

# HIGHER EDUCATION

U.S. higher education is different from many other systems around the world as it is not subject to a central government authority and institutions are free to design curriculum. Regional and national accreditation of U.S. colleges and universities helps ensure that institutional standards are being met.

Higher education in the United States has a diversity of institutions comprising public universities or colleges and also many private institutions.

## Wide range of institutional styles

- > large all-inclusive campus vs fewer students on a close-knit campus
- > urban vs rural setting
- > state-funded vs private institutions
- > amount of funding and support for international students
- > quality of campus facilities, from labs to athletic facilities
- > diverse specializations vs focused on one field

## Four-Year vs Two-Year

### Four-year university or college

- > Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BS) degrees
- > highly flexible and offers a wide variety of courses (liberal arts philosophy)

### Two-year College

A two-year college is also known as community or junior college:

- > studies in a wide range of subjects
- > low tuition rates (average of \$6,500)
- > practical or vocational training
- > possibility to transfer to a four-year bachelor's programme (2 + 2 years)
- > entrance requirements much less competitive than four-year degrees

## Vocational

### Technical Institute

- > two- or three-year course of training
- > semi-professional occupation: dental, engineering or medical technician Terminal Occupational Education (vocational)
- > one to three years of study
- > prepare for immediate employment (not to continue to college or university)

# DEGREES

In the American system of higher education the following degrees are awarded:

- > **Associate degrees**  
conferred after 2 years of studies; students typically continue
- > **Bachelor degrees**  
4 years of studies
- > **Master degrees**  
1 or 2 additional years after a Bachelor's degree
- > **Doctoral degrees (PhD)**  
at least 2-3 years of further studies

**Professional degrees:** many professions require specific training at a post-graduate level:

- > **law degree (J.D.)**  
2 years
- > **medical degree (M.D.)**  
3 years plus additional training (the same applies to dentistry, veterinary medicine and architecture).

A student's academic standing is usually measured by his grade point average (GPA) but this can vary widely.

The registrar of the university/college keeps a permanent record of courses taken and grades earned by each student ("transcript")

## The credit system

American degrees are earned on the basis of the number of courses successfully taken. Each course earns "credits" or "units".

- > **undergraduate student's load = 15-17 units per semester**
- > **graduate student's load:= 9-12 units possibly with research**

Each specialization will have different requirements, for the total number of units in each subject.

## The grading system

Most colleges and universities use letters as follows:

<b>A</b> = excellent or outstanding	<b>C</b> = average	<b>F</b> = failing
<b>B</b> = above average	<b>D</b> = below average	

An undergraduate student must maintain a C or 2.00 average in general and a B or 3.00 average in his or her major field in order to get a degree.

# USEFUL WEBSITES

There is no official ranking system for colleges and universities in the United States. The best college or university is the one that is best for you and meets your requirements - academically, financially, and personally.

Keep in mind that the schools you apply to must be accredited in order to get a financial aid from the Ministry of higher education and research!

The EducationUSA Adviser in Luxembourg can help you find the best place for you. Contact the Adviser on [facebook.com/EducationUSALuxembourg](https://facebook.com/EducationUSALuxembourg) or through [LuxembourgPublicAffairs@state.gov](mailto:LuxembourgPublicAffairs@state.gov)

- > Education USA  
<https://educationusa.state.gov>
- > Study in the States  
<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov>
- > Fulbright commission  
[www.fulbright.be/fr](http://www.fulbright.be/fr)



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**USA**



LE GOUVERNEMENT  
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG  
Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur  
et de la Recherche

# SEARCH ENGINES

- > College Navigator - National Center for Education Statistics  
<http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>
- > The College Board - Big Future  
<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search>
- > American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)  
[www.aacc.nche.edu](http://www.aacc.nche.edu)
- > College Board  
[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)
- > Peterson's  
[www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)
- > Princeton Review  
[www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com)





# APPLICATION

**Begin your research at least 12 to 18 months prior to the academic year in which you hope to attend a college or university.**

**1. > 1 August:**

You may begin most of your applications. The Common Application (used by over 600 American universities) and most other universities' applications become available on-line.

**2. > Finalise your university choices to the 2-8 universities to which you will apply.**

**3. > register for and sit an admissions test (SAT or ACT)**

**4. > September:**  
request a transcript from your school and 2-3 reference letters.

**More information (also available from EducationUSA Adviser)**

- > Common application [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)
- > Fulbright [www.fulbright.org.uk](http://www.fulbright.org.uk)
- > SAT [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)
- > ACT [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)

## Typical Application Requirements

- > A completed application form
- > Application fee (\$50-100 per university)
- > Admissions exam scores (SAT or ACT and TOEFL)
- > 2-3 essays (personal statement)
- > Transcript (document listing your academic qualifications and marks)
- > 2-3 letters of reference (for some universities)
- > Interview (for some universities)

## Application deadlines

**November to January:**  
regular application deadlines, with most in January.

### How to write a personal statement?

Watch the videos on [www.fulbright.be](http://www.fulbright.be)

### What is SAT?

Like American students, you may be required to take the SAT in the last year of your secondary studies. The SAT is offered in Brussels and in Luxembourg (International School [www.islux.lu](http://www.islux.lu)). It is advisable to take the test as early as possible, so that test results can reach the university admissions officers before the application deadlines. Some universities do not require the SAT and others accept alternatives like the ACT.

Register for a test on [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

# OBTAINING YOUR VISA

A valid passport and U.S. visa are needed to enter the United States.

An interview with a consular officer, as well as inkless fingerprint scans at the U.S. Embassy, are required for most visa applicants.

Your university will apply for your visa after you accept their letter of admission. So obtaining a visa is usually one of the last steps before you depart for the United States.

1. Apply online for your visa DS 160 on <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en.html>
2. schedule an interview at the consulate

Documents needed to complete your DS-160:

- > Passport
- > Travel itinerary, if you have already made travel arrangements
- > Dates of your last five visits or trips to the United States
- > Résumé or Curriculum Vitae
- > SEVIS ID, which is printed on your I-20 or DS-2019
- > address of the school/program at which you intend to study

Follow the procedure on the website of the U.S. Embassy

<http://lu.usembassy.gov>  
<https://travel.state.gov>

### What is a form I-20A-B "Certificate of Eligibility"?

The I 20A-B is sent to you by a U.S. institution that considers you qualified for a full course of study.





# TUITION FEES

Almost all American institutions of higher education are not for free. You have to pay tuition and fees, which vary widely depending on location, size, specialization, and other factors. Institutions can be grouped according to public or private, two-year or four-year, but choosing the best institution for you depends on other features. Here is a general overview about the various tuition fees.

> **Public two-year (community) colleges:**

Tuition and other fees: 3.570 \$

> **Public four-year colleges**

Tuition and other fees: 25.620 \$ (out-state fees)

> **Private non-profit-four year colleges**

Tuition and other fees: 34.740 \$

[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

# FINANCIAL AID

## Financial aid from the Luxembourg State

- > The Ministry of Higher Education and Research offers grants and loans to students enrolled in higher education and meeting certain conditions.
- > Financial aid is awarded only for recognised degree courses!
- > Consult the section « eligible degree courses » on our website [www.cedies.lu](http://www.cedies.lu)
- > Contact us in case of doubt [etudes@mesr.etat.lu](mailto:etudes@mesr.etat.lu)

### Application deadlines:

- > from 1st August to 30th November (winter semester)
- > from 1st January to 30th April (summer semester)

For more information on the financial aid application procedure and the eligibility criteria (with the possibility to use our calculation simulator), please visit: [www.cedies.lu](http://www.cedies.lu) .

For a faster processing, apply online via  
[MyGuichet.lu](http://MyGuichet.lu)!



# STUDENT LIFE

ACEL (Association of Luxembourg Student Unions) informs you about all aspects of student life: housing, social security, student jobs and internships, etc.

[www.acel.lu](http://www.acel.lu)