



STUDY USA 2026-27

An introduction to Study USA
HE Students

Supported by the Skills Fund, Delivering the Minister's Economic Vision



Itinerary

- Study USA Programme Overview
- Eligibility Requirements
- Partner US Colleges & Campus Life
- Student Support
- Class Choices – what will I be studying?
- Funding model and costs to consider
- Applications and recruitment timeline

Final Q&A and Close



What is Study USA?

- Study USA is a generously funded scholarship programme providing an opportunity to study at a US College for one academic year
- Funded by the Department for the Economy
- Delivered by the British Council
- Began in 1994
- 50-60 places available in a typical year



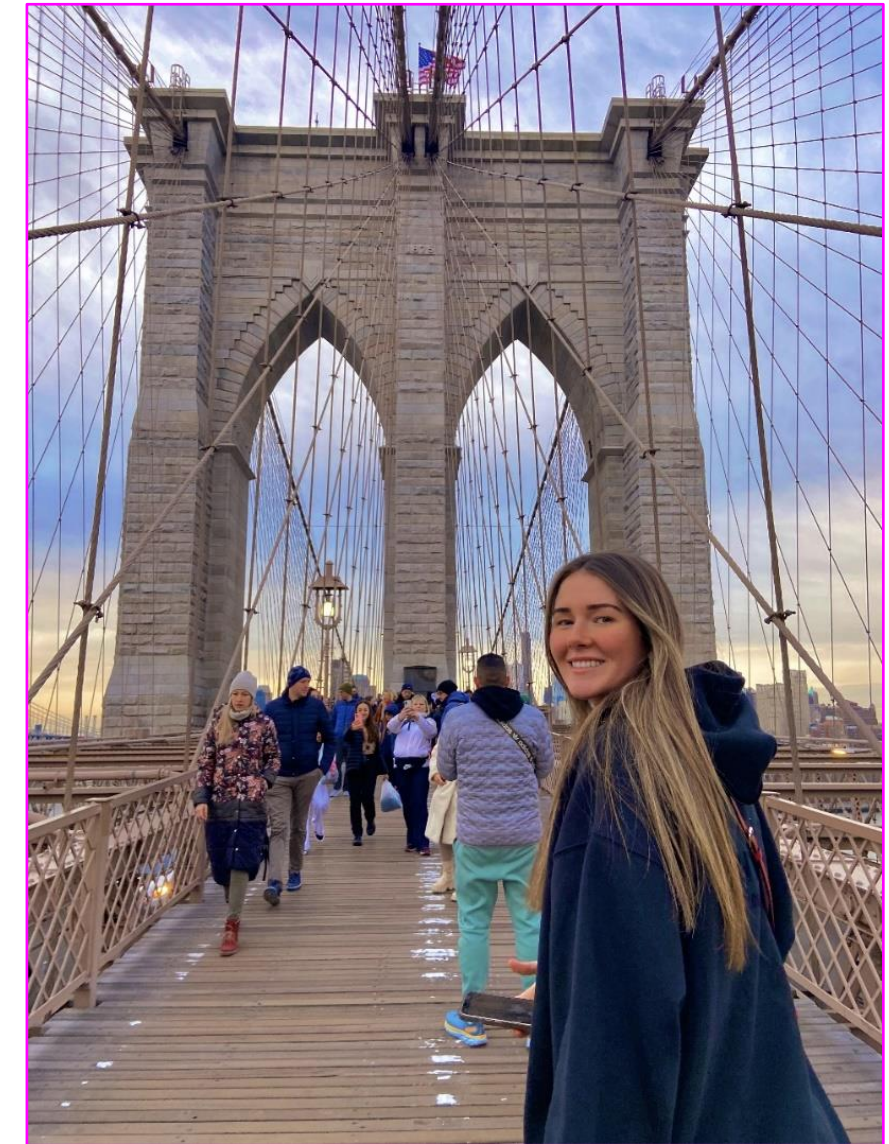
The programme provides students with:

- The opportunity to develop an outward-looking, international experience to develop their **global awareness**
- The opportunity to explore **new teaching** styles
- The opportunity to improve your core **employability skills**
- The opportunity to build your **confidence, adaptability and resilience**
- The opportunity to raise **economic, cultural and political** awareness of Northern Ireland in the USA
- The opportunity to develop the **skills** necessary to become future global leaders within the Northern Ireland economy
- The opportunity to begin developing your **international network**

WHAT'S IT ALL
ABOUT?

Eligibility Criteria

- Must be classified as having Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland or Great Britain **residency** for tuition fee purposes.
- Must be in **full-time** education, studying any discipline.
- Must have obtained a minimum 1st year average of **57%**
- Must apply in **level 2** year of study. **QUB, Ulster University, Stranmillis, Union Theological College*
- Medicine and Dentistry students must obtain school permission before applying.
- Must **not have** previously participated in a student mobility programme funded by a Northern Ireland Executive

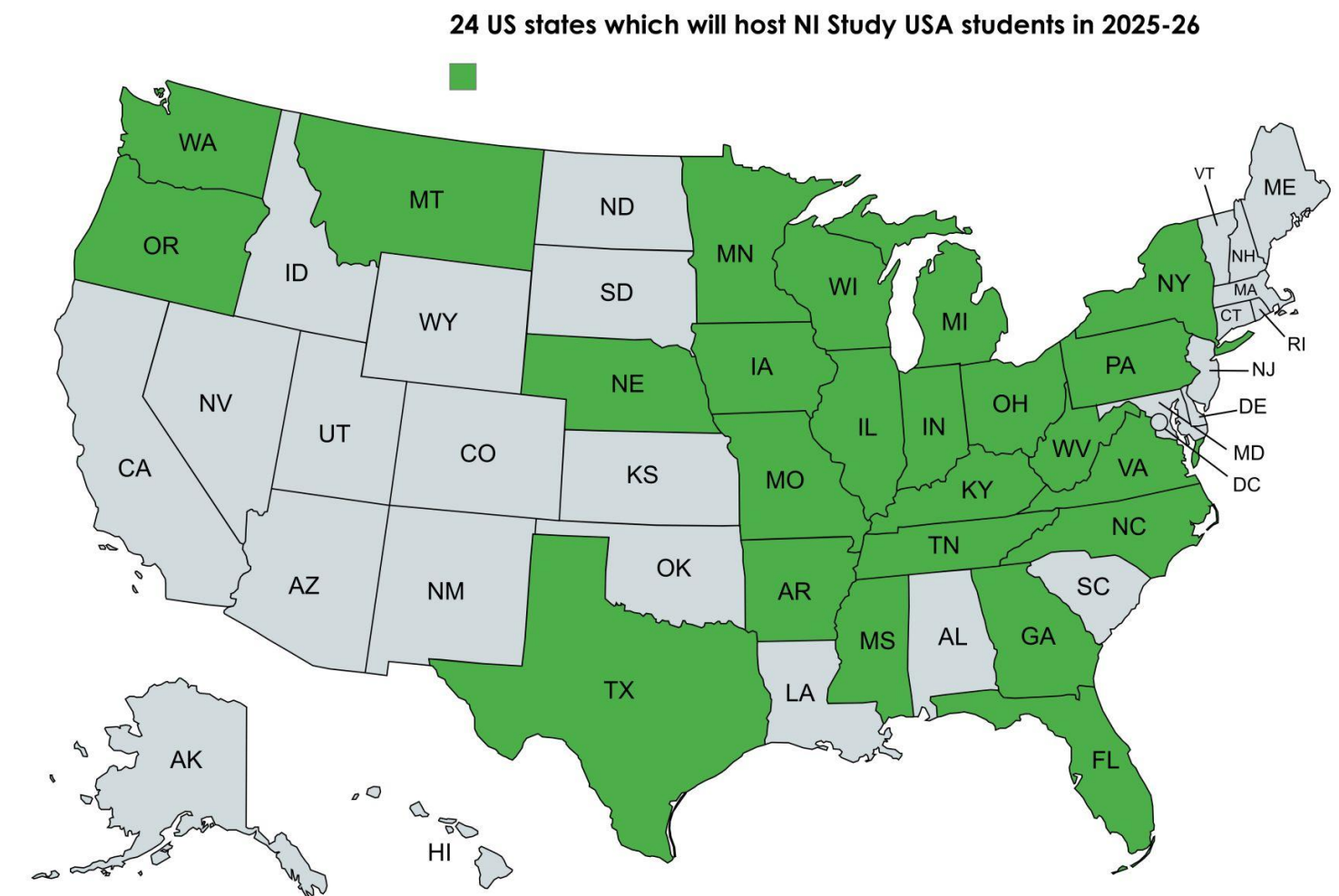


***NOTE** – International or EU students (excluding Ireland) are not eligible for Study USA

Full eligibility criteria available on our website.

Our US Partner Colleges

- We have links with over 140 Colleges across the United States
- Every year a smaller selection put themselves forward to host a Study USA student
- Small private liberal arts colleges **in rural areas or small towns**



Our 2025 -2026 cohort will be attending colleges in 24 US States

Our Partner US College Campuses



Rural or semi-rural campuses

Very few of our host institutions are in big cities

Campus shuttle bus or carpool to local town / amenities!

Is this a lifestyle you will be content with?

Maryville College Campus, Tennessee

Campus Life at a US College

- Closely-knit campus community
- Alcohol is not as central to socialising
- Focus on extracurricular activities with many sports on offer
- Living in a dorm with a roommate
- Eating on campus with a meal plan
- Clubs, societies and volunteering opportunities



Academic Life at a US College

- Smaller class sizes (20-30 students)
- Close working relationship with professors
- Continuous assessment throughout the year
- Graded on class participation **and** attendance
- Heavier academic workload with nightly homework, regular assessments, quizzes and group work



Student Support

Study USA students receive a great level of support in advance and whilst in the USA

Students **must attend** our three **pre-departure workshops** and will also receive a Study USA Student Handbook

1. They will have a designated **International Advisor** on campus in the US to assist day to day queries
2. They can access Wellbeing Services on campus in the US
3. They can still access their Wellbeing Team at home
4. We have a **Student Support Advisor** (based in Pittsburgh)
5. Ongoing support from the Study USA team during your year



Classes while in the USA each semester

What will I study?

2 x classes related to your home discipline (40%)

2 x classes from this list (40%)



1 x elective class e.g. Art, Sports, Humanities (20%)

- You are required to **maintain GPA 3.0** across all your classes throughout the year
- You will be registered as a Junior student (Year 3)
- Most Study USA students will take **200 level** (Sophomore classes)

- Communications
- Public Speaking
- Leadership
- Marketing and PR
- Management
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Foreign Languages
- Finance
- Economics
- Entrepreneurship

Programme Requirements

Complete 30 x class credits during the year (minimum **15 class credits** each semester)

Minimum 15 x hours class time per week

1. Maintain a minimum GPA of **3.0 (83%+ / B grade)** across all classes each semester
2. Complete **5** x Ambassadorial Presentations on Northern Ireland
3. **1** x written assignment and **1** x video Personal Development Portfolio on completion
4. Complete a business project (QUB & UU students)

GPA Table	GPA	US % Grade	UK Grading
A*	4.0	97-100%	I
A	4.0	93-96%	IIi
A-	3.7	90-92%	
B+	3.3	87-89%	
B	3.0	83-86%	IIii
B-	2.7	80-82%	
C+	2.3	77-79%	
C	2.0	73-76%	III
C-	1.7	70-72%	
D+	1.3	67-69%	
D	1.0	60-66%	
F	0.0	Below 60%	FAIL

NOTE: Students who do not achieve a 3.0 at the end of their fall semester will be withdrawn from the programme and will not return to the US for spring semester.

£50,000 Scholarship Package

The scholarship funding package, includes:

- Accommodation on a US campus (shared dorm) for the academic year
- One return flight to the US
- Tuition fees paid by the participating US colleges and universities (*average in 25/26 \$41,000)
- A full meal plan
- A **\$1,000** textbook allowance
- A **\$250** allowance each semester for elective classes
- A **£1000 bursary** paid directly to all students when they successfully return to US for spring semester



Eve McDonnell, Study USA alumna
(2022) meeting Economy Minister,
Caoimhe Archibald with Emma Sheerin,
Class of 2025 in New York – **March 2025**

Costs To Consider – Money Matters...

Programme participants must fund the following:

Commitment Fee *	£200 (reimbursed spring semester in US)
Travel & Medical Insurance	£600+ approximately
Visa Costs	£600 approximately
Spending Money	
Out of term time costs	e.g. accommodation/ food
Travel within the USA	



Students are **NOT** eligible for student finance whilst on the Study USA programme.

*Should a student fail to pay the **£200 Commitment Fee** within seven calendar days, their place on the programme will be revoked and offered to a candidate on the reserve list. The £200 Commitment Fee will be repaid to the student with their £1000 bursary at the start the second semester in the USA

Any student who does not achieve a 3.0 GPA and fulfil the requirements of the programme to graduate by the end of the academic year, will be required to repay the cost of their flight, plus the £1,000 bursary and the reimbursed £200 commitment fee that were paid at the beginning of spring semester.



01

£50,000 Scholarship

Includes accommodation, one return flight, full meal plan, book allowance, elective class allowance, plus £1,000 student bursary. Tuition fees paid by host US institution.

02

***£14,000 Average Annual Student Living Costs in Belfast**

Tuition fees, accommodation, utility bills, food, transport and weekly living expenses.

03

78% of the Class of 2025 spent less than £5,000

Study USA students encouraged to plan and save for their year – visa, insurance, spending money and travel in the US.

**Ulster Bank Survey Aug 2024 : Average annual student expenses in Belfast*

Characteristics of a good Study USA student

- Shows a **good understanding** of all aspects of the programme.
- Displays a genuine **interest in academics** at US college.
- Will have **passed all exams/modules** and have no coursework/exams outstanding by the end of June 2026.
- Will be a **good ambassador** for Northern Ireland.
- Will **volunteer** and actively participate in campus life / local community
- Understands how participation in Study USA will impact upon future **graduate career plan.**



The Recruitment Process

- Formal interviews in Belfast in **December 2025**.
- Applicants will be asked questions related to the application form, and knowledge of the programme.
- The top HE candidates (normally 50- 60) will be offered a place mid December 2025.
- Reserve list students may receive a place.
- Several places are ring-fenced for applicants from Further Education Colleges.



The Recruitment Process - Timeline

Applications Opened Online	01 September 2025
HE Application Deadline	23:59 – Sunday 09 November 2025
HE Interviews	December 2025
US College Matching Meetings	February 2026

Remember!

- Candidates shortlisted based on answers to **6 x questions** (max. 200 words per answer).
- Answer the questions directly and in detail with specific examples rather than vague statements.
- Get your application proofread.
- If called for interview, liaise with the Careers Department to arrange a practice interview.

The Application Process

Online Application: <http://nireland.britishcouncil.org/opportunities/study-usa>

British Council AI Policy

- Using artificial intelligence software to generate answers to Study USA's personal statement questions **is strictly prohibited**.
- Doing so is considered plagiarism and fraud. Doing so violates Study USA's guidelines on plagiarism and fraud.
- Any application found to contain copied, AI-generated or fraudulent content will be disqualified.

Monitoring Form:

Study USA is committed that **people from all backgrounds** can access opportunities suited to their talents and aspirations.

To ensure that the programme is **as diverse as possible**, and to assist us in monitoring the programme, we ask you to complete the **monitoring form** when submitting your application.

What happens if my application is successful?

HE Interview Outcomes Issued	December 2025
College Matching Meeting with US College Reps in Belfast	February 2026
College Enrolment & Visa Applications	April–July 2026
3 rd Pre-Departure Workshop with Erin, Student Support Advisor	End of June 2026
Fall Semester	Mid-August to Mid-December 2026
Spring Semester	Mid-January to Late April / Early May 2027
Study USA Graduation	September 2027

What our students say...

“My experience has been an invaluable steppingstone on my journey towards academic and professional success. The knowledge, skills, and personal growth I gained during my Study USA year will forever shape my life. I am immensely grateful for this opportunity and wholeheartedly committed to utilizing the lessons learned to contribute meaningfully to the global financial landscape in the years to come.”

Ben, Class of 2024

“Beyond academic and professional achievements, the personal growth that I have undergone throughout this programme has been immense. Living in a foreign country has taught me resilience and adaptability, allowing me to be more appreciative of other cultures. Study USA has been a pivotal chapter in my life. I am profoundly grateful for this opportunity and am confident that the skills that I have picked up will drive my future success.”

Elle, Class of 2024

Student Blogs, Video and Next Steps

Sophie from Stranmillis University College spent her year at Schreiner University in Kerrville, Texas.

<https://nireland.britishcouncil.org/blog/my-time-study-usa-programme>

Annie's blog and step by step guide to her Study USA journey 2024-2025 from Belfast to Georgia!

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/student-blog/ireland/study-usa-programme.html>

Watch our student video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEVLVII2K-g>



YouTube



For further information and to check your eligibility, just scan this code.