

The Free School



Free or very low tuition fees for international university students in Germany, Iceland, Norway, Finland, Luxembourg, Greece, Brazil, Panama and the Czech Republic - November 2016.

Original content analysis research.

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This is a Free School presentation



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Aim

This presentation consolidates research published by The Free School in October 2016 (Jericho, 2016a; 2016b). This research aims to:

- Identify popular myths about free university education in Greece, Brazil, Luxembourg, the Czech republic and Panama.
- Summarize the status of tuition fees payable by international students who study at public and private universities in these five countries.

Prior research dated October 2016

Jericho (2016b)

Germany	Free tuition at public universities for international students but not at private universities unless a scholarship is voluntarily offered.
Finland	As of August 2017, tuition fees are payable only by those who are not lawful permanent residents or citizens of Switzerland, the European Union or the European Economic Area who study a Bachelor or Master Degree in a language other than Swedish or Finnish.
Norway	No tuition fees payable by international students at public universities. Private universities must charge international students the same fee as they charge citizens and permanent residents of Norway.
Iceland	Free tuition at public universities for international students but not at private universities unless a scholarship is voluntarily offered.

Background and context

There is much confusion in the public domain about which countries provide free tuition for international university students. As background, I refer to a statement posted by public commentator Howard Clark:

“Nine different countries offer free tuition to U.S. citizens just as they do to their own citizens, according to [Consumer Reports](#). Those countries include: Brazil, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Luxembourg, Norway, Panama. For some, you have to be proficient in the native language. But Finland, Germany, Iceland, Luxembourg, and Norway offer a growing body of courses taught in English.”

Background and context

The author of this presentation, Dr. Jay Jericho regularly works with international scholarship searchers via Quora.com and The Free School. He concludes that there are two major sources of the confusion which prevails in the public domain.

Most scholarship applicants have never studied at post-secondary level. Some of these people have not developed the critical thinking skills required to challenge information that they read in the public domain. They frequently consult imperfect sources such as unconfirmed secondary source reports which appear on discussion forums and dated primary source documents which are no longer current policy.

Most scholarship seekers do not speak English as a first language and their English language is at intermediate level or lower. Often they see keywords in media stories such as “free”, “university”, “tuition fees”, “Germany”. They are unable to interpret information that discusses general eligibility, exceptions and policy history.

Background and context

Using the Clark.com story as an example, it is not true that all 9 of these countries provide universal free tuition for eligible international university students. This situation would be clear if the student followed the link to Consumer Reports reference shown in this story and was able to interpret the table shown in this report.

The two tables on the next slide have been reconstructed from the Consumer Report (2014).

Background (unconfirmed data*)

Country	What's free?
Brazil	Public universities are tuition-free to international students, but Portuguese is the language of instruction.
Czech Republic	Tuition is free for programs in which the language of instruction is Czech.
Greece	Why not study in the birthplace of academia, democracy, and the Olympics? Studying in Greece is generally tuition-free, with some exceptions. The downside is that undergraduate courses are taught in Greek, so you'd have to brush up on your alpha-beta.

Source: Consumer Reports (2014). The facts shown in this table are quotes.

*** This presentation assesses the accuracy of these claims.**

Background (unconfirmed data*)

Country	What's free?
Luxembourg	A true multicultural environment, the University of Luxembourg, which is the only university in the country, provides instruction in French, German, and English. It charges no tuition for foreign students.
Panama	Tuition is free for everyone at public universities in this Central American country, where two universities are internationally ranked—Universidad de Panamá and Universidad Tecnológica de Panamá. The language of instruction is Spanish.

Source: Consumer Reports (2014). The facts shown in this table are quotes.

***This presentation assesses the accuracy of these claims.**

SUMMARY BY NATION: CONFIRMED

Brazil	Free tuition fees at public universities for international students but not for MBA courses and 'extension courses' which may refer to non-award study.
Czech	Programs conducted in the Czech language at public universities are free for international students.
Greece	Greece is committed in principle to charging low tuition fees for foreign students. This policy is not administered uniformly among public universities. This policy is under review due to Greece's economic problems.
Luxembourg	Free tuition at this nation's sole public university for international students but not at its private university unless a scholarship is voluntarily offered.
Panama	Prospective international students are advised to contact Panama's two public universities direct to determine tuition fees payable on a case-by-case basis for the reasons outlined in this presentation.

Brazil: University of São Paulo

International Cooperation Office

Universidade de São Paulo is a public state institution with *campuses* in eight cities around the state of São Paulo: Bauru, Lorena, Piracicaba, Pirassununga, Ribeirão Preto, São Carlos, Santos and São Paulo. It offers academic and research activities in all areas of knowledge: 249 undergraduate courses, 239 graduate courses (Master's and PhD) programs and 993 extracurricular programs in all of its 42 schools.

Tuition fees are **not** charged by USP on undergraduate and *stricto sensu* graduate courses, therefore, no scholarship programs are available for students. Other MBA or extension courses may have tuition fees.

Important:

All classes in USP are held in Portuguese.

Universidade de São Paulo (2016)

Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul

How much do I have to pay to study at UFRGS?

UFRGS is a federal university, public and free of charge, therefore, accepted students do not have to pay tuition. However, some parallel activities are of charge, such as the Portuguese as a foreign language course, as well as cultural activities, lunch at the cafeteria, housing, and so on.

Tuitions fees are not charged by USP on undergraduate and stricto sensu graduate courses, therefore, no scholarship programs are available for students. Other MBA or extension courses may have tuition fees.

Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (2016a; 2016b)

University of Campinas

Unicamp is a public university fully supported by the State of São Paulo. It has also access to private and public research funds. Like in all Brazilian public education institutions, our students (Brazilian or foreign) do not pay tuition fees and have access to subsidized restaurants in campus.

University of Campinas (2016).

Czech Republic: Government

Study in the Czech Republic

The living standard in the Czech Republic is quite high while the cost of living remains reasonable. The same can be said about the higher education: students get good quality and pay affordable tuition fees. Besides, study programmes in the Czech language at public universities are free.

Czech Republic Embassy in Indonesia (2016)

Charles University, Czech Republic

Fees for studies in Czech

Studies in Czech are free of charge. A tuition fee is charged only if the student exceeds the standard length of study by more than one year. Example: The standard length of study for a Masters in General Medicine is 6 years. Students can study 7 years free of charge. If they do not complete their studies by the 7th year, they will have to start to pay the tuition fee upon entering their 8th year.

Charles University (2016)

European Parliament re Greece

Traditionally, Greece has offered tuition free to competitive applicants from other countries. This position is under review due to Greece's dire economic situation.

“The System of Higher Education in Greece is among the most accessible and affordable in Europe: admission tests are not required, education is free and knowledge of the Greek language is not a prerequisite for submission of application. Given the large number of universities and Technological Educational Institutions and sectors covering different kinds of sciences, students have the opportunity to choose from many specialties and disciplines.” European Union Parliament (2012)

University of the Aegean

Information for international students: Admissions

Foreign students who come from countries which are not members of the European Union pay fees so as to cover a small percentage of both the expenses of their studies and the books they are granted.

University of the Aegean (2016)

Technical University of Crete

Admission of foreign students to Greek Universities

Foreign students who come from non-E.U. Member States and are admitted in Higher Education in Greece, pay fees so as to cover a small percentage of both the expenses of studies and the books they are granted. The amount of expenditure is ***to be determined by a future Ministerial decision [emphasis added].***”

Technical University of Crete (2016)

University of Crete (2016)

Fees: In Greek public universities there are no tuition fees for Greek and EU nationals enrolled in undergraduate programs. Some Universities do charge fees to non-EU international students enrolled in undergraduate courses to cover a proportion of their study costs and textbooks, and ***most Universities now charge fees for some of their taught graduate programmes [emphasis added]***. At the University of Crete there are currently NO tuition or bench fees for any registered undergraduate student.

To date, 34 of the 38 [Postgraduate Study Programmes](#) organized &/or coordinated by the University leading to Master degrees have no tuition and/or bench fees. Check the sites of Master programmes for fee status in the current year. Fees are charged for the [joint Master programmes](#) which the University currently participates in (MUNDUS, TIME).

There are no tuition fees for PhD students. Most of the graduate degree programmes (Master and PhD) have associated scholarship schemes.

Luxembourg

Luxembourg has one public university, the University of Luxembourg.

“**Enrolment fee** (one registration fee payable for the degree program as a whole at the start of each term and not for each coursework unit).

No additional tuition fees for foreign students.

Enrolment fee generally 400 euros in semesters 1 and 2 and is 200 euros for all other semesters.” University of Luxembourg (2016)

Luxembourg has one private university, Sacred Heart University Luxembourg.

This private university operates as a Business School. Full tuition fees are payable by domestic and foreign students. (Sacred Heart University, 2016)

Panama Universities

Panama's higher education policies for international post-secondary education students is the most complex of the countries explored in this research presentation.

Panama's Government and universities maintain numerous bilateral exchange partnership programs with national governments and specific universities.

Example: Government of Canada (2016); University of British Columbia (2016).

In contrast to the other countries included in this study, the Panamanian Government regards these agreements as the cornerstone of its international student program that issues student visas to foreign scholars (*e.g.* Panamanian Government, 2015).

The number of international students who study in Panama via these schemes is likely in the thousands each year. In most cases, bilateral exchange students pay their fees to their home university. This arrangement is the international norm for exchange programs coordinated at the university level. International students are not restricted to these bilateral programs and they may apply to universities and post-secondary colleges direct.

Panama Universities

Numerous stories published by the non-mainstream media in the English language, such as global discussion forums, claim that international students do not pay tuition fees to study at Panama's two public universities. These public institutions are the **University of Panama** and the **Technological University of Panama**. It is difficult to obtain comprehensive information from government websites as these are published in Spanish only. These universities websites (via Google translate) are ambiguous.

Technical University of Panama (2016):

“Note: By Resolution No. 07-2004-R-MCAD the Administrative Council of the **Technological University of Panama** established the payment of *fee* Aliens B /. 200.00 per term for foreign undergraduate students (not including fees). Exempted from this payment to foreigners who possess card "E" Panama.” n.b. *Applicants should contact the university to confirm if “fee” refers to tuition fees or administration/amenities fees.*

Technical University of Panama

Card E Panama: “A cédula in Panama is an official; government issued identification card similar to a social security card for Americans. The cédula card displays vital information of the person that owns it. Their name, place and date of birth, nationality, sex, signature and photo along with a specific number assigned to that person. The back of the card has a magnetic strip on it that contains all the same information along with a digital rendition of the holder’s thumbprint. Cards issued to expats display a large letter “E” in bright blue lettering indicating the status of “extranjero,” the Spanish word for foreigner. So what’s the purpose of pursuing a cédula and why did we want one? All foreigners are legally supposed to carry their passports on them at all times for identification purposes.”

Web Article: [How To Get Your E-Cédula Without A Lawyer.... And Why? \(2013\)](#)

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Original content analysis research.

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The Free School



Free university study in Germany:
Original content analysis research

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Call for further research

The researcher calls for other scholars to extend the scope of this project and analyse the fee structures of all post-secondary educational institutions such as vocational colleges and technical institutes. Those who aim to replicate this research project may inspect official current policy documents published in the official languages of each country. This analysis may significantly expand the limited scope of this preliminary research project and further aid students to select the most suitable program.

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