

# Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program's 2020-2021 Tunisia Undergraduate Scholarship Program (Tunisia UGRAD)

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS



U.S. Embassy Tunis



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### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

#### ACADEMIC PROGRAM

As part of the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program, the 2020-2021 Tunisia Undergraduate Scholarship Program, a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State, provides opportunities for outstanding undergraduate students from Tunisia for one academic year of full-time, non-degree study in the United States. Students will attend four-year universities and colleges and will live in on-campus housing (dormitories). Participants may submit U.S. transcripts to their home institution for review upon completion of the program to determine if the credits are transferrable. The program will provide participants with a deeper understanding of American culture and new globally-applicable skills and expertise to help them contribute to the growth and development of Tunisia. **Participants may not choose their U.S. host university/college.**

A broad range of academic fields of study are eligible, including humanities, social sciences, applied sciences, natural and physical sciences, arts, and other standard university fields of study. Please note that students studying at ISSAT (Institut Supérieur des Sciences Appliquées et de Technologie), ISETS, and IHETs are not eligible for Tunisia UGRAD but should apply for the Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program (TCCSP). Students should identify their program field of study on their application. This field should be drawn from the standard university/college curriculum within the United States. Please note that students may not enroll in clinical coursework while on the Tunisia UGRAD Program.

#### EXPERIENTIAL COMPONENTS

To support students in the development of the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to build strong foundations for professional leadership success contributing to Tunisia's development, participants engage in experiential learning components in addition to their academic programs:

Apply online at: <http://www.irex.org/project/tunisia-ugrad>. Application Deadline: Monday, November 18, 2019 at 5:00 pm.  
This Application is free and may be duplicated.

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.

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**Cultural Engagement:** To develop students' interpersonal and cross-cultural skills, participants will be required to give a minimum of one country presentation during their program; complete cross-cultural activities each semester; and develop a virtual cultural exchange activity.

**Community Service:** To expose students to the principles of community service and social responsibility in the United States, participants will be required to perform a minimum of 20 hours of community service with local organizations during their academic year.

**Part-Time Internship:** Internships provide an essential opportunity for participants to develop key personal soft skills and gain professional experience and skills that can be applied in their future careers in Tunisia. Program participants will be required to intern a total of 80 hours during their second semester; each participant's internship must be related to their program field of study.

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## TECHNICAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

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Competition for the Tunisia Undergraduate Scholarship Program is merit-based and open to anyone who:

- Is a Tunisian citizen;
- Is currently enrolled as a first- or second-year full-time undergraduate (Licence) student in good academic standing at the time of application at a registered academic institution in Tunisia;
  - Architecture students are eligible in their first-, second-, third-, or fourth-year of study. Engineering students are eligible in their first-, or second-year (preparatory classes), and third- and fourth-year of undergraduate study;
  - *If you study at an ISSAT (Institut Supérieur des Sciences Appliquées et de Technologie), ISET, or IHET, please see the Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program application.*
- Is currently residing in Tunisia;
- Has a demonstrated record of academic excellence;
- Is able to receive a U.S. J-1 visa;
- Is at least 18 years old by July 1, 2020;
- Is committed to returning to Tunisia after completion of the program; and
- Is able to achieve a TOEFL score of 500 (PBT)

Individuals in the following circumstances are NOT eligible for the Tunisia Undergraduate Scholarship Program:

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- Part-time students;
- U.S. citizens and permanent residents of the United States;
- Individuals currently participating in academic, training, or research programs in the United States;
- Individuals currently residing, studying, or working outside of Tunisia;
- 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 and have not fulfilled their two-year home residency requirement by the time of application;
- Individuals who have applied for U.S. permanent residency in the past three years;
- Employees, and their families, of non-profit organizations who administer the Tunisia UGRAD Program on behalf of the U.S. Department of State. This provision does not disqualify self-supporting members of families who live apart from their parents;
- Locally employed staff of the U.S. Embassy in Tunisia. These individuals are ineligible for grants during the period of their employment and for one year following the termination of employment;
- Immediate family members (i.e. spouses and dependent children) of U.S. Department of State employees for a period of one year following the termination of such employment. This provision does not disqualify self-supporting members of families who live apart from their parents; and
- Persons arrested for, charged with, or convicted of a crime as further detailed by the Bureau.

The U.S. Department of State and IREX reserve the right to verify all of the information included in the application. In the event that there is a discrepancy, or information is found to be false, the application will be immediately withdrawn from consideration and declared ineligible.

Under the terms of this program, participants must return to Tunisia **immediately** upon completion of the program. Participants are not eligible for visa extensions under any circumstances. No exceptions will be made. Additionally, participants must abide by the two year home residency rule as required by their exchange visas, and must pledge to return to Tunisia to share the skills and knowledge they have gained as Thomas Jefferson Scholars.

**Applications not meeting the above technical eligibility requirements will not be forwarded to the selection committee.**

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## FINANCIAL PROVISIONS OF THE GRANT

- J-1 visa support;
- Round-trip travel from participant's home city to host institution in the United States;
- Accident and sickness medical coverage;
- Tuition and mandatory university fees;
- Room and board (housing and meals);
- Small incidentals allowance;
- Limited allowance for books;

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- A wide variety of alumni networking and training opportunities

## SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

Tunisia UGRAD is conducted as a merit-based open competition. After the deadline, all eligible applications will be reviewed by a panel of academic specialists. Chosen semifinalists will be interviewed in Tunisia by a bi-national committee of U.S. Embassy representatives, USG exchange alumni, and/or U.S. specialists. Chosen semifinalists must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) in early 2020. All applicants will be notified of their status in spring 2020.

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

- Academic excellence;
- Expressed commitment to contribute to Tunisia's development;
- Demonstrated leadership potential and commitment to community engagement;
- Proficiency in written and spoken English;
- Flexibility and adaptability as an exchange student;
- Minimum TOEFL score of 500 PBT
- Preference will be given to students who represent disadvantaged and underrepresented communities.

## GENERAL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

- Please answer **ALL** questions on the application in English (except where specified).
- Include your full, legal name - family name (surname) and first name - as spelled on your international passport (if available) or national identity card. Do not translate name spellings.
- Include complete contact information (including postal codes for all addresses and city/country codes for all phone and fax numbers). Street and city names should be written in French or English.
- Do NOT leave a space blank. If a question does not apply to you, enter N/A (not applicable).
- Applicants must complete the application online at [www.irex.org](http://www.irex.org).

### A completed application includes:

- **Additional Application Questions:** Applicants must provide information about how they heard about the Tunisia Undergraduate Scholarship Program, plans to apply for other sponsored educational exchange programs and their permanent home governorate.
- **Short Answers 1-5:** Applicants must answer each question and use no more than 250 words per response. Answers must be the applicant's own work.
- **Essay 1:** Applicants must completely answer the question including all sub-questions associated with Essay 1. This answer should be no more than 800 words and in essay format. Answers must be the applicant's own work.
- **Essay 2:** Applicants must completely answer the question including all sub-questions associated with Essay 2. This answer should be no more than 800 words and in essay format. Answers must be the applicant's own work.

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- **IREX Privacy Statement and Application Certification:** Applicants must read and sign this form in order to verify that they understand IREX's privacy policy and that they have completed their applications truthfully.
- **Two Recommendations:** Applicants must have a recommendation completed by two different people for a total of two recommendations. If the recommendation form is completed in a language other than English, an accurate translation must also be provided, which may be done by the applicant.
- **Course Listings:** This space is provided for the applicants to detail all higher education course history. Applicants must list the academic year the course was taken, the course title, and the grade received for the course in order for the form to be completed. If there was no grade for a course, please indicate either "pass" or "fail". Participants must list courses from their most recently completed year of study, either secondary school or higher education, in order for the form to be completed.

**IF SELECTED FOR THE SEMIFINALIST ROUND, APPLICANTS MUST PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTATION AT THE TIME OF THEIR INTERVIEW:**

- A copy of applicant's high school diploma with an accurate English translation, which may be done by applicant;
- A copy of high school transcripts (course list and grades) with an English translation, which may be done by applicant (**for first-year students only**);
- A copy of applicant's current university transcript (or academic grade book) in the university language of instruction with an English translation, which may be done by applicant;
- Proof of institutional enrollment (if applicable);
- A copy of applicant's international passport (if available) or government-issued identification. *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.*

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**SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

**The deadline for applications for Tunisia UGRAD is Monday, November 18, 2019 at 5:00pm Tunisia time. Late applications will not be accepted.** Applications may be submitted via the IREX website at: <http://www.irex.org/project/tunisia-ugrad>. Please read the instructions and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) carefully prior to beginning the application.

**Late applications will not be accepted.** Do not send applications to the IREX offices in Tunis or Washington, DC. Faxed, emailed, and paper applications will not be accepted.

Applications will not be returned to the applicants after the end of the competition; applicants should keep a copy for their own records.

Only complete applications received by the deadline will be considered.

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## **Tunisia Undergraduate Scholarship Program Timeline**

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| Nov. 18, 2019<br>5:00 pm Tunisia time: | Tunisia UGRAD application deadline   |
| Feb. 2020:                             | Interview committees conduct semifinalist interviews and semifinalists take the TOEFL exam |
| Mar. – Apr. 2020:                      | Finalists and alternates notified  |
| Spring – Summer 2020:                  | Pre-Departure Orientation in Tunis   |
| Aug. 2020:                             | All participants depart for their U.S. host institutions                                   |

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