

Data Driven Global Student Recruitment

Strategic Outreach Framework

WiDS

Brief Overview:

We want to attract a diverse student population and optimize international student recruitment. We strategize by organizing regional recruiting tours that focus on youth dense, highly urbanized areas with strong concentrations of international and English medium schools. By prioritizing regions with favorable visa outcomes and high GDP per capita , we ensure that outreach efforts convert into real enrollment opportunities. This approach allows us to meet more students per trip, reduce travel costs, and uphold Boston University’s commitment to global diversity and access.

Key Metrics

| Metric | Purpose | Weight | Strategic Insight |
|---------------------------------|--|--------|---|
| Number of International School | Curriculum comparable to BU’s academic structure | 0.4 | These schools signal financial capacity, English proficiency, and established advising systems, enabling efficient, high-yield school visits. |
| Student Visa Approval Rates | Assesses immigration feasibility | 0.3 | High approval rates suggests higher probability of students being able to attend BU |
| Upper Secondary Population Size | Measures future college-bound pipeline of students | 0.2 | A large youth population creates a deeper pool of prospective applicants. |
| GDP per Capita | Measures affordability potential | 0.1 | A higher GDP per capita indicates a greater likelihood of financial capacity |

The weights reflect how much each factor influences actual recruitment outcomes and enrollment conversion for Boston University. Since this model is meant to guide real travel planning and outreach decisions, we gave higher weights to metrics that are both impactful and actionable.

International school count per country carries the highest weight (0.4) because it has the greatest direct impact on recruitment access. International and English-medium schools provide students already prepared for a U.S.-style curriculum, have English proficiency, and demonstrate financial readiness, making them high-yield recruitment hubs.

Student visa approval rate (0.3) is ranked second because even strong student interest cannot convert if visas are denied. High approval rates reduce enrollment risk and lead to stronger application to enrollment conversion.

Upper secondary population size (0.2) signals long-term growth potential and future demand for international education. Countries with large youth populations create sustained recruitment pipelines over time, even if short-term conversion may be slower.

GDP per capita has the lowest weight (0.1) because financial capacity matters, but it isn't always a barrier thanks to scholarships and aid programs. For this reason, it supports recruitment strategy but doesn't drive it. Overall, the weighting strategy prioritizes access and feasibility before market size and financial indicators. In short: focus first on where BU can reach students efficiently and actually enroll them.

Countries Ranked by Recruitment Opportunity Score:

| Rank # | Country | Recruitment Opportunity Score |
|--------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | China | 0.900 |
| 2 | India | 0.641 |
| 3 | United Arab Emirates | 0.390 |
| 4 | Spain | 0.252 |
| 5 | Qatar | 0.228 |
| 6 | Thailand | 0.216 |
| 7 | Singapore | 0.207 |
| 8 | Malaysia | 0.207 |
| 9 | Japan | 0.186 |
| 10 | Vietnam | 0.184 |

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|----|--------------|-------|
| 11 | Nigeria | 0.183 |
| 12 | Germany | 0.177 |
| 13 | Egypt | 0.163 |
| 14 | Canada | 0.159 |
| 15 | Saudi Arabia | 0.159 |

The Recruitment Opportunity Score is an index that ranks countries based on their potential for high yield international student recruitment. The score combines factors such as upper secondary population size, international school count, visa approval feasibility, and financial capacity into one comparable value per country.

We noticed that each indicator is measured on different scales; as a result we use min-max normalization to scale all variables between 0 and 1 before combining them. This prevents large metrics from overpowering smaller scale metrics and ensures each factor contributes proportionally to the final score.

The highlighted countries in the table below represent countries that are not currently part of BU's top 10 countries with the most international students attending BU based on 2023 data given by BU Global Programs. Therefore we are suggesting that BU dedicate more trips to these countries as we have found them to have a lot of potential students that may be interested in attending BU. The non highlighted countries are in the top 10 for countries with most students attending BU in 2023 so we suggest that BU maintains their outreach to these countries as well to ensure that we are still welcoming students from these countries.

How to Interpret the Score

- A higher score means a stronger recruitment opportunity.
- Countries at the top of the list, like China, India, and the UAE have both large student pipelines and recruitment efficiency.
- Mid-ranked countries like Vietnam, Nigeria, and Germany represent emerging growth markets where BU can deepen engagement.
- Countries with lower scores may still be valuable strategically but offer lower immediate return per travel effort.

Framework for Global Outreach

The strategy focuses on these core principles:

1. Travel by Region

Prioritize travel within a region rather than across continents. Flights are shorter, logistics are simpler, and teams can visit more schools in a single trip. Using the international school location map, we've identified locations with high concentrations of international schools that the recruitment team can use to guide their travel plans, or at least localize where they should send digital advertisements.

2. Follow Urban Population Density

Target highly urbanized metros with large secondary school populations. Cities with bigger youth cohorts offer deeper talent pools and more opportunities for counselor engagement. By focusing on areas that are both densely populated and have a high

concentration of high school aged students, we significantly increase the number of potential student engagements per tour.

3. International School Aggregation

Choose regions where international and English-medium schools are heavily concentrated. These schools:

- already prepare students for overseas education
- families demonstrate financial capacity for university costs
- ensure English proficiency and smoother application pathways (application requirements)

4. Equity Through Regional Diversity

Rotating recruitment tours across multiple global regions each year supports a balanced and inclusive outreach strategy. This approach broadens access to BU for students who might otherwise be overlooked due to geography or economics. It also sustains BU's mission to enroll students from more than 200 countries while strengthening long-term diversity across the entire applicant pipeline.

5. Smart Risk Filtering

Use visa approval data and income/GDP per capita overlays to avoid markets with high financial or immigration friction. This ensures outreach resources convert into enrolled students. Filter out countries from which BU already heavily targets and receives a high inflow of international students.

Conclusion:

The **Data-Driven Global Student Recruitment Framework** provides Boston University with a precise, evidence-based roadmap to optimize international outreach. By shifting from a reliance on purely historical recruiting patterns to a dynamic **Recruitment Opportunity Score**, BU can strategically balance efforts between maintaining essential pipelines (e.g., China, India) and activating high-potential countries identified in our analysis, such as the UAE, Spain, Thailand, and Nigeria that will likely have many students able and interested in attending BU.

This approach maximizes return on investment by directing travel resources toward established regional hubs with high concentrations of international schools and favorable visa outcomes. Ultimately, adopting this framework ensures that BU not only meets its enrollment targets more efficiently but also upholds its commitment to global access, fostering a more diverse and resilient international student community for the future.