

## Technical English, Lecture 16: Study abroad

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### Study abroad: host country side

Some countries work actively to lure international students

- to acquire a larger geopolitical influence,
- to achieve more prestige, and
- to get a net inflow of intelligent people.

Some also do it to get money! ⇒ the reputation might suffer.

Students attend foreign universities for various reasons.

**North America and Europe:** Students travel to experience a different culture.

**Other parts:** Students travel to

- access better education,
- improve their socio-economic status,
- build a network of acquaintances,
- find employment after their studies, or
- enrich their personal experience.

1/16

### Country essentials

For the country, the essential attributes include:

- the rule of law,
- the civilized social interactions of the locals,
- the respect for individual rights,
- a modern infrastructure,
- a strong education system,
- and government oversight of education.

## Country expectations

The students expect:

- a stable economy,
- an affordable cost of living,
- some stability in the student fees,
- an opportunity to work after graduation,
- a good amount of tolerance for diversity,
- a simple visa process,
- and a simple procedure for the rest of the family to visit the student.

4/16

## University essentials

The essential attributes include:

- an accredited degree,
- a recognition of the previous degrees,
- clear rules,
- a reputable “brand” name,
- and a familiar (possibly single) language of instruction.

6/16

## Country preferences

To excel, the countries provide:

- quality assurance measures for their educational system,
- opportunities to migrate,
- allowances for extended visits by the family or even permanent residency,
- tourists' attractions,
- availability of other citizens from the original country,
- a good amount of wealth that translates to opportunities for the students to eventually become rich if they work hard,
- a good history and reputation,
- political alliances with the home country,
- and a complete society (not just the education system) using a familiar language.

5/16

## University expectations

The expected ones are:

- modern learning styles,
- high quality facilities,
- truth in advertising the university,
- and good support services.

7/16

## University preferences

The students are further looking for:

- a quality experience,
- a rigorous curriculum,
- flexible study modes,
- scholarship support,
- strong alumni associations,
- allowances for students mobility (even study abroad in yet a different place during their study at that university),
- a good (in the eyes of the student) history, reputation, age, wealth, and size.

8/16

## Application process

*Many of the students at Cairo University plan very late for their studies.*

If you intend to begin your PhD in September of year 'X' then a good starting point would be January of year 'X-1'.

- Start to seek information about the study programs and think about TOEFL and GRE exams.
- Depending on your level you may need to take courses, read about the exams, and make some sample tests for yourself.

10/16

## Scholarships

- Most of the universities see a strong need for scholarships for both the local and international students.
- The cost of graduate studies is quite high and usually beyond the abilities of individual students and their immediate families.

Universities however, show a large variation in the allocation policy.

- Some require the student to attend the university for a short period first after which they are assessed and might be granted a full scholarship.
- Other places give the students some assistance upon their arrival and re-evaluate on a yearly base.

9/16

## Summer and Autumn months

**May or June of year 'X-1':** Ask your friends studying abroad about their universities and the cities where they are living.

**July or August:** Download the application materials from the websites of the various universities. Pass the required tests (TOEFL, GRE, IELTS)

**September to November:** Fill the applications, get your recommendation letters, and finish any examination requirements you did not fulfill yet.

**Start of December:** This is a good date to mail the applications since the deadline of the majority of the universities is around January (of year 'X').

11/16

**January and February:** Speak to professors either directly or through your recommenders.

**March and April:** Get the replies and act upon them.

**May to July:** Apply for the visa, reserve housing, buy your tickets, and finish any remaining issues.

12/16

### Which universities?

You need to consider your personal priorities:

- Are the universities working in the subject you have in mind?
- Do you have relatives or friends in some location so that you prefer to be with them?
- Do you have any medical problems that make your choices limited?
- What are your actual abilities and desires? (highly ranked versus small universities)
- Would you like to immigrate or stay for a while (2–3 years) before coming back to Egypt? Why in either case?
- Would you like to live in a large city or in a small country town? (Consider your spouse.)

14/16

In general, there are several components in an application. The most common are:

1. your detailed (with the grades) B.Sc. certificate,
2. your standardized test scores (TOEFL, GRE, IELTS),
3. your recommendation letters,
4. your statement of purpose,
5. your CV,
6. your application forms, and
7. your application fees.

In addition to all of that you must write a good cover letter to accompany the application.

13/16

### Funding

Usually three kinds of support are available.

**Fellowship:** This is the best. Study and get paid for it!

**Research assistance (RA):** Second best choice. You are required to assist the faculty in some research projects as a part time job beside your study and you are paid for your work.

**Teaching assistance (TA):** The problem with being a TA is that you prepare and study courses to teach which may be totally different from what you are doing in your PhD. *This is good for those who want to become professors.*

15/16

## The world is open

- North America has been the favorite destination.
- Europe usually comes second. In some fields, Europe is better!
- Japan, Australia, China, and Singapore are rising. *The future is in Asia!*