



BEYOND THE STATES

College Degrees Abroad Taught in English

The Top Five Stressors for Parents of College-bound Teens – and How to Avoid Them

College enrollment expert demonstrates why European colleges make it better

With the back-crushing weight of student debt grabbing the headlines and giving an entire generation of college-bound teens – and their parents – pause for thought, one education expert says these people can avoid the most common stressors of the application process by considering European college programs taught in English.

International education consultant **Jennifer Viemont** of **Beyond the States**, an online guide to these programs, says that life can be better for parents when their kids opt out of the rat race of U.S. college admissions.

“There’s no question that applying for programs in Europe is less stressful and less costly for families,” said Viemont. “Parents don’t have to go crazy or go broke to ensure their kids get a world-class education.”

She offers these “Top Five Stressors – and How European College Make It Better” to help relieve the stress for parents of college-bound teens:

- **Stressor #1: GPAs.** Every parent wants their kids to do well in school, but the pressure to maintain the highest possible grade point average in order to get into college has made things crazy. With no margin for error, parents are paying a fortune to tutors and having to play Homework Warden every evening and weekend. Kids are too busy for family time, and when they are around they are tired and grouchy.
- **How European College Makes it Better:** Grades still matter, of course. But applicants know exactly how much they matter, and they’re not competing for whose GPA is higher. European colleges don’t care whether your grades are higher than the other applicants just as long as those grades meet the predetermined requirement. Instead of uncertainty and competition leading to anxiety and stress, students can focus on what’s required and then explore what they actually want to learn.
- **Stressor #2: AP Classes.** You think GPAs put pressure on students and parents? Advanced Placement classes are regular classes on steroids, cramming in more content and requiring more homework and stress. The high-stakes AP exams cost money, preparing for them takes away free time and family time, and parents have to watch their kids go nuts for something that may not even be useful. In fact, Dartmouth College recently found that students who passed the AP Psychology exam and then enrolled in the college class did no better than the students who didn’t take the AP class.
- **How European College Makes it Better:** Of the 29 countries with programs listed in the Beyond the States database, only four require American students to have AP classes. Four. And those colleges will tell students exactly how many AP classes they need and what score they need to get on the exam.
- **Stressor #3: SAT/ACT.** Preparation courses for standardized tests is a \$4 billion industry and parents are paying the bill – and not only in dollars. Consider the time: carting kids to and from the courses is no picnic, and the more time kids spend on test prep the less quality time they’re spending with you. And consider the value: a recent study showed that test scores didn’t correlate to how well a student did in college.
- **How European College Makes it Better:** Most European colleges do not require a SAT or ACT score. And those that do give students a specific target score and don’t bother with how that score compares to other applicants. Once a student reaches the required score, no more tests have to be taken or preparation paid for.
- **Stressor #4: Extracurricular Activities.** It’s wonderful for kids to have interests and hobbies. But the “more is better” mentality of U.S. college admissions means kids are just checking off boxes instead of pursuing their passions, while missing holidays and family events due to rehearsals and practices for enterprises they might not care about. Parents pay the price in bills for classes and equipment, in time to shuttle the kids around, and in stress to manage the constant motion of a frenetic schedule.
- **How European College Makes it Better:** European colleges are more concerned with finding the best fit for a student rather than admitting a student who does the most things. This frees students to try things out without feeling like they need to commit to them for the duration of their high school career in order to look good on college applications.
- **Stressor #5: Cost of Tuition.** You know college tuition in the U.S. is crazy when parents have to spend time and money on workshops just to learn how to pay it. The maze of scholarships and loans – and the time and headaches filling out the paperwork for them – is an

enormous burden that may not even pay off.

- **How European College Makes it Better:** Costs are more straightforward and significantly lower than at U.S. schools. In some cases, an entire bachelor's degree program at an accredited school in Europe costs less than only one year at a school in the U.S.

"There's nothing wrong with kids working hard or having full lives," said Viemont. "But spending time and money on busywork – taking activities and classes not for the sake of learning or developing, but for the sake of playing the high stakes admissions games – isn't how most people want to operate. And with the option of college in Europe, students and parents no longer have to."

Students and parents can get more information, arrange for a consultation and sign up for free monthly webinars at www.beyondthestates.com.

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About Beyond the States

Beyond the States helps students connect with and navigate English-taught, accredited, post-secondary educational opportunities to start and compete their bachelor's degrees abroad. With over 300 schools and more than 1,500 programs in its database, Beyond the States is a one-stop source for comprehensive and unbiased information, empowering students to make informed decisions about their future and to earn their degree while seeing the world.