K12 ACADEMICS — INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERIES

Studying in Sri Lanka

A guide for international students & families — how Sri Lanka's higher education works, the student visa, affordable English-medium study, and new Australian branch campuses.

K12 ACADEMICS

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2026 EDITION

ABOUT K12 ACADEMICS

The world's largest education resource.

Online since 2004, K12 Academics has helped millions of families, students and educators **find the right school, college, camp, business and program in their community** — for every kind of learner.

AFFORDABLE, ENGLISH-MEDIUM, NEW AUSTRALIAN BRANCH CAMPUSES

Sri Lanka offers **affordable, English-medium higher education** at respected public universities (Colombo, Peradeniya, Moratuwa) and private institutions (SLIIT), and it's now home to **new Australian branch campuses (Curtin, Edith Cowan)** delivering onshore degrees. Add low living costs, a safe and scenic setting, and reduced SAARC fees. Non-EU students get a **student visa** via the Department of Immigration. This guide walks it in **ten steps**.

General guidance, not legal or immigration advice. Sri Lankan rules, tuition, and funds change. The details here are recent examples and **must be confirmed with your university, the Department of Immigration & Emigration, and the relevant mission.**

1

STEP 01 OF 10

Understand Why Students Choose Sri Lanka

WHAT TO KNOW

Sri Lanka offers **affordable, English-medium education; strong IT and engineering; new Australian branch campuses; low living costs; a safe, scenic setting; and reduced SAARC fees** — an accessible, budget-friendly destination.

BY THE NUMBERS

Affordable	Strong	Branch campuses
English-medium	IT & engineering	Australian (onshore)

HOW TO HELP

Weigh Sri Lanka's **affordability, IT/engineering strength, and branch-campus options** against a smaller international-student system — for value and English-taught study, it's a solid choice.

GOOD TO KNOW

UCSC is consistently ranked **South Asia's best IT faculty**, and the University of Moratuwa leads in engineering — key strengths.

2

STEP 02 OF 10

Understand the System

WHAT TO KNOW

There are **public universities** (Colombo, Peradeniya, Moratuwa, UCSC, Sabaragamuwa — some admit internationals under bilateral agreements), **private universities** (SLIIT — QS/THE-ranked, NSBM, Esoft), and new **Australian branch campuses (Curtin University Colombo, Edith Cowan University)**. Medicine is offered at university medical faculties (SLMC-regulated).

BY THE NUMBERS

Public	Private	Branch campuses
Colombo, Moratuwa, UCSC	SLIIT, NSBM	Curtin, Edith Cowan

HOW TO HELP

Choose among **public universities** (some via bilateral agreements), **private institutions** (SLIIT), or an **Australian branch campus** (for an onshore Australian degree), by field and budget.

GOOD TO KNOW

Australian branch campuses (Curtin, Edith Cowan) let you earn an **Australian degree onshore**, with transfer options to campuses abroad.

3

STEP 03 OF 10

Get the Student Visa

WHAT TO KNOW

International students at a government-accepted institution apply for a **student visa** through the **Department of Immigration & Emigration**. Typically you enter on an **entry visa** and then obtain a **residence visa (renewed yearly)**; a **health protection plan is mandatory for stays over two months**.

BY THE NUMBERS

Student visa	Entry → residence visa	Health plan
Dept of Immigration	renewed yearly	mandatory (2+ months)

HOW TO HELP

Apply for the **student visa** via the Department of Immigration & Emigration (entry visa, then a yearly residence visa), and arrange the **mandatory health protection plan**.

GOOD TO KNOW

The **residence visa is renewed each year**, and a health protection plan is required — your university assists.

4

STEP 04 OF 10

Apply to Universities

WHAT TO KNOW

Apply **directly to universities** (mostly online). International intake deadlines commonly fall **April–July** for a September start, and some acceptances come quickly. **English is the medium at most faculties**; SAARC students benefit from reduced fees and bilateral scholarship agreements.

BY THE NUMBERS

Apply directly	English	SAARC
April–July	most faculties	reduced fees

HOW TO HELP

Apply **directly (online)** for the September intake (deadlines ~April–July), in English — SAARC students should ask about reduced fees and bilateral scholarships.

GOOD TO KNOW

Some **national universities admit internationals under bilateral agreements** — check whether one exists with your country.

5

STEP 05 OF 10

Plan for Tuition & Costs

WHAT TO KNOW

Tuition is **affordable**: public universities **~$1,500–5,000/year**; private universities **~LKR 200,000–600,000/year (~$600–1,800)**; branch-campus (Australian) fees are higher but below the home campus. Living costs are low ($300–500/month).

BY THE NUMBERS

Public	Private	Low
~$1,500–5,000/yr	~$600–1,800/yr	living costs

HOW TO HELP

Budget the **affordable tuition** (public, private, or branch-campus) plus low living costs — branch-campus fees are higher but below the Australian home-campus rate.

GOOD TO KNOW

A **branch-campus Australian degree** costs less onshore than in Australia — good value with transfer options.

6

STEP 06 OF 10

Meet the Financial Requirement

WHAT TO KNOW

For the visa you must show **proof of funds (commonly around $10,000)** covering tuition and living, plus the **mandatory health protection plan** ($300–600/year). Confirm the exact amount and documents with your university and the Department of Immigration.

BY THE NUMBERS

Funds	Health plan	Confirm
~$10,000	mandatory	per immigration

HOW TO HELP

Prepare **proof of funds (~$10,000)** and the **mandatory health protection plan** — confirm the exact requirements with your university and immigration.

GOOD TO KNOW

The **health protection plan is a visa requirement** for stays over two months — arrange it before or on arrival.

7 STEP 07 OF 10

Meet Language Requirements

WHAT TO KNOW

English is the medium of instruction at most faculties, so you'll prove English competence (writing, speaking, comprehension) where required. Sinhala and Tamil are the local languages; some local language helps daily life, but study is in English.

BY THE NUMBERS

English	Proof	Local language
most faculties	where required	helps daily life

HOW TO HELP

Prove **English competence** where required — teaching is largely in English — and pick up some Sinhala or Tamil for daily life.

GOOD TO KNOW

Most faculties teach **in English** — language is rarely a barrier for study.

8

STEP 08 OF 10

Prepare for the Move

WHAT TO KNOW

After your visa, **arrange housing, complete registration, and set up banking and your health plan**. Most international students are based in or near **Colombo**; living costs are low, and Sri Lanka is safe with rich culture and eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites for weekend trips.

BY THE NUMBERS

Housing + registration	Health plan + banking	Based
first tasks	set up	in/near Colombo

HOW TO HELP

Handle arrival admin — **housing, registration, banking, health plan** — and enjoy Sri Lanka—s low costs, safety, and scenery.

GOOD TO KNOW

Sri Lanka is **safe and scenic**, with eight UNESCO sites — great for study-trip weekends.

9

STEP 09 OF 10

Explore Branch Campuses & Transfer

WHAT TO KNOW

The new **Australian branch campuses — Curtin University Colombo (at SLIIT) and Edith Cowan University** — deliver onshore degrees (engineering, CS, business, cybersecurity, commerce, and more), and are set up to let students **transfer to campuses abroad** (Curtin's network spans Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, the UAE, and Mauritius).

BY THE NUMBERS

Curtin / Edith Cowan	Fields	Transfer
Australian, onshore	engineering, CS, business	to campuses abroad

HOW TO HELP

Consider an **Australian branch campus** (Curtin, Edith Cowan) for an onshore Australian degree with the option to **transfer to a campus abroad** — a flexible, cost-effective route.

GOOD TO KNOW

Curtin Colombo lets you **start in Sri Lanka and transfer** to Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, the UAE, or Mauritius — valuable flexibility.

10 STEP 10 OF 10

Thrive & Work After Study

WHAT TO KNOW

Sri Lanka's **IT and engineering** strengths (UCSC, Moratuwa) feed a growing tech sector (graduates work at firms like Dialog Axiata and WSO2, and abroad). Confirm the current post-study work pathway if you want to stay, and use branch-campus transfer options for international careers.

BY THE NUMBERS

IT & engineering	Employers	Post-study
growing tech sector	Dialog, WSO2, global	confirm pathway

HOW TO HELP

Leverage Sri Lanka's **IT/engineering strengths** and (for branch-campus students) transfer/international options, and confirm the current post-study work pathway if you want to stay.

GOOD TO KNOW

Sri Lanka's **tech sector** offers real graduate opportunities — and branch-campus transfer opens international routes.

QUICK REFERENCE

Studying in Sri Lanka: The Essentials

A snapshot — figures change, so confirm with your university, the Department of Immigration & Emigration, and the relevant mission.

The system

Public universities (Colombo, Peradeniya, Moratuwa, UCSC — some admit internationals under bilateral agreements), private institutions (SLIIT, NSBM), and Australian branch campuses (Curtin University Colombo, Edith Cowan University); medicine at SLMC-regulated faculties.

The visa

International students at a government-accepted institution apply for a student visa via the Department of Immigration & Emigration (entry visa, then a yearly residence visa); a health protection plan is mandatory for stays over two months.

Tuition

Public ~$1,500–5,000/year; private ~LKR 200,000–600,000/year (~$600–1,800); Australian branch-campus fees higher but below the home campus; low living costs ($300–500/month).

Money & language

Show proof of funds (~$10,000) plus the mandatory health protection plan; English is the medium at most faculties (proof where required); SAARC students get reduced fees.

Branch campuses & after

Curtin (at SLIIT) and Edith Cowan deliver onshore Australian degrees with transfer options abroad; Sri Lanka's IT/engineering strengths feed a growing tech sector — confirm the post-study work pathway.

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