

How do I get admitted and funded to pursue a postgraduate study abroad?

Step 1: Decide on “programmes’ of interest

- There are unlimited numbers of postgraduate programmes globally. It’s important to identify programmes of interest to you.
- You have higher chance of admission if you select programmes that are strongly aligned to your previous (BSc) studies.
- Take time to read thoroughly through the programme description. You should know the courses available and what competencies you will gain from each. This will help with writing your statement of motivation
- It’s better to identify and target at least 3 – 5 programmes that you have high chance of admission
- Consider programmes from emerging economies (e.g., China, Eastern Europe, etc.). I know we all want to go to the best countries, but these places are super competitive
- Put enough money aside for your application:
 - If you have more money, you can try more courses
 - In some countries (e.g., Canada) you pay for application fee
 - You need transcripts, proficiency, recommendation letters that will attract some cost.
 - Some programmes or courses will require that you post hard copies of your documents (DHL, EMS, etc.)
- Make sure the programmes you selected can be funded by the major scholarship scheme in the country of interest
 - This is challenging and require you to read thoroughly about the programme and the funding opportunities from the university, state or country.

Step 2: Apply for the programme

- You must apply early enough so that you can get the admission on time and still be able to apply for scholarships.
- You need some of these documents to complete an application:
 - Completed application form
 - Certified copy of BSc degree
 - Certified copy of academic records (transcript)
 - Result of English proficiency test (if applicable)
 - Curriculum Vitae
 - Statement of motivation/purpose
 - Letters of recommendation
 - Abstract of your BSc. thesis
 - * Application processing fee (if applicable)

Step 3: So, you got the admission? Now apply for funding!

- There are a lot of funding opportunities for studies in life and environmental sciences.
- For most postgraduate programmes, funding can be obtained from the University, at the regional level, at the national level or international level.
- It's important to start by first identifying all the funding opportunities that you are eligible even before you start applying for a programme.

Step 3A- In some countries (e.g., Canada, USA, etc.) your chance of getting funding is tied to whether a professor agrees to take you on as a graduate student.

- In fact, in some countries, you may not even get admission without first finding a supervisor
- For such countries, please go to the programme website, read the profile of the professors, and decide which one works in an area of interest to you.
- You must then contact the professor of interest. Usually, the professors will respond only to students that they think are interesting.
- You can improve your chances of getting a response by showing that you read their work (papers) and indicating clearly why you want to work with them. I must admit it takes a lot of time to be good at this.
- Usually for such early contact, you need a good CV and statement of motivation to submit.
- *** Never send a generic email to a professor, they will see through you bull****
- If a professor is interested in you, they will ask you to go ahead and apply for the programme.

Step 3B- In other countries (e.g., Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, etc.), you don't need a prior approval from a supervisor. Once you are done with Step 2 and get an admission letter, you can start looking for funding.

- The main difficulty is getting to know which scholarship schemes are available.
- You can start by looking at the programme website. Usually, they will mention available funding opportunities. See for example this one - <https://www.uu.se/en/admissions/master/selma/program/?pKod=SHF2N> and select "scholarships".
- But there are some generic scholarship sources. Here are the most common ones that I know! PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE MIGHT BE NEW SCHOLARSHIPS THAT I DO NOT KNOW ABOUT. DO NOT LIMIT YOUR SEARCH TO MY LIST!

GLOBAL

Guidance Notes: Postgraduate

The best place to search for scholarships for environmental sciences is the UNCCD Knowledge hub: <https://knowledge.unccd.int/cbm/search?text=&f%5B0%5D=category%3A2025>

The joint Japan/world bank graduate scholarship program (JJ/WBGSP) is a good one but it requires 2-3 years working experience: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/scholarships#3>

USA

- For USA, most of the scholarship opportunities are with the universities. It is therefore difficult to specify one institution for funding. The best thing to do is to search the funding opportunities for the different schools.
- The most well-known funding scheme is the Fulbright Scholarships: Check here: <https://gh.usembassy.gov/education-culture/exchange-programs/fulbright-foreign-student-program-fulbright-fsp/>. This is very competitive!

EUROPE GENERAL:

They have this programme: ERASMUS MUNDUS but it's extremely competitive so you need to read carefully: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/individuals/students/erasmus-mundus-joint-masters-scholarships_en

NETHERLANDS

- The main scholarship body is Nuffic: <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/subjects/scholarships/>
- Please check the different scholarships to be sure which one is better for you.
- If you are interested in Wagenigen (where I studied), consider this: <https://www.wur.nl/en/Research-Results/Research-Institutes/centre-for-development-innovation/short-courses.htm>
- These are professional courses and you can find scholarship for them here: <https://www.wur.nl/en/Research-Results/Research-Institutes/centre-for-development-innovation/short-courses/scholarships.htm>

GERMANY

- The main scholarship body is DAAD: <https://www.daad.de/en/>
- To find short professional courses, look here: <https://www2.daad.de/deutschland/studienangebote/international-programmes/en/>

Guidance Notes: Postgraduate

Below, I give some links for finding scholarships and courses in other countries

SWEDEN

Sweden (check University of Uppsala, Lund University and Swedish University of Life Sciences)

See here for scholarship information: <https://studyinsweden.se/scholarships/>

FINLAND

<https://www.studyinfinland.fi/scholarships/bachelors-and-masters-scholarships>

NORWAY

Norway (Norwegian university of Life Sciences)

<https://www.studyinnorway.no/>

UK

<http://cscuk.dfid.gov.uk/apply/shared-scholarships/>

<https://www.chevening.org/>

FRANCE

- I know little about studying here but I understand this is the best place to find information: <https://www.campusfrance.org/en>

CHINA

China has some great scholarships. It is a difficult but quite an interesting country to study. If you have the strength and character to explore other parts of the world, then China is a place to start!

Chinese Government scholarships: <https://www.chinesescholarshipcouncil.com/>

ANSO Scholarship: <http://www.anso.org.cn/programmes/talent/scholarship/>

The Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) has several institutes that offer scholarships for international students. Check more here: <https://english.cas.cn/>.

Guidance Notes: Postgraduate

It's important to read the scholarship guide thoroughly because the application process differs from one scheme to another. In most cases, you will require an admission letter (from the course you applied) together with most of the documents you used to apply for the programme.