

U.S. Colleges and Universities See Strong Rebounds in International Student Enrollments

The Open Doors® 2022 Report on International Educational Exchange reveals an 80 percent increase in new international student enrollments in the 2021/2022 academic year

WASHINGTON, D.C., November 14, 2022 — The [Open Doors® 2022 Report on International Educational Exchange](#), released today by the [U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs](#) and the [Institute of International Education](#) (IIE), found that 948,519 international students from more than 200 places of origin studied at U.S. higher education institutions during the 2021/2022 academic year, a 4% increase compared to the previous academic year. The report shows a strong year-over-year rebound in new international student enrollments (an increase of 80%) in the United States following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and demonstrates the United States' ongoing commitment to international educational exchange.

The *Open Doors* data is evidence of the strong interest among international students to travel to the United States, the top destination for international students worldwide, and pursue their studies in person. 90% of enrolled international students have returned to in-person learning across U.S. campuses. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, international students contributed \$32 billion to the U.S. economy in 2021.

“We are thrilled to see international student numbers on the rise, and to see the United States maintain its global leadership as the top destination of choice for international students,” said Lee Satterfield, Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs. “U.S. colleges and universities are places of inspiration, innovation, and opportunity – providing the skills and networks necessary to solve global challenges.”

Satterfield added, “welcoming international students to American campuses and communities is at the heart of people-to-people diplomacy and a foundational component of our U.S. foreign policy strategy to attract the top talent to the United States.”

New international student enrollments return to pre-pandemic levels

International students enrolled for the first time at a U.S. college or university increased by 80% year-over-year, a return to pre-pandemic levels. New international students continued to study in every U.S. state and territory, and nearly all U.S. states (44 out of 50) experienced an increase greater than 50% in new international student enrollments.

“The incredible rebound we have seen in international student mobility demonstrates the United States' and its higher education institutions' unwavering commitment to welcoming students from around the world,” said IIE CEO, Allan E. Goodman. “The *Open Doors* 2022 report emphasizes that, despite the complexity and uncertainty that accompany pandemics,

international educational exchanges continue. Investment in international exchange remains the best way for educational institutions and countries to connect people and ideas around the world.”

In addition to enrolled international students, more than 184,000 students pursued Optional Practical Training (OPT), a program allowing individuals to gain practical work experiences after academic study.

India, Canada, Mexico, and Nigeria send pre-pandemic levels of international students

China and India represent the majority (52%) of all international students in the United States. China remains the top sending country in 2021/22, with 290,086 students on U.S. campuses (-9% year-over-year). India, the second top-sending country, sent 199,182 international students in 2021/22, an increase of 19% year-over-year.

Twelve of the top 25 places of origin increased the number of international students enrolled in the United States by double digits in the 2021/22 academic year. In addition, other places of origin, including Canada, Mexico, and Nigeria, returned to pre-pandemic international student numbers. Notably, Nigeria saw its largest increase (+12% year-over-year) in international students studying in the U.S. since the 1980s.

Early indications during the 2020/2021 academic year point to the return of study abroad

The *Open Doors 2022 Report* also measures study abroad by U.S. students during the 2020/2021 academic year, a time when global mobility was largely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Data collected during the 2020/2021 academic year shows U.S. study abroad halted amid the pandemic to protect the global health and the safety of students in the United States and abroad. This is reflected in the total number of U.S. students studying abroad for academic credit, declining by 91% to 14,549 students. In addition, over 400 U.S. institutions reported an additional 32,990 U.S. students participating in online global learning opportunities in the same year.

U.S. institutions reported a 523% increase in students going abroad in summer 2021, with 58% of all American students in 2020/21 choosing to study abroad in the summer. These early indications show that demand for international study remains high, and more students will return to study abroad programs in the coming years. According to [IIE's Spring 2022 Snapshot](#), 83% of institutions noted an increase in study abroad numbers for 2022/2023 compared to the previous year.

“As study abroad reemerges for American students, the Biden Administration is expanding the tools available to students to provide greater affordability and accessibility for all students to ensure it reflects the rich diversity of the United States,” Satterfield said. “Study abroad is of strategic importance, as we prepare American students to compete in an increasingly interconnected world.”

Fall 2022 Snapshot

U.S. Institutions Report Continued International Student Growth for Fall 2022

The *Fall 2022 International Student Enrollment Snapshot* findings show a sustained positive trajectory for international student mobility in the United States. U.S. higher education institutions reported a 9% increase in total international students in Fall 2022, with growth across all academic levels and OPT. The number of new international students enrolled at U.S. institutions increased (7%), building on the 80% rebound in new enrollments during the 2021/22 academic year (*Open Doors 2022*). Nearly all institutions (99%) reported a return to in-person or hybrid study. Eighty-seven percent (87%) reported financial support for international student recruitment is the same or higher than the previous year. Over 630 U.S. higher education institutions participated in the *Fall 2022 International Student Enrollment Snapshot*.

To learn more about *Open Doors*, visit opendoorsdata.org.

To learn more about IIE's Fall 2022 Snapshot, visit: <https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Fall-International-Enrollments-Snapshot-Reports>.

About Open Doors

Open Doors is a comprehensive information resource on international students studying at higher education institutions in the United States and U.S. students studying abroad for academic credit at their home colleges or universities. *Open Doors* also reports on the number of international scholars at U.S. universities and international students enrolled in pre-academic Intensive English Programs. Further details on the 2020 *Open Doors* findings are on the *Open Doors* website. For more data, infographics, and resources, visit opendoorsdata.org.

About the Institute of International Education

Established in 1919, IIE is a global not-for-profit that creates and implements international education programs, conducts research, and provides life-changing opportunities for students and scholars worldwide. IIE collaborates with a range of corporate, government, and foundation partners across the globe to design and manage scholarship, study abroad, workforce training, and leadership development programs. IIE has a network of 18 offices and affiliates worldwide and over 1,300 member institutions. Visit [iie.org](https://www.iie.org).

About the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) builds relations between the people of the United States and the people of other countries through academic, cultural, sports, professional and private exchanges, as well as public-private partnerships and mentoring programs. These exchange programs improve foreign relations and strengthen the national security of the United States, support U.S. international leadership, and provide a broad range of domestic benefits by helping break down barriers that often divide us. ECA sponsors the flagship Fulbright Program, the Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarships for U.S. undergraduates with financial need, the Critical Language Scholarship Program in support of U.S. foreign language study abroad, and the [EducationUSA](https://www.educationusa.gov) network of over 400 advising centers worldwide, which provides information to students around the globe who wish to study in the United States. Visit eca.state.gov.

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