

# Navigating Higher Education Abroad Things to Consider Before Applying

**With proper preparation and guidance, it can be an exciting opportunity to pursue higher education in some of the most prestigious institutions in the world and gain invaluable academic and professional skills.**

SARA KABIR

In today's interconnected world, studying abroad is an excellent way for Bangladeshi students to broaden their horizons and gain a global perspective, which can have a positive impact on their future career prospects. The United Kingdom and the United States are two of the most sought-after destinations for higher education, thanks to their top-ranked universities and diverse student communities. However, applying to universities in these countries can be a daunting process, requiring careful consideration and preparation.

As someone who has navigated this process, I understand the challenges and opportunities that come with studying abroad. I also know how important it is to have access to reliable information and guidance to make informed decisions. In this article, we'll explore some key considerations for Bangladeshi students who are interested in pursuing higher education abroad. Whether you're just starting your research or ready to apply, I hope you'll find some valuable insights here.

**Research and shortlist universities**  
Before applying to universities in the USA and UK, it is crucial to keep a couple of important

factors in mind. Firstly, researching and shortlisting universities that align with your academic interests, career goals, and personal preferences is essential. Secondly, don't forget to consider factors such as location, cost, campus life, research potential, and the reputation of the universities.

In the USA, universities range from world-renowned Ivy League institutions to public and private universities. Meanwhile, the UK is known for having some of the oldest and most prestigious universities in the world and offers post-study work visas that allow students to think long-term and explore career opportunities in the UK after completing their studies.

"The UK is the dream destination for many students, especially those interested in gaining an international postgraduate degree, as most master's programs in the UK can be completed in just one year. This is a great opportunity for students who want to experience a culturally diverse environment and gain an international degree that will add

great value to their future academic and professional careers," shares Md. Nuruzzaman, Bangladesh's Regional Manager of the University of Portsmouth, UK.

However, studying in major cities such as London and Edinburgh can be quite expensive. Therefore, many students try to find reputable universities just outside the city that offer almost all the same facilities but are more affordable. The University of Portsmouth, located just 90 minutes away from Central London by train, offers a world-class education and boasts a 94% rate of students finding jobs or pursuing further studies after graduation.

On the other hand, "The US is a melting pot of different cultures and is known for its strong economy and thriving job market. Studying in the US can open up a range of career opportunities, giving you the chance to gain valuable work experience and build professional global networks. Many universities also offer a wide range of extracurricular activities, including sports, clubs, and student

organizations, which can help students to meet new friends and be an exciting and enriching experience," adds S M Mohaimanul Hoque, Bangladesh's Regional Advisor of Trine University, USA.

Typically, students aspiring to study in the US look for strong academic programs and innovative research opportunities. Trine University offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate degree programs in multidisciplinary fields and hands-on learning opportunities, making it a strong contender for interested students.

**Keep the deadlines in mind**

Though some postgraduate programs may have up to five intakes each year, depending on the number of available seats, most universities in the USA usually have four distinct application deadlines that students can apply to in Summer, Fall, and Spring. On the other hand, in the UK, applications for selective programs usually open in January, and the rest open in September, which is the main academic session. It is crucial to check the availability on the university's websites or ask your local university representative before applying.

The application process typically involves submitting your academic transcripts, standardized test scores, academic and work recommendation letters, personal essays, resumes, and other relevant documents. In the USA, it is important to carefully read and follow the application instructions provided by each university, as the requirements can vary. In the UK, most universities use the UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) system mainly for undergraduate programs, through which you can apply to up to five universities. However, many universities accept direct applications as well.

**Prepare for exams**

Standardized tests are also an essential requirement for most universities in the USA, such as the IELTS, TOEFL, SAT, PTE, ACT, GRE, or

GMAT. In the UK, similar standardized tests are required such as the IELTS, TOEFL, BMAT, LNAT, or UKCAT for certain courses. You should prepare for these tests well in advance and aim to score as high as possible, as it can have a significant impact on your admission chances.

**Explore financial aid options**

When considering attending universities in the USA and UK, it is important to factor in the potentially high costs and carefully consider available financial aid options. Many institutions offer scholarships, grants, and loans to international students to help ease the financial burden. Popular external government-funded scholarships include the Fulbright Program in the US, and Commonwealth Shared Scholarships, Chevening, and GREAT Scholarships in the UK.

In addition, some universities provide country-specific scholarships. Bangladeshi students, for example, are eligible for either the Vice Chancellors Global Development Scholarship, which provides GBP 1600, or the Chancellor's Global Academic Merit Scholarship, which provides GBP 3000, to support their academic pursuits at the University of Portsmouth. For undergraduate students, Trine University offers a variety of scholarships up to \$19000. It's crucial to research and apply for these options well in advance as they are typically highly competitive and have early application deadlines.

**If overwhelmed, get expert opinions**

With proper preparation and guidance, it can be an exciting opportunity to pursue higher education in some of the most prestigious institutions in the world and gain invaluable academic and professional skills. But keeping track of the multiple applications and updates can be quite a stressful factor for many Bangladeshi students, so many turn to local education consultancy services and regional representatives to aid them with the process and find the right information.

Sara Kabir is a journalist at The Daily Star

IMAGE: FREEPKX






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