



2025-2026 Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program (TJSP)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Question: Do I need to be an undergraduate student to apply?

Answer: Yes. Applicants must be a Tunisian citizen, currently residing in Tunisia, and currently studying at a Tunisian university/institute in an undergraduate program. Eligible applicants must be in their second year or above. Students in their first or final year of undergraduate studies are not eligible to apply.

Question: I am a first-year undergraduate student. Am I eligible to apply?

Answer: No, first-year undergraduate students are not eligible to apply at this time. The TJSP program team encourages current first-year students to apply in future competitions.

Question: Is there an age minimum for participation?

Answer: Yes. Applicants must be at least 18 years old by July 1, 2025.

Question: I am currently studying at an ISET, ISSAT, or IHET. Am I eligible to apply?

Answer: Yes. TJSP is open to current students of all undergraduate universities and institutes in Tunisia, including ISET, ISSAT, and IHET students.

Question: Can I apply for TJSP if I have already been in the United States as a participant on a U.S. government-sponsored program such as YES or the MEPI Student Leaders Program?

Answer: Yes. However, strong preference will be given to candidates with little or no experience in the United States. Applicants with a prior J-1 visa must complete any applicable residency requirements before becoming eligible for another J-1 visa.

Question: I'm currently taking a year off from my studies. Am I still eligible to apply?

Answer: No. The program is open to current undergraduate university/institute students only.

Question: Are there any limits to field of study specializations?

Answer: TJSP is open to a broad variety of specializations. Students should identify their fields of study on their application and these fields should be drawn from the standard undergraduate university/college curriculum within the United States. Please note that students may not enroll in clinical coursework while on the TJSP Program.

Question: Do I need to take the an English proficiency exam, such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or Duolingo English Test (DET), to apply for this program?

Answer: Only semi-finalists will take the Duolingo English Test (DET). Testing will be coordinated by IREX and at no charge to semi-finalists. Semi-finalist candidates who are eligible for final selection must achieve a minimum DET score of 100.

Apply online at: <https://www.irex.org/project/tjsp>
Application Deadline: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 at 5:00pm Tunis

The Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Department of State and implemented by IREX.

Question: Do I need to have a passport if I want to apply?

Answer: No, a passport is not required at the time of application for the program. However, it is highly recommended to apply for an international passport in anticipation of being selected, as it may take a significant amount of time to receive an international passport. Selected candidates must have a passport by spring 2025 in order to obtain their U.S. visa and travel to the United States. IREX will not provide any monetary assistance for passport applications.

Question: I have a passport, but it shows that I am still a high school student. Do I have to renew my passport to apply?

Answer: No. You do not need to renew your passport to apply for the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program. If selected for the program, your passport must not expire before December 1, 2026, 6 months after your expected return to Tunisia.

Question: I want to apply for the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program but could not find the name of my institute in the eligible institutions list. What should I do?

Answer: Please email thomasjeffersonscholars@irex.org with the name of your institute and documents proving that your institute is accredited by the Tunisian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. IREX will then inform you whether your institute is or is not eligible.

Question: If I am selected, which U.S. host institution will I attend? Can I choose?

Answer: No. Participants cannot choose their host institution placement. Finalists are placed at institutions that have officially applied to host TJSP participants. Each participant is assigned a placement at an accredited institution in the United States based on academic fit.

Question: When are the results of the competition announced, and when does the program begin?

Answer: IREX aims to notify all applicants of their final status in spring 2025. Due to the anticipated volume of applications received, IREX does not forward explanations to applicants not selected as finalists. Finalists should expect to depart for their U.S. host institutions in summer 2025.

Question: If I am selected for the program and travel to the United States, how can I protect my health during the program?

Answer: Participants will be provided with thorough briefings about protecting their personal health and safety while in the United States. They will also have health insurance during their program in the United States and will be supported by program staff should they require medical care. Participants will be expected to follow the health and safety guidance of their campus and community while participating in the program and adhere to vaccination requirements for U.S. international visitor entry and their host institutions.

Question: I have a physical disability or other special need and I need another person's assistance to complete my application. Is this considered plagiarism?

Answer: Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply for the TJSP Program. Applicants with physical disabilities or special needs who require another person's assistance to complete an application may do so. However, the thoughts, ideas and content of your application must be your own; you cannot collaborate with the person assisting you on the content of your application.

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Question: May applicants with disabilities apply? Why does the application ask if I have a disability?

Answer: Yes, applicants with disabilities may apply and are encouraged to do so. The TJSP Program does not discriminate against applicants on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, or any other protected characteristic as established by U.S. law. The application includes a question about disability so that we are aware of what kinds of reasonable accommodations might be needed if you are interviewed or selected. **Your answer to the question regarding disabilities is voluntary and will *not* impact your chances of acceptance.** All candidates must receive a medical clearance as part of the acceptance process.

Question: How are scholars with disabilities supported during the program?

Answer: Each scholar's needs are evaluated individually so that the host university partner and IREX can determine the reasonable accommodations needed to ensure full participation in program activities.

Question: Can I stay in the United States after the school year ends?

Answer: No. All participants are required to return to Tunisia to attend a mandatory re-entry workshop in Tunis in order to successfully complete the program. No visa extensions will be granted. All participants are subject to the two-year home residency rule, which prohibits returning to the United States under certain visa categories until the participant spends at least two years in Tunisia after completion of the program.

Question: Will my credits transfer back to my home institution in Tunisia?

Answer: Participants may submit U.S. transcripts to their home institution for review upon completion of the program to determine if the credits are transferrable.

Question: May I submit my application by email?

Answer: No. Applicants must complete the application online. The online application can be found on the IREX website at: <https://www.irex.org/project/tjsp>

Question: Who may I contact if I have more questions about the application?

Answer: Visit <https://www.irex.org/project/tjsp> or write to thomasjeffersonscholars@irex.org.

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