

Infographic: Iranian Students in the United States

by [Steven Ditto \(/experts/steven-ditto\)](#), [Larisa Baste \(/experts/larisa-baste\)](#)

Feb 14, 2014

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

[Steven Ditto \(/experts/steven-ditto\)](#)

Steven Ditto, a 2013 adjunct fellow with The Washington Institute, is an independent Middle East researcher who specializes in law, human rights, and education. He reads French, Arabic, and Farsi and has written extensively on topics related to Islamic law and history, religious freedom and women

[Larisa Baste \(/experts/larisa-baste\)](#)

Larisa Baste is the managing editor of multimedia at The Washington Institute.

(/sites
red-
tape-
iron-
nerve-
cover.

The rising number of Iranian exchange students presents an opportunity to revitalize U.S. public diplomacy outreach to Iran. This infographic highlights key findings of a new Washington Institute report.

(http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus_133_Ditto.pdf)
(http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus_133_Ditto.pdf)
(http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus_133_Ditto.pdf)



Download Report (http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus_133_Ditto.pdf)

The number of Iranians attending U.S. colleges is on the rise, as bright, motivated students overcome significant obstacles in order to fulfill their professional goals and escape repression in Iran. Both politically and economically, America's international student body helps advance key interests, and Iranians are unlike any other group in terms of their academic talent or level of priority for outreach for public diplomacy and national security.

Red Tape, Iron Nerve: The Iranian Quest for U.S. Education (<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/red-tape-iron-nerve-the-iranian-quest-for-u.s.-education>), a Washington Institute Policy Focus by analyst Steven Ditto, explores the notable characteristics of America's Iranian exchange students and assesses the financial, logistical, and consular challenges in their path. Drawing on extensive historical research as well as personal interviews and surveys of Iranian students, Ditto concludes that lowering certain barriers, reaffirming America's commitment to human rights, and fulfilling past pledges to these students can help Washington revitalize its public diplomacy efforts and pave the way for short- and long-term change in Iran.

Click image to enlarge

([uploads/Documents/infographics/Infographic-Iranian-Students-in-the-United-States-Red-Tape-Iron-Nerve.png](#))

([uploads/Documents/infographics/Infographic-Iranian-Students-in-the-United-States-Red-Tape-Iron-Nerve.png](#))

([uploads/Documents/infographics/Infographic-Iranian-Students-in-the-United-States-Red-Tape-Iron-Nerve.png](#))

IRANIAN STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

from *Red Tape, Iron Nerve: The Iranian Quest for U.S. Education* by Steven Ditto

Young Iranians increasingly seek international education as their sole means to experience the broader world, pursue economic opportunity, and escape social and political repression in Iran.

SMALL

Since the mid-2000s, the U.S. State Department has sought to engage Iranian students, including explicitly exempting exchanges and education-related companies from sanctions.

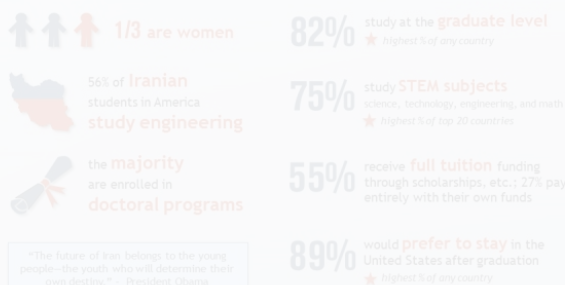
50,000 Iranians study outside Iran
8,700 in the United States

They're only 1% of America's 800,000 international students



BUT SIGNIFICANT

Iranian students are highly motivated, study in critical fields, and are broadly oriented toward and wish to contribute to America. Approximately:



AGAINST THE ODDS

Iranian students continue to face severe limits and significant challenges on the path to an American education.

"The story of Iranian students, often mirrors that of students seeking a U.S. education from across the developing world." - Ditto



AMERICA'S OPPORTUNITY

Much effort has been made to cultivate goodwill and create outreach to the Iranian people, but—in spite of limited initiatives—Iranian students in the United States have received relatively modest attention. Now is the time to:

- 1 Revitalize** Revitalize public diplomacy vis-à-vis Iran, with students playing a more central role. Whether or not they return to Iran, students have the ability to project their opinions far beyond themselves.
- 2 Reaffirm** Reaffirm the U.S. commitment to the aspirations and rights of the Iranian people, particularly students, sending a robust message to the new Iranian president.
- 3 Reform** Seek to reform the areas of policy that cast doubt on the public diplomacy mandate, the challenges that affect the lives of Iranian students as well as their perception of U.S. government competence and American commitment.

At this key political juncture, genuine, consistent assistance from the United States could be the start of a relationship that bears fruit for both countries.

DOWNLOAD THE FULL REPORT FROM THE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE

<http://washin.st/IranianQuest>

Share

Copy the code below to embed the infographic on your site.

<p>Please include attribution to washingtoninstitute.org with this graphic.

<a data-cke-saved-href='http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/infographic-iranian-students-in-the-united-states' href='http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/infographic-iranian-students-in-the-united-states'></p></div>

RECOMMENDED

BRIEF ANALYSIS

[Unpacking the UAE F-35 Negotiations](#)

Feb 15, 2022

◆
Grant Rumley

[\(/policy-analysis/unpacking-uae-f-35-negotiations\)](#)



ARTICLES & TESTIMONY

[How to Make Russia Pay in Ukraine: Study Syria](#)

Feb 15, 2022

◆
Anna Borshchevskaya

[\(/policy-analysis/how-make-russia-pay-ukraine-study-syria\)](#)



BRIEF ANALYSIS

[Bennett's Bahrain Visit Further Invigorates Israel-Gulf Diplomacy](#)

Feb 14, 2022

◆
Simon Henderson

[\(/policy-analysis/bennetts-bahrain-visit-further-invigorates-israel-gulf-diplomacy\)](#)

TOPICS

[Democracy & Reform \(/policy-analysis/democracy-reform\)](#)

REGIONS & COUNTRIES

[Iran \(/policy-analysis/iran\)](#)