

SPAIN

Spain is the most popular destination for Mexican students who do not speak English. There is a well-established Mexican community in Spain that has a long history of promoting exchange programs. It has the advantage of the same language and a cultural affinity with Mexico.

Spanish universities, however, do not enjoy the prestige of their foreign competitors. Their quality is not well-respected in Mexico, and they are perceived as having a poor international mix among their faculties. Many students believe that the networking possible in Mexican universities is more important than the advantages of a Spanish education. The cost of studying in Spain is about twice the cost of a university of equivalent stature in Mexico, although Spain does offer financial aid. The increasing importance of the job market based in North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) countries is likely to cut into Spain's market share in the future.

FRANCE

French universities are considered prestigious and enjoy the attractions of a European location. They also offer a variety of aid packages. On the other hand, they are competing for a very small sub-market of French-speaking Mexicans. Visa application procedures are complex. The high cost of living and studying in France, combined with a perception of ethnic tensions there, are also important disadvantages. The main threats to the French market share come from French-language or bilingual institutions in Canada.

CANADIAN STRENGTHS

Mexican students who have studied in Canada say that potential employment opportunities are the biggest attraction. Canada's universities are regarded as superior to those in both the US and Mexico in this regard. For any given quality level, Canadian universities also cost less.

The prestige of the university is the most commonly mentioned decision factor in selecting a particular institution. Courses offered, cost and program flexibility are also major considerations. Canadian visas are considered more accessible and this is regarded as a competitive advantage by some students.