

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Civil Society Leadership Awards 2019-2020

Open Society Scholarship Programs

Application Deadline: May 15, 2018

Eligibility - Citizenship

- [I am a citizen of an eligible country but am not currently living in my home country. Am I eligible to apply?](#)
- [I have dual citizenship with an eligible and non-eligible country. I live in the non-eligible country. Am I eligible to apply?](#)
- [I live in or am a citizen of a country that is under US sanctions or embargoes. Am I still eligible?](#)

Eligibility - Field of Study

- [I am unsure about which academic field I would like to study. Can I choose more than one field?](#)
- [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?](#)
- [I am confused about the distinction between some of the academic fields listed. How do I know what discipline to apply for?](#)
- [I am interested in studying a subject that is not listed as an eligible field of study. May I still apply?](#)

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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 or permanent residency status in a CSLA **host** university 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 coverage of 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.

Should you progress to finalist status, you may need to submit additional information about your past and current employment and residency, as well as your future plans. Ultimately, all award decisions 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.

- **I am confused about the distinction between some of the academic fields listed. How do I know what discipline to apply for?**

While there is some overlap between fields of study, you should carefully review options and make one choice. You will be able to explain your choice in the essays. We suggest reviewing the [Host University Guide](#) and examining websites listed there to determine what discipline best matches your interests.

- **I am interested in studying a subject that is not listed as an eligible field of study. May I still apply?**

No.

Eligibility - General

- **I am in the final year of my bachelor's study. Am I eligible to apply?**

If you complete your bachelor's degree and can submit proof of your completed degree by the program deadline, May 15th, 2018.

- **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?**

Yes, you may edit your application on Submittable until the deadline (May 15, 2018). After May 15, 2018, the system will be locked and your application will be unavailable to you.

PLEASE NOTE: You cannot change the e-mail address used to register with Submittable—this is the e-mail address to which all CSLA communication will be sent. Therefore, you should choose an e-mail address that you are certain will remain valid and accessible to you for a full year after the application deadline.

- **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. In the few cases where it is required, 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 V of the application. If you do have evidence, please submit images or scans of test reports ensuring the scores are clearly visible.

- **I am a person with a disability. What accommodations does CSLA provide?**

CSLA welcomes applications from disabled students including those with a specific learning difficulty or a long-term health condition (including mental health difficulties). A disabled applicant will be subject to the same academic review as all other candidates. If you have a disability, you are encouraged to disclose this in your application. The information will be used to ensure that reasonable accommodations can be made for testing, interviews, or during studies. CSLA will bear the cost of accommodations in cooperation with your host university.

- **What supporting documents are required, and what if I do not have all of my supporting documents ready to submit by the deadline?**

For your application to be accepted for initial review, you must submit the following documents by the deadline of May 15, 2018: CV/resume, university-issued transcripts/grade reports (including proof of last university degree awarded), and copies of passports or national IDs.

Transcripts/grade reports may be unofficial or provisional at the time of application, but candidates invited to interviews will be required to secure official versions.

Likewise, recommendation letters are not required at the time of application, but candidates invited to interviews will be required to have two reference letters submitted to CSLA by October 1, 2018.

Therefore, we strongly encourage you to request official transcripts and recommendation letters as soon as possible to avoid potential delays. Transcripts and recommendation letters in languages other than English must be accompanied by an official English translation.

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

If you submit your application online, you can see if your application and recommendation letters have been received by checking your account on Submittable. If you submit an online application, please do not submit a separate paper or e-mail application.

If you submit a paper or e-mail application instead of applying through Submittable, CSLA staff will upload the application to Submittable. You will receive a notification and then be able to view your application on Submittable, using the e-mail address listed in your application. We encourage you to use an e-mail account that will be valid for up to nine (9) months after you submit your application.

- **I have printed my paper application and want to submit it to a CSLA office. Which office should I send it to?**

You may send your completed paper application either to our London or New York office, if you are submitting the application by post. All applications are reviewed by CSLA staff, regardless of where the application is received. For offices addresses, see [How to Apply](#).

After You Submit Your Application

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

- **Stage 1:** After May 15, 2018 your application will be reviewed by CSLA staff and international experts to assess your eligibility, competitive potential, and fit with the goals of the program.

Ineligible and uncompetitive applicants will be notified of their status in late June.

Those continuing will be sent out for external review and notified of their status in **September 2018**: those who are reviewed favorably will become Semi-Finalists and be invited to an interview.

Semi-Finalists must ensure that CSLA receives two (2) recommendation letters by the time of the interviews. For further details, see [How to Apply](#).

- **Stage 2:** Interviews of semi-finalists will be held in person (if possible) or via Skype/telephone in late September/October. Travel for in-person interviews will be arranged through local partners; costs associated with international travel and accommodations for the interview will be covered by CSLA. CSLA staff will help coordinate any necessary test registration and payments.

Interview results will be reviewed at a final selection meeting in November 2018. You will be informed via e-mail by January 2019 if you have been selected as a CSLA finalist and are under consideration for placement at a CSLA host university.

- **Stage 3:** Placement of CSLA finalists at host universities takes place from **January through April**, and is managed by CSLA staff. Finalists who fail to obtain an adequate language test score, or fail to gain admission at a CSLA host university, or obtain admission but fail to do so within the CSLA staff-led placement process, will not receive an award, but are welcome to re-apply in the next CSLA competition.
- **Stage 4:** Once CSLA staff have a confirmed placement for you at a CSLA host university, you will receive a grant letter to sign and return to CSLA staff. At that point you will be a CSLA grantee.

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

Semi-finalists become “finalists” after a successful interview and submission of appropriate language competency. A finalist becomes a grantee when they accept the official placement offer from CSLA staff, and return a signed grant letter to CSLA.

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. 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 test will be covered by CSLA.

Generally, either the TOEFL or the IELTS is required by host universities for finalist placement if the language of instruction is **English**. 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 (DELFL); 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.

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

A TOEFL or IELTS test is required for any applicant applying to programs with English instruction, even if the language of instruction at your university was English. The only exception may be for applicants who have full-time BA degrees from Australia, Canada, UK, US, or New Zealand.

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

Your official test reports should be valid until October 2019. This means that you will need to re-sit your test if you took it before October 1, 2017.

- **What is the minimum test score required for consideration?**

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; however, most require a higher score. Please consult the [Host University Guide](#) for more details. 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.

Please note that a high test score does not guarantee admission to a host university or CSLA award. Test scores are only one factor affecting selection decisions.

- **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 early as possible. 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 test closest to you. Arranging test accommodations can take several months and require special documentation. It is your responsibility to collect the documents needed for your specific accommodation. Please see the TOEFL or IELTS websites regarding Disability Accommodations to learn more about the appropriate documents you may need to collect: <https://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/register/disabilities>

<https://www.ielts.org/book-a-test/special-requirements#>

Host University Placement

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

Although the list changes yearly, partners include 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. 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?**

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, with input from the international selection committee and the host university. 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 placement decisions sit with CSLA staff and are final.

- **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. Some finalists 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.

Privacy and Personal Data

- **How can I change my privacy and personal data preferences?**

You can opt-out or update your communication preferences at any time by contacting us at: csla@infoscholar.org.

Further Questions

Due to the high volume of e-mail we receive, program staff cannot respond to all inquiries, including questions that are otherwise addressed in our FAQ section. Inquiries not covered elsewhere may be addressed to: csla@infoscholar.org.