

Studying in Qatar

A guide for international students & families — how Qatar's higher education works, Education City's US branch campuses, the student residence visa, financial aid, and the rules.

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US DEGREES ONSHORE AT EDUCATION CITY, TAX-FREE

Qatar's signature draw is **Education City** — a Doha campus, run by Qatar Foundation, hosting branch campuses of **Georgetown, Carnegie Mellon, Northwestern, Texas A&M, and Weill Cornell Medicine**, whose degrees are **identical to the US home campuses** — plus **Qatar University** and HBKU. Teaching is in English, income is tax-free, and generous **financial aid** is available. Your **university sponsors your student residence visa**. This guide walks it in **ten steps**.

General guidance, not legal or immigration advice. Qatar's rules, tuition, and aid change. The details here are recent examples and **must be confirmed with your university, Qatar Foundation, and the Ministry of Interior**.

Understand Why Students Choose Qatar

WHAT TO KNOW

Qatar offers **US branch-campus degrees onshore (identical to the home campus)**, **English-medium teaching**, **generous financial aid**, **a tax-free income**, and **a safe, international society** — in a country investing heavily in education.

BY THE NUMBERS

US degrees onshore

Education City

English-medium

+ tax-free

Financial aid

Qatar Foundation

HOW TO HELP

Weigh Qatar's **identical-to-US branch-campus degrees and financial aid** against high sticker prices (offset by aid) and restricted work — for a US degree in the Gulf, it's unique.

GOOD TO KNOW

Education City degrees from CMU, Georgetown, and Weill Cornell are **identical to the US home-campus degrees** — the primary draw.

Understand the System

WHAT TO KNOW

Two main routes: **Qatar University** (the large public university — affordable) and **Education City branch campuses** (Georgetown, Carnegie Mellon, Northwestern, Texas A&M, Weill Cornell Medicine, VCUarts, plus HEC Paris and UCL for graduate/executive study), each awarding the **home institution's degree**. Also Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU).

BY THE NUMBERS

Qatar University

public, affordable

Education City

US branch campuses

HBKU

+ graduate options

HOW TO HELP

Choose between **affordable Qatar University** and an **Education City branch campus** (for a US degree) by field — and confirm each program's awarding body and accreditation individually.

WATCH OUT

Confirm the **awarding body, curriculum, and accreditation** for your specific program — branch-campus offerings vary.

Get the Student Residence Visa

WHAT TO KNOW

You need an **Educational (student) Residence Visa**, which your **university sponsors** after admission. After arriving, you complete a **medical exam and receive your QID (Qatar ID / residence permit)**. Required health documentation includes several immunizations and a recent TB screening.

BY THE NUMBERS

Student residence visa

university-sponsored

QID

your residence ID

Medical

immunizations + TB screening

HOW TO HELP

Let your **university sponsor your student residence visa** after admission, then complete your **medical exam and QID** on arrival — prepare the required immunizations and TB screening.

GOOD TO KNOW

You'll need immunizations (polio, MMR, hepatitis B, meningitis, and others) and a **TB screening within the last year** — arrange these before travel.

Apply to Universities

WHAT TO KNOW

Apply **directly to each university or branch campus**. Branch campuses use **US-style admissions** (12 years of schooling, strong grades, subject requirements like Math/Physics for engineering, and often SAT/English tests). Confirm deadlines and requirements on each institution's page.

BY THE NUMBERS

Apply directly

each institution

US-style admissions

for branch campuses

English/SAT

where required

HOW TO HELP

Apply **directly** to your chosen university or branch campus, meeting its (often US-style) admissions requirements — strong grades, subject prerequisites, and English/SAT where required.

GOOD TO KNOW

Branch campuses hold the **same admission standards as the US home campus** — plan for competitive, US-style applications.

Plan for Tuition & Financial Aid

WHAT TO KNOW

Branch campuses follow **US tuition models** (roughly **QAR 180,000–265,000/year**); Qatar University is far more affordable (QAR 1,100–1,400/credit). Crucially, **generous aid** exists: the Qatar Foundation Financial Aid Program (a zero-interest loan for tuition + housing) and the Qatar Foundation Student Fund Scholarship, plus need-based aid and merit awards.

BY THE NUMBERS

Branch campuses

~QAR 180k–265k/yr

Qatar University

far cheaper

QF aid

loans & scholarships

HOW TO HELP

Budget the tuition (branch campuses are pricey; Qatar University much cheaper), and pursue **Qatar Foundation financial aid** (a zero-interest tuition+housing loan) and scholarships — which can cut costs dramatically.

GOOD TO KNOW

The **Qatar Foundation Financial Aid Program** offers a zero-interest loan (tuition + housing), repayable via salary or by working at QF-approved organizations — a major help.

Meet the Financial Requirement

WHAT TO KNOW

For the visa you show an **acceptance letter, proof of funds, and health insurance**. Qatar University, for example, asks for financial-sponsorship documents — a bank guarantee of about **QAR 20,000 if your sponsor is in Qatar**, or the sponsor's bank statement if abroad. Confirm your institution's exact requirement.

BY THE NUMBERS

Acceptance + funds

+ insurance

QU

~QAR 20,000 bank guarantee

Confirm

per institution

HOW TO HELP

Prepare an **acceptance letter, proof of funds, and health insurance** — noting requirements like Qatar University's ~QAR 20,000 bank guarantee (sponsor in Qatar) — per your institution's rules.

GOOD TO KNOW

Financial requirements **vary by institution** — confirm the exact proof (bank guarantee/statement) with your university's admissions office.



Meet Language Requirements

WHAT TO KNOW

Teaching is **in English** at the Education City branch campuses and in many Qatar University programs, so you prove English (TOEFL/IELTS/SAT). Arabic is the official language and used in some QU programs and daily life; some Arabic helps.

BY THE NUMBERS

English

branch campuses & many QU

Proof

TOEFL/IELTS/SAT

Arabic

official; some helps

HOW TO HELP

Prove **English proficiency** for your program (teaching is largely in English), and pick up some Arabic for daily life.

GOOD TO KNOW

Some Qatar University programs are in **Arabic** — confirm your program's language of instruction.

Prepare for the Move

WHAT TO KNOW

After arriving, complete your **QID, medical exam, and immunization checks, and set up banking**. Some universities and scholarships include or subsidize housing (Education City has student residences). Income is tax-free, though food and entertainment can be pricey; Qatar is very safe.

BY THE NUMBERS

QID + medical

first tasks

Housing

often included/subsidized

Tax-free

but some costs high

HOW TO HELP

Handle arrival admin — **QID, medical, immunizations, banking** — and check whether your university/scholarship includes housing; budget for a tax-free but sometimes pricey city.

GOOD TO KNOW

Scholarship students often get **free or subsidized housing** — which significantly cuts overall costs.

Understand Work Rules

WHAT TO KNOW

Be clear on this: international students on a Qatar student visa **cannot work off-campus**. Qatar University students may apply for **on-campus work**, but off-campus employment isn't allowed during studies. **Don't rely on part-time income** to fund your studies.

BY THE NUMBERS

No off-campus work

during studies

On-campus

QU students may apply

Fund fully

don't rely on work

HOW TO HELP

Understand that **off-campus work isn't allowed** on a student visa (only on-campus roles at QU) — plan to fund your studies through aid, scholarships, or family support.

WATCH OUT

Off-campus employment is not permitted during studies — an important point if you were counting on part-time income.

Thrive & Work After Study

WHAT TO KNOW

After graduating, to work you need a job offer and a **work residence permit (Iqama)**, which your employer (a registered Qatari entity) sponsors. Education City graduates (CMU, Georgetown, Weill Cornell) have **strong prospects** in energy, engineering, finance, tech, and healthcare — in a tax-free economy.

BY THE NUMBERS

Work permit (Iqama)

employer-sponsored

Education City grads

strong prospects

Tax-free

income

HOW TO HELP

Plan for an **employer-sponsored work permit (Iqama)** after graduating, and leverage your (especially Education City) degree in Qatar's energy, tech, finance, and healthcare sectors.

GOOD TO KNOW

Post-study work needs an **employer-sponsored Iqama** (a registered Qatari employer) — a job offer is required.

Studying in Qatar: The Essentials

A snapshot — figures change, so confirm everything with your university, Qatar Foundation, and the Ministry of Interior.

The system

Qatar University (public, affordable), Education City branch campuses (Georgetown, Carnegie Mellon, Northwestern, Texas A&M, Weill Cornell Medicine, VCUarts; plus HEC Paris and UCL) awarding home-institution degrees, and HBKU.

Visa & QID

Your university sponsors your student residence visa after admission; on arrival you complete a medical exam (immunizations, TB screening) and receive your QID (residence ID).

Tuition & aid

Branch campuses ~QAR 180k–265k/year (US model); Qatar University far cheaper; generous Qatar Foundation aid (a zero-interest tuition+housing loan) and scholarships, plus need-based and merit awards.

Money & language

Show acceptance, proof of funds (e.g., QU's ~QAR 20,000 bank guarantee if sponsor is in Qatar), and health insurance; English is the main medium (TOEFL/IELTS/SAT); some QU programs in Arabic.

Work & after

Off-campus work is not allowed during studies (QU on-campus roles only); post-study work needs an employer-sponsored Iqama; Education City graduates have strong, tax-free career prospects.

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