

## ARE YOU COMPETITIVELY APPLYING FOR A STEM OR ESAM EXTERNAL (STUDY ABROAD) SCHOLARSHIP AND INTERESTED IN STUDYING IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA OR CANADA?



**LEARN MORE ABOUT  
THE UNIVERSITY  
CONNECTION  
(UNICONN)  
PROGRAM:  
AN UNIVERSITY  
PREPARATORY  
(UNI PREP)  
PROGRAM  
AVAILABLE AT THE  
REPUTED UNIVERSITY  
OF PENNSYLVANIA  
(UPENN):  
AN IVY LEAGUE  
SCHOOL LOCATED  
IN THE CITY OF  
PHILADELPHIA IN THE  
UNITED STATES OF  
AMERICA  
(USA OR U.S.)**

The following questions asked by Omani school students and their parents have been collected, edited and designed by the Takhasussi\* team, while the answers are based on those specifically provided by the reputed University of Pennsylvania (UPenn) in the United States of America, as part of sponsored partner content.

**Q: I HAVE HEARD THAT STEM AND ESAM SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS CAN ENROLL IN A PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. IS THIS A FOUNDATION PROGRAM?**

**A:** The University Connection (UniConn) program is a preparatory course for prospective international freshmen applicants (i.e., students who have NOT YET made a competitive application to a higher education institution) offered at the University of Pennsylvania (also known as UPenn) in the United States of America (USA or US) and located in the city of Philadelphia. Do not confuse UPenn with Penn State as this is a different university. The UniConn program, like most pre-session Academic English and Study Skills programs, has been designed to help students (further) improve their academic English language and study skills. However, what makes this program different from most pre-sessional programs is that students will also learn how to navigate college or university admissions processes and will make complete and competitive applications to recommended higher education institutions (HEIs) in the United States\* primarily. Students enrolled in this program are referred to as freshmen applicants while 'freshman' stands for the first year of an undergraduate degree at a higher education institution in the US.





**DID YOU KNOW?**  
UPenn is one of the eight very well-reputed Ivy League schools in the United States of America.

**'Ivy League' is the name generally applied to eight well-reputed universities in the USA (Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Pennsylvania, Princeton and Yale) that over the years have had common interests in scholarship as well as in athletics.**

**Stanley Woodward, a New York Herald Tribune sports writer, coined the phrase in the early thirties (1930s).**

The UniConn program is a suitable option for high-achieving Omani STEM and ESAM external scholarship students who:

- choose to study in the U.S. or Canada\*
- know exactly in which major they would want to specialize
- need to improve their English language and study skills and/or want to pursue their higher undergraduate studies at one of the recommended HEIs in the United States of America but do not yet have an unconditional offer letter (letter of acceptance) in place at the time they are competitively awarded the scholarship by the HEAC system.

\* MAKING COMPETITIVE applications to universities in Canada is considered an option but this needs to be aligned with the scholarship rules and regulations as STEM and ESAM students may choose their preferred study destination but only during registration and before they travel. You can contact your administrator or CAO in D.C. for more information.

**Q: THIS PROGRAM IS SUITABLE FOR STUDENTS WHO NEED TO IMPROVE THEIR ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS, BUT WHAT IF I AM ALREADY FLUENT IN ENGLISH AND SAT FOR AN SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST (SAT) WHILE IN SCHOOL?**

The UniConn program will be tailored to every student's needs. Hence, this program is suitable for those who need to develop their language and study skills, but also for those with stronger English language skills and even decent SAT scores as application deadlines for Fall 2023 semester are typically in December every year.

**Q: WILL THIS PROGRAM HELP ME SECURE AN ADMISSION INTO A GOOD UNIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES OR CANADA?**

During the UniConn course, students will apply to several HEIs in primarily the U.S. and (if allowed) Canada. All targeted HEIs usually have to be recommended by the cultural attaché office (CAO) for the Oman STEM and ESAM scholarship programs. The UniConn coursework will focus on writing application essays and statements of purpose; one-on-one advising session with college and university admissions specialists and workshops on the admissions process. The aim is for students to competitively apply at a balanced list of schools ('school' and 'college' are words interchangeably used for 'university' in the United States), provided they are approved by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI) for the STEM and ESAM external scholarship programs. Please bear in mind that neither Oman MoHERI, the CAO in Washington nor UPenn can guarantee that you are able to secure admission into your preferred HEI. Many schools, especially top ranked institutions, may be very competitive. This means that a lot of talented students from around world want to study there, while they have limited places available, and the application process can take a significant amount of time and effort.

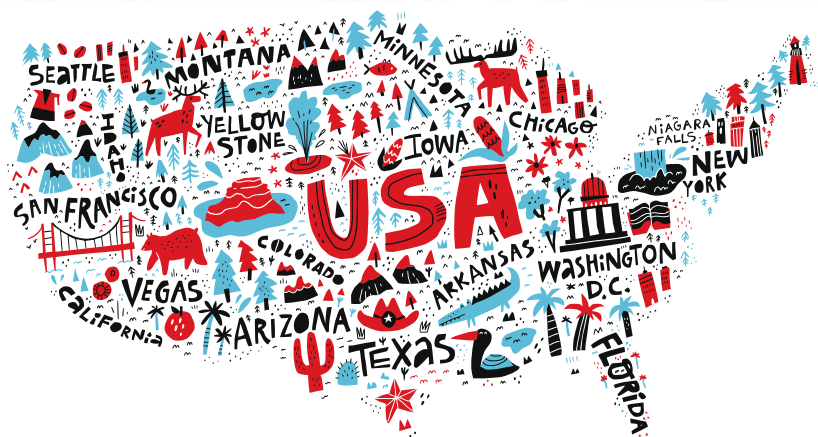


## **Q: IF I AM SHORTLISTED FOR A SE380 (STEM) OR SE390 (ESAM) EXTERNAL SCHOLARSHIP IN AUGUST 2022 AND I AM INTERESTED TO ENROLL IN THE UNICONN PROGRAM – WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?**

- If you register (with the MoHERI's external scholarships department) as someone who wishes to pursue your studies in the United States and you do not yet have an offer letter in place, the staff members working for the cultural attaché office in Washington in the United States will advise you accordingly about your options.
- If you wish to enroll in the UniConn program, you will have to be specific about your preferred major (e.g. Civil Engineering, Economics, etc., etc. - not just a broader area of study such as 'Engineering' or 'Social Sciences') as you will have to write essays or personal statements to HEIs explaining why you want to study that particular major.
- Certain professional undergraduate degree programs are usually **NOT** available at undergraduate level in the United States - professional degree programs usually prepare you for a specific profession - e.g. think of a Lawyer or a Doctor, while Medicine is **NOT** covered by STEM or ESAM. Please consult your administrator and the official websites of recommended universities.

## **Q: OK, SO WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT ONCE I AM REGISTERED AS A UNICONN COURSE STUDENT AND WHEN WILL I TRAVEL TO THE US?**

- You will probably first enroll in an online program and register for a SAT test while you are still in Oman (August\*): This online pre-program - Applying to U.S. Universities - is a custom program for Omani scholarship students that will help you be as prepared as possible to start the university application process when you arrive in the U.S.
- The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is an entrance exam used by many colleges and universities in the U.S. to make admissions decisions. For more information, please visit: <https://www.princetonreview.com/college/sat-information>. You will be required to register for the SAT test before September 1st, 2022, while the date of the actual test will be October 1st, 2022, in Philadelphia, PA.
- WHERE CAN YOU REGISTER? By visiting the following site: <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register> - register once it has been confirmed by your scholarship provider that you can enroll in the UniConn program. You will have to choose the location of where you will take the test. It is easier by using the following zip code: 19104.
- You are expected\* to travel in September and your scholarship administrator in Oman will provide more information about visa application procedures.
- The duration of the UniConn program is one or two semesters. This depends partly on the progress you make and whether you can secure admission to one of the recommended HEIs for Fall or Spring intake. Upon completion of the program, you are expected to progress in to freshman year at the HEI that accepted you. For more information about accommodation in Philadelphia:
  - The Summit at University City (link: <https://www.americancampus.com/student-apartments/pa/philadelphia/the-summit-at-university-city>)
  - University Crossings (link: <https://www.americancampus.com/student-apartments/pa/philadelphia/university-crossings>).



## Q: DO I NEED TO SIT ANY OTHER TESTS AND SUBMIT ANY SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS IN ORDER TO ENROLL IN THE UNICONN PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA?

- As mentioned in the HEAC student guide, all external scholarship students are advised to take the IELTS exam to understand your entry level.
- If you are keen on enrolling in the UniConn programme and you believe that you will be able to compete for the STEM and ESAM scholarships enabling you to enroll in the UniConn programme, then you should start arranging for the following documents:
  - A valid English language test report form
  - One set of official school transcripts for Grade 9 - Grade 12 or Year 10 up to Year 13.
  - A recommendation letter from at least one of your school teachers, especially from the instructor of the course relevant to his/her future major (e.g. Maths for Engineering majors, etc., etc.). Visit the websites of the universities if you are not sure about which subjects have been deemed relevant to your preferred major.
  - The recommendation letter should be written in English and should include the following points (show this to your teacher):
    - ✓ Why am I writing this recommendation to this student? What makes him/her unique?
    - ✓ Why do I think this university's benefit would be to accept such a student?
    - ✓ How would that student benefit his/her country when he/she is back after graduation.

For more information, please visit the website of the UPenn: <https://www.elp.upenn.edu/>



\*Takhasussi (my major or undergraduate course) is a bilingual website application that is currently in the process of development and has been earmarked to become the future microsite (sub-site) of the Higher Education Admissions Center (HEAC) website ([www.heac.gov.om](http://www.heac.gov.om)), the centralised admissions service in Oman, which is part of the Oman Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI).

**\*\* Please note that expected test and travel dates are tentative and might be subject to change(s). Please contact the external UG scholarships department (via the Ministry's department for customer services) for more information.**





## FAQS FOR STEM AND ESAM

The following questions asked by Omani school students and their parents have been collected, edited and designed by the Takhasussi\* team, while the answers are based on those specifically provided by the University of Delaware in the United States of America, as part of sponsored partner content.

**Q: I have heard that STEM and ESAM external scholarship recipients can choose to enroll in a program at the University of Delaware in the United States of America. What is the name of this program and is this a foundation program or a freshman year?**

**A:** The STEM/ESAM foundation program at the University of Delaware ELI is a foundation program focused on university admission and preparing you for undergraduate success. The program is designed to introduce you to American university culture, support you in gaining valuable academic study skills, and help you improve your academic English skills. Central to the program is the university admission process. You will explore academic majors and career communities, and learn how to navigate the U.S. university application process. Individual admissions advising ensures a successful, competitive admissions process for each student. Our goal is to help you get admitted to the universities of your choice, and ensure you have a smooth transition to your undergraduate program. Because we are located between the most important cities on the East Coast of the U.S. (2 hours from New York City and Washington, D.C., 1 hour from Baltimore, and just 45 minutes from Philadelphia), visiting prospective universities is very convenient.

**Q: Is this program only suitable for students who need to improve their English language skills? What if I am already fluent in English and sat for an Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) while in school?**

**A:** The STEM/ESAM foundation program is designed specifically for you. This means that whether you are still improving your academic English skills or you are an advanced English language learner, this program will meet your individual needs. You will learn academic English, improve your math, and gain life skills, such as time management, presentation, and research skills, all in a supportive and fun environment on a classic American university campus.

**Q: Will this program help me secure an admission into a good university or college in the United States and/or Canada?**

**A:** Not only will this program help you secure admission into a good American university, it will also help you succeed in your degree. We will begin working with you online, guiding you as you explore university majors and decide the best path for your career. This is followed by our signature Applying to U.S. Universities course which will walk you through the U.S. admissions process, and support you in writing strong, compelling essays, a key component in U.S. university applications. Lastly, you will have personalized advising sessions with an assigned advisor to help you with the application process from beginning to end. STEM/ESAM students are never alone in this process; you have a special program manager and a team who can help you at any time.

**Q: If I enroll in this program, when will I start with my freshman year?**

**A:** Most STEM/ESAM students apply for admission to undergraduate degree programs that begin in Fall 2023 (August or September intake). Some very advanced students who obtain prior approval from the MoHERI can apply to begin their undergraduate studies in Spring 2023 (January or February intake).

**Q: If I am shortlisted for a se380 (STEM) or se390 (ESAM) external scholarship in August 2022 and I am interested to enroll in the ELI program – what will happen next?**

Why Choose UD?

A  
"PUBLIC IVY LEAGUE" university

**TIER-1**

research university in a fun and supportive community

Ranked

**TOP 100**

among all U.S. universities and

**#38**

among all public

U.S. universities (U.S. News & World Report, 2022)

Ranked

**TOP 20**

in the world for international student satisfaction (International Student Barometer)

Ranked

**#9**

in Colleges with the Best 4-Year Graduation Rate (Chronicle of Higher Education)

**#26**

Ranked **#26** safest university campus in the U.S. (National Council for Home Safety and Security)

Located in charming Newark, Delaware,

the **#17** Best College Town in America (24/7 Wall Street, 2022), with one of America's best Main Streets (Great American Main Street Awards) and convenient bus and high-speed train access to New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.



A: Once you have been shortlisted for STEM or ESAM, and you wish to enroll in UD's Foundation program for STEM/ESAM scholars, you will need to indicate this preference to the MoHERI. Once you are assigned to UD, we will gather your personal information and register you as a student. When we begin this process, you will communicate with our ELI Admissions team to schedule your English language testing and enroll you in classes. You will begin exploring your major and preparing for your IELTS test in a live online class format. If you plan on applying to a very competitive undergraduate program, you should also register for the SAT. During this time we will work with you to issue your I-20 (for your F-1 visa) in a timely manner, and welcome you to campus by mid to late October, just in time for you to see the beautiful fall colors on campus.

**Q: Do I need to sit any other tests and submit any supporting documents in order to enroll in the ELI program at the University of Delaware?**

A: We will need to see a copy of your passport and a financial guarantee from the MoHERI. Although it is not necessary, if you have recently sat for an IELTS, TOEFL, or Duolingo test, it would be helpful to share those scores with us.

**Q: Once I am registered as an ELI student, when will I be expected to travel to the U.S.?**

A: You will begin your studies online, but we will work quickly to issue your I-20 so that you can apply for your visa, and we can welcome you to our beautiful campus in October.

**Q: Can I study law or any other professional degree programme at undergraduate degree level in the U.S. or Canada?**

A: Professional degrees like law, medicine, dentistry and veterinary studies require the completion of a bachelor's degree first. Architecture is available at both bachelors and professional degree levels.

**Q: Can students apply to Canadian schools while enrolled in ELI?**

A: Yes, but you must be approved to study in Canada by the Cultural Attaché in the Ministry. In fact, the ELI will help you with any Canadian applications from beginning to end through the Admissions classes and advising.

**Q: Some mainstream news and social media give us reason to think that the United States is not safe and Americans are intolerant of Arabs. How is it at the University of Delaware?**

A: The University of Delaware and the surrounding area is a diverse and welcoming community with people from many backgrounds and religions. Our Arab students feel safe and welcome here. Fatema Alajmni, an Omani graduate (2020) of UD says, "If you want to study, have fun and feel safe at the same time, UD is the perfect place for that." UD becomes a second home for our Omani students.

**Q: Where can I learn more about the ELI and the University of Delaware?**

A: Check out the ELI's website at [www.udel.edu/eli](http://www.udel.edu/eli) and the University of Delaware at [www.udel.edu](http://www.udel.edu). You can explore our 150+ majors at [www.udel.edu/majorfinder](http://www.udel.edu/majorfinder). Follow our Omani student group on Instagram [www.instagram.com/ud\\_in\\_oman/](https://www.instagram.com/ud_in_oman/) and the ELI at [www.instagram.com/udel\\_eli/](https://www.instagram.com/udel_eli/). You can find UD Admissions on Twitter at @UDAdmissions. Connect with our Oman Blue Hen Network at [www.udel.edu/alumni-friends/connect/alumni-groups/regional-clubs/oman-blue-hen-network/](http://www.udel.edu/alumni-friends/connect/alumni-groups/regional-clubs/oman-blue-hen-network/).



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