Studying in the United States

If you have questions about studying in the United States, you can reach out to EducationUSA to learn more. EducationUSA is a free advising resource funded by the U.S. State Department.
Website: educationusacanada.ca
Email: ottawa@educationusa.org
Phone: 613-688-5519

Search for U.S. universities
College Board search engine – find a good fit college or university
SEVP-approved schools – database of all institutions that grant I-20 documents to international students, including high schools, colleges, and universities
College March worksheets – use these assessments to help determine what is most important to you in the college and university search. NOTE: The word college is often used to refer to any higher education institution, including universities.

U.S. Admissions
Admissions requirements to U.S. universities differ from Canadian requirements. You need to go to the website of each individual university that you would like to in order to learn what application to fill out and what requirements you need to meet. Most notably, U.S. universities will review a student's full high school transcript (Grade 9-11, and any final grades from Grade 12) in the admissions process. U.S. universities have a holistic review process, which means that beyond grades and test scores, students will report honors achieved and activities they have been involved in. Get started on your Five Steps to U.S. Study here.

Applications (These are some of the most popular, but this is not a complete list)
The following websites are for common applications you may complete or requirements you may need to meet.
Common Application – has 950+ member schools
Coalition Application – has 150+ member schools
University of California Application – for the 9 University of California campuses
ApplyTexas – for all 100+ public, Texas universities and colleges
Apply SUNY – for most of the 64 State University of New York campuses

Standardized tests – SAT/ACT
Most universities will require students to submit an SAT or ACT score (your choice). You can register for and take these tests in Canada. Learn more about registration and studying for these exams at the test maker's websites.
College Board – You can register for the SAT and learn more about other testing products like the PSAT and AP exams. You can get free study tools at the Khan Academy.
ACT – You can register for the ACT and learn more about preparing for this exam
Fairtest.org – This website lists all of the universities that do not require the SAT/ACT for admissions. They also track the universities that have temporary test-optional policies due to COVID-19.

Standardized tests – English Language Proficiency
If your first language is English and you attend an English language school, than you will not need to submit an English Language Proficiency exam. If your first language is not English, and you either are not studying in English or have been studying in English for less than three years, then you will likely need to take one of the following (your choice), English language exams.
TOEFL
IELTS
Duolingo English Test (not accepted by all universities/colleges)

Writing your Admissions Essay
Most universities will require a personal essay and potentially university-specific essay supplements. Here are some resources to learn more about essay writing.
College Essay Guy
EducationUSA student sample essays
Johns Hopkins University essays that worked

Other admissions requirements that you might expect
Some universities may require or recommend that you submit the following. NOTE: More selective universities have more requirements, while less selective universities may just need your transcript and standardized test scores.

- Letters of recommendation from a guidance counsellor and a teacher or teachers
- Resume
- Interview
- Audition (performing arts) or Portfolio (fine arts)

Financial aid

If you are interested in scholarship information, please visit this page.

- Finance your Studies document – under the "Funding Opportunities" dropdown and includes universities with specific scholarships or discounts for Canadians.
- CSS Profile – universities that will provide needs-based scholarships (scholarships related to your family income) may require students to complete the CSS profile.

Student-Athletes

If you are considering playing sports in the United States, and particularly if you would like to be recruited for a scholarship, you need to understand the eligibility rules in order to be able to play. There are three sporting organizations that give athletic scholarships (NCAA, NAIA, NJCAA).

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) – The NCAA has three divisions (D1, D2, D3) at four-year universities. Divisions 1 and 2 are the most competitive divisions and have scholarships for athletes. Division 3 schools provide more balance between athletics and studies and potentially have merit and needs scholarships available.

- NCAA Eligibility Center – students need to sign-up here to begin processing their eligibility to play NCAA sports

- Eligibility requirements brochure
- NCAA Directory – use this to see which universities have your sport
- NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student Athlete

National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) – The NAIA is a smaller athletic conference made up of 250 four-year universities and offering 15 sports.

- NAIA Eligibility center

National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) – The NJCAA has 16 sports and is the largest athletic conference for two-year colleges, called either junior or community colleges. It is the only conference that has scholarships at two-year colleges (JUCOs).

Visa Information

Canadian citizens do not need to apply for a student visa to study in the United States, they are the only international student exempt from this step. You can review the documentation that you will need when crossing the border at the U.S. Embassy in Canada's website.

If you are a Canadian permanent resident or a citizen of any other country, you will need to apply for a visa to study in the United States. You can make an appointment at U.S. Embassy or any of the 6 Consulates across Canada at this website.

EducationUSA hosts a Pre-Departure orientation in May/June of each year. Contact EducationUSA to be invited to this session.

Information for American Citizens

If you are a citizen of the United States, you will complete the same application for admissions as any other student. The main differences in process relate to financial information and documentation proving citizenship.

- FAFSA – If you would like to be considered for scholarships, you should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid by the deadlines noted on the university websites where you are applying.
- If you would like to learn more about your funding options, go here.
- You will provide your Social Security Number to the university, and use your American passport when crossing the border.
- Dual citizens need to cross the border with their American passport and should not get an I-20 document from the college or university.