

Comprehensive Guide to Studying Abroad – Everything you need to know- Scholarships, Exams s Application Strategy

Studying abroad can be one of the most transformative experiences of your life — but the journey begins much before you board that flight. From understanding entrance exams to finding the right scholarships and nailing your SOP, this guide simplifies every major step you need to take.

First let's Understand Intakes

Universities abroad typically have multiple admission cycles or “intakes.”

Major Intakes:

- **Fall Intake (August–September):** Most popular, wider course availability.
- **Spring Intake (January–February):** Fewer programs, but good for mid-year planners.
- **Summer Intake (May–June):** Limited courses, mostly short-term programs or diplomas.

It's essential to plan your application timeline based on the intake you're targeting.

1. Choosing Your Country s Course

- Research visa conditions, work rights, PR options.
- Consider ROI, part-time job opportunities, and culture.
- Popular countries: USA, Canada, UK, Germany, Australia, Ireland, Netherlands, Singapore.

Course Search Platforms:

- mastersportal.com
 - bachelorsportal.com
 - topuniversities.com
 - timeshighereducation.com
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2. Entrance Exams: Overview s Resources

GRE (Graduate Record Examination)

- **Purpose:** Required for MS, MA, and some MBA programs
- **Sections:**
 - Verbal Reasoning (130–170)

- Quantitative Reasoning (130–170)
- Analytical Writing (0–6)
- **Total Score:** 260–340 (excluding AWA)
- **Duration:** ~3 hours 45 minutes
- **Website:** ets.org/gre
- **Free Practice:** [GRE Test Prep](#)

GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test)

- **Purpose:** Required for MBA and some MS Business programs
- **Sections:**
 - Quantitative
 - Verbal
 - Integrated Reasoning
 - Analytical Writing Assessment (AWA)
- **Total Score:** 200–800 (mainly based on Verbal and Quant sections)
- **Duration:** ~3 hours 30 minutes
- **Website:** mba.com
- **Official Prep:** [GMAT Exam Prep](#)

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)

- **Purpose:** Tests English proficiency for academic purposes
- **Sections:**
 - Reading
 - Listening
 - Speaking
 - Writing
- **Total Score:** 0–120
- **Duration:** ~2 hours
- **Website:** ets.org/toefl
- **Free Resources:** [TOEFL Prep](#)

IELTS (International English Language Testing System)

- **Purpose:** Tests English proficiency (academic and general)
- **Sections:**
 - Listening
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Speaking
- **Total Score:** Band scale 1–9
- **Duration:** ~2 hours 45 minutes
- **Website:** ielts.org
- **Free Practice:** [British Council IELTS Prep](https://www.britishcouncil.org/ielts-prep)

Duolingo English Test

- **Purpose:** Alternative to TOEFL/IELTS for English proficiency
 - **Format:** Adaptive test with reading, writing, speaking, and listening tasks
 - **Score Range:** 10–160
 - **Duration:** ~1 hour
 - **Website:** englishtest.duolingo.com
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3. Statement of Purpose (SOP) Tips

- Tell your story: background, goals, why this course, and why this university.
- Avoid clichés. Be authentic.
- Get it reviewed by seniors, professors, or mentors.
- Tools to help:
 - [Grammarly](https://www.grammarly.com)
 - [QuillBot](https://www.quillbot.com)
 - [SOP Sample Bank](https://www.sop-sample.com)

4. Scholarships & Funding Sources

Scholarships can be merit-based, need-based, or country-specific. Some are fully funded and cover tuition + living expenses, while others are partial.

How Scholarships Work:

- Provided by universities, governments, or private institutions.
- Can be awarded at the time of admission or require a separate application.

How to Apply for Scholarships (Step-by-Step):

1. **Start Early:** Identify eligible scholarships 9–12 months before your program starts.
2. **Match Criteria:** Check eligibility — academic background, country, program type.
3. **Prepare Docs:** SOP, LORs, financial proof, resume, transcripts.
4. **Write a Scholarship Essay:** Highlight need, merit, and motivation.
5. **Apply Through Official Portals:** Directly via university websites or government scholarship platforms.
6. **Track Deadlines:** Some deadlines are much earlier than course application dates.
7. **Follow Up:** Keep track of communications and interview calls if any.

Global Scholarship Portals:

- [scholarships.com](https://www.scholarships.com)
- [educationusa.info](https://www.educationusa.info)
- [wemakescholars.com](https://www.wemakescholars.com)
- [scholars4dev.com](https://www.scholars4dev.com)

Country-Specific Scholarships:

USA

- [Fulbright-Nehru Masters Fellowships](https://www.fulbright-nehru.org/)
- [Stanford Knight-Hennessy](https://www.stanford.edu/knight-hennessy/)

UK

- [Chevening Scholarship](https://www.chevening.gov.uk/)
- [Commonwealth Scholarship](https://www.commonwealthscholarship.com/)

Germany

- [DAAD Scholarships](https://www.daad.de/)

Canada

- [Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships](#)
- [Trudeau Foundation](#)

Australia

- [Australia Awards](#)
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5. Application Strategy/Timeline

12–18 Months Before Intake:

- Shortlist countries, universities, and programs.
- Take diagnostic tests (GRE, GMAT, TOEFL).

8–12 Months Before Intake:

- Finalize test prep.
- Start SOPs, LORs.
- Prepare resume and personal statement.

6–8 Months Before Intake:

- Take exams.
- Finalize college list.
- Apply for scholarships.

3–6 Months Before Intake:

- Accept offers, apply for visa.
- Arrange finances.
- Book flights and accommodation.

6. Bonus Resources s Tools

- [Yocket](#)
 - [Leverage Edu](#)
 - [Magoosh](#)
 - [GyanDhan](#)
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Studying abroad is not just about education — it's about discovering who you are in an entirely new environment. The journey can be overwhelming, but the growth is life changing. Plan wisely, apply, and step into the next chapter of your life with clarity.

You've got this!