

China, Mexico and Brazil Lead Gains in US Graduate School Applications



L. Velarde
International students at
Georgetown University in
Washington

This is the VOA Special English Education Report.

Graduate schools in the United States are reporting a nine percent increase in applications from international students this year. The increase is the same as two years ago. Last year's gain was eleven percent.

China, Mexico and Brazil showed the biggest increases in applications to enter master's and doctoral programs this fall.

Engineering is the top area of study for international students and had the biggest increase in applications. Gains in business and physical and earth sciences were close behind. Life sciences showed no growth in the [latest survey](#) by the Council of Graduate Schools.

The survey includes the top five countries that send graduate students to the United States, plus Mexico and Brazil. The top five are China, India, South Korea, Taiwan and Canada.

Applications from China climbed eighteen percent this year. That was down from last year. India's number increased just two percent. Applications from South Korea and Taiwan decreased by one to two percent.

Applications from Africa were down five percent, while the Middle East and Europe showed growth.

Council President Debra Stewart says final results will not be available until the summer.

DEBRA STEWART: "Remember, applications do not necessarily convert to enrollment. So about forty-seven percent of all international applications to U.S. graduate schools actually come from students from China. But the share of the applicant pool that actually ends up enrolling in U.S. graduate programs is a bit lower though their application numbers were considerably higher."

Ms. Stewart says last fall, for example, twenty-nine percent of all international graduate students were from China.

This year is the seventh year of big increases in applications from China, where Ms. Stewart points out that more and more students are finishing college.

DEBRA STEWART: "There are just a huge number of talented students, the number growing ever year, because of the tremendous growth in the undergraduate population in China. Now, China has felt the recession like the rest of the world has felt the recession. So it certainly is possible that these very exceptionally strong numbers could be a reflection of recession experiences in China, as well."

George Ofofu from Ghana is working toward a doctorate in political science at the University of California, Los Angeles. He says he was attracted to UCLA's coursework, libraries and other resources, including financial aid he would not have had at home.

GEORGE OSOFU: "It was an ideal opportunity for me to go through the system and get admission here. One, get the training and, two, get some funding to pursue the studies. So I think, yeah, the experience here is really phenomenal."

And that's the VOA Special English Education Report, written by Jerilyn Watson. I'm Christopher Cruise.

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