

United States Hosts More Than 1.1 Million International Students at Higher Education Institutions, Reaching All-Time High

India surpasses China as the top place of origin for international students, with a record-high 331,602 Indian students in the U.S. in 2023/2024

WASHINGTON, D.C., November 18, 2024 — Today, the [Open Doors® 2024 Report on International Educational Exchange](#) announces that the total number of international students at U.S. colleges and universities reached an all-time high of more than 1.1 million (1,126,690) international students in 2023/2024, a 7% increase from the previous academic year.

The record high coincides with the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the *Open Doors Report*, which today is the leading annual benchmark for international educational exchange in the United States. *Open Doors* is published by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the [Institute of International Education](#) (IIE).

International students accounted for 6% of the total U.S. higher education population and, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, contributed more than \$50 billion to the U.S. economy in 2023.

“The experience of studying in the United States not only shapes the lives of individuals, but the future of our interconnected world,” said Scott Weinhold, Senior Bureau Official for the Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. “The ties formed between U.S. and international students today are the basis of relationships for future business and trade, science and innovation, and government relations.”

International graduate students and students on OPT hit record highs

Over a half million international graduate students (502,291) pursued study in the United States in 2023/2024, an 8% increase and an all-time high. Additionally, the number of international students who remained in the United States to gain practical work experience through Optional Practical Training (OPT) reached a record high of 242,782 students, an increase of 22% from the prior year. The number of international undergraduates (342,875) remained stable, decreasing by a moderate one percent from 2022/2023.

The number of new international students enrolling at a U.S. college or university for the first time remained robust, with 298,705 new international students in 2023/2024, matching last year's total (0.1%) and pre-pandemic levels.

“As we celebrate 75 years of *Open Doors*, we are thrilled to report that this year marks a record high of international students in the United States,” said Allan Goodman, IIE CEO. “International students enrich our campuses, foster cultural exchange, and contribute significantly to our economy, and we remain dedicated to supporting these bright minds and ensuring that the U.S. continues to be a premier destination for global education.”

India is the top-sending country for the first time since 2009

India sent 331,602 international students to pursue higher education in the United States in 2023/2024, reflecting a 23% increase from the prior year. India enrollments increased primarily at the graduate (196,567; +19%) and Optional Practical Training (OPT) academic levels (97,556; +41%).

China was the second leading place of origin, despite a 4% decline to 277,398 students. It remained the top-sending country for undergraduates and non-degree students, sending 87,551 and 5,517, respectively. Chinese students pursuing OPT increased by 12% to 61,552. India and China together made up over half of all international students in the United States.

Many other countries sending students to the United States experienced strong growth, with eight of the top 25 reaching all-time highs: Bangladesh, Colombia, Ghana, India, Italy, Nepal, Pakistan, and Spain. Sub-Saharan Africa totals grew by 13% in 2023/24 and had the highest growth rate among all world regions for the second consecutive year, building on the 18% increase in 2022/23.

Rise in international student numbers across 44 states, majority pursue STEM fields

The number of international students in 44 states increased year-over-year. California, New York, and Texas welcomed the most international students. Among the top 10 states hosting international students, three Midwestern states saw the greatest growth: Missouri (+35%), Michigan (+14%), and Illinois (+13%).

More than half (56%) of international students across academic levels pursued STEM fields of study. One in four (25%) studied math and computer science, while nearly one in five (19%) studied engineering.

Number of U.S. students studying abroad increases and locations diversify

The *Open Doors* Report shows that in the 2022/23 academic year, 280,716 U.S. students studied abroad for academic credit, an increase of 49% from the prior year and signaling further growth after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Italy, the United Kingdom, Spain, and France remained the leading host destinations, with nearly half (45%) of all students studying in these top four destinations.

Study abroad destinations further diversified post-pandemic, with Australia and New Zealand back in the 25 leading destinations for U.S. study abroad students. Seven destinations reached all-time study abroad highs as of 2022/23: Denmark, Greece, Italy, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Switzerland.

Fall 2024 Snapshot

The *Fall 2024 International Student Enrollment Snapshot* reports a 3% rise in international student enrollment across U.S. institutions as of the start of the 2024/25 academic year, building on sustained increases over the last three years.

Undergraduate enrollments increased by 6%, while graduate enrollments decreased by a modest 2%. OPT continues to increase by 12%. Many institutions are focusing on international undergraduate outreach in India, Vietnam, China, and South Korea.

International graduate recruitment efforts are being prioritized in India, China, Ghana, and Nigeria. Over 680 higher education institutions participated in the *Fall 2024 International Student Enrollment Snapshot*.

About Open Doors

For 75 years, *Open Doors* has been the comprehensive information resource on international students and scholars in the United States and on U.S. students studying abroad for academic credit. The *Open Doors* project is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and supported in its implementation by the Institute of International Education (IIE). For more data, infographics, and resources, visit opendoorsdata.org.

About the Institute of International Education (IIE)

Founded in 1919, the Institute of International Education (IIE) is the leading global NGO in designing and implementing international education and exchange programs. We work with governments, policymakers, educators, and employers across the globe to prepare students and professionals for the global workforce and equip them to solve the increasingly complex challenges facing our interconnected world. With support from donors, we also create initiatives that assist students, scholars, and artists whose lives and work are threatened; expand teaching and learning across cultures; and provide

opportunities to underserved populations. A not-for-profit organization founded in 1919, IIE has a network of 16 offices and affiliates worldwide and over 1,600 higher education partners. Visit 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 network of over 430 advising centers in more than 175 countries and territories 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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