



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

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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 the Tunisia UGRAD 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. 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 United States and other countries.

Question: What expenses are covered by the program?

Answer: Tunisia UGRAD provides for the following: J-1 visa support; round-trip travel from the participant's home city to their host institution in the United States; tuition and mandatory university fees; health benefits plans; a monthly allowance for living expenses; and a limited allowance for textbooks.

Question: Do I need to be a student to apply?

Answer: Yes. In order to meet the technical eligibility requirements, you must be a current, full-time undergraduate student in your first or second year of undergraduate study in Tunisia. Architecture and Engineering students are also eligible to apply in their third or fourth year of study.

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 for them free of charge. For further consideration, semifinalists must achieve a TOEFL score of 500 (PBT).

Question: Is there an age limit 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: Yes. Tunisia UGRAD 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 university/college curriculum within the United States. Please note that students may not enroll in clinical coursework while on the Tunisia UGRAD Program.

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.

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 Tunisia UGRAD participants. Each participant is assigned a placement at an accredited institution in the United States based on academic fit.

Question: Can I apply for Tunisia UGRAD if I have already been in the United States as a participant on a U.S. government-sponsored program like 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.

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

Answer: Tunisia UGRAD is conducted as a merit-based, open competition. After the application 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, alumni of U.S. government programs, and U.S. Embassy representatives, and must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) in Feb. – Mar. of 2020. All 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):

- 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; and
- A minimum TOEFL score of 500 (PBT).
- Preference will be given to students that represent disadvantaged and underrepresented communities.

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 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 of 2020.

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 Tunisia UGRAD 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.

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 Tunisia UGRAD 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.

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

Answer: Tunisia UGRAD is a non-degree program open to current undergraduate students at Tunisian universities.* Tunisia UGRAD participants live on campus at accredited U.S. universities and four-year colleges. A very broad range of fields of study are offered.

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

Tunisia UGRAD and TCCSP are both part of the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program. Both programs offer one academic year of non-degree study and the opportunity to gain practical experience through community service, professional internships, and first-hand exposure to U.S. life and culture.

**Please note that students studying at ISSAT (Institut Supérieur des Sciences Appliquées et de Technologie) are not eligible for Tunisia UGRAD but should apply for TCCSP.*

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 are encouraged to complete the application online. The online application can be found on the IREX website at: <https://www.irex.org/project/tunisiaugrad>. Paper applications may be submitted to the IREX/Tunisia office; see the address below.

Question: Where can I obtain an application or more information about Tunisia UGRAD?

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

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