

INTERNATIONAL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PROGRAMS U.S. ACADEMIC HOST INSTITUTION APPLICATION 2025-2026 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

DEADLINE: March 3, 2025

IREX, a global development and education organization striving for a more just, prosperous, and inclusive world where individuals reach their full potential, governments serve their people, and communities thrive, seeks accredited U.S. institutions of higher education to host undergraduate students for two programs:

- Global Undergraduate Exchange Program in Pakistan
- Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program



Global Undergraduate Exchange Program in Pakistan

The Global Undergraduate Exchange Program in Pakistan (Global UGRAD-Pakistan) provides emerging youth leaders from diverse communities across Pakistan with the opportunity for **one semester** of full-time, non-degree study in the United States.

During a semester of undergraduate classes and community engagement, participants strengthen their leadership, academic, and career-preparedness skills while building relationships with Americans. Global UGRAD-Pakistan participants will complete 20 hours of community service at local organizations during their semester in the U.S. and complete an academic skills-building class. These activities will help students engage in their host communities as well as gain skills and experience they can apply in their home communities when they return to Pakistan. Global UGRAD-Pakistan is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and supported in its implementation by IREX.

Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program

The Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program (TJSP) provides opportunities for full-time undergraduate university/institute students from Tunisia to spend **one academic year** of non-degree study at U.S. colleges and universities. Through academic opportunities, professional engagement, and leadership development, TJSP fosters economic growth,

stability, and democratic development in Tunisia by equipping a network of youth with essential skills to lead positive change in their professional fields and communities.

Scholars will perform at least 20 hours of community service in their host community during their first semester. Students will also hold unpaid, part-time internships related to their program field of study during their second semester. 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.

Both programs provide the following support to students:

- J-1 visa support;
- Round-trip travel from student's home city to host institution in the United States;
- Tuition and mandatory university fees;
- Room and board (housing and meals);
- A small incidentals allowance;
- A limited allowance for books;
- A limited allowance for cultural enrichment activities; and
- Alumni networking opportunities;
- Accident and sickness limited health care benefit plan (Global UGRAD-Pakistan program only)

Expectations of Host Institutions

The U.S. academic host institutions are critical partners for the programs. Host institutions will be selected based on:

- demonstrated ability to provide a well-rounded program experience (with strong academic and cultural components)
- ability to provide personalized care
- experience and ability to work with students from the targeted regions
- ability to engage students in the local community
- proposed cost-share and per student cost

Participants for both programs are required to be enrolled in full-time primary insurance. IREX prefers that participants be enrolled through the institutional plan. If your institution does not provide health insurance for international students, please indicate this on the application.

Eligible U.S. institutions must be able to secure on-campus housing for program participants and enroll them in a meal plan that provides at least 19 meals per week.

Host institutions will be responsible for providing each student with a) academic support; b) cultural and community support; and c) logistical support. Responsibilities are explained in more detail below:

Academic Support

To position participants for *academic success*, host institutions are asked to:

- Admit participants as non-degree full-time students with the ability to take classes on campus for academic credit.
- Designate an academic advisor who will guide the students' studies and interaction with faculty at the host institution.
- Offer sufficient on-campus courses in disciplines for which students apply.
- Assist students in selecting appropriate courses, taking into consideration the student's field of study and academic experience, program requirements, and the host institution's financial agreement for the program.
- Direct students to academic support services, such as peer tutors and the campus writing center.
- Work with students, the IREX advisor/mentor, and professors to monitor academic progress and to develop a plan to improve academic performance, if necessary.
- If the host institution offers English as a Second Language or Intensive English, coordinate student placement in these courses when necessary.

Cultural and Community Support

To promote *cultural and community* engagement, host institutions are asked to:

- Ensure students participate in on-campus orientation programs assisting them with their adjustment to campus and U.S. life. The orientation should acquaint students with the host institution, campus culture, campus resources (including health and counseling), and academic expectations. The orientation should also cover the institution's policies and protocols regarding academic integrity, campus emergency responses, and gender & sexual respect. The orientation should also reinforce program policies, with guidance from IREX. IREX recommends that the orientation also include a skills-building session to help prepare students academically, such as academic research & writing, critical thinking, time management, note-taking, and studying for and taking tests.
- Inform students of cultural activities and local events (e.g. town meetings, concerts, festivals, political rallies, etc.) they can participate in as part of the Digital Cultural Passport program:

- To complement the academic program and ensure that students receive a well-rounded introduction to U.S. values, institutions, and people, all students will participate in the *Digital Cultural Passport* program. The Digital Cultural Passport program allows students to record exploration of various aspects of U.S. culture which fall under the categories of arts and music, holiday and diversity celebrations, sports and leisure, youth concerns, local pride, and community leadership in action.
- Provide guidance/assistance in locating appropriate community service activities.
- Suggest appropriate locations for the students' country presentations (e.g. local schools, libraries, rotary clubs, retirement homes, etc.).
- Be available to discuss strategies for dealing with roommate issues or cultural adjustment situations with students on a one-on-one basis.
- An optional, but encouraged component is to identify "friendship families" to share American family life, take students on cultural outings and/or host students for holidays.
- If hosting participants from Global UGRAD-Pakistan, recommend at least one academic skills-building course.
- If hosting participants from TJSP, provide guidance/assistance/support in locating appropriate internships for TJSP students which are in the student's field of study and provide substantive experience to advance the student's personal and professional goals. Hosts are asked to share other opportunities for professional development as they become available.

Logistical Support

Host institutions are asked to provide additional *logistical supports* including:

- Correspond with students prior to arrival providing information about the host institution and answering student questions.
- Arrange airport pick-up for arriving students.
- Secure temporary housing in the dormitory or with a host family before the start of classes and during breaks, as necessary.

- Coordinate with the housing office to ensure appropriate housing assignment with a U.S. roommate. **The students are required to live with a U.S. roommate.**
- Sign students up for a comprehensive meal plan (at least 19 meals per week).
- Assist students with any dietary needs and locating requested religious services.
- Provide access to email and internet facilities.
- Work with the appropriate office on campus to enroll students in campus health insurance, if available at the institution for international students.
- Help locate appropriate doctors in the area when students are sick and assist students in finding transportation to their office.
- Keep IREX informed of student progress and any adjustment or behavioral issues.
- Introduce participants to the institution's policies on academic integrity and sexual respect.

*****Please note: Placing students with a U.S. roommate is a requirement of the programs. Institutions that cannot provide on-campus housing with U.S. peers will not be considered.***

Financial Support

Due to funding limitations, most institutions selected offer cost-share contribution of **at least 40 percent** of costs. Cost-share can be in the form of full or partial tuition or room and board waivers, scholarships, or other contributions. While this request should not deter applicants, it should be noted that financial arrangements are determinants of eventual placement of students.

J-1 Visa Regulations

Program participants are subject to the J-1 visa two-year home-residency requirement and are required to depart the United States on the flight provided to them by IREX, immediately following the completion of their program requirement (i.e. final exams).

Prior to beginning his/her program, each student will sign a document agreeing to this two-year home residency requirement. **Students are required to return home**

immediately upon the completion of the program. The United States government has invested a generous amount of money and time into students' professional development with the firm expectation that they will apply their newfound knowledge and skills in their home community upon their return.

No exceptions to this rule are possible. In addition, because the programs are non-degree programs, IREX also cannot consider requests to prolong students' stay in the United States in order to complete an academic degree. IREX is not permitted under any circumstances to transfer the sponsorship of the student's DS-2019 to the host institution.

Organization Descriptions

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' (ECA) mission is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange that assist in the development of peaceful relations.

As mandated by the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) works to build friendly, peaceful relations between the people of the United States and the people of other countries through academic, cultural, sports, and professional exchanges, as well as public-private partnerships.

In an effort to reflect the diversity of the United States and global society, ECA programs, funding, and other activities encourage the involvement of American and international participants from traditionally underrepresented groups, including women, racial and ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities. Artists, educators, athletes, students, youth, and rising leaders in the United States and more than 160 countries around the globe participate in academic, cultural, sports, and professional exchanges.

Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State

The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs leads U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East and North Africa region through carefully administered diplomacy, advocacy, and assistance that advances the interests, safety, and economic prosperity of the American people.

The U.S. Embassy in Tunisia's Public Affairs Section explains and advocates U.S. foreign policy, American culture, and society while promoting dialogue between the U.S. and Tunisia through a variety of educational exchange programs, media relations, cultural activities, and English language training support. The U.S. Embassy in Tunisia sponsors a wide array of exchange programs for students, professionals, artists, and others. These exchanges strengthen the U.S.-Tunisian relationship by building the skills of participants and fostering positive engagement between Tunisians and Americans.

IREX (International Research & Exchanges Board)

IREX is a global development and education organization. We strive for a more just, prosperous, and inclusive world. With a projected annual portfolio of \$155 million and more than 760 staff worldwide, we work with partners in more than 100 countries in four areas essential to progress: cultivating leaders, empowering youth, strengthening institutions, and increasing access to quality education and information. For more information about IREX, visit www.irex.org.

How These Organizations Work Together on These Programs

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and IREX work in partnership on the Global Undergraduate Exchange Program in Pakistan (Global UGRAD-Pakistan). The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) and IREX work in partnership on the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program. As programs of the U.S. Department of State, ECA and NEA develops, funds, and oversees each program, and IREX is a grantee that administers all aspects of the programs.

Submission Guidelines

Please read all instructions and information on the online application carefully before filling out each section of the application form. We recommend that you print a final copy of all pages of the online host application and attachments for your records and reference.

To apply to host for any of the programs please submit all application materials through the online application system found on the IREX website.

Selection of host institutions and placement of students is contingent upon the availability of U.S. Government funding and approval and receipt of J-1 visas by program participants.

Please direct all questions to IREX via email at ugradhosts@irex.org.

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