



The Ultimate Guide to Studying In Europe





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CHAPTER 1

WHY SHOULD STUDENTS APPLY TO UNIVERSITY IN EUROPE?

There are myriad reasons why a European higher education is attractive to international students.



Cultural diversity

International students in Europe are spoilt for choice: from the northernmost tip of Scandinavia down to the Mediterranean coasts of Italy, Spain and Portugal, students have a real variety of cultures and climates to choose from.

World class education

Many European countries play host to top-ranked higher education institutions, which are well known for their innovation and research.

What's more, many European higher education systems, such as Germany and the Netherlands, have a deserved reputation for offering high quality academic and vocational pathways.

European higher education systems follow a shared framework

Since the Bologna system of reforms, Bachelor's degrees across Europe follow the same general framework and teaching standards.

Or, to put it another way, if one of your students were to graduate with a Bachelor's degree from a university in Germany, it would have the same value as a degree from a university in Sweden.



Tuition fees are lower

For some of your students, the cost of studying in another country can be a huge obstacle.

This is another reason why European countries are popular with international school students – they are increasingly affordable compared to other popular destinations such as the USA and the UK.

It gets better – in some countries, studying in Europe is free!

You'll learn more about different countries' tuition fees (including which charge none!) in [chapter 4](#).

Many degrees are taught in English

For some of your students, another perceived barrier to studying at university in Europe could be the fear that they can't speak the native language.

But luckily for your aspiring European applicants, many degree courses in Europe are taught in English. What's more, in many European countries, general English proficiency is very high, meaning that your students should have an easy time conversing with locals!

We'll cover the languages of instruction and proficiency requirements for each country in [chapter 3](#).



It's easy to travel between European countries

In many ways, any one European country acts as a gateway to other countries across Europe.

That's because many European countries are part of the Schengen Area, and a student visa from within that Area grants international undergraduates the opportunity to travel to any of its 26 countries.

In addition, most European countries are well-connected by relatively inexpensive trains, buses and flights.

STUDYING IN EUROPE: HOW TO HELP YOUR STUDENTS FIND THE RIGHT INSTITUTION & COUNTRY

If you haven't already guessed, the diversity and quality offered by Europe's higher education institutions means that your students have countless opportunities to choose from..

But, as is often the case with navigating the world of international higher education, this can leave your students unsure of where to start. As much as European institutions have a lot in common, different countries run their higher education systems in different ways.

So in the next chapter, we'll share a beginner's guide to some of the most popular European study destinations and give you a simple overview of how their university systems work.





CHAPTER 2

EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS EXPLAINED

The Bologna framework means that, while European higher education destinations are unique, they share a lot in common.

As we'll demonstrate in this chapter, many European countries divide their higher education institutions along similar lines, offering a rich mix of academic and vocational options.



Germany is now the top university destination in Europe for international students. As of 2016, there were over 350,000 international students enrolled in the German university system.

What sets Germany apart is a public university system that gives equal weight to academic, vocational and creative pathways.

PUBLIC VERSUS PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

Public universities make up the majority of higher education institutions in Germany. They're attractive to international students because most charge no tuition fees (more on that in [chapter 4!](#)).

There are also a growing number of private universities in Germany. Unlike their public counterparts, these institutions charge tuition fees. On the plus side, private German universities generally offer undergraduates smaller class sizes and therefore a lower student to teacher ratio.

UNIVERSITIES IN GERMANY

Research universities in Germany are a good option for students who are interested in studying a more academic/theoretical degree. Degree paths offered at universities in Germany include a Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BSc), Bachelor of Engineering (BEng) and Bachelor of Law (LLB)



UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCE (UAS)

Universities of applied sciences (or ‘Fachhochschulen’) are universities that offer more practice-based courses. These universities are suitable for students looking for degree paths that more directly prepare them for employment.

Subjects taught in universities of applied science include social work, business, design, and engineering.

At a UAS, students undertake a paid training placement as part of their course (known as a ‘Praxissemester’). These placements can be with companies and organisations in both the public and private sector.

COLLEGES OF FILM, ART, MUSIC

These higher education institutions are for students who wish to study creative or artistic subjects in a more practice-based environment. Some examples of the subjects offered include fine art, music, film & television, and industrial design.

Key takeaways for students researching German universities

- One of Germany’s strengths as a university system is the equal weight it places across academic, vocational and creative degrees. If your students are looking to take a vocational route at university, Germany could be the destination for them.
- Germany’s low tuition fees make it an attractive destination for students worried about the cost of higher education.



The Netherlands is another popular European destination for international students. Its thriving international student community means that new undergraduates will feel right at home!

What the Netherlands also has in common with the German university system is the rich array of both academic *and* vocational choices.

RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

Research degrees in the Netherlands are comparable to those from UK universities. In short, they offer students a specialised path into a certain degree discipline, making them a great option for students who have a fairly good idea of where they want to specialise after high school. Like the UK, degree programmes typically last three years.

UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCE

There are 41 universities of applied science in the Netherlands. As in Germany, a UAS offers a more applied/practical degree path, which normally involves a work experience or study abroad element.

The types of subjects offered at UAS in the Netherlands include hotel management, process & food technology, and teacher training. The majority of UAS degrees are four years in length.



UNIVERSITY COLLEGES

University colleges in the Netherlands are similar to liberal arts colleges in North America. These institutions are well-suited for students looking for a more generalist, holistic education. Students work with tutors and professors to design their own individualised interdisciplinary curriculum.

Many university colleges have on-campus residences where students are expected to live, which create a small, close-knit learning environment.

The strong community focus of university colleges, coupled with the fact that many of their degree courses are taught in English, means that students can look forward to a university experience that combines academic rigour with a good social life.

Key takeaways for students researching the Netherlands

- Like Germany, the Netherlands offers a good mix of academic, vocational and liberal arts courses, providing a wealth of exciting pathways.
- Some courses in the Netherlands have a limited number of places (called 'numerus fixus'). The application deadline for these courses is earlier in the academic year (January, as opposed to May).





Spanish universities are credited as being some of those most welcoming in the world. There are over 60,000 international undergraduates in Spain.

It's worth noting that many universities teach in Spanish, but an increasing number offer courses in English, too.

There are over 70 universities in Spain; roughly two thirds are state-run, and one third are private universities.

Broadly speaking, there are four types of Spanish higher education institutions.

UNIVERSITY SCHOOLS

Known as 'escuelas universitarias' in Spanish, these are institutions that offer 'short-term' three year courses.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGES

Known as 'colegios universitarios', courses taught at these institutions are longer – usually five years.



HIGHER TECHNICAL SCHOOLS OF ENGINEERING & ARCHITECTURE

These institutions offer longer-term courses in subjects such as architecture, industrial engineering, civil engineering and computer engineering.

FACULTIES ('FACULTADES')

These institutions typically offer long-term courses in all fields, except technical areas of study. Subjects covered include sciences, economics and business administration, political science and sociology, law, education, philosophy, Spanish language and literature, geography, and history.



With over 3,500 public and private higher education institutions, France arguably offers more pathways than Germany, the Netherlands or Spain. France is especially notable for its specialist institutions and selective grandes écoles.

UNIVERSITIES IN FRANCE

French universities are publicly funded and offer a range of Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate qualifications.

Bachelor's degrees (or 'licences professionnelles') in France typically last three years.



GRANDES ECOLES

Grandes écoles are elite academic institutions and are typically much smaller and more selective than French universities.

Many grandes écoles are publicly funded, but it's worth noting that some are privately funded, and therefore tuition costs for some grandes écoles is higher.

Admission to grandes écoles is extremely competitive, and students usually have to take two years of preparatory classes.

International students who want to apply to study at a grande école can apply for an 'étudiant concours' or short-stay visa to take the entry exam.

Grandes écoles encompass a range of engineering schools, business and management schools and veterinary schools.



For students interested in an Italian higher education, it's worth noting that the Italian university system is not as complex as its French counterpart.

As of 2022, there are 97 higher education institutions in Italy and these can be divided into three broad categories.

UNIVERSITIES

Italy has some of the oldest universities in the world, with your students able to choose from institutions such as the University of Bologna (founded in 1088) and the University of Padua (founded in 1222).



Most universities in Italy are publicly funded, but there are a number of private universities too.

Italian universities award undergraduate degrees (known as the 'laurea'), which are typically three years in length.

HIGHER EDUCATION FOR THE FINE ARTS, MUSIC & DANCE (AFAMS)

In Italian, these are known as 'alta formazione artistica, musicale e coreutica' (AFAMs), and like universities, AFAMs can be both public and private.

These institutions specialise in fine arts, music, visual arts, drama and dance qualifications. AFAMS can be divided up into the following subcategories.

- Academies of fine arts
- Higher schools of design (ISIAs)
- State music conservatories
- Higher institutes for musical studies
- The National Dance Academy
- The National Academy of Drama





HIGHER TECHNICAL INSTITUTES

Higher technical institutes, like universities of applied sciences in Germany and the Netherlands, focus on preparing students for a vocational career through practical qualifications. Students, for instance, are required to undertake internships (and 30% of these work placements must be acquired at a private company).

Whilst these types of institutions have long existed in countries like Germany and the Netherlands, it's worth noting that they've only existed in Italy since the turn of the 21st century.



Switzerland's university system is divided into three categories – research universities, applied sciences and arts and teacher education.

TRADITIONAL UNIVERSITIES

There are 12 traditional, research-focused universities in Switzerland. These universities are spread across the Italian, German and French speaking regions of Switzerland. All of Switzerland's universities are publicly funded.

Swiss universities are known for being quite selective and competitive and for fostering a culture of critical thinking.



UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES & ARTS (UASAS)

The Swiss universities of applied sciences and arts offer practical and vocational qualifications. Universities of applied sciences and arts maintain close links with businesses and employers.

Examples of courses run by universities of applied sciences and arts include landscape architecture, health sciences, music, art, theatre, film and design.

If your students are interested in a more vocational education at one of these eight institutions, they can be assured that these universities take care to align their degree programmes with the requirements of the international job market.

UNIVERSITIES OF TEACHER EDUCATION (UTES)

There are currently 20 UTEs in Switzerland which teach pre-primary, primary, secondary and special needs education, mixing theoretical subject knowledge with practical experience.



THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

The Republic of Ireland's higher education system has similarities with Switzerland insofar as it is split between traditional universities, institutes of technology and institutions specialising in teacher training.

Let's take a closer look at each of these universities.



UNIVERSITIES IN IRELAND

Universities in Ireland are state-funded, but broadly autonomous. There are seven universities in Ireland, with the most famous including University College Dublin and Trinity College Dublin.

While we'd never recommend choosing a university purely on rankings, it's worth noting that many Irish universities featured in the QS World University Rankings in 2021.

TECHNOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS

Technological institutions in the Republic of Ireland have continued to grow in the past decade, and there are now two main types: technological universities and institutes of technology.

As in other European countries, technological institutes provide training in sectors such as business, science, engineering, and linguistics.

Institutes of technology are more established institutions; there are seven in Ireland.

More recently, some have applied to become a new type of institution known as technological universities. There are currently three of these in the Republic of Ireland.

COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

Colleges of education offer teacher training for both primary and secondary school education. As with universities, your students will enrol on a three year Bachelor's programme.



If you have students who are worried about the language barrier, don't worry! The majority of Swedish citizens speak fluent English.

Another appealing aspect of Swedish higher education is that it offers strong connections with business and industry.

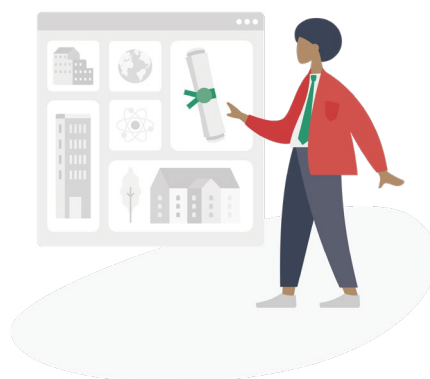
Plus, the Swedish university system is simpler than many covered in this guide!

Swedish universities can be divided into two types – universities and university colleges.

UNIVERSITIES VS UNIVERSITY COLLEGES

There aren't actually many differences between universities and university colleges in terms of the value or structure of their degrees.

The only real difference is that university colleges typically only offer degrees at Bachelor or Master's degree level, whereas universities tend to go all the way up to PhD level.





CHAPTER 3

EUROPEAN APPLICATION SYSTEMS

One daunting aspect of international university applications is the variety of systems and requirements. It's a lot of information for you to process and pass on, and a lot of tasks for your students to juggle.

But it's not all as complicated as you might think! We're here to help you keep on top of the key dates and checkboxes for students to realise their European dreams.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS FOR APPLYING TO UNIVERSITIES IN EUROPE

The exact documents that students need to submit naturally varies according to the country, the institution, and programme they're applying for. Some subjects require extra materials or entrance exams, for example.

Another factor is the applicant's citizenship and residence status. Students who qualify as EU students and are applying to EU universities often have to provide fewer documents.

Students will therefore need to thoroughly research requirements for every single course they're interested in.

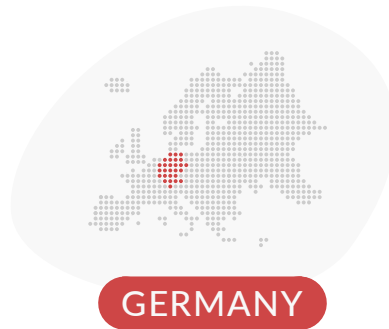




To give you a rough guide as to what students should gather, here are the most commonly requested documents for European university applications:

- A copy of their passport or ID card
- A copy of their birth certificate
- Passport photographs
- Certified copies of transcripts/diplomas/certificates
- Proof of language proficiency
- Portfolio (if relevant)
- CV/resume
- A letter of recommendation (this falls to you and your team!)
- A personal statement/letter of intent (it's important for students to check each course's requirements and criteria on this)
- If applying from outside the EU/EEA, they might have to prove they have sufficient funds to support themselves throughout their studies
- Health insurance (for non-EU/EEA citizens)
- Proof of language proficiency





Germany has a centralised application portal called Uni Assist. However, not **all** universities are on it. This means that application deadlines and processes vary for students applying to Germany, so they need to research each institution carefully. Here's what they need to know to get started...

KEY DEADLINES FOR GERMAN UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS

Although final deadlines vary between German institutions, there is a broad pattern that most institutions follow:

- Deadlines for entry to the winter semester tend to fall on or around 15th July
- Deadlines for entry to the summer semester tend to fall on or around 15th January

The academic year in Germany is split into two semesters: one starting in October and the second one beginning in April.

It's worth noting that at universities of applied science (UAS), semesters generally start earlier (in September for autumn). This can mean earlier deadlines for everything from enrolment to visa applications.

As we touched on earlier, 'numerus clausus' courses have a fixed number of spaces. These are generally oversubscribed courses like medicine, architecture and veterinary science, and it's common for their application deadlines to fall earlier.



ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY IN GERMANY

Universities in Germany tend to accept international qualifications like A Levels, the IB, AP and the US high school diploma.

The easiest way for students to investigate individual universities' requirements is using the [DAAD admissions database](#) (the German academic exchange service). Students can enter their current country and qualifications to view their eligibility for courses across Germany.



Note

It's worth bearing in mind that 'numerus clausus' courses generally have much higher academic requirements.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY IN GERMANY

Again, there isn't one hard and fast rule here. Logically, it depends on the language of instruction!

Whether it's English or German, though, if it isn't students' native language they'll likely have to provide proof of proficiency through language tests. The most commonly required/accepted in Germany are:

- TOEFL/IELTS for English
- TestDaF or DSH for German



SENDING APPLICATIONS TO GERMAN UNIVERSITIES

To submit applications students can generally either use the Uni Assist centralised system, or apply directly to the university.

If they're applying to more than one institution, it often makes sense to use Uni Assist. However, as not **all** universities use Uni Assist, some students might have to take the direct route, too.

And there's a third route for EU/EEA students who are applying for a 'numerus clausus' course: they need to submit applications through the [Foundation of Higher Education Admission](#).



The Netherlands is similar to Germany in that students can usually use the centralised admissions platform, but in some cases apply directly to universities. As ever, it's important to check the procedure for every course they're interested in as early as possible.

KEY DEADLINES FOR DUTCH UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS

Deadlines for September entry usually fall on the 1st May.

Still, it's a good idea for students to apply as early as possible due to the high levels of competition for spots at Dutch universities. Applications tend to open a full year before enrollment, so they can get in ahead of time if they're ready!



For ‘numerus fixus’ courses (much like Germany’s ‘numerus clausus’), the deadline is closer to January.

University colleges often also have deadlines in January, followed by admissions interviews in February.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY IN THE NETHERLANDS

Here we come to quite a distinctive feature of Dutch university applications – one that often causes confusion (and delight!) for international students applying to the Netherlands.

It’s the surprisingly low entry requirements that many universities have – even really prestigious and popular institutions.

For example, the British University of Bristol and the Dutch University of Amsterdam both consistently rank in the top 100 universities worldwide. But while the University of Bristol’s entry requirements are usually AAA (for A Levels), the University of Amsterdam frequently asks for CCC.

The difference can be explained by Dutch universities’ probationary first year. Students who don’t achieve high enough results during this first year can’t continue into the second year of university.

If students need to find out how their qualifications measure up to the entry requirements of the Dutch university system, they can visit [the Nuffic website](#) to find out more.



Top tip

Nuffic is also a handy resource to explore student visas and scholarships!



LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY IN THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands offers over 1,500 courses taught in English. The remainder are almost all taught in Dutch.

If students are applying for courses not taught in their first language, they can prove their proficiency with one of the following tests:

- For applications to English-taught degrees, the IELTS or TOEFL tests are recommended
- Students applying to Dutch-taught courses will probably take NT2 or CNaVT

SENDING APPLICATIONS TO DUTCH UNIVERSITIES

The Netherlands has a helpful centralised application system called [Studielink](#). On it, students can apply for up to four courses at a time, with the option to amend their choices at any time before the enrollment deadline. However, only two of the courses can be 'numerus fixus', and only one can be medicine.



Note

Students need to upload ID documents before their Studielink account is created, so make sure they're organised and have everything ready ahead of time!

Unlike with the UK's UCAS, students don't write one single personal statement to accompany **all** of their applications. Instead, if they are applying to courses that require a motivation letter, they can write individual documents tailored to each university and programme.



Unlike Germany and the Netherlands, Spain doesn't have a centralised application system. That means that there can be more variety in processes, deadlines and requirements.

KEY DEADLINES FOR SPANISH UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS

Application deadlines vary, but in general, students should prepare to submit their applications by the following:

- First week of June for enrollment to the autumn (beginning in October)
 - > Some universities accept applications until the first week of September for autumn enrollment if spots remain
- First week of December for enrollment to the spring semester (beginning in February)

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY IN SPAIN

There aren't any blanket minimum grades that apply across institutions in Spain: universities have their own entry requirements and can ask that students sit additional entrance exams and aptitude tests.

But there is some standardisation which can be helpful for students to know! There are also a few confusing terms they may stumble upon, so we'll explain those too.



Entrance exams for applying to Spanish universities

International students applying to public universities in Spain may have to sit an entrance exam called the EBAU ('Evaluación del Bachillerato para el Acceso a la Universidad', also known as the 'Selectividad'). These exams take place every year in May or June, with a second round in September for students who didn't attain the necessary score.



Note

Although entrance exams haven't been mandatory for international students since 2014, often students without a European Baccalaureate (EB) or International Baccalaureate (IB) are asked to take them.

EU students

Students from countries within the EU, or countries that have a reciprocity agreement with Spain, are eligible to take 'Pruebas de Competencias' (PCE). These are individual subject exams which are usually not mandatory, but if students can take them they should consider it – a good score can really improve their chances of admission!

PCE tests happen twice yearly: first in July, with resits in September.

Non-EU students

Because students from outside of the EU usually can't take PCEs to prove their proficiency in a subject, they'll need to have their qualifications formally recognised through a process known as 'Homologación' (Homologation) which is carried out by the Spanish Ministry of Education.

Students can do this either on [the Ministry's website](#) or through their local Spanish embassy/consulate. If accepted, they'll receive a 'Volante Acreditativo'.



LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY IN SPAIN

Spain is a bit of a curiosity in terms of its language requirements. While most courses are taught in Spanish, they still tend to ask for proof of English proficiency **as well as** Spanish – so students may need to sit two language exams.

- For Spanish, there are two official tests:
 - > DELE
 - > SIELE
- For English, students have several options:
 - > TOEFL iBT
 - > IELTS
 - > CEFR
 - > CPE

SENDING APPLICATIONS TO SPANISH UNIVERSITIES

Students from the EU/EEA or countries with a bilateral agreement

As is often the case, there's a different procedure for students who are citizens of a European country or one with a bilateral agreement (for example Switzerland, China, Norway).

In this case, students will most likely have to apply through [UNEDassis](#), an application portal run by the National University for Distance Education. To create an account, students will need their academic and ID documents to hand. Students will also need to [check the admissions criteria for the institution\(s\) they want to study at](#).

If their application is accepted, students will be given a 'Credencial de Acceso' within three months. They'll then send that to the universities they're applying to.



All other international students

As we mentioned, students with no European academic qualifications need to get their qualifications formally recognised by the Ministry of Education to receive their ‘Volante Acreditativo’.

Once they have it, they’ll be able to register for any necessary entrance exams. If they pass those, they can apply **directly** to the universities of their choosing, following the admissions procedure outlined on each website.



Top tip

Students usually need to submit all their required documents in **Spanish, officially certified** by a translator. They should leave plenty of extra time to get this arranged!



Like Spain, Italy has no central applications platform for all its universities; the process varies between institutions.

Applications almost always involve contacting the Italian embassy or consulate in students’ country of residence, so it’s imperative students allow **plenty** of time for communications and appointments that might be needed!





KEY DEADLINES FOR ITALIAN UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS

Specific deadlines vary between universities, but there are general timelines for students to work towards.

Remember that students from outside the EU who require student visas should get started even earlier, to get ahead of what can be lengthy visa approval processes.

- In April students should contact the Italian embassy or consulate to get the 'Dichiarazione di Valore in Loco' (known as the DV, or in English the Letter of Academic Eligibility and Suitability) and pre-apply for the degrees they're interested in.
- In August, students should hear whether they have been accepted. They'll also find out the dates of any language/entrance exams they need to take, which will usually be sometime in September.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY IN ITALY

Specific criteria or guidelines differ between universities: often, they'll consider students' GPAs or other graded qualifications.

Italy is another country with some 'numerus clausus' courses, and here too they tend to have higher academic requirements.

It's also worth being aware that highly competitive courses sometimes require students to sit entrance exams.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY IN ITALY

Language proficiency requirements depend on the language of instruction. If they'll be learning in Italian, international students usually need to sit an exam. In some cases, though, they can submit documentary evidence of their Italian language skills.



It's important that students check the specific requirements for the courses they want to apply to – they can vary even within universities! For example, the University of Bologna has no specific Italian language requirements, **except** for nursing or medicine applicants.

But even for other courses, the university does suggest its applicants have a basic knowledge of Italian (of at least level A2), so demonstrating this could support students' applications.

As for English proficiency, the usual tests apply: the most common are IELTS and TOEFL.

Sending applications to Italian universities

The process of applying to study at university in Italy varies not just between institutions, but also more generally depending on whether applicants are considered EU or non-EU students, as tends to be the case.

Non-EU students

1. Students should contact the universities they are interested in to find out if they are eligible for the programme
2. If they are, they should submit a pre-application request to the Italian embassy or consulate in their country of residence. This involves submitting:
 - a. The filled-in application form for a Letter of Academic Eligibility and Suitability (the DV we mentioned earlier)
 - b. The filled-in pre-enrollment form (Model A, or 'preiscrizione modello A') or the filled-in pre-enrollment form for studying arts, design, music and dance (AFAM – Model A-bis)
 - c. A copy of school transcripts/diploma/certificates, **officially translated into Italian and legally authenticated**
 - d. Two passport-sized photographs, one of which the student must sign



Once they have all of these documents, the Italian embassy or consulate submits students' applications to the Italian universities they've chosen.

EU students

The process for EU students is not dissimilar. They, too, have to submit a pre-application request to the Italian embassy or consulate, along with the relevant supporting materials.

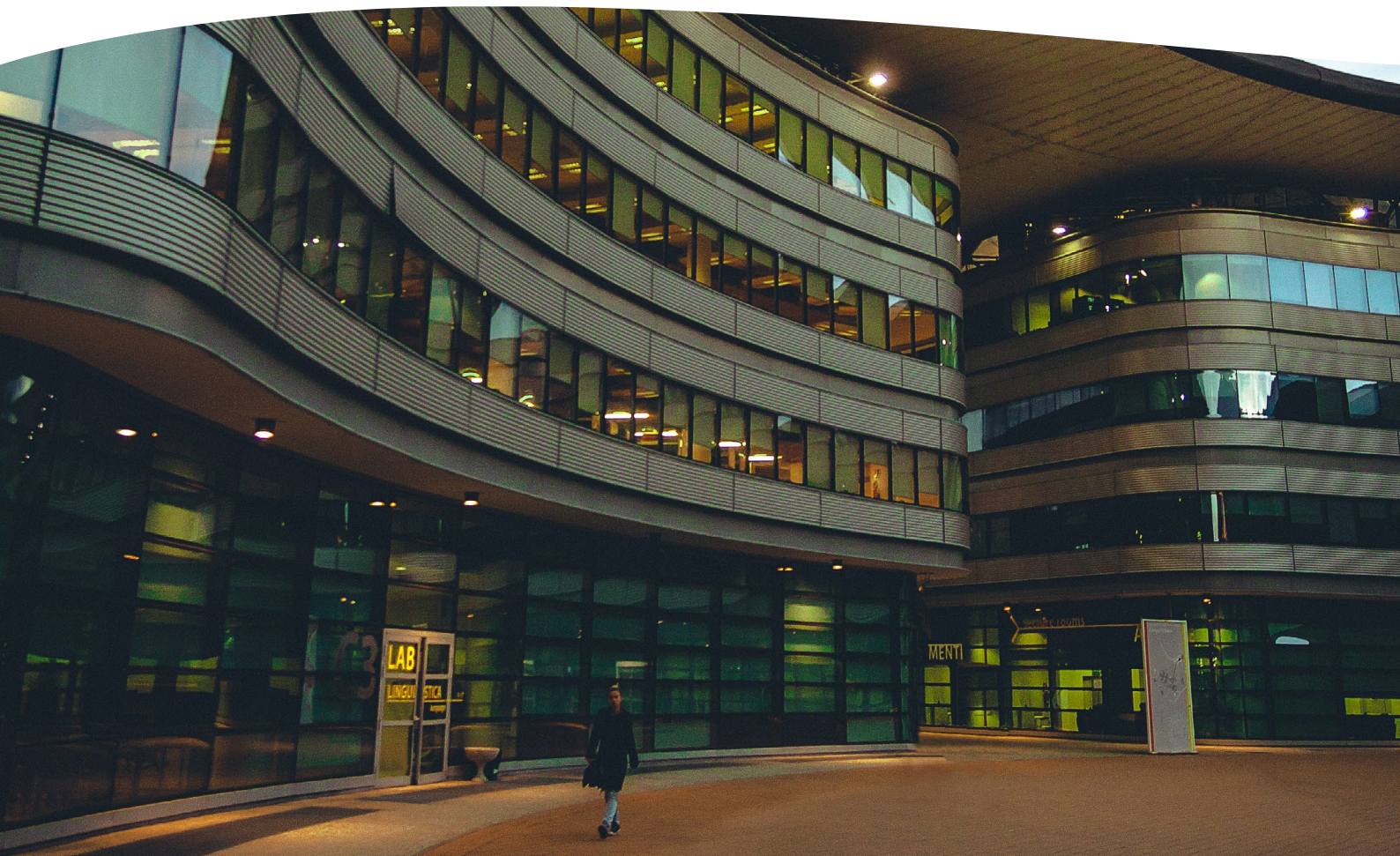
They'll then receive the Letter of Academic Eligibility and Suitability that entitles them to apply to universities in Italy.

The key difference is that EU students can then **submit their own applications directly** to Italian universities, rather than the local embassy or consulate doing it on their behalf.



Note

Bear in mind that here, too, *all* documents need to be officially translated into Italian. Students should leave plenty of additional time to get that arranged.





Sweden has a very handy [coordinated admissions system](#) (known usefully as University Admissions) that simplifies university applications. The University Admissions website is also a great resource for students researching any aspect of studying in Sweden!

But while that standardises much of the application processes, there are still discrepancies for students to look out for.

KEY DEADLINES FOR SWEDISH UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS

Applications to universities in Sweden come in two rounds, but it's the first one your students need to work towards.

That's because it's ***specifically*** for international students. As a result, there are some benefits to international students applying within this round.

Firstly, all English-taught courses are open for application. Plus, admissions decisions are – unsurprisingly – announced earlier, meaning students know where they're headed next semester. That gives them time to plan – for their move abroad, and fulfil any immigration requirements.

The second admissions round is the regular round for students living in Sweden, and Swedish-taught courses are open for application. Some universities still offer English-taught programmes at this stage too – typically if openings remain left over from the first round.



International students can apply in the second round, but it may leave them short of time to organise everything they need. In fact, it's likely that students applying from outside the EU or EEA wouldn't have time to receive their residence permits before the semester began.

Deadlines for each round

First-round deadlines

Autumn semester:

- The application deadline and the last day for students to rank courses is **mid-January** (in 2022 it was the 17th)
- All supporting documents must then be submitted by the **1st February**

Spring semester:

- The application deadline and the last day for students to rank courses is **mid-August** (this year it's the 16th)
- All supporting documents must be submitted by the **1st September**

Second round deadlines

Autumn semester:

- The application deadline and the last day for students to rank courses is **mid-April** (in 2022 it's the 19th)
- All supporting documents must then be submitted by the **mid-June** (in 2022 it was the 21st)
 - > EU students have longer to submit their documents – typically until **early July** (in 2022 it's the 5th)

Spring semester:

- The application deadline and the last day for students to rank courses is **mid-October** (in 2022 it's the 15th)
- All supporting documents must be submitted by the **1st December**



Bear in mind that although there are application windows for the spring semester, **very** few programmes start then. To increase their chances of acceptance – and of meeting fellow incoming students – it's a good idea for students to apply for autumn enrollment.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY IN SWEDEN

Unlike in many countries, students **must have completed their upper secondary education and received their final school grades** to be able to apply for Bachelor's degrees in Sweden.

That means it's not advisable for your students to apply while they're still in school and under your tutelage. Unless they've received their final qualifications, their applications likely won't be considered.

As we've covered, the deadline for autumn enrollment is in January, and spring intakes are very small. It's therefore probable that students will take a gap year after completing secondary school.

As well as language requirements (which we'll get into soon), there's a requirement of proficiency in mathematics. Again, the Swedish admission system's website is a great resource for finding out about course equivalencies, but we'll get into a little more detail below.

University-specific entry requirements

Most degrees in Sweden bring their own specific entry requirements, typically related to the subject area being applied for. Requirements are outlined on programmes' pages on each university's website, so students should be sure to check them thoroughly.

To give students a broad idea of what they're looking at as they begin their research, it's worth giving them some background on Swedish grades.

Swedish upper secondary courses have a number after them; the higher the number, the higher the level. Different courses have different number ranges – some go as high as 7, while others have only 2 levels.



Maths

In maths, for example, students can study at secondary school anywhere from level 1 to level 5. For mathematics 1 – which is what's required of international applicants – it's usually enough to have simply passed their maths qualification.

Sciences

Most Swedish upper secondary school students study natural science 1 and 2. These are more general courses at the lower level, combining several scientific subjects.

Students interested in pursuing sciences can also study the specific subjects of biology, chemistry, and physics at levels 1 and 2. Although they have the same numerical level, these courses are of a higher level than natural science (because they're more in-depth). That means that if a degree requires biology, chemistry or physics Swedish qualifications, students usually need to have specialised in their own science qualifications – and even then, they won't necessarily meet the requirement.

Social Sciences

In Sweden, students can study:

- Social studies 1 and 2
- History 1 and 2

To reach the equivalence required, international students should have qualifications in:

- Social studies to equate with social studies 1 and 2
- History to equate with history 1 and 2
- At least one general subject within humanities/social science (as related as possible to the subject being applied for)
- Modern languages, which in Sweden means a language that **isn't Swedish, English, classical Greek, classical Latin or sign language.**



LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY IN SWEDEN

If your students are applying to a Swedish-taught course, they'll need to prove their proficiency – typically by taking the Test in Swedish for university studies (Tisus).

If they're applying for degrees taught in English and they're not native English speakers, they can take either the IELTS or the TOEFL.

SENDING APPLICATIONS TO SWEDISH UNIVERSITIES

Sweden's coordinated admissions system lets students research and apply for degrees at all the country's universities with one single application (similar to UCAS).

The steps involved are quite straightforward:

1. Create an account
2. Explore and select degrees (up to a maximum of **eight** degrees can be applied to)
3. Complete and submit the application
4. Pay any application fees
5. Upload required documents
6. Track application
7. Receive Notification of Selection Results

One key difference from the UK's UCAS, though, is that all applications are reviewed by one central body, rather than by universities' own admissions departments.

RANKING COURSES

Another similarity with UCAS is the Swedish system of ranking courses.



Once students have chosen the degrees they'll apply for, they have to rank them according to their order of preference. Unlike within UCAS, though, it's not just one firm choice and one safety: **all** the courses they're applying for must be ranked.

And how students choose to rank courses is really important! The first offers they're made are for the degree that they ranked the highest (if there are places available and they meet the entry requirements).

Ultimately, that means that they'll be assessed for admission into their first choice, then their second choice, and so on – up to a maximum of 45 credits. Once offers amounting to 45 credits are made, any remaining applications will be automatically deleted, and students won't be considered for admission to those remaining programmes.

For example, if a student's first choice course is worth 15 credits, their second choice is 7.5 credits, and their third choice is 30 credits, the third course will be deleted if they're offered places on the first two courses. This is because the third offer would take their total up to 52.5 credits – more than the maximum of 45.

Although students **can't change the ranking order of degrees they've applied to after the deadline**, they *can* delete courses and add them back to their application with a different rank.

But these rank-changed and added courses are considered late applications. That means the application will only be considered by the university if there were places available after admissions decisions are made.



Note

Before students make *any* changes to the courses they've applied for, they need to check carefully whether the course(s) they're planning to delete and add back show as "open for late application".



Switzerland is similar to Spain and Italy in that it doesn't have one central admissions system. Instead, most universities have their own online application portals.

As ever, this means students should be extra vigilant about finding specific deadlines, requirements and application processes for every course they're interested in.

KEY DEADLINES FOR SWISS UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS

Most courses in Switzerland accept applications until **the end of April** for autumn enrollment.

However, students from outside the EU and EFTA should aim to apply earlier in order to meet visa deadlines (and some universities' admissions deadlines reflect that). These students should aim to apply **before the end of February**.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY IN SWITZERLAND

There are **some** universities in Switzerland that take the same stance as Sweden – that is, they only accept applications from students who **already have their final results and certificates** for secondary school.

Therefore, it's important you encourage students to check the individual criteria for every single Swiss course they're interested in to see whether it accepts predicted grades.



As has been the case for several destinations, students should know that some universities ask applicants to sit subject-specific entrance exams (for example if they're applying to study medicine).

Some universities also use an entrance exam **only if** the course is oversubscribed. For example, at the University of Basel, the number of admissions for the Bachelor's degree in sport, exercise and health is limited to 125. If by 15th February the number of applications soars way beyond this, they'll hold an athletic entrance exam in July.

It's also worth noting that public universities generally require a qualification in maths for most courses.

Some have even broader requirements, seeking students with a good general education. For example, the University of Geneva asks that applicants have studied each of the following subjects during their final three years of school:

- Their first language
- A second language
- Maths
- Natural sciences (biology, chemistry or physics)
- Humanities and social sciences (geography, history, economics or law)
- Elective (one subject from category 2, 4 or 5 or computer science or philosophy. Computer science and philosophy can only be chosen as a sixth subject.)

But, again, each university, department and degree programme sets its own criteria and decides which qualifications to recognise, so students need to research carefully!



LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLYING TO UNIVERSITIES IN SWITZERLAND

Switzerland is a multilingual country, with four officially recognised national languages (German, French, Italian, and Romansh) as well as plenty of vernaculars and dialects.

As a result, it's not surprising that the languages of instruction – and therefore language requirements – vary. As a general rule though, students simply need to prove their proficiency in whatever language they'll study in. Usually, it will be either German or French, although a growing number of courses are taught in English!

SENDING APPLICATIONS TO SWISS UNIVERSITIES

As we mentioned a little earlier, most Swiss universities have their own online application systems, so students shouldn't need to worry about mailing any documents overseas. They will, though, need to make individual applications directly to each university.

Equally, there are no standardised deadlines or processes, and students should check university and department websites early and contact admissions offices if they have any questions.

For the vast majority of universities, students must identify the faculty and specific degree programme they want to apply to within the initial application form they submit online. If everything has been filled in correctly, the university will send confirmation that it has received the application, as well as an application fee invoice and a list of all the required documents.



Note

Here, too, documents might need to be translated into French, Italian or German. Usually, local Swiss embassies can help students, and they often provide their own translation services.

Once they've paid the fee and submitted the documents and application fee, they'll get confirmation of their offer!



For students applying to university in France, there are online platforms that can make the process smoother. That also means that the deadlines are generally very similar across French universities, making it a little easier to stay organised if students are sending multiple applications in the country!

As in many European countries, though, application processes are quite different depending on whether applicants are EU students or not.

KEY DEADLINES FOR FRENCH UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS

EU students

EU students almost always apply to French degree programmes through [Parcoursup](#), a platform that has its own timetable of deadlines. They tend to be as follows:

- Registration opens in **mid-January**
- The deadline to select academic choices is **mid-March 2021**
- The deadline to complete every section of the application and finalise their choices is **early April**

Non-EU students

Students who don't qualify as EU students follow the Demande d'Admission Préalable – (DAP) timetable, which is as follows:

- Registrations open on **1st October**
- The deadline to submit applications is **15th December**
- Universities generally have to respond to applications by the **end of March**



Once offers are made, students are generally expected to accept or reject them by **mid-May**. Any offers that haven't been responded to by then will be automatically declined.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY IN FRANCE

As usual, every institution and programme is different. Students need to look at each course's criteria to understand the specifics of what each admissions office looks for.

There's plenty of general guidance and information you'll want to make them aware of though!

Public universities

Interestingly, French law states that public universities can't offer places selectively. Instead, students simply **passing** their upper secondary qualifications is sufficient to meet public universities' entry requirements.

Nevertheless, there may be some variety when it comes to especially competitive and/or demanding subjects like medicine or engineering, so students should always be sure to double-check before selecting the courses they'll apply to.

Grandes Écoles

These can be both private or public. What's typically considered to unite them is membership to the CGE ('conference des grande écoles') – which is why they're often compared to the UK's Russell Group or the USA's Ivy League.

Public grandes écoles include the ENS system (the '4 Écoles Normales Supérieures'), but a number of business schools that are grandes écoles are private.



Whether they're public or private, these institutions are free to set any academic requirements they want.

Entry can be very challenging and often involves entrance exams set by the universities – and generally an additional two years of preparatory study after finishing secondary school. The three most common entry pathways to these schools are:

1. Two years of preparatory classes
2. Direct post-baccalaureate entry
3. Parallel admissions, which is when students transfer during their undergraduate degree from another institution

Grands Établissements

These are public universities that are highly selective, although slightly less so than grandes écoles in that they don't require applicants to undertake two years of preparatory study.

They're also unique in that they're overseen by specific ministries, and are therefore often known by the abbreviation EPSCP, which stands for 'établissements public à caractère scientifique, culturel et professionnel'.

Grand Établissements are sometimes considered a type of EPSCP, with other types including specialist schools and universities.

Entry requirements vary between institutions, so students should check each website.

Private Universities

Each private university sets its own admissions criteria, which naturally vary between universities and subjects so students should check early.



LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY IN FRANCE

Most degrees are taught in French, although the number of English-taught courses is growing in the country.

Students applying to a French programme who aren't native speakers need to prove their proficiency through a language test.

There can be exemptions, though, if students have taken the French or international baccalaureate (they must have taken French A1 as a native/ fluent language), if they're citizens of a country where French is an official national language, or if their secondary school education was in French.

For all other students, the French proficiency tests universities look for can vary, but usually they are:

- DELF/DALF
- TEF
- TCF
- CEFR

If students are applying for English-taught programmes and English isn't their first language, they'll generally take the IELTS or TOEFL tests.

Usually, students are expected to have a level of proficiency equivalent to B1/B2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.





SENDING APPLICATIONS TO FRENCH UNIVERSITIES

As we touched on, the application process differs depending on the applicant's citizenship and/or residency, and sometimes the qualifications they hold. The type of institution they're applying to (public, private, *grands établissements*) also makes a difference.

EU students

Students from the EU applying to public universities in France almost always do so through the Parcoursup platform (which is also used by French students).

Students who have French or European baccalaureate/A-levels often follow this process if they're **not** from the EU but **are** from one of the 65 countries affected by the Études en France procedure – students can find the [full list on the Campus France website](#).

Equally, if students **don't have a baccalaureate qualification** but **are** from the EU the application procedure may be different, so it's worth contacting universities if in doubt.

On Parcoursup, students are asked to rank up to 12 degree programmes for each institution they're interested in, up to a maximum of 36 programmes. They should rank these in their order of preference.

Students will find out whether they've been offered a place on any of their chosen courses in June. They can then choose to accept an offer or go into a second round of allocations with their remaining choices.



Note

Offers aren't necessarily made in the order that students ranked their choices, so it may be worth them waiting until the second round!

Accepting an offer on Parcoursup is **not** legally binding. If students have applied to other institutions directly and later receive an offer from one of those, they can accept the later offer.



Non-EU students

For non-European students who **aren't working towards/don't hold French or European baccalaureate/A-levels**, the route to application is through the Demande d'Admission Préalable (the DAP, a preliminary request for admission). These students must submit applications directly to the French Embassy in their country of residence.

Students who **are from an Études en France country but aren't eligible to use the Parcoursup platform** also submit the DAP, but they can do so online through Études en France.

Études en France procedure

Students who **are** from one of the 65 countries affected by the Études en France procedure and are working towards/do have French or European Baccalaureate/A-levels don't need to submit a DAP.

Instead, they send applications using the Études en France online application system, for which they can create a profile through the Campus France website. The system then guides them through the entire application process, including obtaining a visa, how to apply and the documents they'll need to submit.





APPLICATIONS TO THE GRANDES ÉCOLES, GRANDS ÉTABLISSEMENTS AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

These are always made directly to each university.

Different universities ask for different things. Some application processes may involve interviews, cover letters, sample essays, academic references or entrance exams.



REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

This in-demand destination is another that has quite different processes for EU and non-EU students. The former can use the centralised admissions system called the [Central Applications Office](#) (CAO), while students outside the EU need to check individual universities' processes.

KEY DEADLINES FOR IRISH UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS

EU students

- EU students applying through the CAO usually have to submit their applications to all universities by the following deadlines:
- Standard entry: **1st February** (applications cost 45 EUR (50 USD))
- Early application: **20th January** (applications are cheaper at just 30 EUR (33 USD))
- Late application: **1st May**



Students can change their programme choices through the platform until the 1st February for free. They can continue to make changes throughout February, but each change will cost 10 EUR (11 USD).

However, if they can wait, students will get another window to make changes to their choices free of charge between 5th May and 1st July.

Students needn't worry about missing out on a spot because they waited to change their minds, as offers aren't generally made to undergraduates until September. Students who receive an offer have a short window in which to accept it before Round Two of offers commences later in September. Then there is a final round in which offers are made to fill any spots that remain.

Non-EU students

As is often the case, universities set their own deadlines for international students. While this can make extra work in terms of research, there is a plus side – some universities accept applications from non-EU students right up until the academic year begins in September!

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Unfortunately, guidance here is very nebulous.

Not only do universities and programmes set their own criteria, but entry requirements for each programme can also vary from year to year. Factors like the number of places available and the number of applicants can drive grade requirements up or down (meaning in-demand programmes can be highly competitive).

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

International students studying in the Republic of Ireland are almost always taught in English – so a good level is essential.

Non-native speakers usually need to prove their proficiency. Fortunately, most universities offer a range of ways for students to provide this proof.



The most common are:

- University of Cambridge Use of English Examination
- IELTS
- Cambridge Proficiency
- Cambridge A Levels
- PTE Academic

SENDING APPLICATIONS TO IRISH UNIVERSITIES

EU students

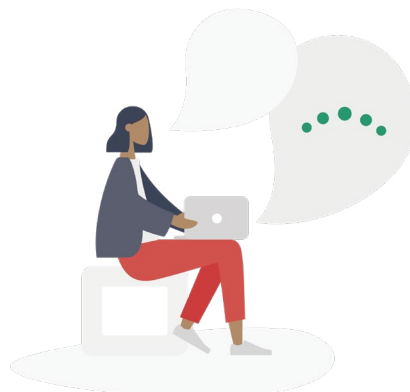
Students can browse and apply to courses through the CAO. They'll need to enter all of the exams/assessments they have taken or will take, and write personal statements tailored to each course they apply to.

Once they're ready, the applications are typically submitted online.

Non-EU

Non-EU students apply directly to the universities they hope to attend – again, usually online.

Some universities also accept applications through the [Common App](#) which can make things simpler for students who are also applying to other countries.



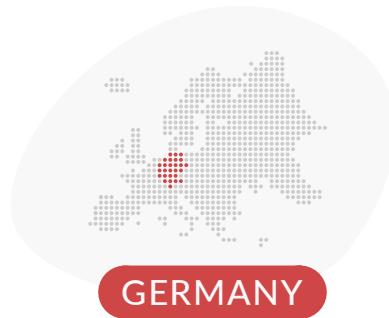
A photograph of three students in a casual setting, likely a library or study area, working on their laptops. One student in the foreground is seen from the back, wearing headphones. Another student in the background is wearing a hoodie and glasses, looking at a laptop. A third student on the right is partially visible, also working. There are water bottles and a small potted plant on the table.

CHAPTER 4

FINANCING A EUROPEAN DEGREE

Mastering international applications is one thing, but students need to plan how they'll fund their education before offers start rolling in.

In this chapter, we'll take a look at tuition fees for international students across these popular European destinations, as well as scholarship and funding opportunities.



One of the things that makes Germany so popular amongst international students is the fact most of its institutions have no student tuition fees. Both domestic and international students at the majority of Germany's public universities study for free (except a small fee covering administrative and miscellaneous costs each semester).

There are also great funding opportunities, so students may not need to worry much about their living costs if they secure a suitable scholarship.

Let's look more closely into funding a German education.

GERMAN UNIVERSITY FEES

Public universities

Back in 2014, Germany abolished tuition fees for undergraduate students at public universities – including domestic and international students.

However, the southwest state of Baden-Württemberg then reintroduced tuition fees **for non-EU students** in 2017. Fees for first-time students are 3,000 EUR (around 3,300 USD) per year.



Note

There are other exemptions which mean some non-EU students **don't** pay Baden-Württemberg's tuition fees. These include students from Erasmus member states, those with permanent residency in Europe, and refugees with the right to stay in Germany.



Private universities

Private universities in Germany do charge tuition fees, and – as tends to be the case – each sets its own.

As a general guide students, can expect to pay at **most** around 30,000 EUR (33,000 USD) per year.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDYING IN GERMANY

Several organisations help students find and apply for scholarships – students should check these out as early as possible if they're interested.

The best place to begin their search is probably the DAAD. It has a [database of relevant scholarships](#), including all the information on deadlines and eligibility.



The Netherlands also provides international students with excellent value for money, as well as a plethora of funding opportunities.

DUTCH UNIVERSITY FEES

EU students

Tuition fees for EU/EEA students at public universities are subsidised by the Dutch government, making them much more affordable than many popular destinations!

Currently, fees are around 2,200 EUR per year (2,400 USD) (the same as for Dutch students).



Non-EU students

As usual, non-EU students face higher fees and more variety. The average annual fees for Bachelor's degrees are between 6,000 and 15,000 EUR (6,500 – 16,300 USD).

Private universities

Private universities are free to set their own fees – and they're usually quite a bit higher. Even EU students can expect to pay up to 9,000 EUR per year (9,800 USD).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDYING IN THE NETHERLANDS

As in Germany, there are useful and reliable resources for international students hoping to research scholarship opportunities. The [Study in Holland website](#) can be a good starting point!



Note

GPA's can be a decisive factor in which students are awarded scholarships. The higher their grades, the higher their chance of getting a scholarship.





Spain offers some of the lowest fees in Europe, as well as plenty of funding and scholarship opportunities for overseas applicants.

SPANISH UNIVERSITY FEES

In Spain, fees are charged **per credit**, rather than per semester or academic year.

The amount that students pay will, of course, depend on where they're from, as well as and what and where they study.

EU students

EU students usually pay the same fees as their domestic counterparts.

Public university fees are set by regional governments. That means that, unlike in countries like the Netherlands, fees vary depending on where the university is located.

Tuition fees for Bachelor's degrees can vary from 680 EUR to 1,280 EUR per year (taking an average amount of credits). That's between 740 and 1,400 USD.

Non-EU students

Different universities have different fees and policies for students from outside the EU.

As ever, students should consult individual universities to verify what fees they'll pay.

Private universities

Of course, fees at private universities are usually considerably more expensive for both EU and non-EU students.



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDYING IN SPAIN

There are plenty of grants and scholarships offered by the Spanish government, charitable organisations and individual institutions. A great starting point is to look at the range of [scholarships provided by the Spanish Ministry of Education](#), and check out offerings from the specific universities being considered.



Like in Spain, fees across Italian institutions vary – even between public universities. All the usual factors (like the student's citizenship, the university, the area of study) can also affect what students pay.

ITALIAN UNIVERSITY FEES

Undergraduate degrees at a public university in Italy usually cost somewhere between 900 and 4,000 EUR (980 – 4,400 USD) per year, although the average is about 1,500 EUR (1,600 USD).

For private universities, fees are anywhere from 6,000 to 20,000 EUR (6,600 - 22,000 USD) each year.

Achievement-based tuition

It's also worth being aware that some universities, like the University of Trento, have a [sliding scale of fees depending on international students' admissions scores](#). The higher they achieve, the lower their fees!



Income-based tuition

Tuition fees at **public universities** in Italy are variable based on family income, so the amount students pay is determined by the resources they have available.

Wherever they're applying, though, the amount students are charged is determined by the Equivalent Economic Situation Indicator (known as the ISEE in Italy – 'L'indicatore della Situazione Economica Equivalente').

For EU students (and at some universities, also for students from outside of the EU), there is an international version of this – the ISEE parificato. Because their families' assets are outside Italy, students need to submit plenty of financial documents to apply.

This can include:

- Bank account balance
- Tax returns
- Passports

The specific documents that universities ask for vary between institutions, but generally they all need to be officially translated into Italian.

Some universities don't offer the ISEE for non-EU students, and may instead let these students apply for a 'flat tax' (a single, lower annual university fee).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDYING IN ITALY

When it comes to funding, there are far fewer distinctions based on students' citizenships, offering a refreshingly simple research process for students interested in securing funding.



For the most part, *all* students can apply for Italian scholarships and grants, and the deciding factors are each student's financial situation and/or academic merit.

There are lots of different types of funding available, so the best port of call is the international offices at the universities students hope to attend. They'll be able to explain the options and processes.

As in Spain, some of the most popular scholarships are offered by the government (usually the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or regional governments) as well as individual universities.



Once again, citizenship and residency are vital when considering how to finance a Swedish education!

SWEDISH UNIVERSITY FEES

EU students

Students from within the EU/EEA are in luck if they're studying in Sweden – much like in Germany, they don't have to pay *any* tuition fees!

Non-EU students

Fees vary (as usual), but on average they're around 129,000 SEK (13,700 USD) per year.

Students should look carefully though, because at some programmes it's as low as 80,000 SEK (8,500 USD), while others charge as much as 295,000 SEK (31,000 USD) per year.



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDYING IN SWEDEN

Thankfully, there are plenty of scholarships open to international students.

Most of these cover the total cost of tuition, while some also provide a stipend to cover living expenses.

For the most part, scholarships in Sweden are managed and awarded by individual universities, but there are some exceptions. The [Study in Sweden website](#) is a good place to look!



For students applying to study in Switzerland, the **biggest** determinant of price is likely to be whether they apply to a public or a private university.

As Switzerland itself isn't an EU member state, that can come into play slightly less than at other destinations.

SWISS UNIVERSITY FEES

Public universities in Switzerland tend to have relatively low tuition fees. That includes some of the most renowned universities like ETH Zurich, EPFL Lausanne, and the Universities of Basel, Bern and Lausanne – all of which charge less than 1,000 CHF (1,300 USD) per semester, or 2,000 CHF (2,600 USD) per year.

But some universities charge as little as 1,700 CHF (1,800 USD) per year, and others as much as 8,000 CHF (8,600 USD). Tuition fees can also vary depending on the study programme.



International student fees

Not all universities charge different fees based on students' nationalities.

For those that do, though, there is a lot of variety to be aware of.

In some universities, tuition fees are only slightly higher for international students. For example, the University of Luzern charges international students 1,110 CHF (1180 USD) and Swiss students 810 CHF.

At other universities, like SUPSI, international student fees are double the fees for domestic students – in this case rising from 800 to 1,600 CHF (1,700 USD).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDYING IN SWITZERLAND

Students applying to study in Switzerland will also find a wide array of funding opportunities.

They come from all kinds of organisations, private institutions and bilateral agreements between governments. Again, there are lots of valuable resources for students looking to explore their options – like this [guide to Swiss scholarships](#)!



France is another destination where the distinction between public and private universities can be quite stark when it comes to tuition fees. Thankfully, most universities are funded by the state, keeping tuition fees extremely low!



That being said, scholarships are fairly sparse for international students. Most of them are for participants in Erasmus exchange programmes rather than for students completing the entirety of their degrees in France.

FRENCH UNIVERSITY FEES

Public universities

On average, tuition fees at public universities in France are as low as 170 EUR (185 USD) per year (although engineering schools can be considerably more expensive). These fees generally apply to all EU and EEA students.

However, non-EU students tend to pay higher fees – around 2,700 EUR (almost 3,000 USD) per year.



Note

Some other qualities that can qualify students for home-fee status include holding a long-term French residence card and having refugee status or subsidiary protection.

Private universities

France's highly selective grandes écoles (at least those that are private) and grands établissements are as demanding financially as they are academically, with some charging up to 10,000 EUR (10,900 USD per year). Those teaching engineering, management or business can come with annual fees of 30,000 EUR (33,000 USD).

On the other hand, some private institutions charge as little as 500 EUR (550 USD), so as ever, careful research is necessary.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDYING IN FRANCE

While there are funding opportunities, these are quite limited for full-time international students.



Scholarships that come with a stipend for living expenses are most commonly available only to Erasmus exchange students, with a small number also designated to engineering, business and medical students from former French colonies.

French public institutes also provide scholarships for foreign students, so it's a good idea for students to contact the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs or their local French embassy, and/or the Campus France office for their country.

If they want to get a head start on the search for funding, though, a couple of good options are [Campus Bourses](#), the [foreign ministry](#), and scholarships from regional authorities.



We come to a final country that has considerable variety in the fees its international students pay. Everything from subject to citizenship can have an impact, so students need to carry out individual research according to their plans.

FEES

Tuition fees vary widely and depend on the programme, university and whether students qualify for UK or EU student status.

It's worth students understanding that most universities have two parts to their fee structure – tuition fees and student contributions. The latter covers things like libraries, electronic devices, student societies and exam entry fees.

While universities can set their own contribution charges, they're capped at 3,000 EUR (3,300 USD).



Free Fees Initiative

Ireland has a Free Fees Initiative for undergraduate study, whereby EU/EEA and Swiss students attending public programmes only pay the contribution charges, and no tuition fees.

To qualify, students must meet the following criteria:

- They have resided in an EU/EEA/Swiss state or the UK for at least three of the five previous years
- It's their first attempt at an undergraduate degree
- The course they're applying for is:
 - > At least two years in duration
 - > Studied full time
- They meet at least one of [the nationality requirements](#)

EU student fees

There are situations in which EU students wouldn't qualify for the Free Fees Initiative, but they would often still qualify for reduced EU rates. These EU rates are decided by each university individually, so as ever, students should check carefully.

Examples of situations where students wouldn't qualify for free fees but may for EU fees are:

- They failed a year of university and are repeating it
- They already have a degree
- They've been a tax resident in EEA state for a number of years

Non-EU students

While the government pays a large chunk of domestic and EU students' fees, students from outside of the EU and the EEA pay the full cost of their programmes themselves.

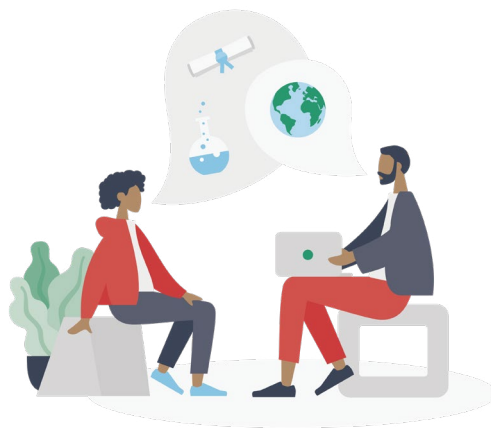


Again, the amount they pay varies a great deal, even within one institution. For example, annual fees at Dublin City University (DCU) range from 12,600 to 18,000 EUR (13,700 – 20,000 USD), depending on the subject studied.

At University College Dublin (UCD), meanwhile, tuition fees are between 16,800 and 25,600 EUR (18,300 – 27,900 USD).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDYING IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

As in many European destinations, financial support and scholarships are provided by the government, external organisations and individual universities. A good starting point for students' research is [the Education in Ireland website](#).





CHAPTER 5

ACCOMMODATION & CAMPUS LIVING

Decisions around accommodation are, in many ways, just as important as academic factors.

Where and how students live determines everything from the friends they make to the foods they eat, the places they can study to the societies they can join. And to be as academically successful as possible, they'll want to feel at home – no matter how many miles away they are.

What's more, accommodation decisions will also have an impact on students' budgetary considerations and personal finances.



TYPES OF STUDENT RESIDENCE IN EUROPE

Student accommodation in most European destinations can be broadly separated into two categories: student-specific/university-affiliated accommodation, and private housing.

Across all countries, rent tends to be significantly more expensive in big cities and popular student areas, particularly on the private market. We'll give you some estimates of what students can expect to pay in each of the following sections.

University-affiliated accommodation

Student-specific/university-affiliated accommodation tends to be halls of residence managed by either the university or student unions (sometimes in conjunction with private organisations). Generally, this is a cheaper option than renting privately.

Halls of residence also offer a great social scene, and are typically close to or on campus, making them extra convenient! Plus, utilities are generally included in the cost, saving students the hassle of organising gas, electricity, water and so on, and of having to stay on top of bills.

In these residences, students usually live in a house or apartment with other students and have their own bedrooms, while sharing common spaces like the bathroom and kitchen.

Nevertheless, in most countries students can find a variety of accommodation options, including:

- Shared rooms
- Corridor rooms
- Self-contained apartments with between two and seven bedrooms
- Single apartments
- Couple apartments



The size and furnishing also vary between different accommodations. Students can either choose furnished accommodation (more expensive but more convenient), or unfurnished (cheaper, but students have to source furniture themselves).

Private student accommodation

Although it's usually more expensive, private student accommodation has its perks! It often allows for greater privacy, and comes with fewer rules and regulations.

Luckily, students usually don't have to fend for themselves when searching for private accommodation. International offices, student services or student unions can generally lend a hand.

There are a number of places students can look for accommodation:

- Local and/or student run newspapers or magazines.
- Online portals or social media
- Housing agencies
- Student associations

There are also several different types of private accommodation to consider.

Private studios

These offer independence, but it tends to come at a price. As well as being more expensive, they're also much smaller – studios are generally just one room containing the bed, desk and kitchen, plus a separate room for the bathroom.

Single apartments and townhouses

Apartments and townhouses offer more autonomy, but they're usually quite expensive. They can also be complicated to obtain as an international student, and generally require working with a local estate agent.



Shared rentals

Renting a flat with one or several friends is another popular option, saving costs and creating great social opportunities.

Usually, students also have the option of joining a flat which already has some residents.

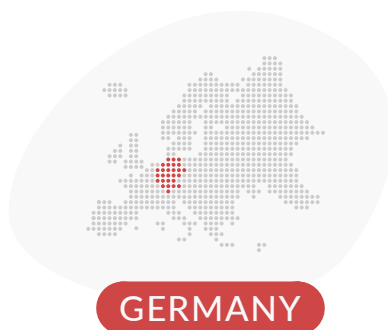
Hostels and dorms

Student hostels and dorms tend to include lots of facilities to make living away from home easy – like fully-functioning laundry rooms and shared kitchens.

Because they're designed with students in mind, they are also generally within a good distance of universities, making them all the more convenient!

Some criteria for students to consider as they compare accommodation options include:

- What deposit is required?
- What amenities are included?
- What utilities are covered in the rent (e.g. water, electricity, heating, garbage disposal, cleaning)
- Is smoking permitted?



Because it's such a popular international student destination, student accommodation in Germany is in high demand. Thankfully, there's a wide range of options available.

The International Office at their chosen university is a great port of call when beginning their search. Many international students also turn to online listings and social media – but of course, caution around fraud and misleading listings is imperative.

STUDENT RESIDENCES IN GERMANY

In Germany, student-specific accommodation usually comes in the form of halls of residence managed by student unions.

Unlike in countries like the UK and the USA, very few students live in student housing. In fact, the majority of international students live in private accommodation.

So if renting privately is more expensive, why are most students choosing it?

The biggest reason is that demand outweighs availability, so speed again, is of the essence.

There is usually a committee of students for each residence that acts as the point of contact between the student union and the residents of the accommodation. They also organise social, sporting and cultural activities.



Applying for student residences

Students register for accommodation through the website of the Studentenwerk administration local to their chosen university. Different student services have different deadlines and application procedures, so it's important to look carefully and early.

Students should also try to submit their applications as early as possible to get ahead of the high demand for spots.

To apply, they'll need to:

1. Submit the online application to the city's student union.
2. Submit the matriculation certificate from their chosen university.
3. If there is a suitable space available, they will receive an offer within 4 to 8 weeks, with the lease agreement attached. In the email, they'll also find the deadline to accept the offer and instructions on how to authorise a direct debit to pay their rent.
4. Students should accept the offer by replying to the email with the documents requested before the deadline.



Note

Students should be *very* vigilant about checking their emails. Germany operates a system known as 'Schnellanschreiben', whereby if a room becomes suddenly available, a last-minute offer is sent by email **at the same time to all the people on the waiting list**. The first person to reply with the direct debit authorisation and other required documents gets the room!



PRIVATE STUDENT ACCOMMODATION IN GERMANY

Students looking to rent privately can find a wonderful source of support in the International Office or the student union in their university or city.

Students for whom budget and in-house socialising aren't a big concern might consider single apartments, but most opt for flatshares (often known as 'Wohngemeinschaft').

THE COST OF STUDENT ACCOMMODATION IN GERMANY

Student-specific residences tend to charge between 240 and 300 EUR per month (260 – 325 USD), but factors like location, size and amenities all affect the price.

For private accommodation, students should expect to pay anywhere from 300 EUR to 800 EUR (325 – 870 USD) per month.



THE NETHERLANDS

Much like Germany, student accommodation in the Netherlands is in very high demand, particularly in popular cities.

Many institutions offer university-managed accommodation, but most Dutch students make their own arrangements in shared private apartments.

However, unlike in Germany, student accommodation is often on the more expensive end of the spectrum. Students applying to the Netherlands should make accommodation research high on their to-do list.



On the bright side, most universities provide temporary solutions for international students (particularly those taking part in exchange programmes or international courses) to give them a chance to get settled and finalise their plans.

STUDENT RESIDENCES IN THE NETHERLANDS

Most Dutch universities don't have a campus – they're city universities, meaning the university manages buildings across a city as opposed to having a dedicated, self-contained campus.

This means that while students' rooms are technically university-owned, students' lived experiences aren't very different to what they'd have in privately-managed accommodation: in both cases, they're in the midst of the city rather than in a self-contained campus.

Universities that don't own housing also often negotiate with private landlords to rent a block of rooms which they can then sub-let to students. As a result, students don't need to deal with landlords or letting agencies directly, but instead secure their accommodation through the university housing office.



Note

University accommodation often fills up as early as May or June for the autumn semester, so students need to get organised early!

PRIVATE STUDENT ACCOMMODATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

Private solutions are the most popular for students in the Netherlands.

Students should expect a lot of competition, and might even be asked to an interview by potential housemates.



THE COST OF STUDENT ACCOMMODATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

On average, renting a private, single apartment costs 700 to 800 EUR (760 – 870 USD) each month.

Of course, renting a room in a shared apartment or house is much more affordable – typically between 300 and 600 EUR (325 – 650 USD) per month, depending on size, location and furnishing. In Amsterdam, though, it can be as high as 800 EUR (870 USD).



While Spain has a variety of accommodation options for its students, the most common is student residence halls known as ‘Colegios Mayores’, or student apartments.

STUDENT RESIDENCES IN SPAIN

In Spain, students can find Colegios Mayores which offer conferences, workshops, cultural and sporting events and more! They'll keep boredom at bay and find great opportunities for professional development.

HOST FAMILIES

While all the usual private accommodation options are available in Spain, there is one worth mentioning here that isn't as popular in Germany and the Netherlands.



There are host families keen to welcome international students all over Spain – a great option if students are looking for a really immersive cultural and linguistic experience. They can also provide a sense of family to keep homesickness at bay, and can be a very affordable option!

THE COST OF STUDENT ACCOMMODATION IN SPAIN

The usual factors are at play here: location, size, amenities and so on.

Students living in residence halls can expect to pay anywhere from 360 to 650 EUR per month (390 – 705 USD).

The divergence between private apartments is even greater: anywhere from 200 EUR to over 1,000 EUR each month (220 – 1,085 USD).

Living with a Spanish family can also come with very different prices based on region, living conditions, and so on.



Italy's student accommodation provisions are similar to those in other countries we've seen so far, giving students a choice between private and university-affiliated options.

In terms of price, there is quite a bit of variety, but accommodation is generally relatively affordable!



STUDENT RESIDENCES IN ITALIAN UNIVERSITIES

Different universities have their own ways of doing things, but in general, there is an accommodation services office that manages housing.

Some institutions guarantee housing specifically to international students (although at some universities, these guarantees are reserved specifically for students from outside the EU).

PRIVATE ACCOMMODATION IN ITALIAN UNIVERSITIES

That being said, some universities don't have **any** of their own accommodation.

In those cases, the international office at the university can help students to find suitable accommodation, and tends to set them up with more affordable options than they might find independently.

THE COST OF STUDENT ACCOMMODATION IN ITALY

Student housing in Italy can range anywhere from 300 to 800 EUR a month (330 – 870 USD), depending on the type, size, city and location in relation to the centre and/or the university.

Accommodation designed specifically for students, whether managed privately or by a university, typically costs around 300 to 600 EUR per month (330 – 650 USD).

Rooms in shared apartments are slightly more expensive, with an average of 500 to 800 EUR **plus** utility bills (550 – 870 USD).

Meanwhile, students looking to rent an entire apartment for themselves should expect to pay between 800 and 1200 EUR (870 – 1,300 USD), excluding utilities.



There aren't any hard and fast rules when it comes to accommodation in Sweden. Some universities guarantee housing for international students, but not all of them, and the conditions of these guarantees vary.

That being said, most universities do have some kind of accommodation service to help students find their new home in Sweden, so the process shouldn't be too overwhelming!

Still, accommodation is in extremely high demand, so planning carefully and early is of the utmost importance.

STUDENT HALLS OF RESIDENCE IN SWEDEN

Student halls of residence – known as 'kollegium' in Swedish – aren't necessarily university-owned. Universities might point students to housing companies that also label their accommodation that way – and the experience of living in it won't be noticeably different.

Students need to be aware that there are normally long waiting lists for rooms in halls of residence, particularly in large or student-heavy cities. They should register their place in the queue as soon as they can.

To do this, students contact the hall of residence, or the student support service at their chosen institution.



Note

Each queue or waiting list is **specific to individual institutions**. Students can't switch their place in the queue to a different university if they change their mind about which offer to accept.



THE COST OF STUDENT ACCOMMODATION IN SWEDEN

Monthly rent varies depending on all the usual factors, but as a rough guide will probably fall between SEK 2,500 and 7,000 SEK (270 – 740 USD).

And if they secure dedicated student accommodation, students will likely only pay rent for the nine months they're actually at university!



Truly *on-campus* accommodation is somewhat rarer in Switzerland than in other countries.

With a competitive housing market and high prices, students applying to Switzerland would all be well advised to start early.

STUDENT RESIDENCES IN SWISS UNIVERSITIES

While university-affiliated accommodation is relatively common in Switzerland, the university's actual involvement in owning and running the building ranges from full ownership to simply selecting privately-provided student housing to endorse.

The most common form of student residence is the large student halls we've seen elsewhere in this guide. In response to rising demand, there's also a growing number of buildings that offer single apartments and studios.



HOST FAMILIES

As in Spain, staying with a local family can be a really good option for international students in Switzerland. Plus, rates are often much lower than for other accommodation options, making it a particularly suitable choice for students on a tight budget.

THE COST OF STUDENT ACCOMMODATION IN SWITZERLAND

For the most part, accommodation designed for students costs somewhere between 400 to 800 CHF per month (430 – 860 USD), so it's not the cheapest of all the countries we've covered. And remember, this is the **most** affordable option, and spaces are extremely limited.

Students in Zurich and Geneva often pay 1,700 to 5,000 CHF each month (1,800 – 5,400 USD), especially on the private market.

But students don't need to panic! Again, with time and attention, they can find cheaper options. For example, the University of Geneva provides student rooms for just 440 CHF per month (470 USD).

And even if they don't secure student housing, if students are happy to rent with a group of people, they can pay much lower rent.

FRANCE



Here, too, an early start is wise – especially in popular student cities. And student services at their university should also be able to help, with many even having a system in place to connect students with reputable private providers if needed.



STUDENT RESIDENCES IN FRANCE

In France, rather than universities owning their own accommodation, it's usually managed by regional centres for student services, which are known as CROUS ('centres régionaux des œuvres universitaires et scolaires').

Because they're publicly owned and subsidised by the French government, they're a very affordable option. All the other usual benefits apply: furnished rooms, the inclusion of amenities, and an active social scene.

Of course, the demand for these rooms far exceeds the supply, so get your students organised ASAP!

The application process does depend on whether:

1. They're taking part in a formal exchange programme through Erasmus
2. They're moving to France for their entire degree
3. They're scholarship holders managed by Campus France

Erasmus students: The international relations service of the French host institution will book their accommodation and let them know anything they need to do.

Scholarship holders managed by Campus France: Campus France manages the process on students' behalf.

Non-exchange students: International students should apply directly through the [CROUS website](#). Registration opens in early May, and speed is of the essence.

Students can use the CROUS platform, [Lokaviz](#), to see all the rooms available in CROUS residences, as well as reliable private accommodation options.



HOSTELS

Nonprofits (often religious in nature) run hostels for young people, sometimes segregated by gender.

Usually, young workers get first pick of rooms, but students are welcome too! This is also a cheaper option, and some include meal plans for an added dose of convenience.

LIVING WITH A FAMILY OR AN ELDERLY RESIDENT

France is another place where lodging with a local family is a popular (and affordable) solution. Some families even host students for free (or for extremely low costs) in exchange for helping with things like childcare, homework, or language lessons – similar to an au pair set-up.

There are also nonprofit organisations that pair students in search of a room with older residents who have a spare room and would like some company. Again, rent is usually very cheap, and sometimes free altogether.

THE COST OF STUDENT ACCOMMODATION IN FRANCE

In order of expense, average prices are as follows:

- CROUS buildings: 450 EUR in Paris and 350 EUR elsewhere (380 – 490 USD)
- Hostels: 600 EUR in Paris, 400 EUR elsewhere (650 – 440 USD)
- Private rentals: upwards of 800 EUR in Paris and 450 EUR elsewhere (870 – 480 USD)



REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

As ever, students have options, but need to remember that on-campus accommodation is hugely sought-after. Organisation and an open mind are key!

STUDENT RESIDENCES AT IRISH UNIVERSITIES

Unlike in many European countries, all Irish universities have their own halls of residence.

The format is usually apartments of 4 to 8 students sharing communal areas while bedrooms are private.

Rooms aren't always given out on a first-come, first-served basis. Instead, some institutions give priority to certain groups, like first and second-year undergraduates or international students.

Some universities have catered residences in which students can sign up for meal plans and eat in the hall's cafeteria for an additional cost.

Off-campus housing

For students who don't want or don't get rooms in halls of residence, many universities also run housing off-campus. They can be apartment blocks or more of a hostel style, and things like security services and catering may be different from what students see on campus.

HOST FAMILIES

Again, living with a host family can be a convenient, affordable, practical and enjoyable solution.



THE COSTS OF STUDENT ACCOMMODATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

On average, students pay between 4,000 and 6,000 EUR (4,400 – 6,600 USD) per year for a room, which is around 500 EUR (550 USD) a month.

If they share their bedroom with a fellow student, the average price drops to 3,500 EUR (3,800 USD) per year.



Note

Most campus accommodation doesn't allow students to pay rent monthly. Instead, it's typically paid in two instalments, in September and in February.

Unlike in many countries, it's not uncommon for utilities to be charged separately. Another arrangement students might find in Ireland is that a **certain amount** of heat and electricity is included in the amount they pay, but if they use *more* than that amount, then the cost will be deducted from their deposit.

Student accommodation off campus is often more flexible and slightly cheaper than on campus: about 180 to 200 EUR (200 – 220 USD) per month for a single room, plus usually around 30 EUR (33 USD) for utilities.

If they choose to rent outside of student accommodation, there can be quite a lot of variety in cost, but on average a small single apartment will set them back around 170 EUR (188 USD) per month.

Of course, location is a huge factor. In Dublin, students can expect to pay an average of 450 EUR (500 USD) per month, or even up to 900 EUR (1,000 USD) for larger spaces and more desirable locations.

Homestays are certainly cheaper, coming in at just around 160 EUR (175 USD) per month.



PREPARING STUDENTS TO STUDY IN EUROPE

As you prepare to help students explore the awe-inspiring educational offerings in Europe, here are some top tips to give students:

- Start the research process **early** – earlier than you think.
- Write down every deadline you see. Really. **Every** deadline.
- Think holistically when deciding on destinations – they impact every aspect of your experience.
- Make use of European universities' student services if they have any doubts, questions or concerns. They're there to help!

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Having read this guide, you should have a solid grounding in European higher education and feel well-equipped to guide students on the destinations that best fit their needs.

One of the paradoxically unifying themes of this guide has been variety. European countries rarely follow just one set way of doing things. From individualised application processes to diversified institution offerings, wide-ranging accommodation to dynamic teaching approaches, Europe certainly doesn't adhere to one-size-fits-all.

And that means that pretty much every student can find their own perfect fit in this vast and varied continent. But it also means that doing so takes consideration, time and research.



The Ultimate Guide to Studying in Europe: Preparing students to study in Europe

Of course, you can make it all much easier for you and for them by using the free BridgeU platform! Its intelligent matching tools take into account students' preferences, needs and grades to show them the universities and programmes where they're likeliest to thrive.

They can explore and compare their options with a wealth of data on over 28,000 universities around the world, as well as tailored, original content on everything from creating applications to signing up for student societies. Our intuitive platform makes drawing comparisons and making informed choices easy.

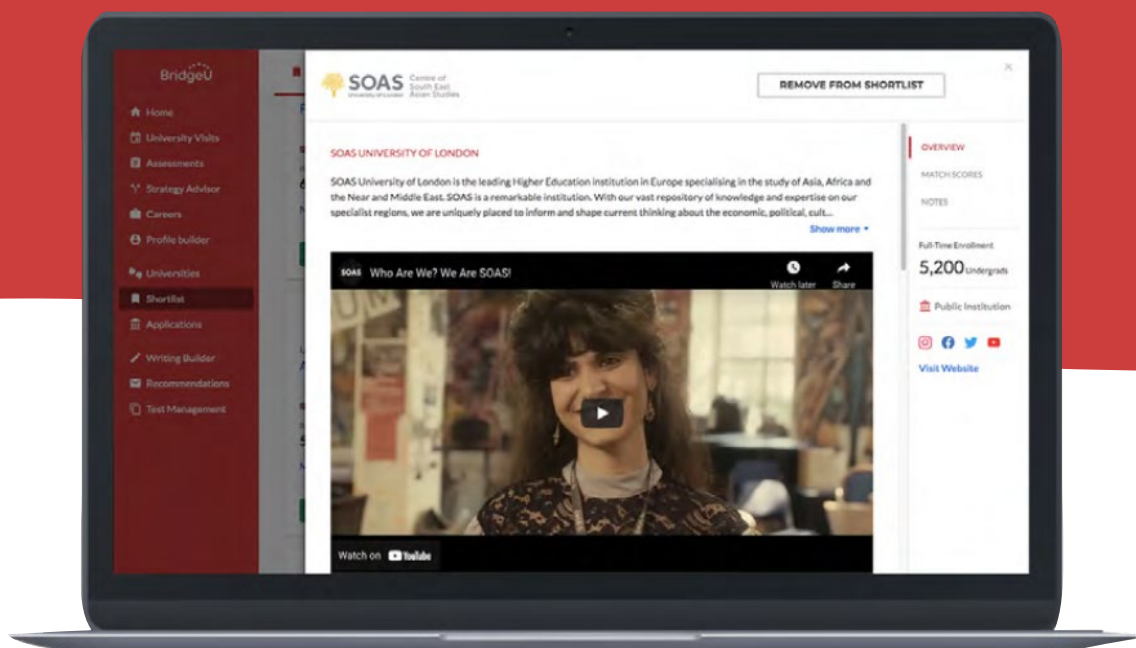
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