

# International Students in U.S.

## Open Doors 2024

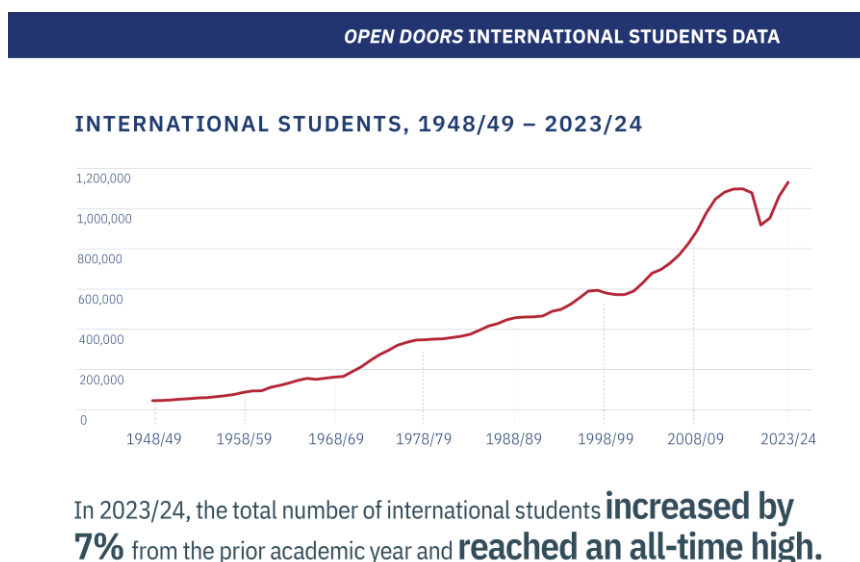
The Institute of International Education (IIE) released Fast Facts from **Open Doors 2024**<sup>1</sup> in Washington DC on 18 November 2024.

In respect of students **incoming** to US, Open Doors 2024 reports on numbers in **2023/24**.

The number of international students at US universities and colleges during the 2023/24 academic year increased by 7% from the previous academic year to the new record high number 1,126,690.

Chart 1 **International Student Trends: U.S.** shows the trends in numbers over 75 years to 2023/24.

**Chart 1**  
**International Student Trends: U.S.**



The number of students is up by 69,502, from 1,057,188 in 2022/23 to 1,126,690 in 2023/24.

The change in numbers of international students in U.S. is as follows:

- 6.6% growth to 1,126,690 in 2023/24
- 11.5% growth to 1,057,188 in 2022/23
- 3.8% growth to 948,519 in 2021/22
- 15.0% drop to 914,095 in 2020/21
- 1.8% drop to 1,075,496 in 2019/20
- 0.05% growth to 1,095,299 in 2018/19
- 1.5% growth to 1,094,792 in 2017/18.

International students accounted for 5.9% of the total US higher education population in 2023/2024 and, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, contributed more than \$50 billion to the U.S. economy in 2023.

<sup>1</sup> <https://opendoorsdata.org/> downloaded 19 November 2024

## Academic Levels

Open Doors reports on four academic levels: Undergraduate, Graduate, Non degree and Optional Practical Training.

The aggregate growth of 6.6% in student numbers from 1,057,188 in 2022/23 to 1,126,690 in 2023/24 was made up of

- Drop of 0.9% in Undergraduate student numbers to 342,875
- Growth of 7.6% in Graduate student numbers to 502,291
- Drop of 11.5% in Non degree student numbers to 38,742
- Growth of 22.1% in Optional Practical Training student numbers to 242,782.

The Optional Practical Training (OPT) program allows international students to practise their skills in the United States for up to 12 months during or after their academic programs, or up to 36 months for students who have earned a degree in STEM fields.

## Commencements

Numbers of new international student enrolments, or commencements, provide a leading indicator of numbers of enrolments.

As a leading indicator, the report shows year-on-year growth in international student commencements in the US of just 0.1% in 2023/24, after increases of 14% in 2022/23 and 80% in 2021/22, following the covid-impacted drop of 46% in 2020/21.

The change in numbers of new international student enrolments is as follows:

- Growth of 0.1% to 298,705 in Fall 2023
- Growth of 14.0% to 298,523 in Fall 2022
- Growth of 80.0% to 261,961 in Fall 2021
- Drop of 45.6% to 145,528 in Fall 2020
- Drop of 0.6% to 267,712 in Fall 2019
- Drop of 0.9% to 269,383 in Fall 2018
- Drop of 6.6% to 271,738 in Fall 2017.

## Source Countries

From the Open Doors Press Release:

India is the top-sending country for the first time since 2009. India sent 331,602 international students to pursue higher education in the United States in 2023/2024, reflecting a 23% increase from the prior year. India enrollments increased primarily at the graduate (196,567; +19%) and Optional Practical Training (OPT) academic levels (97,556; +41%).

China was the second leading place of origin, despite a 4% decline to 277,398 students. It remained the top-sending country for undergraduates and non-degree students, sending 87,551 and 5,517, respectively. Chinese students pursuing OPT increased by 12% to 61,552.

India and China together made up over half of all international students in the United States.

Numbers of international students from the top 10 countries are in Table 1 **U.S.: Leading Places of Origin** from Fast Facts.

**Table 1**  
**U.S.: Leading Places of Origin**

		<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>% Change</b>
	<b>World Total</b>	<b>948,519</b>	<b>1,057,188</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>11.5%</b>
1	India	268,923	331,602	29.4%	23.3%
2	China	289,626	277,398	24.6%	-4.2%
3	South Korea	43,847	43,149	3.8%	-1.6%
4	Canada	27,876	28,998	2.6%	4.0%
5	Taiwan	21,834	23,157	2.1%	6.1%
6	Vietnam	21,900	22,066	2.0%	0.8%
7	Nigeria	17,640	20,029	1.8%	13.5%
8	Bangladesh	13,563	17,099	1.5%	26.1%
9	Brazil	16,025	16,877	1.5%	5.3%
10	Nepal	15,090	16,742	1.5%	10.9%

## Study Abroad

In addition to data on numbers of international students at universities and colleges in U.S., the Open Doors release also included data on U.S. students studying abroad, in **2022/23**.

In respect of students **incoming** to U.S., Open Doors 2021 reports on numbers in **2023/24**. But in respect of students **outgoing** from U.S., Open Doors reports on numbers in **2022/2023**.

From the Open Doors Press Release

The Open Doors Report shows that in the 2022/23 academic year, 280,716 U.S. students studied abroad for academic credit, an increase of 49% from the prior year and signalling further growth after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Italy, the United Kingdom, Spain, and France remained the leading host destinations, with nearly half (45%) of all students studying in these top four destinations.

Study abroad destinations further diversified post-pandemic, with Australia and New Zealand back in the 25 leading destinations for U.S. study abroad students.

Open Doors reported that in 2022/23, the total number of U.S. students who studied abroad for academic credit increased by nearly 49% to 280,716 students.

The rate of change in numbers of U.S. students studying abroad is as follows

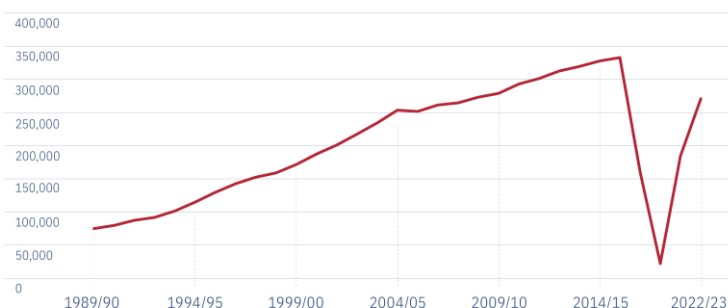
Growth of 49% in 2022/23  
Growth of 1,197% in 2021/22  
Drop of 91.1% in 2020/21  
Drop of 53.2% in 2019/20  
Growth of 1.6% in 2018/19  
Growth of 2.7% in 2017/18  
Growth of 2.3% in 2016/17  
Growth of 3.8% in 2015/16.

Detail is in Chart 2 **U.S. Study Abroad Trends**.

## Chart 2 U.S. Study Abroad Trends

OPEN DOORS U.S. STUDY ABROAD DATA

### U.S. STUDENTS STUDYING ABROAD, 1989/90–2022/23



In 2022/23, the total number of U.S. students who studied abroad for academic credit **increased by 49% to 280,716 students.**

(In addition, 25,692 U.S. students participated in non-credit work, internships, volunteering and research abroad.)

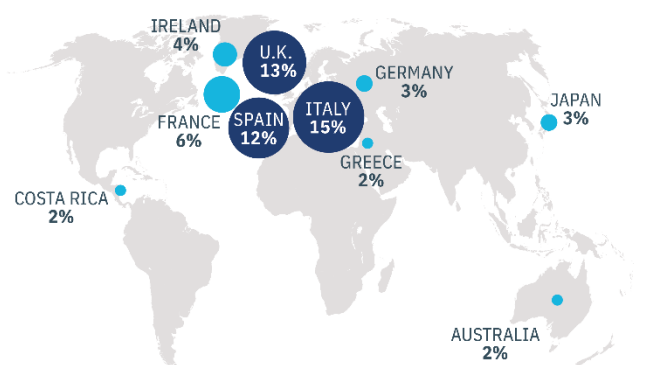
### Destination Countries

Italy, United Kingdom, Spain and France remained the most popular destinations. In 2022/23, 64% of U.S. students who studied abroad went to Europe.

## Chart 3 U.S. Study Abroad Destinations 2021/22

OPEN DOORS U.S. STUDY ABROAD DATA

### LEADING DESTINATIONS OF U.S. STUDY ABROAD STUDENTS, 2022/23



Europe hosted **64%** of all U.S. students who studied abroad.

Detail is in Table 2 **U.S. Study Abroad: Leading Destinations**, from Fast Facts.

**Table 2**  
**U.S. Study Abroad: Leading Destinations**

	<b>Destination</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>% of total</b>	<b>% change</b>
	<b>World Total</b>	<b>188,753</b>	<b>280,716</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>48.7%</b>
1	Italy	30,610	41,840	14.9%	36.7%
2	United Kingdom	27,503	35,018	12.5%	27.3%
3	Spain	25,348	32,648	11.6%	28.8%
4	France	14,397	17,096	6.1%	18.7%
5	Ireland	7,031	9,780	3.5%	39.1%
6	Japan	678	9,675	3.4%	1,327%
7	Germany	7,644	9,324	3.3%	22.0%
8	Costa Rica	4,751	6,558	2.3%	38.0%
9	Australia	924	6,135	2.2%	564%
10	Greece	4,484	6,006	2.1%	33.9%

### **Access to Study Abroad**

In **November 2024**, Open Doors reported that numbers equivalent to 9.3% of completing U.S. domestic undergraduates pursuing bachelor degrees undertook study abroad in **2022/23**, from 5.9% in 2021/22, but still down from 16.1% in 2018/19, 16.0% in 2017/18, 16.0% in 2016/17 and 15.5% in 2015/16.

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