

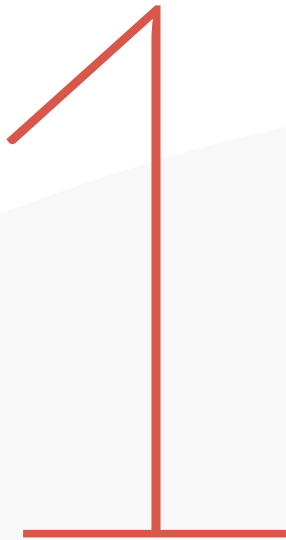


# The Ultimate Guide to Studying in Canada



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## Why Study in Canada?

Sitting alongside the United Kingdom and the United States, Canada is arguably the third most popular destination for international students overall.

And it's not hard to see why.

Canada offers international students an exciting mix of big cities and vast, beautiful countryside. It's also a culturally diverse, bilingual country. What's more, Canada offers international students a world-class university education, at a much lower price than its neighbour, the USA.

So before we go any further, let's take a quick glance at some of the reasons why an international student might want to think about Canada for their university education.

### Lower tuition fees

As we've already mentioned, Canadian universities offer international students a much lower price tag than their US counterparts. Out-of-state fees for international students are lower for both private and public universities.

### Quality of education

According to Times Higher Education's World University Rankings, 30 Canadian institutions rank as the best in the world.

Being an undergraduate in Canada can help to put students on the fast track to become a permanent Canadian resident

### Less test/transcript heavy application process

Compared to the US system, Canadian universities give more weight to a student's more recent school grades and test scores. Canadian universities also place much less emphasis on test scores, so there's less reliance on the SAT or ACT to gain admission.

### A diverse, welcoming community for international students

Canada is a very popular country for international students - not only due to the lower cost of study, but also because it's culturally diverse. What's more, being an undergraduate in Canada can help to put students on the fast track to become a permanent Canadian resident after they've finished their studies.

### Natural beauty

It goes without saying that Canada is a beautiful country for studying at university, being the home of natural wonders like the Northern Lights, Lake Superior and of course Niagara Falls!

**Note:** If your students are thinking about Canada as a potential university destination, it is worth noting that some Canadian universities are in hard-to-reach locations, and can be expensive to travel to! Make sure they factor this into their research!



# 2

## **A Guide to Canada's Provinces**

As we've already discussed, Canada is huge!

Like the USA, its vast and varied geography means that students are spoiled for choice when it comes to starting their university applications.

In this section, we'll give you a brief overview of the different provinces in Canada, and discuss some of the universities located in each one.

## Alberta



Alberta is one of the three 'prairie' provinces in Canada. It borders the Rockies, so it's a great spot for hikers and skiers alike! The climate in Alberta is reasonably temperate, with four seasons combining warm summers and cold winters (hence its popularity for skiers).

Alberta borders the Rockies, so it's a great spot for hikers and skiers alike!

### Top universities in Alberta

#### The University of Alberta

The University of Alberta has a strong reputation for research and excellence, in subjects such as humanities, sciences, social sciences, creative arts and business. It also offers taught courses in French at the Faculte Saint-Jean. International students applying here can expect tuition fees between \$14,000 and \$16,000.

#### University of Calgary

The University of Calgary is a research university that boasts four campuses across the province of Alberta, as well as a fifth international campus in Doha, Qatar. Again, tuition fees range between \$14,000 and \$16,000.

## British Columbia



British Columbia offers students both coastlines and mountains. It's home to big cities like Vancouver and smaller towns like Victoria. It's a large province with a range of climates. While British Columbia is an English speaking province, it's also home to over 700,000 residents who speak other languages.

### Top universities in British Columbia

#### The University of British Columbia

The University of British Columbia sits in the QS Top 50 in world rankings. UBC also has a great reputation for highly specialised degrees, such as journalism, international economics, and food market analysis. The price tag for international students is a bit higher, at \$26k-28k, but it's worth taking a look at UBC's scholarship offering to see if your students can apply for financial aid.

Home to over 700,000 residents  
who speak other languages

#### Simon Fraser University

Like UBC, Simon Fraser University has a strong international reputation, with almost a third of undergraduates being international. For students who are keen on sport, it's worth noting that SFU is the only Canadian university that's a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the largest college sports organisation in the world.

## Manitoba



Considered one of the three 'prairie provinces' in Canada (alongside Alberta and Saskatchewan), Manitoba has a continental climate, though it does experience cold winters too!

### Top universities in Manitoba

#### The University of Manitoba

Based in the city of Winnipeg, The University of Manitoba is a research intensive public university. International students make up about 15% of its total student population, and it has one of the largest indigenous student populations in the country.

It's also an elite university for sports - Manitoba's sports teams have 42 Canadian inter-university national championships!

#### The University of Winnipeg

Again based in the city of Winnipeg (the clue's in the name!), this university offers students an urban campus, small class sizes and a commitment to environmental sustainability. Winnipeg also seeks to make all of its students more aware of indigenous Canadian culture, with an Indigenous Course Requirement (ICR) for all new undergraduates.

## New Brunswick



New Brunswick is one of the four Atlantic provinces on the east coast of Canada. It's a bilingual province, with roughly two thirds of the population identifying themselves as English-speaking, and the other one third French speaking.

Its terrain is comprised more of forest uplands and it's a much less densely populated province compared to some of the others. Some parts of New Brunswick experience a humid, continental climate, whilst the northernmost regions have a subarctic climate.

### Top universities in New Brunswick

#### The University of New Brunswick

The University of New Brunswick has two amazing, picturesque campuses for international students to choose from. Whether it's Saint John with its delicious seafood and waterfront pubs, or Fredericton with its famous Farmer's Market, both campuses offer students access to vibrant New Brunswick culture.

#### The Université de Moncton

This is a French language university in New Brunswick, spread across three campuses. It's the only wholly French-speaking university in the province. Moncton is also one of only two universities in Canada that teaches French common law.

Manitoba has a continental climate,  
though it does experience cold winters

## Newfoundland & Labrador



Newfoundland and Labrador is the easternmost province of Canada. 97% of its inhabitants are English speaking. It's known for glaciers and whale-watching and is a place where it's possible to see the Northern Lights.

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### Top universities in Newfoundland & Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador only has one major university (though it does have a number of smaller colleges and higher education institutions to choose from).

#### Memorial University

Memorial University is Newfoundland and Labrador's only university and is spread across four campuses, and offers online learning for those students who are interested. It's also one of the top 20 research universities in Canada.

As one of the largest universities in North Canada, Memorial University awards over 75 scholarships, so it's worth students checking these out if they're worried about financial aid.

## Nova Scotia



One of Canada's maritime provinces, it's also the second-smallest. It has a continental climate, with the Atlantic Ocean moderating the winter and summer temperatures. The province is known for its history, seafood and wildlife (particularly puffins and seals).

In terms of culture, Nova Scotia boasts a lot of interesting museums which showcase its rich ethnic heritage, as well as a number of music and arts festivals. For students who love the outdoors, it's also the home of two national parks - Kejimikujik National Park and Cape Breton Highlands.

### Top universities in Nova Scotia

#### Dalhousie University

Dalhousie University is located in Halifax, Nova Scotia. It offers 3,600 courses in over 180 undergraduate, postgraduate and research degrees. It's an internationally respected institution, so definitely worth considering for students thinking about Nova Scotia! It's also noted for its Agriculture campus, located one hour from the main Halifax campus. As you may have guessed, it's home to the university's Faculty of Agriculture.

#### Mount Saint Vincent

Mount Saint Vincent is known for its small campus and opportunities for distance learning. Its list of flexible, personalised learning is small, but it's worth looking at for students who are interested in taking an online course.



## Ontario



Ontario is Canada's most populous province, comprising over 38% of the country's total population. It boasts the beauty of natural landmarks such as Niagara Falls, but is also home to Ottawa and Toronto, arguably Canada's most well-known cities.

North Ontario has long, cold winters and short summers, whilst the southern part of the province is tempered by its proximity to the Great Lakes.

Ontario comprises over 38% of  
Canada's total population

### Top universities in Ontario

#### The University of Toronto

The University of Toronto sits in the QS Top 30 rankings, and is a public university comprised of 11 colleges. As well as being well-known for its scientific research, it also has a reputation as an all-round excellent research institution.

#### The University of Waterloo

The University of Waterloo sits in the technology hub of the city of Waterloo. It's a university with lots of close connections to industry and it's worth noting that Waterloo ranks as number 1 in the world for student-employer partnerships, with 87% of its students being employed within six months of graduation.

### Western University

Western University is an institution that offers students a range of over 400 degree programmes! It's also considered one of the world's most beautiful universities, with a campus comprising hundreds of acres of land and stunning Gothic architecture.

## Prince Edward Island



The smallest and most densely populated province in Canada, Prince Edward Island plays host to a handful of universities and higher education institutions. Historically, Prince Edward Island is also one of Canada's oldest settlements. It's known for its seafood

### Top universities in Prince Edward Island

#### The University of Prince Edward Island

Prince Edward Island's main university is based in Charlottetown, and offers students personalised learning, small class sizes and a campus with a rich history spanning 200 years. The university's eight faculties means that students have a wide range of degree courses to choose from

Prince Edward Island is also one of  
Canada's oldest settlements and is  
known for its seafood.

## Quebec



Quebec is a primarily French speaking province and has a French-influenced culture and history. It's the largest province in Canada and the second largest in terms of population.

Because it's such a large province, Quebec has a range of climates. The south has four seasons varying from hot summers to cold, snowy winters. As you move north, the temperatures in both summer and winter get colder. In the far north, you can expect an Arctic climate with a freezing and long winter.

Being mainly a French-speaking province, Quebec's culture can feel quite distinct from the rest of Canada's. However, it's worth noting that cities such as Montreal are bi-lingual, so international students who only speak English shouldn't worry too much about fitting in! Quebec is ethnically diverse, particularly in the larger cities. Quebecers are known for loving ice hockey, their national dish: poutine (cheese and gravy on french fries) and - most of all - Quebec!

### Top universities in Quebec

#### McGill University

Based in Montreal, McGill University is in the QS top 50 world rankings, and attracts thousands of international students from over 150 countries every year. It offers many international scholarship programs and has an excellent academic reputation in both the arts and sciences

#### Universite Laval

In the QS top 500, Universite Laval is a French-language University with undergraduates from 120 countries.

## Saskatchewan



Saskatchewan is one of the prairie provinces and nearly 10% of it is comprised of rivers, reservoirs and lakes. Saskatchewan is landlocked, and is known for its rich agricultural industry. The province is known for hunting, fishing and hiking. Most of the province has a continental climate with warm summers, but Arctic winds coming from the north means that winters can also be cold!

Saskatchewan is landlocked, and is known for its rich agricultural industry.

### Top universities in Saskatchewan

#### The University of Saskatchewan

With a reputation as an old and distinguished Canadian institution, USask offers students an interdisciplinary approach to research and learning. The university's signature research areas include agriculture, water security, energy and mineral resources. There are also a range of on-campus services to offer students pastoral support during their time studying at USask.

## Finding the right Canadian university: top tips

As we've covered in this section, Canada is huge. There are a lot of options for international students looking to apply to a Canadian university. For students currently researching and shortlisting potential Canadian destinations, here are our top tips.

### Rural or urban?

Canada mixes remote rural locations and vibrant, global cities. So it's worth students asking themselves: what's the best learning environment for me? Do I like nature walks, skiing, or being near the Ocean? Do I love discovering big sprawling cities? Do I like being able to escape into a quieter/ country area but also having a city nearby?

Canada mixes remote rural locations and vibrant, global cities. So it's worth students asking themselves: what's the best learning environment for me?

### Weather

We've mentioned the weather and climate a few times so far. It's certainly true that parts of Canada are very cold. Our advice for students seeking warmer climes is to look at universities and campuses situated closer to the US border!

### Living costs, travel costs & accessibility

International students applying to Canada need to remember that it's huge! So it's worth thinking about how cheap/expensive it would be to get to an international airport to go home! It might also be necessary to think about public transport in more remote areas.

It's worth thinking about how cheap or expensive it would be to get to an international airport to go home

And finally, it's worth thinking about the cost of living in different Canadian cities and provinces. For example, Vancouver is one of the most expensive cities. How much will transport, food and accommodation cost on top of tuition?



# 3

## **Canadian Universities & Degrees Explained**

Like the USA, Canada offers a diverse range of university and course options, though the university entrance criteria across the different Canadian provinces vary greatly.

This means that, when it comes time to research and apply to different Canadian universities, students will need to check the entrance requirements of each university and province carefully.

In this section, we'll briefly explore the different types of Canadian universities and degree courses on offer.

## The different types of Canadian university

### Public universities

These institutions receive funding from the provincial, territorial and/or federal government, although they do charge students tuition fees as well as accept private funding.

### Private universities

A private university generally does not receive funding from the provincial, territorial or federal governments, instead receiving private funding through donations from wealthy alumni and faculty research grants as well as traditional tuition fees. Private universities often attract and retain the very best staff possessing esteemed reputations in their respective fields.

### Liberal arts colleges

Similar to their US counterparts, liberal arts colleges place a particular emphasis on undergraduate courses in the liberal arts, namely the humanities but also social, natural and formal sciences.

### Colleges and polytechnic institutes

These are Canadian institutions offering a range of technical diplomas and applied degrees. It's also worth noting that some Canadian universities also offer some shorter diplomas and career-based programmes.

## The different types of Canadian degree

### Academic degrees

Canada sits in what could be called a 'sweet spot' between the US system and the UK system of higher education. This means that, like the British system, applicants apply to a course of study, but they have flexibility to make their own path to the degree. You can expect to take around 5 courses per semester; it is these classes which make up the degree programme. Typically, each course is made up weekly of two hours of lectures and a one hour tutorial where a teaching assistant leads a discussion based around that lecture or the week's reading.

### Applied Degrees

Applied Degree programs in Canada combine the academic focus of a university degree with the practical, job-ready skills students learn in college. A number of colleges and technical institutes across Canada, as well as some universities and university colleges, have introduced Applied Degree programs to respond to today's demanding job market.

Applied Degrees fill the need for educated and highly-skilled workers by producing graduates who bring a strong combination of technical and theoretical skills to the job.

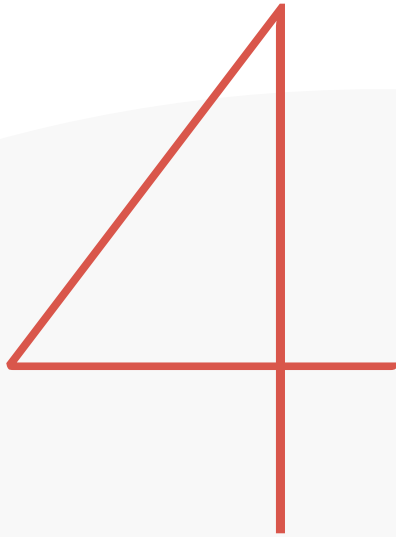
Applicants apply to a course of study, but they have flexibility to make their own path to the degree

## Differences between Quebec & the rest of Canada

There are some differences between how the education system is structured in Quebec compared to the rest of Canada, as well as the language or terminology used. In Quebec, 'college' (or 'CEGEP') refers to either a 2-year pre-university programme or a 3-year professional programme.

These could be thought of as equivalent to a British 'sixth form', and are required to progress to traditional undergraduate study at a university. This is typically 3 years long and results in a bachelor's degree.

Everywhere else in Canada, 'college' refers to a community college or a technical school where students can earn a certificate, diploma or associate's degree. Students can study an undergraduate or postgraduate course at a university (though they will need a degree with honours to do the latter), while at graduate school they can obtain an advanced certificate, degree or diploma.



## **Admissions & Entry Requirements**

The Canadian admissions process is a lot less complex and time-consuming than the US admissions process .

But it's important not to develop a false sense of security! Applicants will still need plenty of time to research universities and courses to find the best fit. Starting the process early can also increase the chance of being admitted.

## How the application process works in Canada

In Canada, students apply to courses/programmes, not just universities. If you're familiar with the US admissions process, this may surprise you. It doesn't mean that students are locked into one series of modules for their whole university life - there's lots of choice within the programmes. However, they do need to apply to a programme of study (such as Actuarial Science, English or Biology).

Having found the right course, it's necessary to look at the deadlines and requirements because they can vary from province to province, as well as from university to university!

Generally speaking, the university application process starts in the fall (autumn) of the year before the degree course commences

## University application deadlines

Generally speaking, the university application process starts in the fall (autumn) of the year before the degree course commences. Be sure to start looking into scholarships right away as well, as some have early deadlines.

Just to make it a bit more complicated, application deadlines vary by programme of study, as well as by university and by province in Canada. They also can change annually, so the best advice we can give is for both counselors and students to check, check and triple check before the application process begins!

Most undergraduate programs in Canada accept applications until March 1 for September

entry. However, there are exceptions. For fall term (September) entry, deadlines can be as early as November 1 the previous year for some programmes.

Students are strongly encouraged to submit their application far in advance of the posted deadlines. Spaces fill quickly for popular universities and programs, and it is common for a program to close before the application deadlines listed.

## Admission requirements

Again, the documents required for entry to a Canadian university will depend on what region/province the university is in. The academic requirements for international students will also vary depending on which course/degree the student is applying for.

### School official transcript/academic profile

Canadian universities will generally require strong academic grades in either a national or international high school qualification. In some cases, high grades in a qualification such as the IB can actually count towards university grades.

Students can either submit their achieved grades or their predicted grades. Students of the IB and English national curricula will need to submit their final grades in the summer after their IB/A-level exams.

### Proof of standardised tests

Canadian universities don't tend to rely on standardised tests like universities in the US do. However, some universities in Canada will have them as a requirement - for example, the University of Toronto.

### English language qualifications (TOEFL, IELTS)

International students applying to Canada may have to prove their proficiency in English or French (depending on what language the degree is taught in). There is no standardised test for French language universities but these institutions will assess international students on a case-by-case basis.

## Statement of Purpose

Many colleges require a statement of purpose. This is important not only in the process of evaluating a student's application, but also for financial aid because it gives the faculty assessing the application their most significant impression of the student as an individual. This section is the key to distinguish your students' applications from other suitable candidates - to help them stand out from the crowd.

A statement of purpose should include: a student's reasons for choosing a particular course; the suitability of their education and experience for the chosen course; and their personal interests and career goals. Some courses like Business school courses will have their own essay questions and format. Others may ask for a résumé or reasons for applying to that particular course.

## Applying for a study permit

Students applying to university in Canada will be required to gain a study permit to take up their place at a Canadian university. A study permit is often issued to international students alongside their visa. In order to qualify for the Canadian study permit, students need to provide evidence of a valid passport, an acceptance letter from a designated learning institution (i.e. their university of choice) and proof that they can support themselves whilst studying in Canada.

## How to apply to the different Canadian provinces

Some of the Canadian provinces have their own centralised application systems - although it's still worth checking the entry requirements of each individual institution. We'll briefly explore each of the application systems in more detail.

### Apply Alberta

This is the system through which students can apply to all universities in the province of Alberta. As you would expect, the website contains lots of helpful resources for international students looking to apply to a university in Alberta.

## British Columbia

British Columbia's application site, EducationPlannerBC, allows students to explore undergraduate, postgraduate and apprenticeship opportunities.

## Ontario Universities Application Centre

The OUAC processes all undergraduate and professional applications on behalf of Ontario's universities (except the Royal Military College of Canada). Applicants submit their application to the OUAC, indicating all choices they wish to apply for. The OUAC does not make any admission decisions.

The OUAC forwards undergraduate applications to all requested universities and/or programs. Depending on the applicant's current situation, either the 101 or 105 online applications are used. Visit the OUAC website for more details on this.

A study permit is often issued to international students alongside their visa

The OUAC also processes applications for professional programmes such as law, medicine, teaching and rehabilitation sciences. Specifically:

- The Ontario Law Application Service (OLSAS) processes applications for admission to Ontario's Law Schools.
- The Ontario Medical School Application Service (OMSAS) processes applications for admission to Ontario's medical schools.
- The Ontario Rehabilitation Sciences Programs Application Service (ORPAS) processes applications to occupational therapy, physiotherapy and physical therapy, audiology and speech-language pathology programs offered at the graduate level at some Ontario universities.
- The Teacher Education Application Service (TEAS) processes applications for admission to Ontario's faculties of education.



# 5

## **Student Finance & Financial Aid in Canada**

As with other countries, the cost of studying in Canada can sometimes seem prohibitively high for many students

It's natural for the cost of living to be a constant worry when applying to university in Canada, especially with some Canadian cities being very pricey to live in!

## How much does it cost to study in Canada?

Tuition fees at universities in Canada will vary depending on the institution and the course, ranging from \$1,500 to \$20,000. As a general rule, humanities courses tend to be less expensive than a course in medicine, engineering or dentistry.

But students shouldn't be put off by the price tag of going to university in Canada. In this section, we'll look more closely at some of the financial aid on offer.

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## How to find scholarships in Canada

There are a number of places that international students can look for scholarships when applying to Canada. We can't go into all of them in great depth, but below is a brief overview of where to start looking.

### University scholarships

Almost every university in Canada will offer some kind of financial aid for students. A useful exercise for both counselors/advisers and students is to take a look at university financial aid options when students start researching and shortlisting universities.

Many universities, such as the The University of Manitoba and the University of Alberta, offer what are known as entrance scholarships, where they will offset either all, or part of, the cost of tuition fees.

Almost every university in Canada will offer some kind of financial aid for students

These scholarships will be awarded based on academic merit, and students may require minimum grades/GPA in order to be eligible.

### Needs-based scholarships

As the title suggests, these are scholarships that are awarded to international students on the basis of financial need.

### Merit-based scholarships

These scholarships are typically aimed at students who are either academically gifted, or excel at sports/athletics. The university entrance scholarships we discussed above are often a form of merit based scholarship.

### Country-based scholarships

Canadian universities will offer scholarships to students from specific countries around the world. So if your school is based in a qualifying country, it's worth seeing what financial aid is on offer.

### Government funded scholarships

The Canadian government offers a number of scholarships for international students.

### Privately-funded scholarships

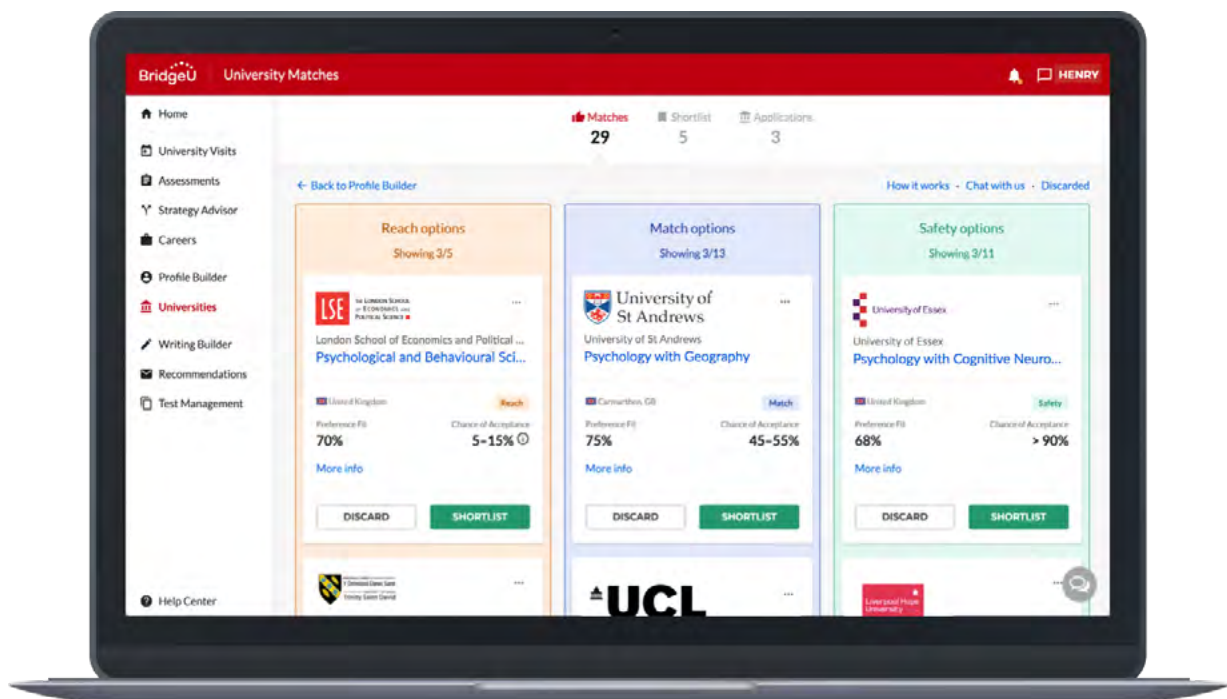
Some private companies and organisations may offer scholarships for international students. They are likely to be targeted at students from specific countries, or from minority backgrounds.

# About BridgeU

BridgeU provides world-class university and careers guidance for global secondary schools, to empower your students, inform your guidance strategy and improve outcomes.

Founded in 2014, BridgeU is the market leader in university and careers guidance for global secondary schools. We partner with schools in over 100 countries and we match students with over 28,000 universities and higher education institutions.

Our platform provides schools with a comprehensive end-to-end solution for advisers, teachers and students.



To learn more about how BridgeU can help your students manage and structure their university research, schedule a free demo today by visiting

[bridge-u.com/demo](https://bridge-u.com/demo)