

Opportunities for Continuing Education in the United States

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Structure of graduate education in the US

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- Public universities
- Private universities and colleges (colleges usually do not have graduate programs). These include the Ivy league, e.g. Harvard, Yale, etc.
- Community colleges (these are institutions where the first two years of a four year degree can be taken as well as trade schools i.e. plumbing, etc.)

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Each category contains several types – you will mainly be interested in large public universities and private universities.

The goal of higher education in the US is different from that in Europe. US universities typically follow a “liberal arts” education model. This gives a broad education with a specialization, and can be thought of as two years of (mostly) general education in a wide variety of fields followed by two years of (mostly) specialized education in a single field. In particular, everyone will take courses in the main academic disciplines such as math, science, English, history, etc.

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Funding graduate education in the US

While there are some scholarships for graduate education, in many areas the vast majority of funding comes from either a Teaching or Research Assistantship. Teaching Assistantships are common in areas like math, English, etc., and Research Assistantships are common in lab sciences and engineering. In many areas scientific and engineering areas, it is expected that the funding for an Assistantship will cover the cost of tuition, living expenses, and health insurance. So for many people, and especially in technical areas such as math, engineering, and science, graduate education in the US is in effect free.

Requirements you may have to fulfill

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- 2 Apply to a university where faculty here have contacts!
- 3 Apply for a position in a Masters program, and then transfer after graduation to a better university. BEWARE: Most US universities admit few students for a masters degree alone, and leaving a masters/PhD program with a masters degree alone is regarded as an unsuccessful outcome. Clear communication will be required.

Differences in the job opportunities in the US in comparison with Europe

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How to tell if a university is good in your area

For assessing US university quality, there are many ranking systems. US News and World Report is still probably the best. I believe the ranking of mathematics graduate schools to be generally somewhat reliable, although the rankings by subdiscipline (Analysis etc) are not so great. See [US News and World Report Graduate School Rankings](#).