



## A GUIDE TO APPLYING TO TOP 50 EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Top 50 European universities	4
What do global rankings tell us?	7
How likely are British students to gain a place at these top universities?	10
Which courses are available in English at the best universities in Europe?	12
Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine	12
Arts & Humanities, Modern Foreign Languages	13
Liberal Arts & Sciences	14
Engineering and Technology	15
Business & Economics	16
Law	17
Science and Mathematics	17
Hospitality & Tourism	18
Conclusion	19
About A Star Future	20

# INTRODUCTION



When students are looking at universities overseas it is quite common for them to want to search out the best possible university according to the university league tables. We often hear students say that they would only consider going abroad for something better than they can get at home. This is a natural and understandable component of the decision-making process. However, it rarely gives the full story regarding the suitability of international degrees for British students or the feasibility of their actually being able to take up a place at one of these leading institutions.

The purpose of this guide is to give an overview of what is actually available at the best universities in Europe taught in the English language. For obvious reasons, we have excluded the UK from our definition of Europe for the purpose of this exercise. We have concentrated on the Top 50 universities in the world that are neither British nor non-European.

We will address issues relating to the composition of the league tables themselves, give examples of specialist universities that are not included in the overall league tables but are still world-leading in their field and also provide an overview of higher education institutions that are excellent in some of the more popular vocational fields and therefore “ineligible” for inclusion in global rankings.

While issues relating to entry requirements, student experience and tuition fees will be mentioned where relevant to the feasibility of a particular course at a university we will not be dwelling on these in a wider context. More information on these issues can be found on the [country pages](#) of our [website](#).

# TOP 50 EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

This ranking of European universities is adapted from [The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2019](#) (THE 2019). The number of courses in English is taken from our own research in August 2018 and there may have been some additions or cancellations since then. Tuition fees are quoted for courses starting in 2019.

Rank	University	Country	Global Rank	Bachelors in English	Tuition fees pa
1	ETH Zurich	Switzerland	11	0	
2	Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich	Germany	32	0	
3	École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne	Switzerland	35	0	
4	Karolinska Institute	Sweden	40	1	0
5	PSL Research University Paris	France	41	0	
6	Technical University of Munich	Germany	44	1	
7	University of Heidelberg	Germany	47	0	
8	KU Leuven	Belgium	48	4	€890 - 922.3
9	Delft University of Technology	Netherlands	58	4	€2,083
10	Wageningen University	Netherlands	59	0	
11	University of Amsterdam	Netherlands	62	16	€2,083 - €4,336
12	Humboldt University of Berlin	Germany	67	0	
13	Leiden University	Netherlands	68	15	€2,083
14	Erasmus University Rotterdam	Netherlands	70	12	€2,083 - 4,100
15	Sorbonne University	France	73	0	
16	Utrecht University	Netherlands	74	10	€2,083 - 4,100
17	University of Freiburg	Germany	76	0	
18	University of Groningen	Netherlands	79	37	€2,083 - 4,000
= 19	RWTH Aachen University	Germany	87	0	
= 19	Uppsala University	Sweden	87	4	0
21	University of Tübingen	Germany	89	0	
= 22	Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin	Germany	90	0	
= 22	University of Zurich	Switzerland	90	1	CHF 1,440
24	Lund University	Sweden	98	6	0
25	University of Helsinki	Finland	99	0	
26	University of Basel	Switzerland	103	0	
27	Free University of Berlin	Germany	104	1	0
28	Ecole Polytechnique	France	108	1	€12,000
= 29	University of Bern	Switzerland	110	1	CHF 1,500
= 29	University of Bonn	Germany	110	0	
= 29	University of Copenhagen	Denmark	116	0	
32	University of Oslo	Norway	121	0	
= 33	Aarhus University	Denmark	123	10	0
= 33	University of Göttingen	Germany	123	1	€ 336.95
= 33	University of Mannheim	Germany	123	0	
= 33	Radboud University	Netherlands	123	13	€2,083
= 37	Université Catholique de Louvain	Belgium	128	0	
= 37	Maastricht University	Netherlands	128	15	€ 2,083 - 3,405
39	Technical University of Berlin	Germany	131	0	
= 40	University of Geneva	Switzerland	135	1	CHF 1,000
= 40	University of Hamburg	Germany	135	0	
= 40	Karlsruhe Institute of Technology	Germany	135	1	€ 8,415
= 40	Pompeu Fabra University	Spain	135	6	€ 1,657 - 2,512.23
= 44	Ghent University	Belgium	143	1	€ 915.1
= 44	University of Vienna	Austria	143	0	
46	Autonomous University of Barcelona	Spain	145	5	€1,516
47	University of Cologne	Germany	146	0	
48	Ulm University	Germany	149	0	
49	TU Dresden	Germany	151	0	
= 50	Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna	Italy	153	0	
= 50	Stockholm University	Sweden	153	3	0

Although the UK maintains its reputation as one of the best higher education systems in the world, the number of British universities ranked at the very top has dropped slightly compared to three years ago (from 26 in 2015 to 21 in 2018 - The University of Leeds being the British university most closely equivalent to Stockholm University, according to THE 2019).

From the perspective of UK students looking for the highest standard of education in the world, according to THE 2019, they are just as likely to find a world-class university in continental Europe as they would be in the USA. Of the world's top 153 universities 50 are located in continental Europe. There is an equal number of American universities in the same range, although these are admittedly more likely to be found in the higher positions. The remaining 32 universities are predominantly based in Canada (6), Australia (8) and Asia (14).

The landscape of elite education in continental Europe has become more diverse over the past three years. Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland continue to lead the rankings and together constitute 60% of the top 50 European universities. At the other end of the spectrum, universities in Finland, Italy and Austria have seen an improvement in their ranking during this period.

[The Netherlands](#) has been the most successful European country in expanding its UK student population thanks to a large number of English undergraduate course offerings. Across the top 50 European universities there are currently 170 Bachelor's degrees offered in English, 122 of which are on offer at eight Dutch universities and of these, 37 are offered at one university alone - the [University of Groningen](#) (18<sup>th</sup>).

We often receive enquiries from students wishing to study in English in France, Switzerland and Germany, in particular. While it is true that half of the most elite European universities are to be found in these three countries, they offer limited options for British students. With three international tracks for their Mathematics programme, [Ecole Polytechnique](#) (28<sup>th</sup>) is the only French representative on our list that teaches in English. Across the highest ranked Swiss universities, there are only three Bachelor's degrees taught in English. Moreover, prospective students only have a choice between two subjects: English at the University of Zurich (22<sup>nd</sup>) and the University of Bern (29<sup>th</sup>); or Economics at the University of Geneva (40<sup>th</sup>). While there has been growth in English-taught higher education in Germany recently, this relates almost entirely to courses at Master's level and there is little appetite to introduce widespread English-taught Bachelor's at this time. There are only a handful of full degrees taught in English at German research universities. These include North American Studies at Free University of Berlin (27<sup>th</sup>), Molecular Ecosystem Science at the University of Goettingen (33<sup>rd</sup>) and Mechanical Engineering at [Carl Benz School of Engineering](#), a private offshoot of Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (40<sup>th</sup>). The [TUM School of Management](#) (part of Technical University of Munich (6<sup>th</sup>))

also offers one degree programme in Management and Engineering. This has five specialisms but only computing science can be completed in English currently.

The majority of the remaining Bachelor's degrees taught in English are offered at universities in Sweden (14), Spain (11) and Denmark (10).

Of the 170 Bachelor's on offer, the most common subjects are engineering, arts and humanities, business and economics. Seven of the programmes are Liberal Arts and Sciences degrees that naturally include a broader range of subjects within them and could appeal to a wider range of students. We will expand on subject possibilities later in this guide.

# WHAT DO GLOBAL RANKINGS TELL US?

While there are some excellent opportunities available at the “best” European universities, it is fair to say that it is not possible to find something taught in English for everyone. But even if it were, are these really the best universities for young British students? It is hard to argue that these rankings don’t broadly point out which are the best universities from a purely academic perspective but there are certainly many factors that are important yet completely neglected by them. It is worth taking a moment to consider the methodology behind the rankings.

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings are composed of the following elements:

- Teaching: the learning environment (worth 30 per cent of the overall ranking score)
- Research: volume, income and reputation (worth 30 per cent)
- Citations: research influence (worth 30 per cent)
- Industry income: innovation (worth 2.5 per cent)
- International outlook: staff, students and research (worth 7.5 per cent).

There is no doubt that these rankings have become more sophisticated in recent years but it is still clear that research output both in terms of volume and influence dominates the rankings. While this is obviously the main component of a university’s reputation, when students are looking for the best learning environment it may not be the most important consideration; universities that specialise in research may not have the best approach to teaching, although clearly there is crossover and “trickle down” advantages to studying in a university that is at the forefront in its field. However, these broad rankings could also disguise a weak department within an otherwise excellent university.

The criteria used to compile the teaching component of the ranking score do not relate to student satisfaction. They are, amongst others, proxy measures such as staff to student ratios, the ratio of doctoral to bachelor’s students and the income of the university in proportion to the number of students it has. There is merit in all of these measures but they do not say much about the day-to-day experience of students on campus and British students would be well advised to reflect on this when using these rankings.

Student experience outside the classroom, rates of graduate employment etc. are not included in the methodology at present and it is hard to see how this could be added meaningfully when comparing universities across national borders.

The International Outlook portion of a university's score is interesting in that global collaboration, recruitment of international students and links between academics around the world are all signs of a healthy university in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This factor alone is a good enough reason for British students to think seriously about becoming more international.

We have focused on Times Higher Education Global Rankings because these are generally regarded to have the most solid methodology or are not exclusively based on research performance. Other rankings include:

- [Academic Ranking of World Universities](#) (Shanghai Jiao Tong Ranking)
- [QS World University Rankings](#)
- [US News Best Global Universities](#) (new in 2014 but US News has ranked US universities for 30 years)

A quick analysis of these three additional rankings reveals that there are 89 universities that could refer to themselves as being in the Top 50 in non-English-speaking Europe. While there is some consensus as to which are the very best universities (ETH Zurich is top on all four rankings) there is also a lot of variation. For example, University of Copenhagen is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> in non-English-speaking Europe on the ARWU and US News rankings but only shows up as a relatively lowly 29<sup>th</sup> on THE ranking.

To be fair to the compilers of these rankings, none of them would argue that they are sensible tools for undergraduates choosing where to study without reference to other factors. Any ranking should only ever be viewed as advisory at best when investigating undergraduate study options. We continue to maintain that any student who makes their final decision of university based entirely on league table position will only ever make the right choice through sheer luck.

Other well-known weaknesses of such rankings are their inability to take small, specialist universities into consideration and their failure to include universities or colleges that may have excellent reputations for teaching standards but little if any research output. An example of specialist universities that fall into this category is [Bocconi University](#) in Italy - [ranked 16<sup>th</sup> in the world for economics](#) in the QS subject rankings but invisible in all of the overall rankings.

Some small universities can appear in the global rankings but their positions are likely to vary significantly. This typically affects universities in science, technology and medicine more than universities focussed on humanities and social sciences, typically because these latter universities are less likely to have a high ranking in the first place. For example, Karolinska Institute in Sweden (4<sup>th</sup>) focusses solely on medical research but is unranked in the QS ranking. Similarly, Charite (22<sup>nd</sup>) in Berlin is a medical institute and is not ranked by any of the other major listings. Also, [TU Delft](#) (9<sup>th</sup>)



focusses mainly on engineering. It is ranked even higher by QS (4<sup>th</sup>) but is a relatively lowly 43<sup>rd</sup> on the ARWU ranking and doesn't even feature in the Top 50 US News Best European universities.

Higher education institutions (HEI) that offer excellent teaching environments, such as [Dutch Universities of Applied Sciences](#) or Swiss hotel schools, are at a distinct disadvantage because they cannot compete with universities that have an extensive focus on academic research. More and more of them conduct applied research so this situation might change over time but for now, students who are more suited to a practical style of education must be particularly careful when using the best university rankings.

Additionally, small liberal arts colleges cannot challenge in the World University Rankings because they focus entirely on teaching. This is more often misleading when students use the global rankings to choose where to study in the USA because at least in Europe, world-class liberal arts institutions are likely to be affiliated with excellent universities that do show up in the Top 50. However, American universities in Europe, such as the [American University of Paris](#), might be overlooked if students are only concentrating on global rankings. These colleges could well make an excellent academic option for many highly gifted students.

An example of an HEI that might fit into both of these categories would be [Digipen Institute of Technology](#) in Bilbao, Spain for [computer game design](#) ( [#3 in Princeton Review](#)).

Even when a university does appear near the top in THE World University rankings, this might still not be a true picture. For example, [Ecole Polytechnique](#) is ranked just outside the World's top 100 but is also the [2<sup>nd</sup> best small university in the world](#) (Caltech, an institution that used EP as its foundation model, is first). It is also ranked well inside the top 100 in the world for studying [engineering](#), computing science and economics.

Also, when a university does not appear in the list this does not mean that it is not a potentially excellent choice. For example, if we look at THE Top 50, [Tilburg University](#) in The Netherlands is not mentioned at all even though almost all Dutch research universities (nine out of thirteen) are included. However, looking at THE subject-specific rankings reveals Tilburg to be the best Dutch university for the study of [business and economics](#) (2<sup>nd</sup> best in Europe, 28<sup>th</sup> in the world) and the third best for studying [psychology](#) (6<sup>th</sup> in Europe, 44<sup>th</sup> in the world). If these are the subjects that appeal to students, it would be a shame if they were discouraged because Tilburg's overall ranking is 13<sup>th</sup> out of 13 Dutch research universities (201-250<sup>th</sup> globally).

# HOW LIKELY ARE BRITISH STUDENTS TO GAIN A PLACE AT THESE TOP UNIVERSITIES?

Naturally, every university and in some cases every degree will have their own entry requirements. We will address some of the peculiarities relating to particular subjects in the next sections. Here, we will attempt to summarise what we believe to be some good starting points when looking at good universities in general.

The 24 universities offering Bachelor's degrees in English are able to accept students with the same minimum academic standards necessary in the UK. In principle, this is three A' level passes or 24 points on the International Baccalaureate. BTEC Level 3s are not equivalent to A' levels and would not be regarded as suitable for entry to any of the universities in this list. If students are capable of studying in the local language, these entry requirements are usually accurate for such courses as well. While the minimum standard of entry is extremely low by the standards of offers made by equivalent British universities, most of the universities on this list will operate some form of selection over and above the minimum requirement. Not every university does this for all courses, meaning that there genuinely are options at these universities that are accessible with EEE at A' level.

There may be requirements for students to have GCSEs and A' Levels in certain subjects. The [German universities](#) will require a combination of Triple Science at GCSE and maths or a science at AS level for any degree subject. [Swiss universities](#) will insist on maths and a science at A' level. It is not unheard of for universities to require combinations of subjects that are unlikely and/or impossible for British students to have studied. One example of a university on this list is from [Lund University](#) (24<sup>th</sup>), whose BSc in Physical Geography requires students to have A' levels in maths, physics, chemistry and biology but not geography.

The relatively narrow focus of A' levels can place British students at a disadvantage. The breadth of the International Baccalaureate means that it is more likely to satisfy the entry requirements of universities in all countries although for the best universities in the world, students who have taken Maths Studies would probably struggle. The IB Organisation is also quite active in intervening whenever a university's entrance requirements seem to be impossible to achieve with the IB diploma. The only example at the Top 50 universities where we know the IB alone is not enough is medicine at the [University of Groningen](#) and Maastricht University in the Netherlands. Because students need to have studied three sciences and maths to the end of high school in order to be viewed as equivalent to Dutch candidates, IB students will need to take an external exam in at least one of these subjects. This will ordinarily require around 200-300 hours of individual study.

[Danish universities](#) have very limited places for international students particularly in the arts, humanities and social sciences owing to government cutbacks. Students wishing to study here will need to have very good grades indeed. Denmark is one of the few countries that will probably see a decline in English-taught Bachelor's degrees in the next few years.

[Swedish universities](#) can be difficult for A' level students to access without taking a gap year because A' level results are announced after the deadline for students starting university the following September.

[The Dutch system](#) contains an increasing amount of variety in its selection procedures. Until recently almost all courses were accessible with EEE without any additional scrutiny of a student's academic background. Increasingly, universities are being given the freedom to select their own students resulting in a sometimes bewildering array of assessment methods, including online tests, assessment centres and exams that must be taken at the university itself. Different courses at the same university can rely on different methods so it is difficult even to generalise about one institution. For courses where decentralised (ie. not controlled by the Dutch government) selection is possible the university has complete freedom to choose the most capable students to fill the limited number of places they have available. In general terms, this would mean that students would be expected to have BBB or better for most degrees. Some will be a lot higher. Often the most important part of a student's application will be their motivation letter (roughly equivalent to the personal statement). Dutch universities are keen to see evidence that an applicant has thought about the implications of studying abroad and how they expect to benefit from the experience. [University Colleges](#) affiliated with Dutch universities operate selection processes that are usually separate from those used by other courses. These are the most likely to include an interview as part of the process. Interviews are not common at any of the universities in the Top 50 that we know personally.

At public universities in Europe, personal statements are often of no importance, prior work experience is rarely taken into consideration and we are not aware of any universities placing any explicit value on music exams etc.

We will cover some particular quirks for individual courses in later sections but in summary, we would suggest that students who would struggle to get into a "Russell Group" university would be best advised not to consider applying to the Top 50 universities. Their chances of being successful might be improved but the question of "What grades do I need?" should really be replaced with "Is this a good idea?" Entry requirements are only one factor in choosing a university; students need also to think about how they will cope with the academic workload and standard once they arrive at a university abroad.

# WHICH COURSES ARE AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH AT THE BEST UNIVERSITIES IN EUROPE?

In the remainder of this guide, we will evaluate some of the options available at Top 50 universities but also give examples from universities that could be considered as equally good in their particular fields of expertise. Wherever possible we will endeavour to use examples where we can actually assist with the application process and wherever appropriate, we will make reference to subject-specific rankings as well as the overall World University Rankings.

## Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine

These subjects are by far the most popular choices for students looking abroad. We receive roughly 3,000 requests for information about medical courses abroad every year and in excess of 50,000 people per annum view our page on studying medicine abroad. Is there any possibility for students denied a place in the UK to find one at the Top 50 universities abroad? The short answer is probably no, but then the excellence or otherwise of a university's medical teaching is not a significant component of global rankings (medical research, on the other hand, is one of the single most important factors).

Universities with excellent medical faculties that fall just outside the top 50 and teach in English include the University of Milan and the University of Bologna. Both universities are ranked between 250 and 300 according to the Times Higher Education Global Rankings. [Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore](#) (ranked 101-150 in the world for [medicine](#)) and Charles University in Prague, ranked between 400 and 500 in the world, are also known for having an established Medicine programme in English. Entry requirements for each of these universities currently involve an entrance examination and competition means that students will have to perform very well to get a place.

There are two universities in the Netherlands where medicine is taught partly in English. Both [University of Groningen](#) (18<sup>th</sup>) and Maastricht University (37<sup>th</sup>) have BSc qualifications taught in English but these must be followed by 3-year MSc qualifications taught in Dutch. Places on these courses do exist for British students but there are very few who are successful. Both Groningen and Maastricht are excellent options for medical research and in this field, they are ranked 78<sup>th</sup> and 81<sup>st</sup> in the world respectively according to [THE Clinical, Pre-clinical and Health](#) ranking.

Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine are not offered in English at any of the Top 50 universities. There are excellent opportunities in Europe but they are not to be found at these universities. For dental students, we would recommend Universidad Catolica de Valencia and Universidad Europea de Madrid. For both veterinary medicine and dentistry, the University of Zagreb in Croatia is another excellent option.

## Arts & Humanities, Modern Foreign Languages

There are a number of universities that offer courses in arts and humanities subjects, most notable [KU Leuven](#) in Belgium (8<sup>th</sup>). This university offers Bachelor's degrees in philosophy and theology. [Leiden University](#) (13<sup>th</sup>) in the Netherlands has a number of humanities degrees. It is also the first and only institution in continental Europe to offer an archaeology degree in English. Fine Arts is available in English at Lund University (24<sup>th</sup>) in Sweden but in The Netherlands, it is offered only at Universities of Applied Sciences. Several Dutch universities including Erasmus University (14<sup>th</sup>), Utrecht University (16<sup>th</sup>) and Maastricht University (37<sup>th</sup>) offer courses in Arts, Culture and Media, which often enable students to develop their own bespoke curriculum.

The university with the most courses in the arts and humanities is the [University of Groningen](#) (18<sup>th</sup>) with degrees in [Arts, Culture & Media](#), [English Language & Culture](#), [American Studies](#), [Religious Studies](#) and [European Languages & Culture](#) amongst others. Students interested in European history may be interested to learn that the Erasmus University Rotterdam (14<sup>th</sup>), Utrecht University (16<sup>th</sup>) and University of Groningen (18<sup>th</sup>) are the only elite European universities where they can study [history](#) fully in English. The alternative option would be to take a history major at American universities in Europe. For students interested solely in British history, the best advice we can give is that a European university possibly isn't the right option.

## Philosophy, Politics & Economics

Three years ago there was a trend amongst several continental European universities to develop programmes that could be seen as similar to PPE degrees. Since then we have not since any further substantial development in this area. Having said that, the existing PPE equivalent options at elite European universities are very attractive with high-calibre British students. These include PPLE (politics, psychology, law and economics) at the University of Amsterdam (11<sup>th</sup>) and Philosophy, Politics and Society at Radboud University (33<sup>rd</sup>). It is worth mentioning that PPLE at the University of Amsterdam requires applicants to have A' Level in maths.

PPE is an area where there are other suitable opportunities at universities that do not feature in the Top 50 because they are not comprehensive universities and only specialise in a narrow range of disciplines. The best example in this instance is [Sciences Po](#) (401-500<sup>th</sup> in the world overall but 68<sup>th</sup> for [social sciences](#)) in France. This university has an excellent reputation and now offers a number of English-taught degrees that include PPE within them. These degrees are based on particular regions of the world and we have seen a great deal of interest in their Europe-North America programme which can include a year studying in the USA as part of a three-year Bachelor's degree. Other programmes focus on Africa, the Middle East, Latin American and Southeast Asia. The entry requirements for Sciences Po are a little opaque and all students will be interviewed prior to acceptance.

Another course with a similar nature to PPE is the International Politics and Government offered at [Bocconi University](#) in Milan, Italy. Bocconi has been teaching economics and finance in English since 2001, but this latest degree offers a slightly different focus for students looking to go into public administration or international relations.

Both of these universities are private and fees can be higher than at public universities. However, means testing and/or scholarships are available for EU nationals. Within the public sector, the [University of Groningen](#) (18<sup>th</sup>) offers a degree in International Relations & Organisation and Leiden University (13<sup>th</sup>) offers two courses relating to international affairs at its campus in The Hague.

## Liberal Arts & Sciences

As European universities have started to develop courses taught in English, several of them have adopted the American model of the liberal arts rather than translate their existing qualifications into English. This offers British students something that they are unlikely to find at their home universities. It also offers them the chance to access US-style higher education at a much lower cost and a lot closer to home.

While the very nature of the liberal arts and sciences means that these degrees should be broad and include a wide range of subjects, there are still some very clear differences in their institutional focus. For example, the [Global Responsibility and Leadership](#) programme at [University College Friesland](#) (part of the University of Groningen) is inspired by the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Its curriculum balances out between Human and Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Information Technology.

The liberal arts and sciences degrees offered at University College Utrecht and University College Roosevelt (both part of Utrecht University) are perhaps more focused on the arts and social sciences. Leiden University College is also a strong contender for students interested in the social sciences, law etc.

For students looking for a more engineering and technology-focused programme, the University of Twente (just outside of the top 50) offers ATLAS (Academy of Technology of Liberal Arts and Sciences). The aim of the course is to develop technologically able students with an appreciation of the social science, design and business dimensions of innovation. Entry requirements are maths, physics A' level and whatever else students happen to be interested in.

The nature of these degrees means that they will not be suitable for British students expecting to study only one subject at university. However, for students with a genuine interest in broadening their knowledge before going on to specialise at postgraduate level, degrees in the liberal arts and sciences might very well be the best option.

University Colleges offering degrees in LAS are the most likely to invite students to interview and the most selective will certainly be looking for AAB or above at A' level or 36+ on the IB.

## Engineering and Technology

Engineering is one of the easiest subjects to find taught in English at Top 50 universities in Europe. Many of the best universities in the world specialise in this area and as an increasingly international profession, engineering is often offered in English. There also seems to be a greater consensus between all the ranking compilers when identifying the best universities in this field, suggesting it is perhaps easier to be objective about engineering excellence than in most other subjects.

German and Swiss universities are usually seen to be the very best in Europe with ETH Zurich and Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne usually at the very top of engineering league tables. The best German university is usually seen to be the Technical University of Munich. The [School of Management](#) at TUM does offer one Bachelor's degree that can be completed in English but this is a combined engineering and management degree.

Options for Bachelor's degrees in engineering are most likely to be found in Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands. Lund University (24<sup>th</sup>) and Aarhus University (33<sup>rd</sup>) have engineering degrees taught in English. In the Netherlands, Delft University of Technology (9<sup>th</sup>) is the only specialist technology making it to the top 50 European universities. This university offers aerospace engineering and

computer science and engineering in English. More comprehensive Dutch universities also offer courses in engineering. These include [University of Groningen](#) (18<sup>th</sup>) ([Chemical Engineering](#) and [Industrial Engineering](#)) and Maastricht University (37<sup>th</sup>) (Knowledge Engineering).

Entry requirements for engineering will usually specify good A' level grades required in maths and physics and we have heard some universities suggest that British students struggle when they first arrive at Dutch universities.

## Business & Economics

Business and economics are also relatively easy to find at leading universities. If a university only offers one course in English there is a very high chance that it will be in international business. Most of the leading universities will require maths A' level for economics degrees and either A' level or AS level for business degrees. Students who only have maths GCSE or maths studies on the IB will find that their options are unlikely to include the best universities in Europe.

Erasmus University Rotterdam (14<sup>th</sup>) is the only institution in the top 50 to have a dedicated business school. The International Business Administration degree at their [Rotterdam School of Management](#) (RSM) has an excellent reputation, but it is not suitable for all students. It is the only degree of which we are aware that includes no elective elements at all. Students are required to study all areas of business and not specialise in marketing, finance, HR etc. as might ordinarily be the case. RSM's philosophy is that specialisation takes place when students start their Master's degree.

There are opportunities to study both business and economics at University of Amsterdam (11<sup>th</sup>), University of Utrecht (16<sup>th</sup>), [University of Groningen](#) (18<sup>th</sup>), Radboud University (33<sup>rd</sup>) and Maastricht University (37<sup>th</sup>). Outside the Netherlands, there are options for business and/or economics at Aarhus University (33<sup>rd</sup>), Pompeu Fabra University (40<sup>th</sup>), Autonomous University of Barcelona (46<sup>th</sup>), University of Geneva (40<sup>th</sup>) and Stockholm University (50<sup>th</sup>).

Other options that do not appear at Top 50 universities but are generally recognised to be of excellent quality include [Bocconi University](#) and Copenhagen Business School (currently very difficult to gain admission and excellent grades necessary). In the [QS ranking of the best business schools](#), Bocconi is currently 10<sup>th</sup> in the world and CBS is 17<sup>th</sup>. The only European schools that score higher are INSEAD and London Business School, both of which only offer postgraduate education. Both Bocconi and CBS are too small and too focussed to appear in the overall world university rankings.



We are also seeing an increase in double or even triple degrees offered in business that allow students to study not only in Europe but in other continents too. Perhaps the best example of this is the [World Business Bachelor](#) offered at Bocconi University, University of Southern California and Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

## Law

This is perhaps the most country-specific subject offered at leading universities; students of the law abroad will not be studying English law. We would still recommend an international legal degree to students who are planning to work in an international field. In a crowded marketplace for law graduates, differentiation from one's peers is perhaps more important here than in any other profession.

Because of the national nature of most law schools, there are very few options for studying law abroad at the Top 50 universities. [University of Groningen](#) (18<sup>th</sup> but also [88<sup>th</sup> in the world for law](#)) offers an LLB in International & European Law and Maastricht University (37<sup>th</sup>) an LLB in European Law. Elsewhere in continental Europe, the only options for studying English in Europe are on offer in Belgium, Czech Republic and Spain.

## Science and Mathematics

In comparison with engineering or business, there are relatively few degrees offered in scientific subjects at Top 50 European universities.

The [University of Groningen](#) (18<sup>th</sup>) has the widest range of degrees in the sciences. [Maths](#), [Physics](#), [Biology](#), [Chemistry](#), [Astronomy](#), [Artificial Intelligence](#) and [Life Science & Technology](#) are some of the BSc degrees on offer. Elsewhere in the Netherlands, Maastricht University (37<sup>th</sup>) offers the "Maastricht Science Programme", which allows students to combine multiple science disciplines in one degree or focus on just one discipline.

For maths, we would recommend [Ecole Polytechnique](#) (28<sup>th</sup>) in France. The university allows students to combine maths with either computer science, economics or physics. Lund University (24<sup>th</sup>) in Sweden also offers physics and mathematics in English.

There are degrees available in Europe at universities that are not amongst the Top 50 but even here, students choices are likely to be limited in comparison with other subjects.

## Hospitality & Tourism

We include hospitality and tourism in this guide precisely because they are not subjects that one would expect to find at leading academic universities. Autonomous University of Barcelona (46<sup>th</sup>) offers tourism in English, but this is the only university on our list with anything suitable. How then should students find the best education without global rankings to fall back on? It is my intention to use hospitality and tourism as an example of where students should be looking if they are more interested in vocational education with a particular career goal in mind.

In the absence of academic rankings, we believe students should consider factors such as wider industry reputation (there are industry rankings of hospitality programmes), opportunities to study internationally and work experience of real value.

There are a number of private institutions offering high quality, high-cost education in this field, particularly in Switzerland. Perhaps the best-known examples are Glion and Les Roches and Ecole Hoteliere Lausanne. While these options are very well respected and can provide excellent connections into the hotel industry, tuition fees can be somewhat unaffordable.

We are seeing more students choosing Dutch Universities of Applied Sciences for the study of hospitality and tourism. [Breda University of Applied Sciences](#) (BUAS) is generally recognised to be the best university for hotel management in the Netherlands and entry is extremely competitive. Assessment of students' aptitudes is used more than academic record, however. Another excellent example is [NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences](#) in Leeuwarden. They have their own 4\* hotel on campus and students are expected to spend at least 18 months of a 4-year degree studying or working overseas.

QS has started a ranking for [Hospitality and Leisure Management](#) but so far, only 51 institutions are listed and the names of these universities are very different from the ones seen in other subject rankings. It might be some time before this ranking is sufficiently comprehensive to be of any value. BUAS is ranked 26<sup>th</sup> in this list under its old name of NHTV Breda.

# CONCLUSION

While there are some excellent opportunities for many students we believe it is likely that in some fields, students will have to look beyond these particular universities to find the right choice for them and that this is by no means a bad idea. Rankings, while useful, can never tell the full story about a university's suitability. Quality and reputation, not to mention recognition of European degrees, means that studying abroad is unlikely to be an inferior choice to staying at home.

We believe students should consider international options as objectively as their British options and if they can see their way to a better education abroad, they should be encouraged to broaden their horizons. The benefits of studying abroad can certainly repay the investment in time taken to explore this growing world of possibility. It is our modest hope that this guide will help in the process of sifting through all the options to find the right choice.

# ABOUT A STAR FUTURE

A Star Future provides an advisory and support service to British careers professionals. We can assist you with information about international higher education not only in Europe but around the world. Every year we visit approximately 250 schools and colleges, speaking to groups of Year 12 students and/or parents.

Please contact us at [info@astarfuture.co.uk](mailto:info@astarfuture.co.uk) if you would like to schedule a visit or if you have any queries with which we may be able to help you.

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The information contained within this document is correct to the best of our knowledge. Due to the complexity of different university application systems and the fact that most of this information has been compiled from a variety of sources as well as first-hand experience, we cannot take responsibility for any inadvertent inaccuracies.

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