

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

2018-2019 CIVIL SOCIETY LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Open Society Scholarship Programs

Before Applying

Eligibility - Citizenship

- **I am a citizen of an eligible country, but am not currently living in my home country. Am I eligible to apply?**

You may be eligible for the award if you are temporarily outside of your home country (and your home country is eligible for awards). For instance, if you are studying abroad for a short time you will be considered eligible.

Please note that individuals with citizenship in a CSLA **host** country are not eligible and individuals with legal residency in a CSLA **host** country are not eligible unless they are recently displaced persons/refugees.

In addition, if you are a citizen of a country that is the target of US sanctions or embargoes, this restriction of being only temporarily outside of your home may not apply. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Please ensure that you complete all the details in Section I of the application describing the documents you hold and the duration for which they are valid.

- **I have dual citizenship with an eligible and non-eligible country. I live in the non-eligible country. Am I eligible to apply?**

In rare circumstances we may consider applicants with dual citizenship as eligible, depending on your situation and legal status.

Please ensure that you complete all the details in Section I of the application describing the documents you hold and the duration for which they are valid.

- **I live in or am a citizen of a country that is under US sanctions or embargoes. Am I still eligible?**

Citizens from eligible countries may be eligible for the award despite US sanctions or embargoes. However, please note that the determination as to eligibility for the award and the costs associated with the application and selection process will be based on the facts of your particular situation and all applicable laws and regulations.

Additionally, should you progress to finalist status, you may need to submit additional verification of your current and expected residence. In some cases, residency or employment may impact whether or not we ultimately are able to offer you the award; however, this will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Please ensure that you complete all the details in Section I of the application describing the documents you hold and the duration for which they are valid.

Eligibility - Field of Study

- **I am unsure about which academic field I would like to study. Can I choose more than one field?**

No. Please think about your specific interests in terms of your future career, research the parameters of similar academic fields to determine what best matches your interests, and then choose a field of study that most closely fits your goals. You will be asked to explain the reason you chose this field within the application, and your answers will heavily impact the review of your application. In some cases, CSLA staff may guide candidates toward a more appropriate field of study during the interview.

Admission to a master's level course requires a strong, clear, subject-specific interest, and in some cases, appropriate previous training. Certain law courses, for instance, require a bachelor's degree in law as prerequisite.

- **I am a good fit for the award, but have already applied for study in an eligible subject at a university that does not partner with CSLA. Will CSLA provide funding for this course?**

No.

Eligibility - General

- **Do I have to have a bachelor's degree in order to apply?**

No, you do not have to have a bachelor's degree in order to apply; however, in order to continue in the competition you must submit proof of your degree by July 15th, 2017.

- **Can I reapply if my previous CSLA application was unsuccessful or if I had to decline a CSLA offer in a previous competition?**

Yes. You can reapply for a new competition but you will need to complete a new application with all required (and updated) attachments.

- **Can I apply for CSLA award if I am already studying in a current CSLA host country?**

No.

Completing an Application

- **Can I edit my application myself after it has been submitted?**

No. Nor can you change the email address associated with your application, by which CSLA staff will contact you. You may submit updates regarding your contact information or residency by contacting the program through Submittable or by emailing csla@infoscholar.org; please note that requests to edit the content of your application after it has been submitted will not be considered.

- **Will I need to take GRE test? Should I provide a GRE score along with my CSLA application?**

The majority of the master degrees within CSLA do not require GRE reports. CSLA staff will provide specific advice and details to finalists during placement, and costs associated with the test will be covered by CSLA.

- **Am I required to have a language score report to submit my CSLA application?**

No, you can submit your CSLA application without an official language test score. If you do not have evidence of your language competence at the point of application, you should answer the related questions in section VIII of the application. If you do have evidence, please submit images or scans of test reports ensuring the scores are clearly visible.

- **Should I complete ‘Disability Accommodations’ questionnaire?**

This form is available for those with special needs or disabilities that have been professionally assessed or evaluated. This is to inform CSLA staff and help them to make the necessary accommodations during the application and placement process.

- **What if I do not have all of my supporting documents ready to submit before the deadline?**

You must include your CV and either your passport or national ID for your application to be accepted for initial review.

For the remainder of your documents, we understand that there may be difficulty obtaining documents, such as your transcripts or disability documentation, by July 15th. In Section VIII, you will be asked to provide confirmation that you are uploading each required supporting document. You will also be able to note if you have not included any specific document, and provide an estimated date by which you will submit the remaining documents.

You will receive a notification from Submittable when your application is complete.

- **How can I know that my application has been received?**

If you submit your application online, you can check if your application has been received through Submittable, and will receive a notification from Submittable when your application is complete. There is no need to submit a separate paper application.

If you submit a paper application, you will be able to view your application on Submittable, using the email address listed in your application, once your application has been received and processed by our office. We encourage you to establish an email account that will be valid for up to six (6) months after you submit your application, if you do not already have one. Additionally, you will receive a notification from Submittable when your application is complete.

In regard to your recommendation letters, we suggest that you ask your recommenders to notify you once they have uploaded or emailed their recommendation, as we will not be able to notify you that the recommendations have been received.

- **I have printed my application and want to submit it to a CSLA office, but there are several addresses. Which office should I send it to?**

You may send your completed paper application to the office geographically closest to you if you are submitting the application by post. All applications are reviewed by CSLA staff, regardless of where the application is received.

After you submit your application

- **What happens after I submit application, and when should I expect to hear from CSLA staff?**

Stage 1: After you submit your application, it will be reviewed by CSLA staff and international experts to assess your eligibility and fit with the goals of the program. Applicants will be informed of their status in **September 2017**; those who were reviewed favorably will move forward to the interview stage.

Stage 2: Interviews of semi-finalists will be held in person (if possible) or via Skype/telephone with CSLA staff, international experts, and faculty from CSLA host universities **in October and November 2017**. Travel for in-person interviews will be arranged through local partners; costs associated with international travel and accommodations for the duration of the interview will be covered by CSLA, and semi-finalists will receive a stipend to cover domestic travel. CSLA staff will help coordinate any necessary test registration and payment, and may discuss possible university placement options with you at this stage.

CSLA staff and university partners will hold a final selection meeting in **November 2017** to review interview results and choose CSLA finalists. You will be informed via e-mail if you have been selected to be a CSLA finalist and are under consideration for placement at a CSLA host university.

Stage 3: CSLA staff will work to place finalists at CSLA host universities between **January and March, 2018**. Some candidates may remain unplaced, especially if they have failed to obtain an adequate language test score or fail to gain admission at a CSLA host university. Unplaced candidates will not receive an award but are welcome to re-apply in the next CSLA competition.

Stage 4: Placements are confirmed on a rolling basis between **Spring 2018**. After CSLA staff determines academic placements, a grant letter will be issued and you will become a CSLA grantee.

- **What is the difference between a “finalist” for placement and a “grantee”?**

Applicants become “finalists for placement” when they move to Stage 3 of the competition, including a successful interview and submitting evidence of language competency. An applicant becomes a grantee when they accept the official placement offer from CSLA staff, following admission to one or more CSLA host universities and final placement by CSLA staff.

Language Tests

- **I see that I may need a language test for admission to a university. When will I need to take one, and what test should I take?**

You should review the host university guide to ensure that you have sufficient language competency for any programs you are interested in attending.

If the language of instruction for your program is English, you will need to have a valid English language test. As a general point of reference, both TOEFL and IELTS tests are accepted by our host universities for finalist placement. It is important to note that many programs in France and Germany are conducted at least partially in English.

For programs with exclusively French instruction, applicants will need to sit one of the following: Test de connaissance du français (TCF); Test d'évaluation de français (le TEF); Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELF); or Diplôme approfondi de langue française (DALF) with satisfactory marks.

Exceptions are made for applicants who have had at least six (6) years of education in a Francophone country, such as the of the Democratic Republic of Congo, where French is recognized as the official language of instruction.

For programs with exclusively German instruction, you may be requested to sit for a TestDaf. Please note that citizens from Cambodia, Egypt, Laos, Libya, Myanmar/Burma, and Syria are not eligible for placement at CSLA host universities in Germany.

Semi-finalists without evidence of language competency will be required to take a language test in order to remain in the competition. CSLA staff will advise these candidates of the appropriate test and a timeline for taking the test. These tests will be arranged through local partners; costs associated with international travel, registration and accommodations for the duration of the test will be covered by CSLA, and semi-finalists will receive a stipend to cover domestic travel.

- **Am I exempt from the language test requirement if I have studied in English?**

A TOEFL or IELTS test is required to any applicant applying to programs with English instruction. The only exception is for applicants who have full-time BA degrees from Australia, Canada, UK, US, and/or New Zealand.

- **What is a “valid” language test?**

Your test reports should be valid until October 2018. This means that you will need to re-sit your test if you took it before October 1, 2016.

- **Will I need to re-sit my language test if I already have a valid test score?**

It will depend on the test score you have achieved already. In general, a minimum score of 5.5 on the IELTS (with at least a 5.5 in each section) or 59 on the TOEFL iBT (with a minimum of 12 in reading and 20 in writing) are the lowest scores our host universities will consider for review; however, most require a higher score. Finalists may be offered conditional admission to a host university pending an improved language score; in those instances, CSLA staff will advise these candidates of the appropriate test and a timeline for taking the test.

Grantees attending universities in the UK will need to obtain at least a 6.5 on the UKVI IELTS in order to obtain a Tier 4 student visa to the UK. CSLA staff will arrange UKVI IELTS tests for grantees during the pre-academic summer school; costs associated to the test will be covered by CSLA.

- **How can I prepare for my language test? When will I need to do that?**

We do encourage you start practicing for the test as soon as you submit your application. There are a number of available resources, both electronically and in print, and we would suggest that you utilize these to your best ability. Most notably, there are free online practice tests that help you identify any areas for development.

- **I am a person with a disability and require disability-related test accommodations. Does this impact my taking a language test?**

For those needing to take an English language test, we will work with you and our regional partners to register you for a TOEFL test closest to you. From previous experience, we have found that the TOEFL is able to arrange any necessary accommodations faster than the IELTS. It is your responsibility to collect the appropriate documents for your specific accommodation. Please see the TOEFL website regarding Disability Accommodations to learn more about the appropriate documents you may need to collect: <https://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/register/disabilities>.

Host University Placement

- **Which universities partner with the CSLA program?**

Although the list changes yearly, partners in 2017 included universities in Europe, the UK, the US and some parts of Asia. For a full list of our current host universities, please see the Host University Guide.

- **Why do you have a limited number of CSLA host universities?**

We work with a wide range of universities which offer quality instruction in the social sciences and humanities and share our commitment to open society values. These universities have agreed in advance to provide significant tuition discounts for CSLA candidates, and they actively participate in our selection process. Our university partnerships enable us to cluster grantees at institutions, which we value, and we therefore prioritize our established partners when we match CSLA finalists to program options in their field of study.

- **How is a CSLA finalist matched with a university?**

CSLA staff will arrange placements for successful CSLA candidates in cooperation with our host university colleagues. Finalists are matched with universities according to their chosen area of specialization, overall academic profile including language test scores, and professional aspirations. Final decisions concerning host university placement are made by the CSLA program staff, factoring in input from the international selection committee and host university staff and faculty. All placements are made in conjunction with the host universities, and candidates must meet their standards for graduate studies admission, which differ from university to university. Please note that final placement decisions sit with CSLA staff and are final, as it is our objective to find successful placements for as many finalists as possible.

- **Will I need to apply directly to universities once I am selected as a finalist for the program?**

In some cases, you will need to apply to a CSLA host university directly. Finalists who are being considered for placement at universities in Hong Kong, France, Germany, Hungary, The Netherlands, or the UK will be asked by CSLA staff or staff from our host universities or host organizations (e.g. DAAD), to complete additional application forms. There will be no fee for submitting these applications. CSLA staff will advise you of the need to apply and work with you on this process. Please note that if you apply directly to a university without prior instruction from CSLA staff, we will not be able to reimburse the application costs.

Additionally, admission to a university does not guarantee placement at that university. CSLA staff will guide finalists through the placement process, but it is important to note that placement decisions sit with CSLA staff and are final.

Contact Us

If you have further questions about the process before or after applying, please email us at csla@infoscholar.org or contact the partner offices in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania or Tajikistan.