



STUDENT HANDBOOK FOR STUDYING ABROAD

Acknowledgements

India Center for Migration has brought out this handbook for information of Indian students desirous of studying abroad. The document aims at providing important information to Indian students on how to plan their study, travel and related expenses in a foreign country and ensure their safety and well-being. Overseas Indian Affairs I & II Divisions of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India have provided valuable inputs in preparation of this handbook.

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Disclaimer

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Every year, Indian students in large numbers move to foreign educational institutions for pursuing higher education. It is important to ensure that students are equipped with all necessary information concerning their departure and stay at educational institutes abroad.

The India Centre for Migration, a think tank of the Ministry of External Affairs, recommends the following key guidelines necessary for Indian students.

The following handbook is a comprehensive tool to facilitate informed and secure migration and provides pointers to Indian students who are inclined to pursue higher education abroad. This guide will help you at every step, right from departure to your career prospects.



1 PRE-DEPARTURE

This section will acquaint you with important steps on choosing and verifying the institute of your choice. It will also prepare you to gather relevant information from the institute and aid you in making an informed decision.



1.1 Selecting your course and institution

- ① Trust only government verified institute websites. NOTE – Trustworthy institute websites generally have a suffix that includes the country abbreviation (e.g. for Germany - .de, for France - .fr, for Netherlands - .nl and for South Korea- .kr)
- ① Take into account the institute's official recognition and academic reputation.
- ① Ensure that the degree you earn will have recognition in India or any other country you choose to work or study in.
- ① Consider the language requirements. [1]
- ① Check your eligibility for the program.

1.2. Applying to your institute

- 🏛️ Deliberate on the entire application process starting with the admissions criteria, the application deadlines (including scholarship, if any) and the required language skills.
- 🏛️ Make sure to research about the fee refund policies of the educational institute you wish to study at. While some universities abroad do provide a full/partial refund of the tuition/non-tuition fees under specific circumstances, most of the universities do not provide a refund. Hence, it is vital to be aware of the fee refund policies of the educational institution prior to your application. [2]
- 🏛️ Verify and fill all required documents. NOTE - Ensure that all your documents are translated by a certified translator if specified by the institution or the Embassy of the country you are travelling to.
- 🏛️ Make digital backup files of all the relevant documents and bills (including any online application fees paid).



1.3. Scholarship



Search and apply for as many relevant scholarships as possible, keeping in mind that certain scholarships do not permit simultaneously availing other scholarships.



Check if your scholarship covers all your expenses including tuition, accommodation and daily expenditures.



Scholarships can be provided by different institutions including governments, educational institutions, profit and not for profit organisations. [3]



Ensure you read all the terms and conditions of your scholarship and keep up with all the requirements.



Some scholarships applicable for students desiring to study in USA, Europe and UK are as follows:

- Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation Scholarships
- Fulbright – Nehru Fellowship
- Campus France Charpak Scholarship
- Erasmus Mundus Scholarships for International Students
- WISE (funded by DAAD)
- Orange Tulip Scholarship (OTS)
- British Council GREAT scholarships for Indian Students
- LSE Commonwealth Shared Scholarship Scheme (CSSS)
- Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Postgraduate
- Chevening Scholarships
- Cornell University Tata Scholarship
- British Council-IELTS Prize



Some scholarships applicable for students desiring to study in Australia are as follows:

- University of New South Wales (UNSW Sydney) Future of Change India Scholarship
- India Global Leaders Scholarship
- University of Adelaide Ashok Khurana Scholarship for Indian Students

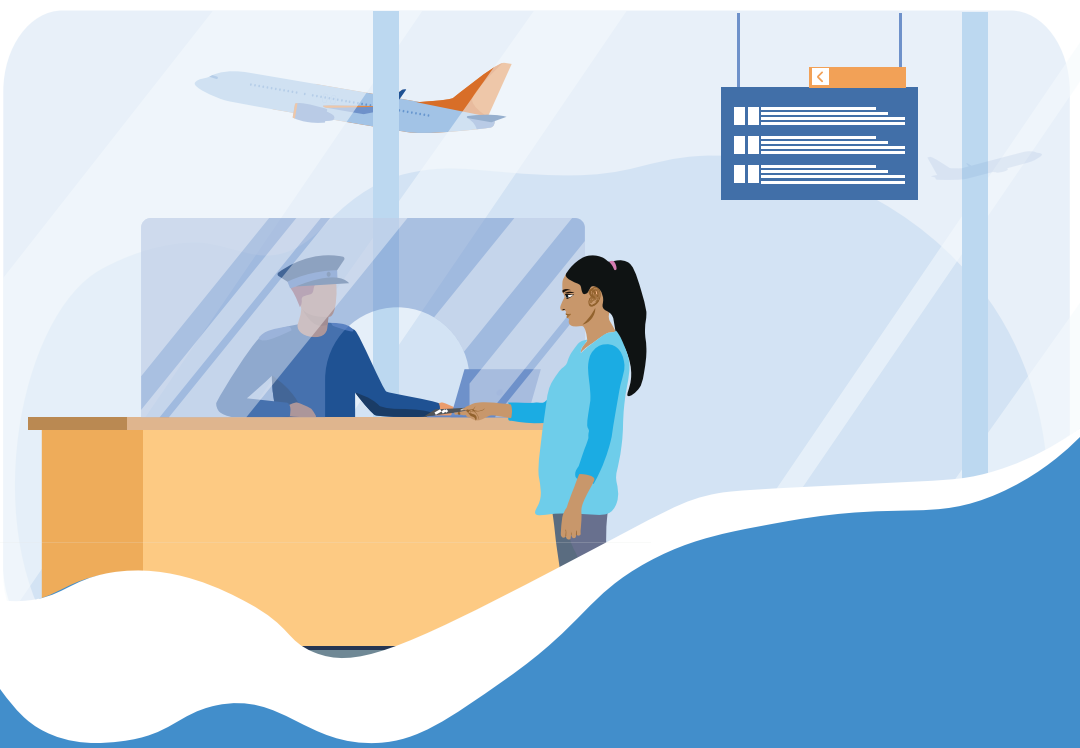


Some scholarships applicable for students desiring to study in China and Japan are as follows:

- Peking University Scholarship
- Asian Development Bank Scholarship

1.4 English proficiency test

- ☰ When planning to study abroad in an English speaking country for your higher education, you will most likely have to submit your IELTS or TOEFL score.
- ☰ These standardised tests determine your English language level by assessing your reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.
- ☰ The test scores are required as part of your application to an English-speaking university and will demonstrate if you will be able to understand the course material.
- ☰ International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is available in two formats, one for higher education level abroad and the second for social skills and workplace contexts. IELTS uses British English and consists of four parts- reading, listening, speaking and writing. IELTS is accepted in thousands of institutions in over 140 countries but each institute has its own requirement for IELTS scores.
- ☰ Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is a proficiency test developed by an American company. The test measures your reading, speaking, writing and listening proficiency in American English. TOEFL can be a paper based test or an internet based test. This test is accepted in Australia and the UK and it is likely that American institutions will favour this exam over the IELTS test.
- ☰ For higher education in the UK and for support of your visa application, only the IELTS UKVI is accepted.
- ☰ For Canada and the US, either the IELTS or TOEFL will do.
- ☰ Students looking to take the test can find local centers where the test is offered.
- ☰ To find test location, you can go to the IELTS website:
<https://www.ielts.org/for-test-takers/book-a-test/location-list/india/tv>
- ☰ The TOEFL test is offered more than 50 times a year and can be searched on the TOEFL website: https://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/register/centers_dates/



2 DEPARTURE

This section will provide you with some basic requirements that you need to keep in mind while preparing your travel. This includes the relevant paperwork for your departure and the living arrangements that need to be made before your arrival at the destination country.

2.1. Paperwork





- ✉ Apply for your visa well ahead of time to account for any possible delay and rejection.
- ✉ Ensure you have collected all the relevant documents required to start the visa process. Although visa requirements vary from country to country, some basic documents required for your visa are: (i) your offer letter from the academic institute (ii) acceptance of scholarship, if any (iii) financial statements (iv) accommodation details at destination country and (v) health insurance certificate.
- ✉ Confirm that your passport and visa are valid for the entire duration of your stay and that your passport is valid for at least 3 months longer than your visa.



2.2. Living arrangements/Accommodation


- 🛏 Check with the concerned university about 'On-campus housing' as most of the universities have a residence hall area but it might be limited to first-come-first-serve basis.
- 🛏 Shared rentals or single room apartments are available as part of 'Off-campus housing', but you should consider the distance from your accommodation to the university. Confirm with your university (International desk) for more details.
- 🛏 It is advisable to make the necessary living arrangements, even if temporary, before leaving for the destination country.
- 🛏 Cost of living expenses at the destination country must be borne in mind before applying to any university abroad.
- 🛏 Remember that staying farther away from your university will increase your additional costs.


 Be aware of the types of cuisine available in your destination country if you have any dietary restrictions.


 Be mindful of the weather conditions of the destination country and pack appropriate clothing.


2.3. Travel



 It is extremely important that you make your flight reservations in advance. If you start planning early, you will have more time to be on the lookout for special fares and good deals. Seat availability can also be a problem, especially if you are traveling in high season (for example, summer for Europe).

 You can almost always make a reservation and then cancel it if you find something better. Keep in mind, however, you may be charged a penalty by the airline company. If you think you might cancel a reservation, ask about it first.

 Round-trip tickets are usually the least expensive, but you must specify your return date at the time of purchase. Travel must be completed within one year. Take this into consideration if you are unsure of when your courses or exams will be over or if you plan on doing any post-program travel.



 One-way airline tickets can also be a good choice. Sometimes it is possible to find really good deals on one-way fares, especially with charter flights. Just remember that if you buy a one-way ticket to leave India, you will have to buy a one-way ticket for your return. Start looking for a return ticket well in advance (4-5 months).



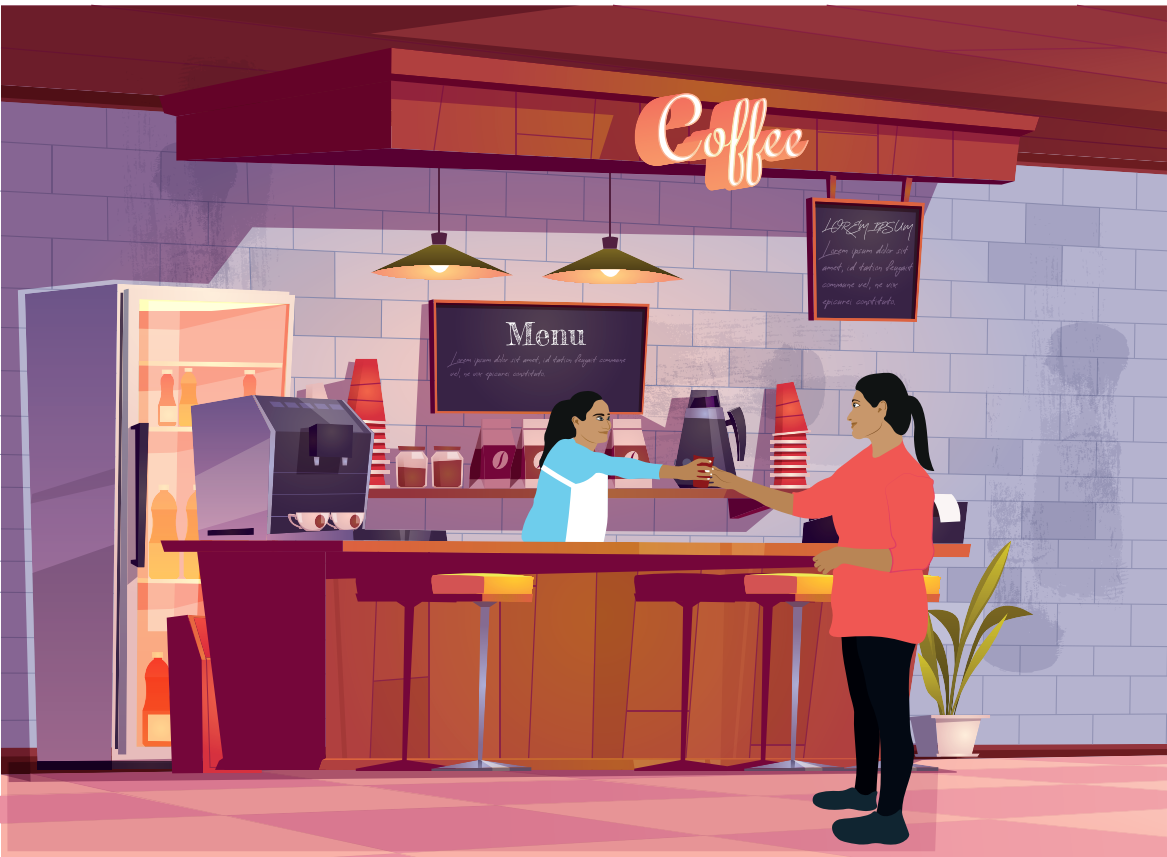
3 STAY





This section will acquaint you with important issues you should consider during your stay as a student abroad.

3.1. Transportation



-  Use discounted travel cards and monthly passes to save money on local transportation.
-  If staying 'Off Campus', look for other students from your university and try to arrange common modes of travel.

3.2. Part-time employment








-  Most countries regulate the number of hours you can work as a full-time student. Please keep these regulations in mind before taking up part-time employment.
-  Do enquire if the country concerned requires a work permit for part-time employment.
-  Balance your academic priorities along with your work commitments.
-  Be aware and affirm your rights as a part-time employee and promptly report any incident of harassment or discrimination to your employer and/or the Indian Mission in your country.

3.3. Acclimatisation




-  Find and associate with Indian diaspora groups/communities/student organisations that will familiarise you with your surroundings and learn from their experiences.
-  Also participate and associate yourself with university based extra-curricular and co-curricular groups and activities.

3.4. Security






-  Register yourself on the MADAD portal run by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. [4]
-  Register yourself with the Indian Embassy on arrival at the Embassy website or in person.
-  While travelling to different countries on Schengen Visa, please carry copies of your important travel documents.
-  Promptly approach the respective Indian Embassy in case of an emergency such as loss of important documents or threat to personal safety.
-  It is not advisable to carry excess cash while travelling.

3.5. Post-study work opportunities

-  Finding employment in a foreign country after graduation can be challenging. Start planning early and seek guidance from your university placement centre.
-  Apply for a Work Permit in the stipulated time frame along with necessary documents including your degree certificate and transcripts.
-  Remember that the permissible duration of stay for finding employment after completion of your degree varies from country to country. [5]

4. Medical Insurance When Studying Abroad

-  Several countries require you to produce a valid health insurance for obtaining a Visa.
-  If you already have medical insurance, you need to ensure that it provides international coverage, and covers medical evacuation/repatriation (travel expenses for returning home if your medical condition warrants it).
-  While having an insurance policy is a must in universities in the Schengen area and the US, it is optional in the UK, Australia and South East Asian countries such as Singapore and Malaysia but it is always sensible to ensure a safety net.



It is important that the plan you buy complies with the university's guidelines.



Keep in mind the guidelines issued by your university regarding medical insurance when buying a health insurance policy. Ideally, a good student insurance should cover medical situations, evacuation/repatriation, personal liability and accident, tuition fee, sponsor protection and travel.



Contact your university infirmary or local health department immediately in case of any health emergencies

5. Important Tips for Handling Finances









Upon arrival at your foreign destination, you may not have a chance to exchange money at the airport. You will need cash to pay for a taxi, food, porters, etc., and therefore need to carry enough cash to pay for these immediate expenses.








You can exchange foreign currency from any bank. However, some banks do not keep a supply of foreign currency on hand and must order it. Some currencies are more readily available than others such as Dollar, Pound and Euro, so it is better to plan ahead. You should check out current currency rates before you leave.



Dollar, Euro and Pound are readily available in exchange counters at airports. Keep money in your card if you are travelling to a country with a different currency. Use authorised exchange agencies only.

-  For the most part, receiving money while overseas is not very complicated. It is worthwhile to have more than one option available for accessing money, such as a debit card and a credit card.
-  You can only carry foreign exchange up to a certain limit when you are travelling abroad. Please check with the correct authorities for the permissible transactions and remember that the limit is for the financial year and not calendar year.
-  There are several ways you can carry foreign exchange such as cash, travel cards and traveller's cheque. Do not carry currency only in one medium.
-  While travelling abroad, a resident Indian can carry Indian currency (in cash) up to INR 25,000 and foreign currency notes or coins up to \$3,000 per foreign trip. The balance amount can be carried in the form of store value cards, traveller's cheque or banker's draft.
-  Usually, you can buy foreign exchange 180 days before your travel date from an authorized person or dealer. Remember that the law allows you to exchange foreign currency equivalent to up to INR 50,000 if you want it in cash. If the amount of foreign currency you want to buy is equivalent to or more than INR 50,000, the payment should be made by way of a crossed cheque, banker's cheque, pay order, demand draft, debit card, credit card or prepaid card only.
-  A travel card offered by a bank in this case works better as the transaction charges are nominal. These are pre recharged and any person in India can top up the card.

6. Travelling During your Stay




-  As a student abroad, you are most likely planning to travel within your host country, and possibly to neighbouring countries as well. It is a fabulous opportunity for you to see a new part of the world. Take advantage of your weekends and your program.
-  The costs and logistics of traveling abroad will depend largely on the country in which you are studying.
-  Public transportation abroad will most likely be by bus or train. Former study abroad participants are excellent sources of information about travel. Consulting a guidebook is also highly recommended.
-  Discount airlines are rapidly becoming the most inexpensive way to travel. Often they fly into smaller airports but the savings can be significant.
-  If you are studying in Europe, one popular and economical method of transportation is the train. EU-rail passes are available to tourists and may be tailored to fit your travel plans.

IMPORTANT

Before you leave India, you need to check on visa requirements for the country in which you will be living. If you will be travelling to neighboring countries, you should check on visa requirements for those countries as well.

7. Packing Tips and Suggestions



-  Always pack light. Keep in mind the weight limit restrictions applicable to your luggage by the airline.
-  Do not carry restricted items and read the guidelines written on your ticket carefully. Take comfortable shoes and appropriate clothing for the climate of the country you are visiting.
-  Winterwear such as coats and blazers can be heavy and increase your luggage weight. Carry items which are sturdy and can be used multiple times.

8. Choosing an Educational Agent/Counsellor

Note that it is not mandatory for you to engage the services of an Educational Agent/Counsellor. Nevertheless, if you choose to engage one, here are some important points to keep in mind.



Ensure that your Educational Agent/Counsellor is legitimate. Ensure their veracity by gathering all relevant information from both online and offline sources.



Verify the information provided by your Agent/Counsellor from the official website of the university.



Enquire about the role that the Agent/Counsellor will be playing in the process of choosing and applying to universities abroad.



Enquire whether your Agent/Counsellor works for a particular university(ies) or provides independent services.



Remember that no Agent/Counsellor can guarantee your admission in any legitimate university abroad. Admission decisions are solely based on the university and depend on your academic and professional qualifications.



Remember that Agents/Counsellors have an advisory role and they cannot guarantee your job placement or settlement in a country abroad.



The responsibility of your security and welfare abroad does not lie with your Educational Agent/Counsellor. Contact your university administration or the concerned Indian Embassy for help.

IMPORTANT

Be aware of fraudulent agents in India who may deceive you when applying to foreign universities; only hire certified agents. This will save you from facing unwanted troubles like monetary loss, loss of documents, being misguided, etc.

Visa Requirements

Australia

Website: gostudy.com.au/australian-visa/student-visa/

Required Documents: Confirmation of Enrolment, Genuine Temporary Entrant, Financial Requirements, English Proficiency Requirement, Australian Health Test Requirement, Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC), Proof of financial support.

Canada

Website: canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada/study-permit/prepare/get-documents.html

Required Documents: Proof of acceptance, Proof of Identity, Proof of Financial support.

France

Website: france-visas.gouv.fr/en_US

Required Documents: Application form dated and signed, France-Visas receipt, ID photograph, Passport/Travel document, Commitment to present proof of compulsory vaccinations at the educational institution in France, Proof of health insurance and civil liability, Promise from an organization to cover costs.

Germany

Website: india.diplo.de/in-en/service/studentvisa/2004346

Required Documents: Passport, 3 Passport Pictures, Cover Letter, Letter of Admission, Proof of Payment, Proof of Language Proficiency, Proof of Financial means, Travel Health Insurance.

New Zealand

Website: immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/apply-for-a-visa/tools-and-information/forms-guides-and-checklists

Required Documents: A completed application form, Two-sized color photographs, Passport, Application fees, VAC Service Fee, Statement of purpose, Offer letter, English Language Proficiency Test, Proof of Financial support, eMedical Chest X-Ray certificate.

Russia

Website: studyinrussia.ru/en/life-in-russia/arriving-in-russia/visa/

Required Documents: Passport, Official invitation for entry to Russia, e-Application form, Photo, HIV-negative status certificate.

Singapore

Website: mfa.gov.sg/Overseas-Mission/Beijing/Application-for-Students-Pass

Required Documents: Overseas study plan of the applicant, Financial/bank statement, Applicant's passport.

UAE

Website: government.ae/en/information-and-services/education/higher-education/student-visa

Required Documents: Admission letter from the university, Passing Medical Fitness Test, a Visa Sponsor either the university itself or a parent or relative, Approval of the relevant General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs (GDRFA).

United Kingdom

Website: gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/documents-you-must-provide

Required Documents: Passport, Proof that you can support yourself and pay for your course, Proof of parental or other legal guardian consent if you're under 18, Tuberculosis test results.

United States of America

Website: travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html

Required Documents: Passport, Nonimmigrant Visa Application , Application fee payment receipt, recent photo, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Statues-For Academic and Language Students.

IMPORTANT

Visa requirements of each country is subject to change. It is important to keep a tab on the visa requirement changes from time-to-time.

Initiatives taken by Indian Missions/Posts

High Commission of India, Canberra, Australia

Indian Student Advisory

Registration for Indian students

Website: hccanberra.gov.in/

High Commission of India, Ottawa, Canada

Registration for Indian students

Website: hciottawa.gov.in/

Embassy of India, Paris, France

Important links for Indian students

Indian Student Advisory

Registration for Indian students

Website: eoiparis.gov.in/

Embassy of India, Berlin, Germany

Dedicated website (<https://www.indianstudentsgermany.org>)

Registration for Indian students

Website: indianembassyberlin.gov.in/

Embassy of India, Wellington, New Zealand

Indian Student Advisory

Website: hciwellington.gov.in/

Embassy of India, Moscow, Russia

Indian Student Advisory

Registration for Indian students

Website: indianembassy-moscow.gov.in/index.php

High Commission of India, Singapore

Indian Student Advisory

Registration for Indian students

MADAD portal registration for Indian students

Website: hcisingapore.gov.in/

Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi, UAE

Comprehensive PDF for Indians in UAE

Registration for Indian students

Website: indembassyuae.gov.in/

High Commission of India, London, UK

Student Advisory (Do's and Don'ts)

Registration for Indian students

Website: hcilondon.gov.in/

Embassy of India, Washington DC, USA

Dedicated website (Student Hub)

Website: <https://www.ishubus.com/>

Registration for Indian students

Website: indianembassyusa.gov.in/

Contact Information

Indian High Commission, Canberra, Australia

Address: 3-5 Moonah Pl, Yarralumla ACT 2600, Australia

Tel: +61 (0) 3 8593 9124 (Mon to Fri, 9:00 - 03:30 PM)

Website: www.hcic Canberra.gov.in/

E-mail: ociinfo.inau@vfshelpine.com

High Commission of India, Canada

10, Springfield Road, Ontario, K1M 1C9, Ottawa.

Tel: 6137443751, 6137443752, 6137443753

Fax: 6137443033 / 6137440913

Website: <https://www.hciottawa.gov.in/>

Embassy of India, Paris, France

13-15 rue Alfred Dehodencq

75016 - Paris, France

Tel: 00 33 1 40 50 70 70

Fax: 00 33 1 40 50 09 96

Website: www.eoiparis.gov.in/

Embassy of India, Berlin, Germany

Tiergartenstr.17 10785 Berlin, Germany

Tel: +49-30-25795-0

Website: indianembassyberlin.gov.in/index

High Commission of India, New Zealand

Ranchhod Tower, Level-2, 102-112, Lambton Quay,

Wellington-6011,

PO Box:4045

Tel: +64-4-4736390

Fax: +64-4-4990665

Website: www.hciwellington.gov.in

Embassy of India, Moscow, Russia

6-8 Vorontsovo Polye Street
Moscow (Russia) 105064
Tel:(495) 783 7535
Fax:(495) 9172285, 916 3632
Website: www.indianembassy-moscow.gov.in

High Commission of India, Singapore

31, Grange Road Singapore 239702.
Tel: +65-6737-6777 / 91729803
Whatsapp helpline: +65 - 94519814 (during office hours)
Website: www.hcisingapore.gov.in/index

Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi, U.A.E.

Plot No. 10, Sector W-59/02, Diplomatic Area, Off the Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Street,
P. O. Box 4090, Abu Dhabi, U.A.E.
Abu Dhabi, U.A.E.
Tel: 00-971-2-4492700
Fax: 00-971-2-4444685
Website: www.indembassyuae.gov.in

Indian High Commission, London, UK

India House, Aldwych, Wc2B 4NA, UK
Tel: 00 44 (0) 20-7632-3035 / 20-8629-5950 (between 10 am to 5 pm on all working days)
E-mail: info.London@hcilondon.in
Website: www.hcilondon.gov.in/index

Embassy of India, Washington, D.C, USA

2107 Massachusetts Avenue,
NW Washington, DC 20008
Tel :(202) 939-7000
Website: www.indianembassyusa.gov.in

Endnotes

[1]

In French educational institutions, certain programs require proficiency in the French language. Working knowledge of French would also help you in gaining not only part-time but also full-time employment.

[2]

Non-tuition fees refer to the administrative fees that need to be paid in addition to the tuition fees for every course. A few examples of non-tuition fees include examination fees, health insurance fees, application fees, maintenance fees, academic record fees, etc.

[3]

Scholarships in Germany are available mainly for research, and in some cases at the Masters level. The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) is one such scholarship in the field of academic international co-operation. www.daad.in will provide you an overview of the same.

Erasmus Mundus program provides EU funded scholarships for International students who have been accepted for higher studies in an European institute. More information is available on https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/scholarships_en

[4]

The MADAD Portal is a Consular Grievance Monitoring Redressal Mechanism run by the Ministry of External Affairs which provides a platform to file consular grievances to the Indian Government. This will help you monitor the status of your complaint filed at the concerned Indian Embassy. It will also enable the authorities to provide you with prompt assistance in case of any emergency.

[5]

Germany provides post study work permit for 18 months and students may use this period to find jobs related to their area of specialisation. In Germany, the work permit requires the following documents to be submitted at the foreign nationals' registration office: (i) Valid Indian Passport, (ii) Masters Degree, (iii) Proof of Health Insurance and (iv) Scholarship documents, if any.

No institution can guarantee a place for you in the university of your choice. No Educational Agent/Counsellor can provide an occupation in a foreign country after the completion of higher education.

Abbreviations

IELTS- International English Language Testing System

TOEFL- Test of English as a Foreign Language



The India Centre for Migration (ICM) is a research think-tank of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on all matters related to international migration.

Apart from academic research, ICM has been involved in undertaking various activities and programmes at the ground level for the benefit of migrant workers.

Important Contacts

eMigrate: www.emigrate.gov.in

MADAD Portal: <https://portal2.madad.gov.in>

Pravasi Bhartiya Sahayata Kendra

Phone Number: +91-11-40503090/26885021 (From Outside India)

Phone Number: 1800-11-3090 (Only in India)

Email: helpline@mea.gov.in



India Centre for Migration
Ministry of External Affairs

Third Floor, Indian Society of International Law Building,
9, Bhagwan Das Road, New Delhi – 110001, India

Telephone Number: 011- 23070297

Email: icm@mea.gov.in

Website: icm.gov.in

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