



U.S. Embassy Tunis



Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program's 2020-2021 Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program (TCCSP)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Question: What is the Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program (TCCSP)?

Answer: TCCSP is an education exchange program that offers a scholarship for one academic year (approximately 10 months) to study at an accredited community college in the United States. The program will provide participants with a deeper understanding of American culture and provide new globally-applicable skills and expertise to help them contribute to the growth and development of Tunisia. TCCSP is a part of the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program and is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and supported in its implementation by IREX.

Question: Why is the U.S. government interested in funding programs for citizens of Tunisia to study in the United States?

Answer: The U.S. government believes that individual exchange programs are one of the most effective methods of fostering mutual understanding and good relations between the people of the United States and the people of Tunisia.

Question: What is a community college?

Answer: In the United States, community colleges are undergraduate institutions providing certificate and degree programs. U.S. community colleges are institutions that specialize in providing post-secondary education in applied fields, technical skills development, and job training. Community colleges also respond to a local economy's need for trained workers in the city and state where the colleges are located.

Question: What expenses are covered by the program?

Answer: TCCSP provides funding for the following: J-1 visa support; roundtrip travel from the participant's home city to their host institution in the United States; tuition and mandatory college fees; a health benefits plan; a monthly allowance for living expenses; and a limited allowance for textbooks.

Question: I am a current student at an ISET (Institut Supérieur des Etudes Technologiques), IHET-School of Tourism (Institut des Haute Etudes Touristiques), or ISSAT (Institut Supérieur des Sciences Appliquées et de Technologie). Am I eligible to apply?

Answer: Yes. Current ISET, ISSAT and IHET students are eligible to apply for TCCSP.

Apply online at: <https://www.irex.org/project/tccsp>
Application Deadline: Monday, November 18, 2019 at 5:00 pm

This program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and supported in its implementation by IREX.

The Thomas Jefferson Scholarship 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.

Question: I am a current university student. Am I eligible to apply?

Answer: Only ISSAT university students and IHET School of Tourism students are eligible to apply for TCCSP. Please visit www.irex.org/project/tunisiaugrad for information about the Tunisia UGRAD program for other university students.

Question: Do I need to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) to apply for this program?

Answer: No. Only semifinalists are required to take the TOEFL and testing will be provided free of charge. For further consideration, semifinalists must achieve a TOEFL score of at least 500 PBT.

Question: Is there an age requirement for participation?

Answer: Yes. Applicants must be at least 18 years old by July 1, 2020.

Question: I want to study Political Science in the United States. Can I apply for this program?

Answer: No. TCCSP is only open to students interested in pursuing professional certificates in the fields specified for each year. Eligible fields of study for the 2020-2021 academic year are:

- Applied Engineering,
- Business Administration and Management,
- Information Technology, and
- Tourism & Hospitality Management.

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

Answer: No. Participants cannot choose their community college placement. Each participant is assigned a placement at an accredited institution in the United States based on professional certificate program and placement availability.

Question: Can I apply for the Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program 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. Additionally, individuals who have participated in an Exchange Visitor program sponsored or funded by the United States Government (e.g. the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Public Affairs Sections of U.S. Embassy, MEPI, U.S. Agency for International Development or other U.S. government agencies) for a period of more than six weeks, need to have fulfilled their two-year home residency requirement by the time of application.

Question: What is the selection process and what are the main selection criteria?

Answer: TCCSP is conducted as a merit-based, open competition. After the deadline, all eligible applications will be reviewed by a panel of academic specialists. Chosen semi-finalists will be interviewed in Tunisia by a bi-national committee of U.S. specialists, U.S. Government program alumni, and/or U.S. Embassy representatives, and must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) in February-March 2020. Applicants will be notified of their status in spring of 2020.

Selection panels will use the following criteria to evaluate applications (not in order of importance):

- Is a citizen of Tunisia;
- Is currently residing in Tunisia;
- Is currently enrolled as a first- or second-year full-time undergraduate (Licence) student in good academic standing at the time of application at an ISET (Institut Supérieur des Etudes Technologiques), IHET (Institut Supérieur des Etudes Touristiques), or ISSAT (Institut Supérieur des Sciences Appliquées et de Technologie);
- Has a demonstrated record of academic excellence

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- Is able to receive and maintain a U.S. J-1 visa;
- Is committed to returning to Tunisia after completion of the program;
- Is able to achieve a TOEFL score of 500 (PBT); and
- Is at least 18 years old by July 1, 2020.

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

Answer: All applicants will receive notification in spring of 2020. Due to the anticipated volume of applications IREX will receive, IREX cannot provide explanations about application selection decisions to applicants not selected as finalists. The program begins in summer 2020.

Question: How is the Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program (TCCSP) different from the Tunisia Undergraduate Scholarship Program (Tunisia UGRAD)?

Answer: TCCSP participants focus on enhancing their vocational skills and earning a professional certificate in eligible fields of study. TCCSP is open to current ISET, ISSAT, and IHET students. Participants on this program might live on or off campus depending on their U.S. community college placement.

The Tunisia UGRAD program is a non-degree seeking program open to current non-ISSAT/ISET/IHET undergraduate university students. Tunisia UGRAD participants live on campus at an accredited U.S. University or 4-year college. A very broad range of fields of study are offered.

Both programs are part of the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program, are for one academic year (approximately 10 months) and offer participants the opportunity to gain practical experience through community service and professional internships in their fields of study, as well as first-hand exposure to American life and culture.

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

Answer: Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply for TCCSP. 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.

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. TCCSP 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 a part of the acceptance process.

Question: May I apply for both the TCCSP and the Tunisia UGRAD program?

Answer: No. The Tunisia UGRAD program is open to current non-ISSAT/ISET/IHET undergraduate university students only. TCCSP is open to current ISET, IHET, and ISSAT students only. Current university students not studying at ISSATs/ISETs/IHET are not eligible to apply to TCCSP. If an applicant applies to both programs, one application will automatically be considered technically ineligible.

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Question: I am currently studying in a preparatory program at an ISSAT. Which program should I apply for?

Answer: You should apply for TCCSP. TCCSP is open to current ISET, IHET, and ISSAT students. The Tunisia UGRAD program is open to current non-ISSAT undergraduate university students only.

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 students only.

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 on the IREX website at:
<https://www.irex.org/project/tccsp>.

Question: Where can I obtain more information about TCCSP?

Answer: Visit <http://www.irex.org/project/tccsp>, write to thomasjeffersonscholars@irex.org, or call (+216) 71-247-037, (+216) 20-638-847

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