

# Challenges of international students in the us

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Since the history remembers, a man crossed borders and walked distances in order to satisfy the hunger for knowledge and comprehension. As the globalization expands rapidly and the modern means of transport allow crossing oceans in a couple of hours, travelling for education becomes more and more popular. Indeed, every year thousands of knowledge-seeking young people leave their countries for studies. While some students adapt to the new environment quite fast and smoothly, most, however, face difficulties concerned with the new place, different teaching approach, or other barriers at a certain point. In the US, the main issues that the international students have to overcome are the foreign language-related difficulties, unfamiliarity with the American teaching style, and exposure to the new culture.

The first challenge that a foreign-born student encounters on the way to academic success is a language barrier. Considering that English is not the first language for the majority, right after leaving his or her homeland and boarding in the US airport one enters the territory where complete comprehension of information is rarely possible. English is very different from most non-European languages. For instance, the gap between English and Arabic, which is spoken in my native Saudi Arabia and the neighboring countries, is immense, and, therefore, students from those states require years of intensive training to alleviate it. Apart from limiting the student's abilities to express him/herself or perceive crucial information from the teacher or lecturer, language barrier equally affects the daily life activities: being unable to properly express him/herself, one may face difficulties even when performing simple tasks such as shopping or asking for direction.

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The second major problem awaiting the international students in the US is the different academic system. American colleges and universities place emphasis on learning through the completion of assignments and projects, enforcing future professionals to build the bridge between the academia and practical world while yet at the classroom desk. For many, such approach is difficult to adapt to. Educational systems in their countries are more oriented towards the traditional theoretical knowledge accumulation. Some also struggle with the plentiful essays and research papers, as well as with the norms of citing and referencing.

Finally, international students coming to the US inevitably experience the phenomenon known as a culture shock. The feeling of unfamiliarity with many situations and uncertainty about how to react to them result in a state of anxiety and disorientation. The experience is not limited to students, though: many of those who travelled abroad in search of work, education, or better living found themselves in similar circumstances. The symptoms of culture shock may range from moderate irritation to deep-rooted psychological crisis or even panic (Deresky & Christopher, 2012).

In conclusion, international students coming to the US in order to acquire knowledge should be prepared for a long adaptation process. Foreign language, demanding educational system, and culture shock are the main environment-associated inhibitors of one's academic progress. It depends both on the student and his mentor whether or not he will be able to level the impact of these inconveniences.

## References

Deresky, H., & Christopher, E. (2012). *International management*. Frenchs Forest, N. S. W.: Pearson Australia.

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