



Destination Finland

Expanding U.S. Study Abroad



FINNISH NATIONAL
AGENCY FOR EDUCATION

Fulbright Finland

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Tervetuloa Suomeen! Welcome to Finland!

Finland is located in northern Europe between Sweden, Norway and Russia. It is part of the European Union and a member of the Nordic family. But Finland and Finns are different.

Finns pride themselves on being practical, turning potential setbacks into steps forward. Their national self-image is characterized by resilience in the face of cold Arctic winters, a concept they call *sisu*—equivalent to the English “guts.” Of course it is worth noting that those winters give way to summer days where the sun never sets in northern Finland.

Finland is a safe country where technology and innovation are highly prized—Finnish firms and individuals use digital resources and mobile technologies at rates among the highest in the world. At the same time, nature is always close by and the conserving the environment is another core value. It is common for Finns to visit rustic cottages called *mökki*, requiring trips to the forest to gather firewood and to the lake for water, reinforcing their links to the natural world.

Finns are strong believers in equality and education. Their primary education system is known to be globally superior, but their higher education system is also one of the best in the world with robust international connections, few hierarchies and academic freedom.

Finland's general infrastructure is effective in conjunction with both public and private services. Having well-run public services like the police, fire and rescue services, transportation, education, and health care are fundamental to the society.

Indeed, Finland’s commitments to its values, its citizens and its institutions have led to its predominance in many international rankings, among them that Finland is the most stable nation in the world (Fragile States Index); the freest nation in the world (Freedom House); the safest country in the world (World Economic Forum); the happiest country in the world (Sustainable Development Solutions Network); among many other accolades.

The Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI), the Fulbright Finland Foundation and IIE have authored this paper to inform Americans interested in new international partners about opportunities we offer to explore one of the greatest nations in the world, Finland. Tervetuloa!



Figure 1: Helsinki Cathedral
(Kari Palsila/Helsinki Marketing)

Higher Education in Finland

Education is one of the cornerstones of Finnish society. Finland prides itself on an educational system that offers equal opportunities of education for all, irrespective of residency, sex, economic situation or linguistic and cultural background.

There are altogether 15 universities and 25 universities of applied sciences in Finland, the total number of students being approximately 300,000. Both sectors have their own profiles. Universities emphasize scientific research and instruction. Universities of applied sciences adopt a more practical approach.

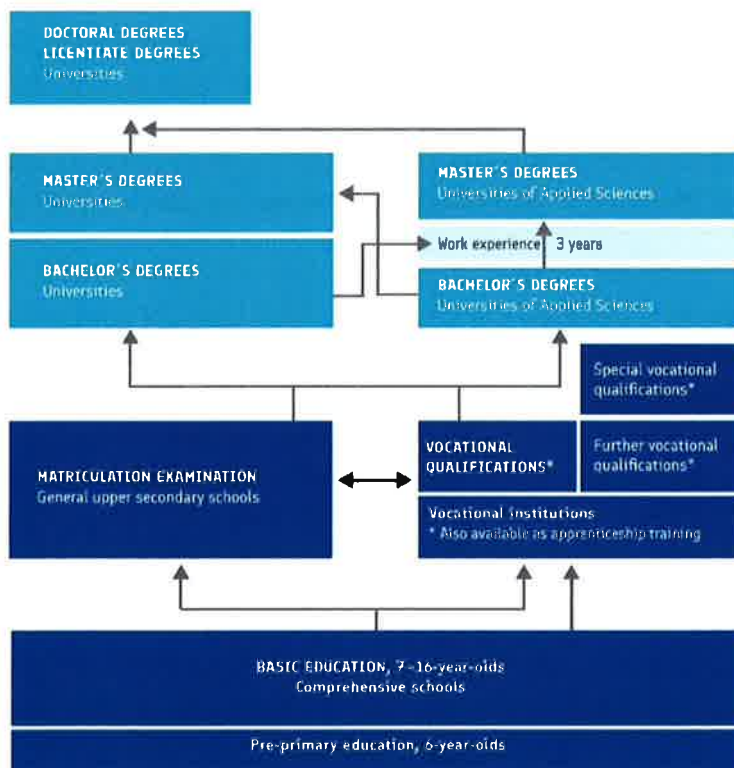


Figure 2: Finnish Education Structure

The **Finnish National Agency Education, or EDUFI**, operates under Finland's Ministry of Education and Culture and develops programs and strategies for education and training at all levels, including lifelong learning. EDUFI collaborates with higher education institutions to achieve their internationalization goals and allocates funds for international programming. Internationalization services, among its many other services.

The Government 2030 vision for Higher Education in Finland calls for innovative universities and universities of applied sciences with the aim of creating strong internationally attractive knowledge clusters and encouraging higher education institutions to become actively involved in international networks. In addition, the recent international strategy for higher education and research sets a goal for genuinely international higher education communities.

Currently, around 10,500 Finnish higher education students go abroad annually for a study exchange lasting 3-12 months, and nearly as many foreign exchange students study in Finnish institutions. In addition, Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences host more than 20,000 international students who study for a full degree. (All in all, around 30,000 international students can be found at the campuses in different corners of the country.)

Finland is an ideal destination for international students as many of its classes are delivered in English; its programs rank highly in terms of educational quality; and its institutions offer services that support students during their stay in Finland.



Figure 3: U.S. Fulbright grantees in Turku, Finland for the annual American Voices Seminar (Fulbright Finland Foundation)

English as Language of Instruction

All together Finnish higher education institutions offer over 400 English-taught programs to choose from. This means that all lectures, literature and exams are provided in English. These full degree programs offer an official Finnish higher education Bachelor's, Master's or Doctoral degree.

Additionally, non-degree program, which are offered by some institutions, can be taken as part of an exchange period.

English is Finland's third, unofficial language (Finnish and Swedish both being official languages), and one can expect most Finns on- and off-campus to speak it fluently.

High Quality Education

Finland is famous for excellent standards in education. Finnish teachers are highly valued professionals who constantly work to meet the varied and individualized needs of their students. Finnish expertise is deeply celebrated worldwide in the fields of information and communication technology, biotechnology, forestry and environmental sciences, education, architecture, design and art.

The Finnish attitude to studying follows an approach that benefits the individual: students are challenged and encouraged to think for themselves. Teaching in these universities is based on research and the institutions' specific expertise. These high-quality study programs combine in-depth research with the needs of future working life.

At universities of applied sciences (UAS) research and development are the basis for teaching. Co-operation with local industries boosts learning outcomes as the education is shaped to answer the needs and expectations of both industry and commerce.

The professors that guide students are approachable experts in their fields.



Figure 4: Students at the University of Helsinki Library (Linda Tammisto/Helsinki Marketing)

Student Experience

Students in Finland are guided by professional student services throughout their studies. Student counselling is provided by all institutions, and teachers are also committed to support every student throughout their studies.

Healthy, nutritious, and low cost school lunches are served in each higher educational institution. Each university offers options for anyone with dietary concerns including any religious, health, ethical, or cultural restrictions.

For all incoming international students, student unions and associations arrange tutoring in addition to fun leisure activities. These activities include everything from different sports and cultural events to live concerts and art exhibitions.

Internationalization Opportunities

Fulbright Finland Foundation

The **Fulbright Finland Foundation** supports the internationalization of education and research in Finland, and helps U.S. and Finnish institutions create linkages. Under its Internationalization Services the Foundation organizes study tours to the U.S. for Finnish higher education experts; runs the **Fulbright Speaker Program**, the **Fulbright Dialogues** series, and the **Transatlantic Roundtables** series for tackling issues related to transatlantic higher education cooperation, and organizes two major public Fulbright Seminars annually.



Figure 5: U.S. Fulbright grantees at the “Fulbright Forum: Education, Innovation, Science and Art” at the University of Jyväskylä (Fulbright Finland Foundation)

With all of its programs, the Foundation aims for high impact, and strives to facilitate new connections and inspire lasting cooperation. Special emphasis is paid on cross-border cooperation and on themes of global importance, such as its **Nordic-Baltic Fulbright seminar** on cybersecurity. In 2016, the Foundation hosted the inaugural **Fulbright Arctic Initiative** research program's mid-term plenary week for scholars from all eight Arctic Council member countries, and will also organize the plenary week seminar for the second Fulbright Arctic initiative program in 2019.

A key strength of the Foundation is the consistent strategic engagement of the alumni: 5,500 Finns and Americans have received a grant from the bilateral program since its inception in 1949 and the Fulbright Finland Foundation runs an active and rapidly growing alumni network in both countries.



Figure 6: Helsinki City Street (Kuvatoimisto Kuvia Oy/Helsinki Marketing)

Opportunities for U.S. Institutions with Fulbright Finland

There are many concrete ways in which U.S. universities and colleges can work together with the Fulbright Finland Foundation to help create collaboration and develop lasting linkages with Finnish institutions. U.S. universities currently working with the Fulbright Finland Foundation recommend the following ways as particularly helpful and successful:

- U.S. institutions can host Finnish students, faculty, or university administrators from Finnish institutions on Fulbright Finland Foundation grants. The Foundation offers 24

different grant programs to the United States for students, researchers, teachers, administrators and other professionals.

- U.S. institutions can send U.S. students, faculty, or administrators to Finnish institutions on Fulbright Finland Foundation grants. The Foundation offers 27 different grant programs for U.S. citizens to come to Finland to study, teach, or conduct research or professional projects.
- U.S. institutions can co-sponsor a grant with the Fulbright Finland Foundation for Finnish students or scholars to their institution.
- U.S. institutions can host an expert delegation from Finland on one of Fulbright Finland Foundation's Expert Study Tours to the United States, or participate in Fulbright Finland's seminars and training events if in Finland.



Figure 7: A graduate from Williams College Gemma Holt during her Fulbright term at the University of Lapland (Fulbright Finland Foundation)

Impact of Fulbright Finland Exchanges

With the support of Fulbright Finland, one-time exchanges have the potential to grow into institutional partnerships:

- After a chance meeting of university representatives in China revealed a shared interest in logistics, **New Jersey City University** professor John Donnellan spent 3 weeks as a Fulbright Specialist at **Satakunta University of Applied Science (SAMK)** on the

southwest coast of Finland, the first Fulbrighter at SAMK. This exchange allowed Dr. Donnellan to plan and implement together with SAMK a cooperative student project in which Finnish and American logistics students worked cooperatively on issues of supply chain management in the ports of Rauma, Finland, and Jacksonville and Baltimore in the U.S. Now SAMK and New Jersey City University have signed a cooperation agreement and the first student exchange will take place next academic year. In addition, research collaborations and projects are planned.

- Professor Mike Loovis from **Cleveland State University (CSU)** visited the **University of Jyväskylä (JYU)** as a Fulbright Scholar in 2011 and found mutual research interest related to sports and physical activity with Finnish colleagues. This led to Finnish teachers to visit Ohio in 2015, and for Finnish researchers to visit the U.S. for further collaboration in 2017. A partnership agreement was signed between CSU and JYU in late summer 2017.

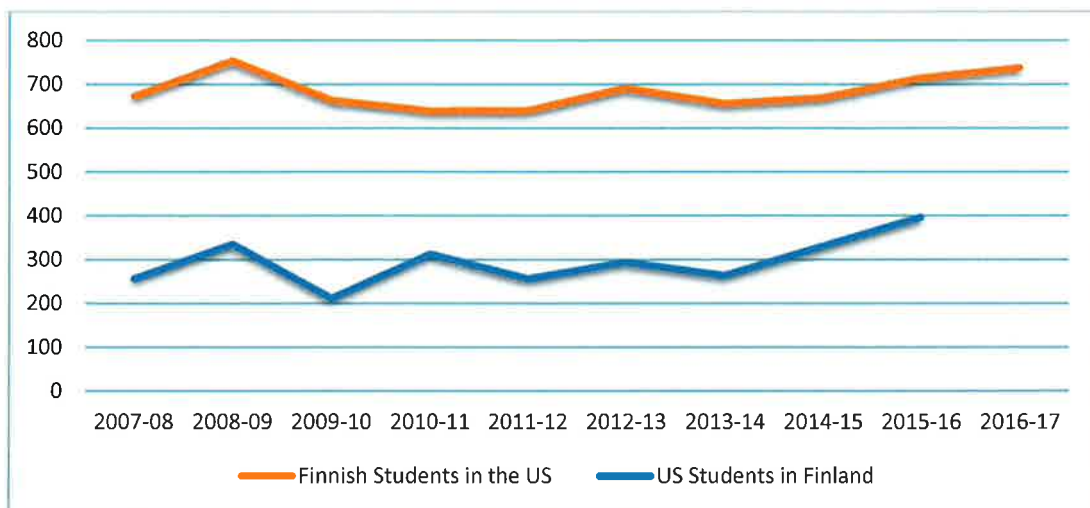


Figure 8: Midnight Sun in Finnish Summer (Harri Tarvainen/Visit Finland)

Finland-U.S. Student Exchange

IIE, one of the largest and most experienced higher education exchange agencies in the world, has conducted an annual statistical survey of all international educational exchange activity to and from the U.S. each year since 1948. The results of those surveys are published as the **Open Doors** report. According to the 2017 Open Doors report, 737 Finnish students enrolled in U.S. higher education institutions, up 3.2% from the previous year. Over the past 10 years, the number of Finnish students in the U.S. has remained stable, hovering around 700 students per year.

Finland was the destination for only 396 American study abroad students in 2015-16, the last year for which there is data. While this figure represents a 20% increase from the previous year, the number of American students in Finland remains about half of those Finland sends to the U.S.



Source: IIE Open Doors 2017

The small number of American students in Finland reflects a broader trend. In 2013, less than 10% of the 2.6 million American higher education students studied abroad. In order to increase the number and diversity of Americans studying abroad, IIE launched **Generation Study Abroad**, an initiative to challenge higher education institutions, educational organizations, national agencies, stakeholders and individuals to think creatively about ways to support increasing the number of U.S. students studying abroad, with the goal of doubling the number of participants by the year 2020.

EDUFI became a Generation Study Abroad Commitment Partner in 2016. In 2018, EDUFI has partnered with IIE to offer an **International Academic Partnerships Program (IAPP)**. IAPP, with its focus on developing a comprehensive, campus-wide strategy for partnering with the focus country, is actively assisting with linkages being built between numerous U.S. institutions and counterparts in other countries. Through a 6-month program that includes webinars, mentorship, site visits and other educational resources, IIE provides IAPP participants with the

guidance necessary to find the right partner, and to build strong and sustainable linkages that transform the home institution as much as the partner's.

The Finland IAPP will include the opportunity for representatives from American higher education institutions to visit Finland in September 2018 and to meet with Finnish university counterparts interested in forming new partnerships to increase student mobility. The application for the Finland IAPP, as well as more information, can be found online at <https://www.iie.org/Programs/International-Academic-Partnership-Program/IAPP-Finland>.

The deadline to apply is **June 15, 2018**.

For More Information

Presence at NAFSA

Terhi Mölsä, Chief Executive Officer of the Fulbright Finland Foundation, will give a presentation at NAFSA on building U.S. study abroad capacity in Finland.

<i>Title:</i>	U.S. Department of State Forum on Education Abroad Services and Opportunities
<i>Date and Time:</i>	Tuesday, May 29, 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM
<i>Location:</i>	PCC, Room 114

While information regarding Finland and the IAPP can be found at the IIE booth at any time, **EDUFI, Fulbright Finland Foundation** and **IIE** representatives have dedicated the following time to be present together at the booth.

<i>Booth Number:</i>	IIE Booth #P1404
<i>Date and Time:</i>	Tuesday, May 29, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

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Who We Are

As an independent, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit founded in 1919, the mission of IIE (www.iie.org) is to help people and organizations leverage the power of international education to thrive in today's interconnected world. IIE's work focuses on advancing scholarship, building economies, and promoting access to opportunity.

The Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) (<https://www.oph.fi/english>) operates under the Ministry of Education and Culture. It is responsible for developing education and training, early childhood education and care, and lifelong learning, as well as for promoting internationalization. EDUFI promotes internationalization in education and training, working life, cultural field and among young people through international cooperation and mobility programs as well as with a range of other activities.

Within the higher education sector EDUFI collaborates closely with Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences with the purpose of supporting their strategic aims in the field of internationalization. In addition to allocating funds for international mobility and educational cooperation EDUFI provides information on opportunities for internationalization, promotes Finnish higher education abroad and collects data and publishes information on internationalization.

The Fulbright Finland Foundation (www.fulbright.fi) is an independent not-for-profit organization based in Helsinki, Finland. With the purpose of promoting a wider exchange of knowledge and professional talents through educational contacts between Finland and the United States, the Foundation collaborates with a range of government, foundation, university, and corporate partners on both sides of the Atlantic to design and manage study and research scholarships, leadership development programs and internationalization services. The Fulbright Finland Foundation is funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, the U.S. Department of State, the Finland-America Educational Trust Fund, private foundations, Finnish and U.S. higher education institutions, alumni of the Fulbright Finland programs, and private donors. Over 70% of the Foundation's core funding originates from Finland, and advancement, fundraising and sponsored grants are a central part of the operation.

Cover Photo by Sakari Piippo, courtesy of the Finnish Promotion Board



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