

STUDY ABROAD

BEYOND THE USUAL: Lesser-known destinations for studying abroad

SARA KABIR

Studying abroad is something most Bangladeshi students dream of. While destinations like the United Kingdom, USA, Canada, and Australia are the more popular choices, there is a plethora of lesser-known study abroad destinations that we don't usually think about.

A major factor when it comes to picking the "perfect" university and country is the cost of tuition and accommodation.

Ahmed Labib Daiyan, a fourth-year student at the College of Asia Pacific Studies, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in Japan, testifies, "When looking into universities abroad, I wanted to avoid popular destinations due to the Bangladeshi saturation in those areas as well as how astronomical the costs could get. I chose Japan because it offered a couple of scholarship opportunities to explore."

"For me, Hungary was the first choice, as it offers some of the best student-friendly opportunities and has an excellent

The Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship, which I am a recipient of, is one of the many fully-funded scholarships offered by the government for aspiring students in Hungary.

quality of education, with a multicultural experience, and numerous part-time work opportunities. The Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship, which I am a recipient of, is one of the many fully-funded scholarships offered by the Hungarian government for aspiring students," adds Syeda Mahjabin Tabassum (Rafa), who is currently pursuing a B.Sc in Agricultural Engineering at the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences (MATE).

Moving to a new country and leaving the comfort of your home is a daunting feat – one that can be made less stressful by choosing a country closer to Bangladesh. Countries like Malaysia and Singapore provide the perfect balance of familiarity.

"My main priority was finding a university that was flexible and close to home so it would be easy to travel back and forth. Not only was Malaysia more accessible and affordable, but there was also less paperwork for the application process," shares Anika Rodoshi, who recently completed a Bachelor's degree in Professional Communication from Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, Malaysia.

On the other hand, MD. Yusha Rumman, who will be studying Chemical Engineering at Taylor's University, Malaysia from September 2023, shares, "Because I chose the Malaysian branch of Taylor's University, my tuition fees will be one-third of what it would be at the Australian branch. The plane fare is also comparatively low and since it's close to Bangladesh, my parents can visit me anytime. Malaysia is a Muslim country, so I don't have to worry about haram and halal food. But one downside is that international students aren't allowed to work part-time alongside their studies and

it's very hard to get a scholarship or other aid."

Similarly, Hadiul Islam Navid applied to the Abu Dhabi campus of New York University as they offer a full-ride scholarship with a yearly stipend, and plane tickets to visit his family three times a year. Another compelling factor was the study-away semesters at NYU's other campuses where students get the chance to study in a different country for one semester.

"The diverse community at NYUAD aligns with my aspiration to become a global leader. The prospect of socialising and competing with exceptional students from around the world filled me with excitement. It is not about the country but rather the students and the university culture," adds Navid, who is currently a third-year student majoring in Business, Organizations and Society, and minoring in Applied Math and Legal Studies at NYU Abu Dhabi.

Even within the more popular choices, there are countries that are cheaper and offer a warm atmosphere that appeal to students.

Shams Mohammed Shami, a second-year Software Development and Digital Design student at Edinburgh University shares his experience, "Even though Scotland is under the UK and follows all their rules and regulations, the situation for students is a bit better, specifically when it comes to living conditions and finding good work compared to other parts of the UK."

Beyond the popular study-abroad destinations lies a world of untapped potential waiting to be explored by students seeking a unique and transformative educational experience.

Sara Kabir is a graduate from North South University.



ILLUSTRATION:
ABIR HOSSAIN

A QUICK GUIDE TO APPLYING FOR A MASTER'S DEGREE ABROAD

Choose your destination and university based on your situation, financial capacity, subject, future job prospects, and other priorities.

Time your applications wisely. The Fall session is the most popular for international students as most funding opportunities are available during this session.

Sort out your finances. Regardless of where you apply or what kind of financial support you receive, the entire process requires a hefty amount, which includes costs for exams and application fees.

You might need to take tests like IELTS or TOEFL and GRE or GMAT. Depending on your timeline, you need to take these tests and collect the results before you can start your application.

Some documents are needed to apply for any degree, such as transcripts, original certificates, grade sheets, and a CV. You'll also need recommendation letters from your professors and/or employers.

As part of the application process, you may be required to write a Statement of Purpose (SOP), a Research Statement, or an essay on a particular topic.

After the selection, document collection and test-taking are done, it is time to apply. Make sure you have a credit card that allows payment in foreign currency to start your application.