

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

# Civil Society Leadership Awards 2016-2017

## Open Society Scholarship Programs

### Before Applying to CSLA:

- **I am not currently living in my home country. Am I eligible to apply?**

You may be eligible for the award if you are temporarily outside of your home country. For instance, if you are studying abroad for a short time, or if you have recently acquired refugee or asylum status, you will still be considered eligible.

Please ensure that you complete all the details on Page 1 of the application describing the documents you hold and the duration for which they are valid.

- **I have dual citizenship with an eligible and non-eligible country. I live in the non-eligible country. Am I eligible to apply?**

In rare circumstances we may consider applicants with dual citizenship as eligible. Please explain your situation in detail and ensure that all the information on Page 1 of the application is completed thoroughly.

- **I think I am a good fit for the award, but have already applied to a non-CSLA partner university in an eligible subject. Can CSLA provide funding for this course?**

No, only CSLA host universities are eligible for funding. A list of the supported fields and CSLA host universities is in the [Guidelines](#). Please refer to this list before applying.

- **Why do you have a limited number of universities eligible for the CSLA award?**

We work with a wide range of universities which offer quality instruction in the social sciences and humanities and share our commitment to open society values. These universities have agreed in advance to provide significant tuition discounts for CSLA candidates, and they actively participate in our selection process. Our university partnerships also enable us to cluster grantees at one institution, which strengthens a sense of community among CSLA scholars.

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- **How do I know if my field of study is available at a particular university?**

Please refer to the comprehensive list provided in the [Guidelines](#). The list is arranged by general fields of interest. We encourage you to explore the courses by researching our partner host universities. Please take note of the language of instruction, as you would need to meet the university admission standards to be placed there. On Page 2 of the application, there is an optional question addressing your interest in a particular CSLA host university. Please ensure your field of study is an eligible field at that university before completing the question.

Scholarship Programs staff will arrange placements for all successful CSLA candidates in cooperation with our partner university colleagues. We will try to accommodate your stated preference but we cannot guarantee it.

All placements are made in conjunction with the host universities, and candidates must meet their standards for admission, which differ from university to university. CSLA and university staff will be in touch with successful candidates to communicate any additional university admission procedures that need to be completed.

- **I would like to study in a particular field, but it is not supported at my university of choice. What should I do?**

Not all subjects are available through CSLA at all universities, so please make sure that you would be prepared to be placed at any of the partner universities offering your chosen field. Please make sure that if you indicate a preferred university on your application that your field is offered there.

- **I am unsure about which field of study I would like to study. Can I choose more than one field?**

No. Please think about what your specific interests are in terms of your future career, and read the information on the university websites carefully. Then choose a field of study that most closely fits your goals, and explain in the essays the reason you chose this field. In some cases CSLA staff may guide semi-finalists toward a more appropriate field of study at the time of the interview.

Admittance to a master's level course requires a strong, clear, subject-specific interest, and in some cases, appropriate previous training. Certain law courses, for instance, require a bachelor's degree in law for admittance.

- **What does the award cover and what would I need to pay for?**

CSLA grantees receive full funding for their degree studies, including accommodation and travel to the CSLA summer school prior to their studies, return travel to their host university, a living stipend for the duration of their studies, tuition, fees and health insurance, a small fund for professional development, and travel to a grantee conference. During the application process, language testing fees will be paid for those applicants who have been invited for an interview by CSLA.

- **When will I need to take a language test, and should I take the IELTS or TOEFL test? I see that I may need one for admission to a university.**

All applicants who do not have a valid language test (taken within the past 2 years) and who are invited to an interview will be advised to take a language test in November 2015.

For candidates who wish to study at a CSLA host university in the United Kingdom, an IELTS test is mandatory, as the TOEFL is not accepted.

For universities in France, semi-finalists will need to have evidence of one of the following tests of French language competence at a satisfactory level: Test de connaissance du français (TCF); Test d'évaluation de français (le TEF); Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELF); or the Diplôme approfondi de langue française (DALF). Exceptions are made for citizens of the Democratic Republic of Congo, as French is recognized as the official language of instruction.

For universities in Germany, programs with instruction in English usually accept TOEFL and may recognize IELTS results. For programs with instruction in German, candidates may be requested to take a TestDaf examination.

## Completing the Application

- **I need to change the email address for one of my referees but have already submitted my online application. Can I go back into my application to change it?**

No. After you submit your application via the online platform, [Submittable](#), the application cannot be re-opened for editing. In this case, please email [csla@infoscholar.org](mailto:csla@infoscholar.org) for a reference form which you can send to your recommender. CSLA recommendation forms can also be [downloaded here](#). They can then send the completed reference to [cslareferences@infoscholar.org](mailto:cslareferences@infoscholar.org), or via post.

- **Is it possible for my referees to submit their references directly to CSLA staff instead of through the online application system?**

Yes. Referees can send their recommendations to [cslareferences@infoscholar.org](mailto:cslareferences@infoscholar.org) or to one of the addresses listed in the [Guidelines](#). All references should be received by the deadline of **September 15, 2015**.

- **I have been away from academia for a while and cannot get an academic reference. What should I do?**

Please have a second professional reference submitted. Please make a note on your application as to why an academic reference cannot be provided.

- **Who should be my professional reference if I've not had employment before? Can a family member or friend submit one for me?**

If you have experience as a volunteer, for instance, your supervisors there could provide you with a professional reference. Otherwise, you should ask someone who has knowledge of your character, interests, competencies and your civil society involvement. This is generally not a friend or a family member, so we would advise you to think of a professional acquaintance who can offer this assessment.

- **Is it possible for my referee to submit their recommendation after the September 15 deadline?**

No. All references should be received by the deadline of **September 15, 2015** via [Submittable](#), by email to [cslareferences@infoscholar.org](mailto:cslareferences@infoscholar.org), or postmarked by this date. References can be sent in advance of you submitting your application.

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- **What makes a transcript ‘official’?**

Transcripts must be issued directly by the institution awarding the degree. If possible, they should bear the university’s stamp or seal to prove they have been issued by the institution. A scanned version should be attached to your online application; originals may be submitted with a paper application.

- **You require an English translation of my transcripts. Can I translate it myself?**

No. All transcripts should be translated by an official translation company and notarized as accurate. They should have an official stamp or a certification letter from the translator.

Alternatively, the university issuing the degree may also provide an official translation of the transcript. They should also include an official stamp or certification letter to prove that the translation is accurate.

- **Who is the ‘Required Accommodations’ section for? Should I complete it?**

This section is available for those who have special needs or disabilities. This is to inform CSLA staff and help them to make the necessary accommodations during the application and placement process.

- **Should I mail a paper application as well as submit my application online to be sure CSLA staff receive it?**

You can check through [Submittable](#) if your application has been received after you submit it. There is no need to submit a separate paper application if your online application was received.

- **I have printed my application and want to submit it to a CSLA office. There are several addresses. Which office should I send it to?**

You may send your completed paper application to the office geographically closest to you if you are submitting the application by post. All applications are reviewed by CSLA staff, regardless of where the application is received.

## After you submit your application

- **What happens to my application after I submit it? When should I expect to hear from CSLA staff?**

After you submit your application, it will be reviewed by CSLA staff and international experts to assess your fit with the goals of the program. Applicants will be informed of their status in **October 2015**; those who were reviewed favorably will move forward to semi-finalist status.

Semi-finalists are required to take a language test in **November 2015**, and CSLA staff will help coordinate test registration and payment.

Interviews of semi-finalists will be held in person (if possible) or via Skype/telephone with CSLA staff, international experts, and faculty from CSLA host universities in **November 2015**. CSLA staff will discuss possible placement options with you at this stage.

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CSLA staff and university partners will hold a final selection meeting in **January 2016** to choose finalists. You will be informed in writing if you are a CSLA finalist and will be considered for placement at a partner university.

CSLA staff will work to place finalists at partner universities between **January** and **March**. Some candidates may remain unplaced, especially if they have failed to obtain an adequate language test score.

After placements are made, a CSLA grant letter will be issued and finalists will become CSLA grantees.

- **I also applied to a CSLA partner university directly. Did I need to do that?**

In some cases, you won't need to apply to a CSLA host university directly as the placement is made for successful applicants after the interview stage by CSLA staff.

Semi-finalists who are being considered for placement at universities in China, France, Germany, Holland or the UK will be asked by CSLA staff or staff from our host universities or partner organizations (e.g. [DAAD](#)), to complete additional application forms. There will be no fee for submitting these applications.

However, if you are interested in being considered at the **University of Cambridge** you must complete the University of Cambridge application form as well as the CSLA application form. *Please note there may be a cost for submitting this application.*

- **Will I be able to change my desired university placement after I submit the application?**

If you are invited to the interview stage, please mention this to the interview team. In all cases CSLA staff will make the placement for you based on your suitability to a specific course, in conjunction with a thorough assessment from the university. CSLA staff will communicate the placement options to the candidate via email after the interview.

- **I have further questions about the process and my application. How can I contact CSLA staff?**

If you have further questions about the process before or after applying, please feel free to reach out to CSLA staff at [csla@infoscholar.org](mailto:csla@infoscholar.org), or to the partner offices in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Lithuania.