

American-Style Colleges Outside the US



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Q: Have you seen a shift in student interest in studying in the
US?

What factors are driving those conversations in your context?



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Why this conversation matters

- Students are increasingly considering international options beyond the US
- “American-style” is a familiar but often unclear
- Similar language can mask important structural differences
- Advising requires more than institutional brand recognition
- Student fit depends on structure, setting, and readiness



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American curriculum vs American institution



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American curriculum vs American institution

American Curriculum

- Liberal arts breadth
- Academic flexibility
- Interdisciplinary exploration
- Discussion-based learning
- Holistic student development

- ❑ Not every institution with an **American-style curriculum** is an **American university**.
- ❑ Curriculum tells you **how students learn**. Institution tells you **who grants the degree** and **how the university is structured**.

American Institution

- US university identity or affiliation
- US degree framework or governance
- Branch campus model or integrated global campus
- Alignment with US admissions and academic structures
- Institutional identity tied to a US university



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Q: When a parent says, “But is it a real American University?”, what do you usually say?



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Four institutions, four models

Institution	Model	Region	Broad academic identity
NYU Abu Dhabi	Global campus of a US university	Middle East	Liberal arts and sciences within a global research university
Northwestern Qatar	Branch campus of a US university	Middle East	Specialized academic focus within US institutional framework
Temple University, Japan Campus	Overseas campus of a US university	Asia	American degree pathway in Japan
University College Utrecht	European liberal arts and sciences college	Europe	Liberal arts and sciences in a European university system



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Q: Which matters more in your context: the teaching model, the name on the degree, or the post-graduation outcome?



Advising Framework

1. Academic model

- Breadth, flexibility, major structure, pedagogy

2. Institutional identity

- US university, branch campus, independent college, European model

3. Admissions approach

- Selectivity, review process, institutional priorities

4. Student experience

- Residential model, student body, geography, culture

5. Cost and outcomes

- Affordability, financial aid & scholarships, degree mobility, postgraduate pathways



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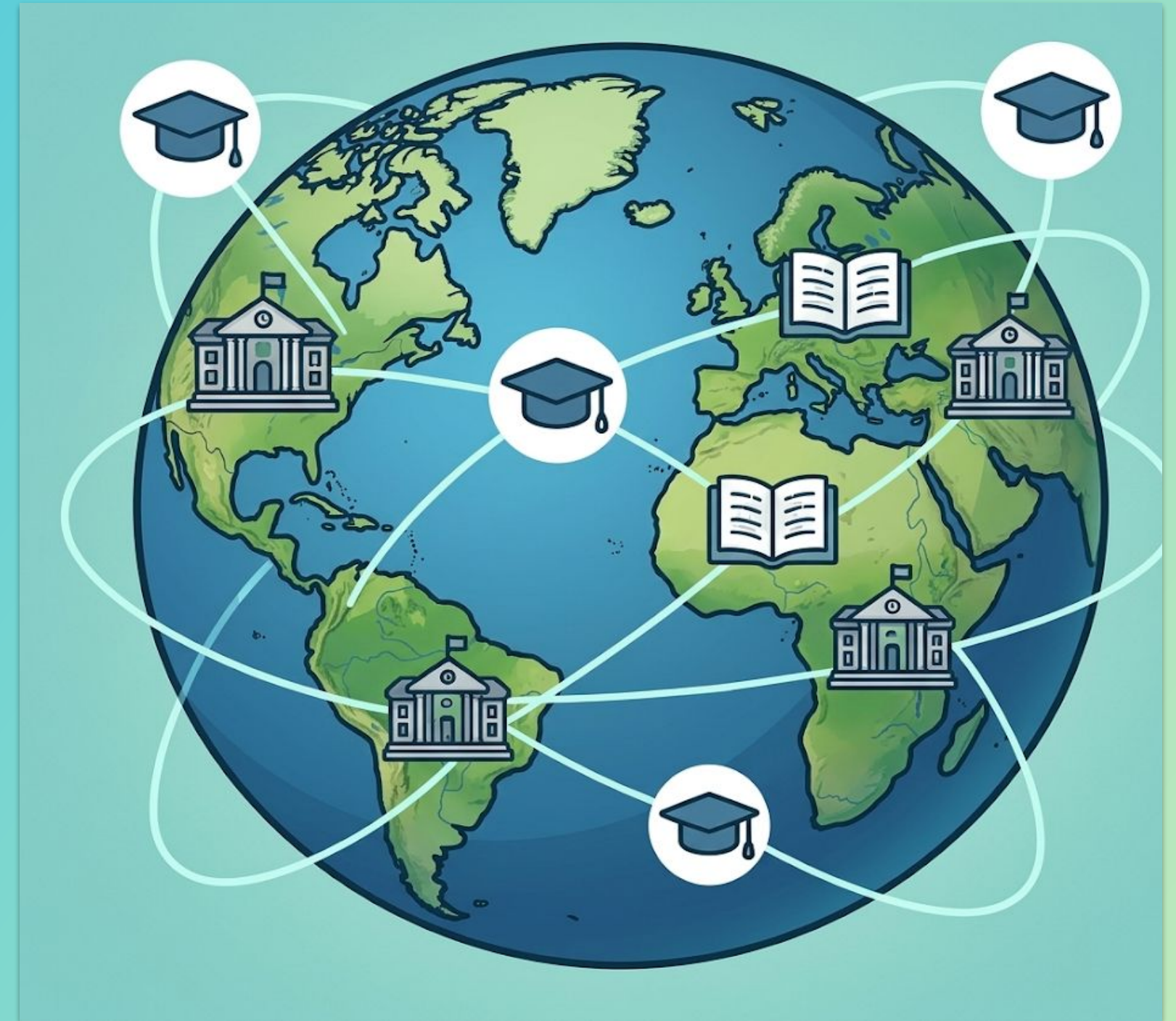
Part 1 American institutions outside of the US

Similarities, differences and for what student



Three Models of US Universities Abroad

- **Global campus**
 - Integrated into a global US university system
 - Often highly international by design
 - Best for students seeking a global student community
- **Branch campus**
 - A US university campus abroad
 - Often smaller and more specialized
 - Best for students seeking focus plus institutional affiliation
- **Overseas campus**
 - A US university campus in a specific regional setting
 - Offers an American degree pathway outside the US
 - Best for students wanting US structure in a non-US location



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NYU Abu Dhabi - Global Campus Model

What it is

- Degree-granting campus of NYU
- Liberal arts foundation
- Research-intensive, globally connected institution
- Fully residential undergraduate experience

What is familiar

- Academically driven, comprehensive admissions
- Breadth before specialization
- Strong faculty engagement
- Strong co-curricular and research opportunities

What is distinct

- Highly international student body
- Abu Dhabi location and regional context
- Small, intentionally global residential community
- Embedded in NYU's global network

Who thrives

- Academically ambitious students
- Globally curious learners
- Adaptable and community-oriented students
- Students comfortable living across difference



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Northwestern University Qatar

What it is

- School number 12 of Northwestern
- Focused on communications and Journalism
- Part of Education City - Home of 5 Top American Institutions

What is familiar

- Same Northwestern degree as home campus
- Academic excellence and research
- Opportunity to do exchange program with Evanston campus
- Highly personalized learning experience (1:8 ratio)

What is distinct

- Ability to cross-register across all Education City campuses
- State-of-art campus and advanced technology
- Highly international student body
- Location in Qatar, a global hub

Who thrives

- Storytellers, future leaders, change-makers...
- Fit and Match: Strong academics and high interest
- Academically motivated and aspiring to be global citizens.



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Branch Campus Model

What it is

- International branch campus of Temple University (Pennsylvania)
- Liberal Arts & Sciences

What is familiar

- U.S.-accredited Temple University degree & credits
- Shared curriculum and course structure
- Access to Temple University resources and network
- Opportunities to study across campuses

What is distinct

- Close-knit campus community
- Highly international student body
- Located in one of the world's most dynamic cities
- More affordable

Who thrives

- Globally minded and open to new experiences
- International interest, Japan in particular
- Academically motivated



Discussing the Structural and Cultural Dynamics of US Campuses and International Hubs



Image created by Google Gemini with prompt: visualize the difference in student life between US campus and a MENA campus



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Students can benefit from both worlds!



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US Universities Abroad

- Smaller campus does not mean lower quality
- Student experience may differ from home campus
- Regional context is part of the educational experience
- Best match depends on goals, not only brand recognition



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Part 2 Liberal Arts and Sciences
at university colleges
in the Netherlands
(and a few other European options)

Similarities, differences and for what student





Liberal Arts and Sciences introduced to the Netherlands in 1998,
University College Utrecht

Currently ten university colleges

Unusual for the Netherlands:

- Most programmes monodisciplinary
- Most programmes non-selective
- Most programmes do not provide housing



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What is similar to the US?

Explore before you specialize:
Liberal Arts AND Sciences (BA/BSc)

(Campus) Community with strong emphasis on
extracurricular activities

Holistic admissions taking into account
academic and community fit
(Extracurriculars, CV, interview etc.)



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What is different from the US?

Honours colleges

Part of larger research universities,
not independent colleges

Smaller scale: 300 – 900 students

Facilities

40-50% of students and staff is international



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What is different from the US?

Price tag, public universities

European passport: € 2,694 - €5,700

Non-European passport: €12,000 - €22,000

3-year undergraduate programmes (BA/BSc)

Common in continental Europe

Usually followed by a graduate programme

In the Netherlands or abroad



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What kind of student?

Independent and proactive (Dutch culture!)

Academically strong and intellectually curious

Wide range of academic interests

Contributes to community

International interest



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What college is the right one?

Curriculum and subjects offered:
Free choice or thematic majors?

Teaching style

Location: Urban, small town, rural

Housing:

Usually provided, but not always

1,2 or 3 years

American-style campus, city campus, bulding



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Examples of other Liberal Arts and Sciences options in Europe

University College Freiburg, Germany

University of Pécs, Hungary

University of Helsinki, Finland

Several in the UK (usually humanities/social science)

Branches of American universities

e.g. Bard College, Berlin, Germany,

American College Dublin, Ireland, Webster University



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Q: “Which of these students would be hardest for you to advise: the prestige-driven parent, the undecided student, the cost-sensitive family, or the student seeking migration options?”



Takeaways

- “American-style” is a starting point, not a full category
- US Universities abroad are not all one model
- US curriculum and institution are not the same thing
- Best match depends on student fit, family priorities and long-term goals





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