

American Secondary School Scholarship Competition
Application Overview
Academic Year 2015/16

Important Notes

In addition to reading this *Application Overview*, please be certain to read the information sheet for your individual country. The document outlines deadlines, tells you where to mail the application, and identifies features of the application that may be unique to your country. ***Both documents should be read first before you begin to complete application materials.***

ASSIST invites scholars from around the world to submit applications to earn one-year scholarships in American independent secondary schools. Primarily, ASSIST selects students entering the 11th grade. There are also opportunities for students entering the 10th grade and for 12th grade or postgraduate students. Students study in the States for 10 months and then return to their home countries – scholarships are not renewable. Students must remain in the U.S. for the full ten months, spending vacations and holidays with their American host families, and then must return to their home countries following their ASSIST year. Parental visits are discouraged until the springtime to ensure a successful cultural transition.

Candidates may not express a preference for a particular school, geographic region, or type of school (day or boarding). The final decision for acceptance lies with the school, and ASSIST works carefully to present candidates to schools where the fit is felt to be optimal.

The Application

Students are asked to provide thorough applications to the country committee evaluating their candidacy. Students with the most promising applications are invited to the interview stage. Please complete all application materials, make a full copy of all documents, and mail the original and copy in one envelope to your country coordinator. The elements of the application are:

Application Form. This form includes contact and biographical information, as well as a detailing of personal information. We also ask that the candidates submit informal candid photographs of themselves with family and friends.

The Essay. Candidates discuss what makes them unique, focusing on special talents, meaningful experiences, and personal philosophies. The committee is interested in family relationships, interests and activities, and a clarification of the desire to be part of the ASSIST program – what the candidates will bring to it, gain from it, and share after it.

Academic Transcript. We require an official academic transcript that includes the courses and academic achievement for both the current and previous school years. Ask the school official to return the transcript to you in an envelope, sealed and with a signature across the seal. Please also attach an official English translation of the transcript.

Recommendations. Personal recommendations must be submitted by the candidates' current English teacher, current Mathematics teacher, and the person in the candidates' school who handles academic matters (guidance counselor, Head, Principal). Ask each teacher or administrator to return the recommendation to you in an envelope, sealed and with a signature across the seal.

The Interview

For successful applicants, interviews take place from October through January in each country where ASSIST maintains a presence. ASSIST representatives and colleagues form interview committees in each country, and students have an opportunity to present themselves.

Language Proficiency

ASSIST Scholars must have a strong command of the English language – spoken, written and read. As part of the interview or before, most candidates will sit for the English Language Test for International Students (ELTiS) to help determine language proficiency. Usually on the same day, each candidate will also be asked to handwrite an essay on an assigned topic. Language skills will also be assessed utilizing the application materials submitted and by careful attention during the interview.

Selection and Notification

ASSIST makes decisions in December, January and February following each of three international interview trips. All candidates are notified of the status of their application. Students not offered a full or partial scholarship might be placed on a waiting list.

School Placement

Once named ASSIST Scholars, candidates are presented to member schools, which make the final decision regarding admission. A candidate's place in the ASSIST program is not confirmed until a member school has offered admission to that candidate.

Financial Responsibilities of the Family

An ASSIST program fee, set by the ASSIST Board of Directors, is charged to the family of each successful candidate. Those selected for ASSIST full scholarships are exempted from the school tuition charges, which will range to US \$56,620 at boarding schools in 2014/15.

As a nonprofit educational organization, ASSIST seeks to keep its fees low and responsive to family needs. The program fee covers ASSIST's administrative and operating costs, both in America and around the world; the cost of the orientation in America; and the cost of transportation to the host family or school. The program fee is published annually prior to the commitment to join the program.

Families are also responsible for round-trip airfare to the U.S., the return trip from the school to point of U.S. departure in the spring, health and accident insurance, visa application fees, a medical examination, and spending money for personal expenses.

Sponsorships

Students in some countries, who come from families of very modest financial means, are sponsored by generous donors. Some or all of the costs associated with participating in the ASSIST program are underwritten by the donors.