, more specific course titles than we're used to in the UK. Look out for degrees in sustainable agrisystem management or ecosystem science, for example.



Maastricht, Netherlands

"The approach to student life is different and the focus is certainly on a cultural exchange. There are also personality differences which change the way lessons are taught: professors and tutors are direct and informal, which reflects the Dutch personality of straight talking and honesty."

Hannah Patterson, University of Maastricht, the Netherlands

Structure of studies

As a general rule, you can expect a three- to four-year bachelor's degree depending on the subject or type of institution you attend. The academic year is similar to the UK's but may start a little earlier.

Get ready for a steep learning curve - you may have to adjust to a new life and academic setting more quickly than friends back home who are still enjoying freshers' parties.

How much will it cost?

In the public universities in Europe, you'll find far lower fees than we're used to in the UK. Some countries, like Germany, Denmark, Finland, Austria and Cyprus charge no fees for their undergraduate degree. Expect fees of around €2,000 (£1,500) per year in the Netherlands. You'll pay €200 (£150) per year for undergraduate degrees at public universities in France, although courses taught in English are limited.

It's not all about fees - here's what else to consider:

- **The cost of living:** countries like Slovenia, Luxembourg and Hungary are known to offer a lower cost of living than the UK.
- **Student loans:** you can't take your UK student loan with you, but you may be eligible to apply for a loan in the Netherlands or Denmark if you work, or in Bulgaria.
- **Scholarships:** There are some on offer, but you might find more financial support available if you're applying to study in the private universities.
- **Working:** One advantage of studying in Europe is the right to work, although opportunities vary from country to

country and depend on your language skills. Some students find work with their university; others offer English tuition.

Applications and getting a place

Competition for places varies but, as a general rule, it is not as hard to get in as we're used to in the UK. In most cases you'll apply direct to a chosen university although there are some centralised applications in the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden.

How will it differ from the UK?

Student life may be a little different on the continent, where some students go to university at a later age, or halls of residence aren't commonplace. Read up on what to expect on university websites and student forums, so you know what you are signing up to.

"First year begins half way through August and from day one every exam counts towards your final grade. Exams occur every six to eight weeks with multiple courses running simultaneously. In the Netherlands, the first year is the most important, you have to prove your capability or by Christmas it is possible that you may be asked to leave."

Hannah Patterson, University of Maastricht, the Netherlands

Find out more

- **The Student World:** www.thestudentworld.edufindme.com
- **A Star Future:** www.astarfuture.co.uk
- **Eunicas:** www.eunicas.co.uk
- **Study Portals:** www.studyportals.com

Studying in the USA & Canada

Nowhere attracts more international students than the USA, so what could North America offer you?

What's on offer?

The USA boasts many of the best universities in the world and many of the big names that you might have heard of: Harvard, Yale and Princeton. Canada - a much smaller nation - ploughs lots of money into its education system and offers different benefits, including the possibility of staying on after graduation.

If you're not keen on admissions tests, Canada might be the choice for you - tests are rarely required for undergraduate study. However, in the USA, tests are a big part of university recruitment and most applicants have to sit one.

Choosing an institution, course and subject

USA

- Choose from 4,500 universities
- 63 institutions in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings Top 200 (2015-2016)
- Niche subjects include Hispanic-American studies and American literature

Canada

- Choose from 100 universities
- 7 institutions in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings Top 200 (2015-2016)
- Niche subjects include arctic nursing, native American art or natural resources management

Structure of studies

The academic year runs from August/September to May/June. In Canada, it will take you three to four years to complete your Bachelor's degree; at least four years is needed in the USA.

The US is known for its flexibility in education; you can choose to specialise later on in your degree and don't have to decide on a major when you apply. So if the idea of studying for a science degree with courses in history, fine art or sociology alongside appeals, then this might be the place for you.

Canadian degrees also start off much more general than those in the UK. You might pick a range of subjects from sciences or arts before you start to narrow down your focus.

How much will it cost?

- According to The US College Board, average tuition fees for 2015-2016 were \$23,107 (roughly £15,800) at public institutions and \$32,405 (roughly £22,200) at private ones. Fees at community colleges are considerably lower.
- Consider that two-thirds of international students get some form of financial support, so most people aren't paying the headline fees.
- There are scholarships based on a range of criteria (merit, talent, country of origin etc) and financial aid. Some students pay

nothing for their education in the USA.

- According to Statistics Canada, tuition fees for international undergraduate students in Canada averaged CAD\$21,932 (around £12,000) in 2015/2016.
- You'll find fewer sources of financial support in Canada but it's worth exploring the possibility of scholarships with your university.
- While Canadian universities are mainly public, in the USA there are many private universities to choose from. Private US universities tend to have higher fees but a range of scholarships and funding support available.

Applications and getting a place

- **Applying to US universities** can be a laborious process involving lengthy applications and deadline dates from November to January.
- **Applications in Canada** tend to be shorter, but you may need to provide further information on academic progress, sample essays, letters of reference and letters of intent (much like a personal statement). Your university will explain their processes, but you might be expected to apply between December and February or March.
- **Applying for a visa** is an essential part of the process whether you study in the USA or Canada. In both cases, you'll be required to provide evidence of your finances, good character and good health.

How will it differ from the UK?

Canada features natural beauty, vibrant cities, harsh winters and plenty of diversity. It's the second largest country in the world with a population of only 36 million.

The USA offers huge diversity across



Eliot House, Harvard University

its 50 states with selling points including impressive facilities, a vibrant campus life and the chance to become a well-rounded graduate with great breadth of knowledge.

In both countries, you'll have the opportunity for a student experience that shares some characteristics with the UK. Choose carefully though, some US universities are single-sex and some campuses are alcohol-free.

Alternative ways to study

- **Co-op programmes:** these feature work experience, a bit like sandwich courses in the UK. US degrees with practical training built-in also offer similar benefits.
- **Community colleges:** a bit like further education colleges in the UK, these offer more work-related qualifications. It is possible to study for an Associate degree at community college for two years before transferring to a university for a further two years to gain a bachelor's degree.

Find out more

- **Study in Canada:**
www.studyincanada.com
- **US-UK Fulbright Commission:**
www.fulbright.org.uk

Studying in Australia & New Zealand

If you're looking for a big change from the UK, then why not explore the southern hemisphere?

What's on offer?

If you're travelling thousands of miles for your education, you want to be sure that you're getting a good-quality education and a great lifestyle. Australia and New Zealand have lots to offer on both counts.

Australia

- Choose from 43 universities
- Eight universities in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings Top 200 (2015-2016)
- Around 3,400 full-time bachelor's degrees

New Zealand

- Choose from eight universities
- One university in Times Higher Education World University Rankings Top 200 (2015-2016)
- Around 340 full-time bachelor's degrees

If you're looking for higher education with a vocational focus, check out polytechnics and colleges of education in New Zealand and TAFE and VET colleges in Australia. Be sure to explore undergraduate qualifications below degree level, like diplomas and associate degrees when you're doing your research.

And remember that a new country (and continent) opens the door to new courses. Perhaps you'd consider studying indigenous cultures or Antarctic science,

for example? Look out for new and unusual subject matters in veterinary medicine or marine biology courses. Or maybe you fancy a degree that reflects one of the key industries of the country, like mining, agriculture, outdoor activities or winemaking.

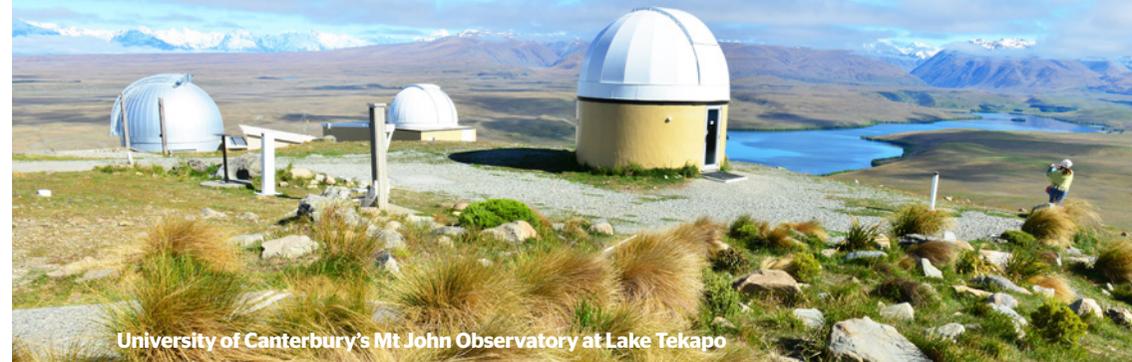
Structure of studies

The academic year in Australia and New Zealand runs from February to November. You can expect to spend three to four years studying for an undergraduate degree in Australia or New Zealand, or longer for courses like medicine.

In both countries, you choose a major subject to specialise in, but you have the option to try out other subjects too. It's not unusual to change your major as you progress through your studies.

How much will it cost?

- It certainly isn't cheaper to study in Australia and New Zealand. According to Study Options, a service for students interested in studying down under, undergraduate fees range from AUS\$18,000 - 36,000 (£9,300 - £18,700).
- In New Zealand, you'd be looking at NZ\$20,000 - 34,000 (£9,500 - £16,200) for similar courses.
- Remember to factor in additional costs for applications, visas, health insurance and so on. And if you plan to return to



University of Canterbury's Mt John Observatory at Lake Tekapo

the UK regularly then travel will be a big expense.

- Scholarships are available, but can be limited and competitive at undergraduate level. You can search for scholarships at www.studyinaustralia.gov.au and www.studyinnewzealand.com.

Applications and getting a place

You generally apply direct to the university, with closing dates in Autumn for courses starting in February. The good news is that applications tend to be shorter and simpler than the UCAS application.

In many cases, three A-levels will be sufficient to meet entry requirements, but more may be necessary for some competitive courses. You're likely to need three As for medicine, however three Cs might get you onto a Bachelor of Education at the University of Auckland, which is ranked alongside the University of Leicester and Newcastle University in the Times Higher league tables. In some cases, you may be asked to sit an admissions test like the Law School Admission Test (LSAT).

How will it differ from the UK?

Students often speak highly about the experience they get at universities in Australia and New Zealand: the tutor contact time; the range of assessment methods; and being known to their tutors are just some of the selling points.

The grading systems are different so you won't be getting a first or a 2:1 at the end of your degree. Expect to get graded A to D in NZ; or high distinction, distinction, credit or pass in Australia.

One of the big bonuses about life down under is the different way of life. Perhaps you crave outdoor living or a more laid-back lifestyle, or maybe you look forward to being close to great beaches or beautiful glaciers and fjords? Both destinations will deliver on all counts - but it may come at a cost as you'll be a long way from home comforts, so think carefully about the pros and cons before reaching a decision.

In both countries, it may be possible to work alongside your studies for around 20 hours per week in term time and more in the holidays. Closely check the conditions of your visa before you start any employment.

If you fall in love with the country, there can be options to stay on and work or even emigrate afterwards. Find out more from the government's immigration service in your chosen country.

Find out more

- **Australia:**
www.studyinaustralia.gov.au
- **New Zealand:**
www.studyinnewzealand.com

Studying in Ireland

If you don't want a far-flung destination, the Republic of Ireland has great opportunities closer to home

What's on offer?

Ireland is one of the most popular countries for UK students to study: it's close, the costs of study are lower - and everyone speaks English!

There are only seven universities in Ireland, along with 14 institutes of technology and a handful of colleges where you can study for a degree. You can choose from around 1,500 courses at undergraduate level.

Two of Ireland's universities are considered to be amongst the best in the world: Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin. These both appear in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings Top 200 2015-2016.

According to Education in Ireland, the country is at the cutting edge of research into subjects like nanoscience, immunology and computer science.

Structure of studies

You can opt to study at a university or an institute of technology offering technical higher education. You'll find three-year bachelor's degrees on offer, or three- to four-year honours degrees. The institutes of higher education also offer two-year qualifications like higher certificates; these are of a similar level to foundation degrees or HNDs in the UK.

There are plenty of similarities to education in the UK; the academic year runs from September to June, and the degree classifications are the same too (first, 2:1, 2:2 and so on).

How much will it cost?

As long as you're an EU citizen and resident without a university degree, you can forget about tuition fees. However, your studies won't be free; students

have to pay a registration fee or student contribution of €3,000 (£2,350) per year in 2016-2017.

You can't take your UK student loan with you, unless you come from Northern Ireland, so you'll need to consider other ways to fund your studies. Most people use a combination of savings, part-time work and grants and scholarships. Use the university websites to search for scholarships that you may be eligible for.

The cost of living is fairly similar to the UK, although you'll find Dublin is more expensive than the rest of the country. You might expect to pay somewhere between €10,000 and €15,000 (£7,800 to £11,800) for annual living and study costs in Dublin, according to the Irish Council for International Students.

Applications and getting a place

Apply through CAO (Central Applications Office) from November onwards. You should aim to apply before February, although the closing date for late applications falls in May.

- You needn't worry about a personal statement or a reference. Decisions are based on grades so offers are made when results come out in August.
- It can be tough to get into Irish universities, particularly for competitive courses like medicine where strong grades from four A-levels are required, along with a good score on the HPAT admissions test.
- The points system used for applicants with A-levels have changed recently which has made it a little easier to get in.
- Certain combinations of A-levels may not be permitted, for example, English literature with English language, or Environmental Science with Biology

or Geography.

- See the CAO website for details of entry requirements, and a guide to the A-level points system: www.cao.ie

How will it differ from the UK?

Student life in Ireland is not too different from the UK. Ireland is known for its literary and musical heritage, as well as its pubs, so expect to enjoy a good arts and social scene in your spare time.

If you're coming from a big UK town or city, you may find Ireland quieter in comparison - the entire population of the Republic of Ireland is just over half the population of London.

Dublin provides the best opportunity for city life, as most institutions outside the capital are based in smaller cities and towns.

The Republic of Ireland is small, so it is fairly easy to travel around and visit other areas. And when it's time to come home, you can often find good deals on flights and ferries to get you back cheaply.

Medical care

- **Don't forget your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) if you want to cover some of the costs of medical care when studying in Europe. This only applies to the first year of your studies, so after that you might need to consider private healthcare insurance.**

Find out more

- **Education in Ireland:** www.educationinireland.com
- **Qualifax:** www.qualifax.ie



Your long-term career prospects

So studying abroad sounds good, but will it improve your employability and job prospects afterwards?

The workplace is changing fast and employers in many countries are looking for adaptable, resilient and multi-skilled people to work for them.

Make yourself more employable

- Make sure you can clearly articulate what you've gained from studying abroad so you can sell yourself to a potential employer. Your university careers service could help you with this.
- Think of ways to make yourself more employable on graduation: take advantage of work placements, language lessons, working on projects with local businesses, part-time work and involvement in student societies or competitions.

What do employers think?

If you're thinking of studying overseas to improve your job prospects, then there's some good news. International experience is valued by many employers, particularly in today's global, competitive workplace.

A 2013 survey carried out by the British Council found that employers see a clear business benefit to recruiting staff who can work well with those from other cultural backgrounds. Some 360 business leaders across nine countries identified that staff with these intercultural skills are 'more likely to

bring in new clients, work well in diverse teams, and positively support their organisation's brand and reputation'.

If you study overseas, you're likely to be mixing with students from a range of countries, not just students from the host country, so you should develop a strong sense of intercultural awareness.

Remember: if you don't fancy a full degree abroad, you could gain international experience in other ways, perhaps through the Erasmus scheme, a summer school abroad or an internship in China.

Skills and qualities you will gain

Here are just some of the things you'll develop through international study, all of which are desirable in the workplace:

- Communication
- Resilience
- Maturity
- Self-confidence
- Cultural awareness
- Global mindset
- Initiative
- Independence
- Self-awareness
- Language skills
- Adaptability

Anwar Hussain Nadat left Batley in Yorkshire to study primary education at the University of Auckland, New Zealand's largest and most highly-ranked university. He now works at a primary school in the city.

"Studying abroad allowed me to strengthen and gain new skills, such as adaptability and integration. Moving to a new place built further confidence in me. My current employer highlighted my willingness to learn and I believe the decision to study abroad has benefited me in this way."

Hannah Patterson is coming to the end of her European Studies degree at University of Maastricht in the Netherlands, but she isn't looking at the benefits her degree will give her back in the UK.

"Studying abroad has certainly given me the motivation to maintain a life abroad. If I were to apply for a job in an international company in Europe who was seeking native English speakers, then I have a definite advantage. I wish to stay working in Europe for the near future, I have no reason to leave the Netherlands and wish to continue building a career in an international environment"

Hallaamal Keir swapped Leeds for Occidental College in California. She is still in her first year, but is already seeing some of the benefits..

"Being in an unfamiliar place forces you to mature in so many ways that you wouldn't expect; being able to understand different cultural and social interactions is an incredibly helpful tool for navigating all types of situations. Being able to switch between cultures and between different social situations is such an advantage. I've also found that employers literally jump at the chance to interview somebody who has study abroad on their resume because of the growth and development you do while in another country.

Dharmesh Vyas left London to study at University of Saskatchewan in Canada. He went on to find work as a planning and development officer for the municipal government in Alberta, Canada.

"I feel studying abroad has made me more willing to move around for a career - the notion of uprooting oneself from home, relocating to a completely new area, and re-establishing oneself became much easier. Having studied abroad, I have adopted a new culture in addition to the one I already feel I belong to. Professionally, I feel these skills are always transferable and I do feel more equipped to be mobile as I progress in my career, both geographically and from one job to the next."

