

# 2021-2022 Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program (TJSP)

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS



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### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program (TJSP) fosters economic growth and stable democratic development in Tunisia by creating a network of youth prepared to lead positive change in their professional fields and communities. TJSP focuses on leadership capacity and professional preparation for highly motivated and academically successful students, shaping future leaders from throughout Tunisia to contribute in a meaningful way to Tunisia's democratic and economic development. The Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Department of State.

### ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The 2021-2022 Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program provides opportunities for highly motivated and academically successful undergraduate university/institute students from Tunisia for one academic year of full-time, non-degree study at accredited four-year colleges and universities 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 students a deeper understanding of the United States, as well as new skills, knowledge, and leadership development to help them contribute to Tunisia's economic growth. **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. 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 Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program.

### EXPERIENTIAL COMPONENTS

To support students in the development of the skills, knowledge, and leadership skills 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: <https://www.irex.org/project/thomas-jefferson-scholarship-program-tjsp>.

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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

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.

Competition for the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program is merit-based. To be eligible, a candidate must:

- Be a Tunisian citizen;
- Currently reside in Tunisia;
- Be enrolled as a full-time, undergraduate, university/institute student in good academic standing at the time of application at a registered academic institution in Tunisia AND not be in the final year of their undergraduate program at the time of application;
  - 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;
- Be able to receive a U.S. J-1 visa;
- Be at least 18 years old by July 1, 2021;
- Be committed to returning to Tunisia after completion of the program;
- Be able to achieve a TOEFL score of at least 500, either at the time of application or after short-term pre-academic English language study in the United States; and
- Complete the academic year prior to study in the United States in good standing with a passing average (aka *moyenne générale*)

Individuals in the following circumstances are NOT eligible for the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program:

- Part-time students;
- U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States;
- Individuals who have applied for U.S. permanent residency in the past three years;

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- Employees of non-profit organizations that administer the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program on behalf of the U.S. Department of State and their families. This provision does not disqualify self-supporting members of families who live apart from their families;
- Locally employed staff of the U.S. Embassy in Tunisia and their immediate family members. This applies to the staff's period of employment and one year following the termination of employment; nor
- Persons arrested for, charged with, or convicted of a crime

The U.S. Department of State and IREX reserve the right to verify all 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;
- Health insurance;
- Tuition and mandatory university fees;
- Room and board (housing and meals);
- Small incidentals allowance;
- Limited allowance for books;
- A wide variety of alumni networking and training opportunities

#### **SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA**

TJSP 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 2021. All applicants will be notified of their status in spring 2021.

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;

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- Ability to achieve a TOEFL score of at least 500, either at the time of application or after short-term pre-academic English language study in the United States.

Preference will be given to students who represent underserved 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 <https://www.irex.org/project/thomas-jefferson-scholarship-program-tjisp>.

### A completed application includes:

- **Application Questions:** Applicants must provide responses to all application questions, including information about how they heard about the Thomas Jefferson 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.
- **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:

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- 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 government-issued identification.
- A copy of applicant's international passport, if available. *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 TJSP is Tuesday, December 8, 2020 at 5:00pm Tunisia time. Late applications will not be accepted.** Applications may be submitted via the IREX website at: <https://www.irex.org/project/thomas-jefferson-scholarship-program-tjsp>. 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, D.C.** 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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### Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program Timeline

Dec. 8, 2020 5:00 pm Tunisia time:	TJSP application deadline
Feb. 2021:	Interview committees conduct semifinalist interviews and semifinalists take the TOEFL exam
Mar. – Apr. 2021:	Finalists and alternates notified
Spring – Summer 2021:	Pre-Departure Orientation in Tunis
July-Sept. 2021:	All participants depart for their U.S. host institutions

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