



## New Generation of University Applicants Strive to Become Global Citizens

### Description

New research carried out by QS with students worldwide explains the growing importance of international study. Although students in different regions have different motivations for studying abroad, they all agree on one aspect – developing **global communication skills** is key.

### Benefits on studying internationally

It's perhaps unsurprising that students from developing parts of the world are keen to learn from abroad, graduate from a reputable university and get work experience overseas. However, this is no longer just the pursuit of those from Asia, Latin America and Africa. Students in Europe and the US are equally interested in broadening horizons, becoming part of diverse communities and learning from other cultures. This could be a direct impact of globalisation, given the way businesses are becoming more connected and international, in turn increasing the demand for globally-minded graduates.

Our research, based on ~**60 focus groups** and over **1,800 survey responses**, finds students commonly cite the following three factors when comparing universities abroad:

#### 1. Practical and flexible learning

Almost unanimously, students call for more practical learning – for their knowledge to be applicable in the real world and for work **experience** elements to be incorporated into programs. Often, underlying this is the motivation to become more employable through studying practically-focused programs at recognised universities. As Rohit from India shares:

"In India, you cannot learn and apply new things at the same time. You can either learn or apply."

Students in the US, on the other hand, felt strongly about accessing not only practical but flexible programs, and being able to shape their own course of study. As Maria from the US put it: *"I don't want to get a degree that everyone else is getting. I want to get it in a way that is best for me and things that I like."* The ability to choose specific courses and programs of interest appeals to

students from all over the world however, with Latin American applicants especially interested in *specialising* and Indian students willing to *take the initiative* in their learning.

### • Benefits associated with reputation

There's a number of benefits students associate with attending a reputable institution – enhanced employment prospects, a wider **professional network** and a challenging, dynamic environment. Although, once again, a concern for employment prospects is often the reason students pay attention to university reputation, many reference a competitive learning environment as being beneficial to their success. As Lawrence from the US tells us:

I would go to a university where I could meet great people, not just the program. The Ivy League school will provide you with those connections. •

### • Personal development & employment prospects

It was interesting just how much students associate personal development – strong interpersonal skills, **leadership qualities**, the ability to present – with enhanced employment prospects. There is a perception that academic excellence, and sometimes even work experience, is no longer enough to stand out and appeal to an employer. It's the acquisition of extra-curricular skills and experiences, often centred around communication, that sets students apart. As Shubham from India put it:

People skills are, according to me, the most important. More important than any technical skill. •

The desire to stand out is particularly topical in India, where the employment market is severely overcrowded.