



Education in Washington State



- Washington State Higher Education
- Washington State Education System
- Four-Year Universities and Colleges
- Community and Technical Colleges
- Specialty and Short Term Training
- Research Institutes
- Washington State Schools
- Contacts

Washington State Higher Education

Washington State, located in the northwest corner of the United States, is an excellent choice for international students and professionals looking for a high-quality and affordable education. International students studying in Washington are in the most trade dependent region of the United States, with a diverse population, world class companies and research institutions. Washington State is equidistant to Europe and Asia, has numerous sister cities, and is home to international trade offices and consulates.

Washington State enjoys a reputation for being one of the nicest places to live in the United States. Home to beautiful mountains and the Pacific Ocean, a technology-oriented economy with strong international connections, Washington provides an excellent and safe environment for educational opportunities. Greater Seattle and Washington companies and research institutions attract and produce a highly educated and skilled workforce for the region, the nation and the world.

Students from throughout the United States and around the world receive training at Washington State institutions. Numerous exchange programs and direct enrollment provide visiting students an opportunity to study in Washington while many local students likewise take advantage of exchanges abroad. Currently, Washington State is host to 11,370 international students, who with their families, contribute \$216 million to the state economy.

Head of the Class:

According to the U.S. Census, 52 percent of Seattle residents age 25 and older have graduated from a four-year college, the highest percentage of any city in the United States. Further, 20 percent of Seattle residents have earned a graduate degree or professional degree, 11 percent higher than the national average.

Washington State is the tenth largest destination for international students in the United States and its schools make transferring between programs easy for students building a successful educational and professional career.

“In the state of Washington, you can travel from magnificent coastal beaches to dense rain forests, and from spectacular alpine peaks to high desert canyons carved by prehistoric floods. Along the way, you can sample crisp Washington apples, award winning wines, and famous Northwest cuisine.”

-Former Governor
Gary Locke

Washington State Education System

The United States has long held the reputation for having the world's finest higher education system, with outstanding programs in virtually all fields. In Washington State one can choose from a variety of educational programs provided by more than 60 public and private four-year universities and colleges, two-year community colleges, professional and technical training schools, research institutions and English language programs.

The variety of educational opportunities within the Washington State system provide international students and professionals options at every educational level.

For example:

- **University or College:** These terms are sometimes used interchangeably because both offer a four-year Bachelor's degree. Usually, only universities offer postgraduate degrees such as Master's or Doctoral degrees. Colleges and universities may be funded by the state or may be privately funded.
- **Community and Technical Colleges:** Community and technical colleges meet the educational and vocational needs of local and global communities. They offer Associate degrees that usually require two years of study and Certificate programs that usually require one year of study. Many students transfer with their Associate's degree to a Bachelor's degree program at a university in what is popularly known as the 2 + 2 program (2 year community college + 2 years university = 4 year Bachelor's Degree).
- **Professional/Vocational/Short Term Training Programs:** may be offered by a number of different types of higher education institutions such as vocational schools, community colleges, or specialized private companies. Professional schools grant degrees and certificates in their areas of specialization. Technical institutes provide job-related training programs. Some schools may develop an individualized program that will meet special needs.
- **English Language Programs:** also called ELPs, Intensive English Programs (IEP), or Language schools, focus on the teaching and learning of English as a second language (ESL). The ELP is frequently affiliated with, or part of, a college or university, or it may be a private company.

Four-Year Universities and Colleges

Washington State and Greater Seattle possess one of the finest public and private university and college systems in the United States. Washington is home to more than 21 four-year state and independent universities and colleges. These schools educate tomorrow's workforce and provide ongoing training for professionals through award-winning programs. International students can gain from the excellence of education provided by the following schools and others in Washington State.

Ranked 1st overall in Washington State for its undergraduate programs, the [University of Washington](#), offers degrees in a multitude of areas. Their computer science and engineering programs rank among the top 10 in the nation. The UW undergraduate business program is ranked 16th and its subsidiary international business program ranks 9th. The UW is currently host to over 2,400 international students who take advantage of its diverse program offerings.

At [Washington State University](#) campuses, engineering has been popular with international students for over 75 years. The College of Engineering and Architecture offers a broad array of engineering programs including study in the areas of biological systems, chemical, civil, computer, electrical, manufacturing, materials, and mechanical engineering. The College is open to international students and offers practical applications in all engineering fields.

[Central Washington University](#) (CWU), originally a teacher's college, is considered to have one of the best Education Departments in the state. Among many disciplines, CWU offers a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with specialization in Finance, Human Resource Management, Management and Organization, Marketing Management, Operations Management, and Information Systems. In addition, CWU takes pride in its Supply Chain Management certificate program, which satisfies the demand for professionals in the industry.

[City University](#) is a private, nonprofit institution of higher education with the mission to provide educational opportunities worldwide. City University offers Associates, Bachelors and Masters programs as well as certificates, and English as a Second Language classes.

[Seattle University](#) (SU), a leader in software engineering education, established its pioneering Master of Software Engineering program in 1979, and awarded the world's first degree in 1982. Seattle University shares the rank of 26th in the U.S. with Gonzaga University for its undergraduate engineering program. Further, SU offers the largest internationally accredited MBA program in the Northwest United States. SU also offers graduate degrees in finance, international business and professional accounting. The school educates managers from around the globe to be effective world-class leaders - both in their professions and in their communities.

Pacific Lutheran University (PLU), located in Tacoma, is a recent recipient of a \$4 million dollar alumni donation from Peter and Grace Wang, who are first generation Americans from Taiwan and China. The fund is to establish The Wang Center for International Programs to prepare students to be world peace advocacy leaders. This gift will support PLU's already reputable academic programs in international education.

Seattle Pacific University (SPU) is a fully accredited, distinctly Christian university of arts, sciences and professional studies serving 3,600 undergraduate and graduate students. Academically, SPU offers 52 undergraduate majors including computer science, mathematics and a nationally accredited program in electrical engineering. In addition, SPU's undergraduate business and graduate MBA programs are internationally accredited by AACSB. Because of its central location in Seattle, SPU is ideally situated for student internships in local businesses, including such firms Microsoft, Starbuck's and Fluke Industries. Overall, SPU graduates students of competence and character who go on to engage the culture and change the world within their chosen careers.

The University of Puget Sound, located in Tacoma, is a nationally ranked, liberal arts college of high caliber. The university is an independent, predominantly residential, undergraduate college with selected graduate programs building effectively on a liberal arts foundation. Students from 48 states and territories and 21 countries live and learn at the university, founded in 1888.

Community and Technical Colleges

Washington's Community and Technical College system is separate from the public secondary school system and four-year institutions. The colleges are affordable and are open to all citizens regardless of their academic background or experiences. The colleges offer an array of educational programs and activities appropriate for both local and international students.

Each Community College district offers comprehensive educational, training and service programs to meet the needs of both the communities and students served. These colleges provide adult education, high standards of excellence in academic transfer courses, practical courses in occupational education, and community services of an educational, cultural and recreational nature. Many of the Community Colleges in Washington State have programs tailored for international students and professionals, for example:

North Seattle Community College offers transfer degrees in the Arts, Sciences and Fine Arts. Technical training programs include culinary arts, information technology, Early Childhood and Special Education, and ESL to name a few. North Seattle Community College's programs provide the opportunity for international students to prepare for careers in a wide spectrum of fields.

South Seattle Community College (SSCC) offers a program structured specifically for international students. The ESL/Bridge Program provides non-immigrant students with skills in English language, as well as American communication and study styles. ESL/Bridge graduates are admitted to the college's professional and technical programs as well as the AA university transfer degree programs. SSCC currently hosts 133 international students, 2.2% of its population and offers International Student Services to help provide international students with the best educational experience available.

Highline Community College offers excellent university transfer programs, intensive English language programs, and special services for international students, including orientation, academic advising and transfer assistance, free tutoring, homestay placement and student organizations to help international students to get to know American students. In addition, Highline Community College offers degrees and certificates in the areas of business, international business and international cargo transportation. Through the Business Department, programs provide education in theory and practical applications with a focus on global environment, preparing students for careers in e-commerce, importing and exporting, international business, accounting and more.

Seattle Central Community College has recently been named "College of the year" by Time Magazine, due to its diversity and interactive programs. Seattle Central is locally known as the "United Nations" and is one of the most diverse colleges in the United States with 52 % of its students and 28% of its faculty from various ethnic backgrounds. The most popular program for foreign students is the College Transfer Program. Class sizes are small and students enjoy many academic and personal support services. Seattle Central has created an extensive program of "learning communities," where students and faculty from different disciplines work together in courses that emphasize a common theme. In 2001-2002, Seattle Central had the most international students of any community college in Washington State.

Bellevue Community College (BCC) sends more graduates to four-year schools than any other community college in the state. Due to the college's reputation and educational and corporate partnerships, it was awarded a National Science Foundation grant to create the Northwest Center for Emerging Technologies. BCC was named among the 10 best community colleges in the United States by Rolling Stone magazine.

Edmonds Community College, located in the suburbs of Seattle, has served international students since 1980 and presently has one of the largest international programs in the state. In addition to ESL and university transfer degrees, the college specializes in technology training and is one of a few institutions that offers a Microsoft approved Train-the-Trainer course. Community College Week has acknowledged Edmonds as one of the top five percent of colleges in the U.S. for granting degrees in computer and information sciences. The college also develops international partnerships for both short and long term training and education. The college is also a leader in online distance education and has developed relationships with institutions in Japan, India, and other countries for online course delivery.

[Clover Park Technical College](#)'s International Program's mission is to provide the highest quality of services to international students and educational partners from around the world. Programs at Clover Park emphasize "learning by doing" and students have the options of studying a range of disciplines, from automotive technology to 3-D animation to new computer and information security. Additional training, such as preparation for professional certification, is available through The Institute for Business and Industry.

Washington State's institutes of higher education benefit from the generosity of the state's business leaders. For example, in 1996, the state's community college system received a donation of more than \$11 million in software from local software giant, Microsoft.

Specialty and Short Term Training

Washington State provides specialized and short term training to international professionals allowing them to become more efficient and proficient in areas such as English language, telecommunications, computer use, pilot training, transportation planning, among many others. Improving the skills of international professionals will lead to a more efficient worldwide network of commercial and information flows. For example:

[Associates in Cultural Exchange](#) (A.C.E.) is the largest non-profit international education and training organization in the Western United States. For over 28 years, A.C.E. has been a leader in intensive English language instruction dedicated to cross-cultural communication and education. A.C.E. owns and manages intensive ESL institutes on four college campuses as adjunct departments.

[Washington Academy of Languages](#) specializes in language training, language teacher training, and translation and interpretation services. Courses include Intensive English Programs, English Study/Tour, semi-intensive courses in twelve languages, and graduate Certificate Programs in Teaching English as a Second Language and Bilingual Education offered in cooperation with Seattle Pacific University.

The [Pacific Rim Bankers Program](#) (PRBP) presents a program that brings to life real world banking issues by connecting theory with practice. The program is a unique combination of rigorous analysis, practical applications and a strong emphasis on the financial issues of the Pacific Rim. PRBP trains business officers from over 28 nations around the world during their annual session.

Highline Community College's [Center for Extended Learning](#) offers training designed to meet individual needs in technology and computer training, business and professional development, personal enrichment, workplace safety, and much more. Customized training can also be developed, including training and education for businesses.

[Central Washington University](#) offers a Bachelor of Science degree in Flight Technology with specialization in Aviation and Airport Management, Airway Science, Aircraft Systems Management, Aviation Maintenance Management, and Flight Officer training.

[The University of Washington Extension](#) program is a national leader in the quality and number of its certificate programs, offering more than 100 programs that can help students improve their depth of knowledge and skills in a particular discipline and remain competitive in the ever-changing job market. Two such programs include the Computing and Software Systems Professional Program, and Business and Management Program, which can lead to Bachelor's degrees.

[The University of Washington Tacoma's Institute of Technology](#) specializes in filling the technology industry's need for highly-educated workers and encouraging a wide diversity of people to enter the technology field. Tacoma's Institute provides bachelor and masters degrees in computing and software systems.

Seattle Pacific University's [Center for Professional Development](#) offers a number of certificate programs designed to help students from the business community gain the skills and knowledge needed to advance in their careers and remain competitive in today's fast-changing job market. Classes cover issues in accounting, human resources, human performance, marketing and financial planning and are offered in a variety of formats including on-line and blended programs.

Research Institutes

Washington State's major research universities, the University of Washington and Washington State University, have been nationally recognized for their groundbreaking work in many of today's top fields, making them a premier destination for international scholars.

[The University of Washington](#) (UW) is one of the nation's outstanding, comprehensive research institutions and one of the top federal grant and contract recipients in the United States. The U.S. News and World Report rankings of best graduate schools listed thirteen of the University of Washington's graduate programs in the top 25 in the nation, including medicine, dentistry, nursing, public health, and computer science. In early 1996, the UW was awarded a landmark grant of \$12 million to set up a new engineering research center for the development of a completely new form of medical implants.

[Washington State University](#) (WSU) in Pullman maintains the largest agricultural education, outreach and research programs of the state's public and private institutions and corporations. WSU has a long history of supporting research for the state's agriculture commissions and is nationally acclaimed for its plant biochemistry research and training facilities. The university's International Marketing for Agricultural Commodities and Trade (IMPACT) Center is an important source of information and research on foreign markets, product development and shipping and storage technology. WSU has recently received national recognition for research in biogenetics, high-yield and disease-resistant wheat strains and monoclonal antibodies.

WSU's Veterinary School doctorate program is ranked 12th in the nation.

Washington's exceptional research universities are complemented by the strong presence of nationally and internationally known corporations and private institutions at the forefront of new technology. Boeing Commercial Aircraft is a leader in aerospace research, conducting its work at several sites in Washington. Famous developers and manufacturers of computer hardware, software and communications equipment are located in Washington, including AT&T Wireless, Attachmate and Microsoft. In addition, some of the largest forest products companies in the United States maintain major research facilities in Washington, including Weyerhaeuser and Simpson Timber. The Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, located in Seattle, is internationally known for its advanced research in areas including cancer prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. These companies, and many others in Washington, contribute to the already vital business community and help make the state an ideal place to work and live.

Washington State's educational institutions and dynamic corporations are only two of many reasons for international students to desire studying in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. Come explore the endless opportunities.

Washington State Schools

Washington State universities, colleges and specialty schools want to make it easy to find the right program. Below is a list of the schools and their webpages.

Four-year Public Universities and Colleges:

[Central Washington University](http://www.cwu.edu/)..... <http://www.cwu.edu/>

[Eastern Washington University](http://www.ewu.edu/Home.xml)..... <http://www.ewu.edu/Home.xml>

[The Evergreen State College](http://www.evergreen.edu/)..... <http://www.evergreen.edu/>

[Washington State University](http://www.wsu.edu/) <http://www.wsu.edu/>

[WSU – Spokane](http://www.spokane.wsu.edu/)..... <http://www.spokane.wsu.edu/>

[WSU – Tri-Cities](http://www.tricity.wsu.edu/)..... <http://www.tricity.wsu.edu/>

[WSU – Vancouver](http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu/)..... <http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu/>

[Western Washington University](http://www.wvu.edu/) <http://www.wvu.edu/>

[University of Washington](http://www.washington.edu/)..... <http://www.washington.edu/>

[UW – Bothell](http://www.bothell.washington.edu/) <http://www.bothell.washington.edu/>

[UW – Tacoma](http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/)..... <http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/>

Four-year independent Universities and Colleges:

Bastyr University	http://www.bastyr.edu/
City University	http://www.cityu.edu/
Cornish College of the Arts	http://www.cornish.edu/
Gonzaga University	http://www.gonzaga.edu/
Heritage University	http://www.heritage.edu/
Northwest University	http://www.northwestu.edu/
Northwest College of Art	http://www.nca.edu/
Pacific Lutheran University	http://www.plu.edu/
Saint Martin's University	http://www.stmartin.edu/
Seattle Pacific University	http://www.spu.edu/g
Seattle University	http://www.seattleu.edu/
Trinity Lutheran College	http://www.tlc.edu/
Walla Walla University	http://www.wallawalla.edu/
Whitman College	http://www.whitman.edu/
Whitworth College	http://www.whitworth.edu/

Speciality and Short Term Training Institutes:

Associates in Cultural Exchange (A.C.E.)	http://www.cultural.org/
Institute for Extended Learning	http://www.iel.spokane.edu/
Seattle Vocational Institute	http://sviweb.sccd.ctc.edu/
Washington Academy of Languages	http://www.wal.org/

Community and Technical Colleges:

Bates Technical College	http://www.bates.ctc.edu/
Bellevue Community College	http://bellevuecollege.edu/
Bellingham Technical College	http://www.btc.ctc.edu/
Big Bend Community College	http://www.bigbend.edu
Centralia College	http://www.centralia.edu/
Clark College	http://www.clark.edu/
Clover Park Technical College	http://www.cptc.ctc.edu/
Columbia Basin Community College	http://www.columbiabasin.edu
Community and Technical Colleges Washington State Board, Olympia	http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/
Edmonds Community College	http://www.edcc.edu/

Everett Community College	http://www.everettcc.edu/
Grays Harbor College	http://ghc.ctc.edu/
Green River Community College	http://www.greenriver.edu/
Highline Community College	http://www.highline.edu/
Lake Washington Technical College	http://www.lwtc.edu/
Lower Columbia College	http://lowercolumbia.edu/
Olympic College	http://www.olympic.edu/
Peninsula College	http://pc.ctc.edu/
Pierce College	http://www.pierce.ctc.edu/
Renton Technical College	http://www.rtc.edu/
Seattle Community Colleges (District VI)	http://www.seattlecolleges.com/
North Seattle Community College	http://www.northseattle.edu/
Seattle Central Community College	http://seattlecentral.org/
South Seattle Community College	http://www.southseattle.edu/
Shoreline Community College	http://www.shoreline.edu/
Skagit Valley College	http://www.skagit.edu/
South Puget Sound Community College	http://www.spscc.ctc.edu/
Community Colleges of Spokane	http://www.ccs.spokane.edu/
Spokane Community College	http://www.ccs.spokane.edu/
Spokane Falls Community College	http://www.spokanefalls.edu/
Tacoma Community College	http://www.tacomacc.edu/
Walla Walla Community College	http://www.wvcc.edu/
Wenatchee Valley Community College	http://www.wvc.edu/
Whatcom Community College	http://www.whatcom.ctc.edu/
Yakima Valley Community College	http://www.yvcc.edu/

Helping to raise the profile of Washington State as an education destination for international students is Study Washington, an organization of 39 schools. These schools are dedicated to educating and training international students and professionals from all over the world and helping them succeed. Study Washington was organized with the assistance of the U.S. Commercial Service and the Washington State Office of Trade. It continues to work with these organizations in its efforts to reach out to international students.

For a list of Study Washington members please visit www.studywashington.org.

Contacts

For additional information about the education sector in Washington state, please contact:

[Trade Development Alliance of Greater Seattle](#)

1301 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2500
Seattle, WA 98101 USA
Tel: 206-389-7301
Fax: 206-624-5689
Email: tdags@seattlechamber.com

[enterpriseSeattle](#)

1301 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2500
Seattle, WA 98104 USA
Tel: 206-389-8650
Fax: 206-389-8651
Email: info@enterpriseseattle.org

[Economic Development Council of Snohomish County](#)

728 - 134th Street SW, Suite 219
Everett, WA 98204 USA
Tel: 206-743-4567
Fax: 206-745-5563
Email: info@snoedc.org

[Economic Development Board For Tacoma-Pierce County](#)

950 Pacific Avenue, suite 410
PO box 1555
Tacoma, WA 98401-1555 USA
Tel: 253-383-4726
Fax: 253-383-4676
Email: susan@edbtpc.org