**US Universities**

**Types of universities**

There are different types of universities in the US and often the word College is used interchangeably with university. Sometimes the word university is used to mean an institution which offers graduate programmes. There are also public and private colleges. The type of university/college impacts on the cost of tuition, the availability of financial aid and how selective the admissions process is.

Public institutions (sometimes referred to as state universities) are funded by state governments and public funding. Because they are part funded by state taxation, they usually offer students form the state the university is in much cheaper tuition fees than to out of state or international students.

Private institutions are funded by tuition fees and private donations. They are generally smaller and more expensive that public institutions.

Most degree courses follow the Liberal Arts philosophy. They tend not to prepare students for specific professions but focus on a more gereralised knowledge. Students take a wide range of classes including sciences, social sciences, humanities and arts. Students don’t start to narrow down their subject until the end of the second year. You’ll have a lot of autonomy over what classes you take and what direction your studies go in

It takes four years to complete an undergraduate degree in America. Most degrees are heavily course work focussed as opposed to exam assessed.

**Cost**

There is no standard tuition fee but studying in the USA is expensive. Private universities are more expensive but award more large scholarships. Some institutions provide scholarships covering the entire cost of study, while others contribute towards the overall cost. Common sources of funding include:

* **Needs-based financial aid** - if your family income falls below a certain amount then many institutions can assist with tuition fees and accommodation.
* **Merit scholarships** - for those with outstanding talent or excellent grades in a specific subject.
* **Sports scholarships** – awarded to students who excel in a particular sport

You will need to check if these are open to international students at your chosen university or college. Funding for overseas students does exist and generally differs between institutions. Look for grants and scholarships alongside researching universities. Some funding deadlines are early in the year. You will not be eligible for a UK student loan or a US loan (unless you are an American or dual national).

Tuition fees range from $5,000 to $50,000 (£4,074 - £40,746) per year. Most undergraduate degrees last four years so build that into your planning. A typical four-year public college charges in-state students $10,230 per year (£7,939) while out-of-state students are charged $26,290 (£20,404). There are private non-profit colleges too, which charge $35,830 (£27,808) on average.

You will also need to factor in accommodation and living costs, and travel.

**How to apply**

A growing number of universities use a central based admissions service called the Common Application process but for others you apply directly to the university. There is no limit to the number of universities you can apply for but practically it is recommended that you limit your applications to 6 universities/colleges. If you don’t apply via the Common Application process then each application is done separately through the university’s own system/processes. Regardless of whether you apply via the Common Application or directly to your chosen universities, you generally need to supply various documents including an application form, transcripts of your academic record, admissions essay, references, English language certificate if English isn’t your first language, a piece (s) of work marked by a teacher and possibly a test (the SAT or ACT). Your admissions essay is generally the US version of a personal statement. It’s your opportunity to demonstrate why you are interested in that course and why you deserve a place. You should focus on super and extra curricular activities, volunteer work, hobbies and career aspirations.

The SAT and ACT are standardised tests used for university admissions in the United States. They assess subject knowledge in core subjects like Maths, English and Science. Universities generally accept both tests. The SAT focuses on English and Maths whilst the ACT includes science. There are deadlines to register for the tests and there is a cost too. Some universities/colleges are test optional so it is not a compulsory part of the admissions process.

Each university will have its own deadline date which is generally the beginning of January. This is known as a regular decision deadline. Some have an Early Decision deadline in October/November. Or there may be Rolling Admissions process when you can apply between the Autumn and Spring. Deadlines do vary make sure you double check. All required documents must be submitted by the deadline. If you go for Early Decision then you are only allowed to apply to one university in the early application cycle. Any others you apply to have to be under the regular decisions cycle. There is a fee to apply to each university, normally £50-80. Once a university has accepted you, you’ll need to apply for a US student visa.

Check out these websites for more information:

<https://www.unifrog.org/student/know-how/keywords/us-private-vs-public-universities>.

<https://www.savethestudent.org/study-abroad/america/studying-abroad-american-universities.html>

https://www.astarfuture.co.uk/country/study\_in\_united\_states\_of\_america.html