

United States (US)

Guide



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Why the US?

The United States of America is the most popular study destination for international students. The US universities consistently rank number one in rankings around the world making the country the holy grail of higher education and research. In 2018, approximately 2 lakh Indian students flew to the US to pursue education opportunities. High quality of education, research, and a plethora of job opportunities make the US a top choice for international students.



1.

Globally Recognized Education:

According to Times Higher Education World University Rankings, the QS World University Rankings and many others, US universities consistently dominate the top spots owing to cutting-edge research and high quality of education. Harvard, MIT, and Stanford University are ranked as the top 3 universities in the world year after year. The US is also home to the Ivy League - one of the most well-known groups of universities in the world.

2.

Exposure to Different Cultures:

The US is the land of immigrants. People from many nationalities have made it their permanent home in the last few decades owing to better job opportunities and a high quality of life. It is often referred to as a 'melting pot' of cultures as it draws cultural influences from Latin Americans, Asians, Europeans and Africans who make up a sizable population of the country.

3.

Exciting Job Prospects:

Home to some of the biggest tech giants in the world, there is a growing demand for graduate and post-graduate students in the US. Companies such as Apple, Google, Facebook are all based out of Silicon Valley, a region in the San Francisco Bay Area of California that serves as a global center for technology and innovation.



Types of post-secondary institutions

1. Community College

Community colleges are two-year associate degree programs/certifications. Throughout the years, community colleges have begun to adopt vocational oriented programs. Some of the community colleges in the US:



Green River College



Miami Dade College



Santa Monica College

2. State College or University

State colleges have a wide range of degree programs available. They have lower tuition costs as compared to other universities making them an affordable and attractive option for international students. State Colleges have a vibrant campus life, extra-curricular activities, and state of the art teaching facilities. The largest public colleges in the US have over 60,000 students enrolled. Some of the good State Colleges in the US are:



University of Michigan



**University of California
- Los Angeles (UCLA)**



University of Virginia

3. Private College and University

Private colleges offer students with smaller class sizes that help the students build a relationship with their professors and advisors. They have a smaller list of degree programs they offer but students have the option to customize their degrees and be part of more discussion based classes. The Ivy League in the US is one of the most well-known groups of private universities in the world. Ivy League consists of the following eight schools:



Brown University



Columbia University



Cornell University



Dartmouth University



Harvard University



Princeton University



**The University of
Pennsylvania**



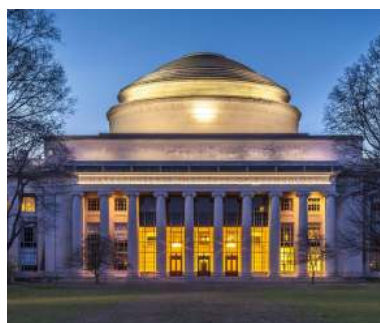
Yale University

4. Institute of Technology

Institutes of technology are universities that specialize in engineering, technology, applied sciences, and natural sciences. Examples include:



**Illinois Institute of
Technology**



**Massachusetts Institute
of Technology (MIT)**



**New York Institute of
Technology**

Requirements for post-graduate study in the US

Academic Requirements:

Admission into a study course depends on the student's past academic performance. Each institution specifies the minimum grades/ marks or cumulative averages (GPAs) it will accept. In some cases, students also need to have completed one or more required subjects previously, known as prerequisite subjects.

Language Proficiency Requirements

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is the most common language test for universities and colleges in the US. English Language Testing System (IELTS), is also accepted. Language test score requirements vary by institution and program.

Some institutions only look at the overall scores, while others have cut-offs for scores in each of the four skills sections. Typically, students applying to an undergraduate course need one of the below:

TOEFL (internet-based test, iBT) scores between 60.0 and 100.0 overall
IELTS scores between 6.0 and 7.5 with no band less than 6.0

General exams

GMAT - The Graduate Management Admission Test is intended to assess certain analytical, writing, quantitative, verbal, and reading skills in written English for use in admission to a graduate management program, such as an MBA program.

GRE - The Graduate Record Examination is another test required to be taken by students applying to graduate schools to pursue MA or MS. Increasingly many business schools are also accepting GRE scores for the purpose of granting admission for MBA.

LSAT - The Law School Admission Test is a standardized test and is an integral part of the law school admission process. The purpose of the LSAT is to test the skills necessary for success in the first year of law school.



US student visa

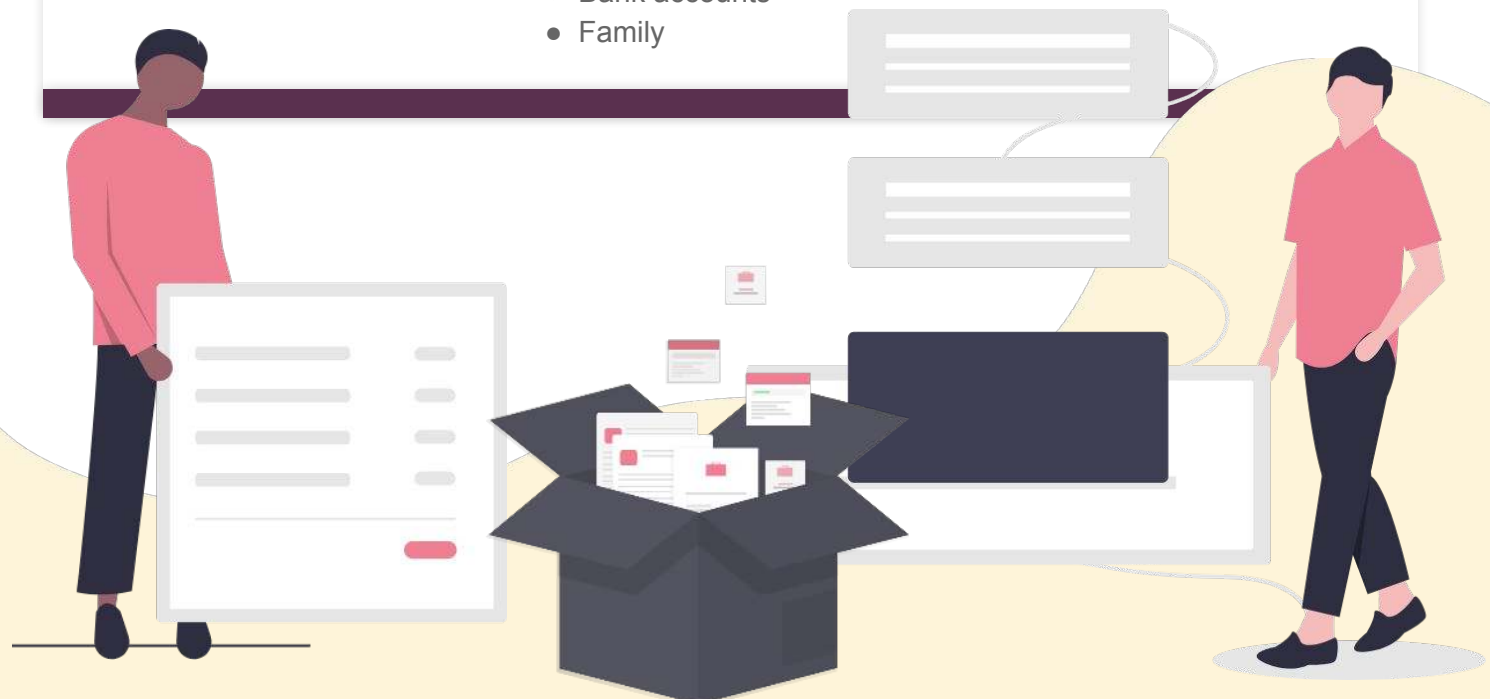
There are three different types of visas depending on the level of schooling you apply for :

- 1. F Student Visa:** For students looking to study at a college or university in the US
- 2. J Student Visa:** For students looking to participate in an exchange program at the high school and university level.
- 3. M Student Visa:** For students looking for non-academic or vocational study or training in the US

Before you apply for a student visa, you must be accepted by an institution in the US that is certified by the Student Exchange and Visitor Program (SEVP). Once you're accepted into a school, you will receive an I-20 or DS-2019 form from the institution's international student office. These forms are important to present when the student applies for their visa.

Here are list of things that you will need to provide qualify for the F Student Visa:

1. Providing proof of intent to return to their home country upon completion of studies.
2. Only studying at the institution noted on the visa.
3. Demonstrating you have sufficient funds to support your life in the US.
4. Showing strong ties to your home country through:
 - A job offer for after graduation
 - A house, land, etc
 - Bank accounts
 - Family



Working while studying in the US

Working On-Campus with F1 Visa

F1 visa allows international students to work while they are studying in the US.

Students with a valid F1 visa are allowed to work on-campus only with these specific guidelines:

- Work 20-hours per week during regular full-time semesters
- Work more than 20-hours per week between quarters semester
- Work more than 20-hours per week during school breaks (including winter and summer break)

On-campus work is typically available at the cafeteria, library, research labs, or admissions offices. Students can work in more than one job but they must comply with the hour restrictions.

Working On-Campus with F1 Visa

International students have two options for working off-campus. It's important to note they must complete their first academic year before they are eligible for off-campus work.

The options are:

- **Curricular Practical Training (CPT):** CPT allows you to do training, work or internships that may be part of your degree program. Some degree programs require students to complete an internship prior to graduation.
- **Optional Practical Training (OPT):** OPT provides you with the option to do an off-campus job or internship for 12 months, given it is in your field of study. For students enrolled in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs, there is an option for a 24 month OPT extension, for a total of 36 months. Students who want to apply for OPT need an additional visa.



After post - graduation - What's next?

After your OPT expires, you can switch to an employer-sponsored visa.

The most common employer-sponsored visa for the U.S. is the H1B visa, which is tied to a specific job. To be eligible, you will need to find a job with an employer that can sponsor you. Your employer will have to submit your application to the U.S. lottery, which takes place every April. An employer can only apply once a year, so if the deadline is missed, you'll need to wait until the following year.

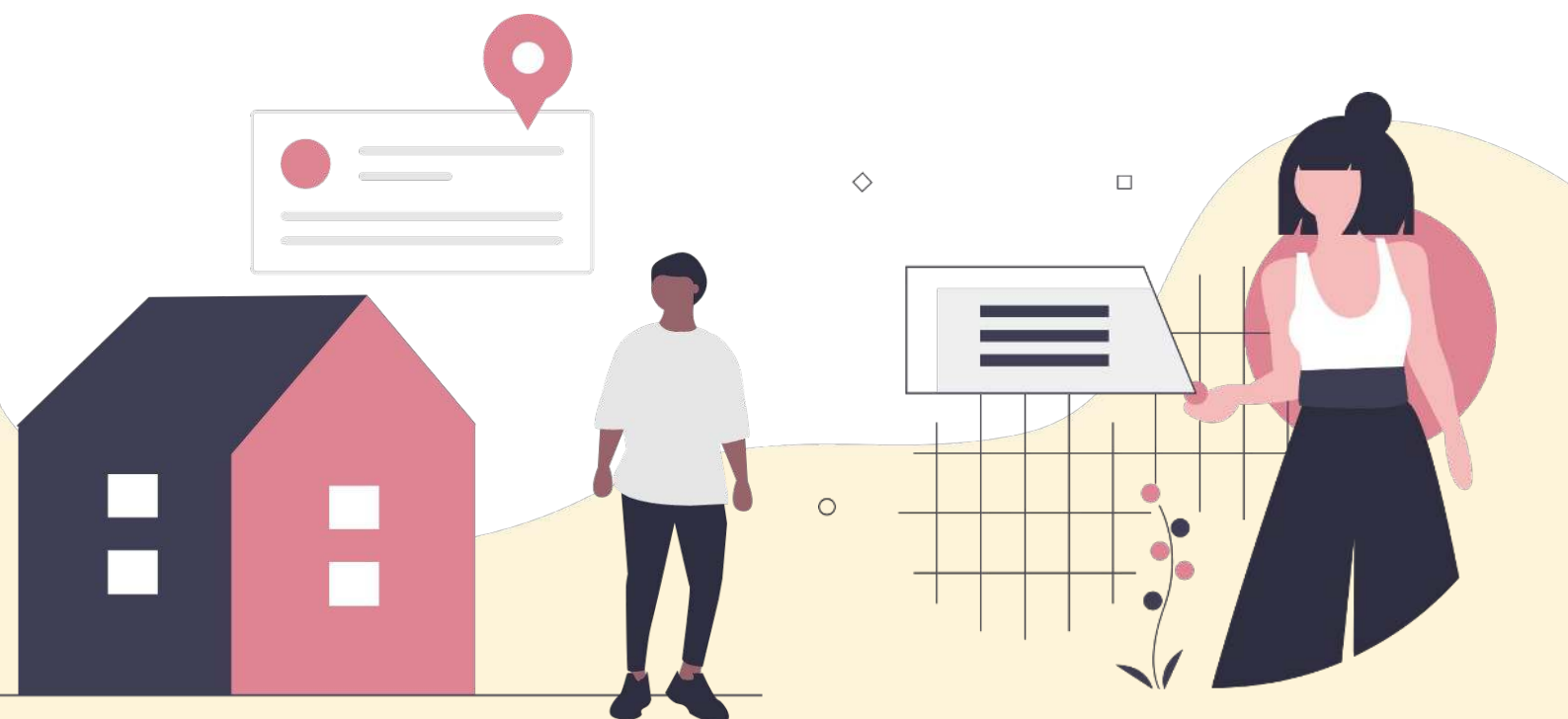
Only 85,000 visas are issued each year. Due to the large number of applications, demand usually exceeds supply. Depending on the year, between 30% and 50% of applicants receive a visa, which typically becomes effective four or five months after the lottery. You're not eligible to work until your visa is issued, so unless you're already working in the U.S. on another visa like OPT, you will need to remain in your home country. Your H1B visa also provides entry into the U.S.

Permanent Residency in the US:

In order to become a U.S. permanent resident, you must transition from an H-1B visa status to Green Card, which is often the best option for skilled individuals who wish to remain in the U.S. for the long term.

The H-1B visa allows you to work in the U.S. for up to six years, after which you can file for permanent residency.

The transition from an H-1B visa to an employer-based Green Card is initiated by employers. U.S. - based companies that sponsor workers for work visas are typically the ones responsible for Green Card sponsorship as well.



Get started on your application with leap scholar today.

Your dream of studying in the US is within reach with Leap Scholar.

We at Leap Scholar provide end-to-end guidance to help make your study dream come true. Our team of expert, experienced counsellors work along with successful student mentors currently studying in top universities in the US to give you the best personalised counselling experience.

From shortlisting the right course to visa processing, from college applications to financial guidance - we do it all. We are committed to helping our students fulfil their potential, and believe in deep expertise and empathy.



Understanding your requirements



Guiding you on TOEFL/IELTS training



Finding the right course and college



Filling in your college application



Collecting all the necessary documents



Counselling you through the entire process



Ensuring you get a successful admission



Providing you the best knowledge on education loans, forex cards, bank accounts in US



Supporting you through the Visa application process



Advising you on travel and forex requirements



Preparing you for your move to the US

Sign-up now

