

Who is eligible to apply to the program?

In keeping with the U.S. Government-sponsored initiatives dedicated to promoting greater understanding with countries in Eurasia, the competition for the FLEX scholarship is merit-based and open at no cost to applicants who meet the following requirements. Eligible applicants must:

1. Meet the grade/age requirements set for their country:

Country	Eligible Grade*	Eligible Birthdate Range	Completed Secondary Education or Graduated
Armenia:	9, 10 or 11	15 March 1995 - 15 July 1998	Ineligible if graduated
Azerbaijan:	9, 10 or 11	1 January 1996 - 15 July 1998	Eligible if graduated
Georgia:	9, 10 or 11	1 January 1996 - 15 July 1998	Ineligible if graduated
Kazakhstan:	8, 9 or 10 or 1st year of college	1 January 1996 - 15 July 1998	Ineligible if graduated
Kyrgyzstan:	9, 10, 11; or 1st or 2nd year of a lyceum or college	1 January 1996 - 15 July 1998	Eligible if graduated
Moldova:	9, 10 or 11	1 January 1996 - 15 July 1998	Eligible if graduated
Russia:	8, 9 or 10	1 January 1996 - 15 July 1998	Ineligible if graduated
Tajikistan:	9, 10 or 11	1 January 1996 - 15 July 1998	Eligible if graduated
Turkmenistan:	N/A	1 January 1996 - 15 July 1998	Eligible if graduated
Ukraine:	8, 9 or 10	1 January 1996 - 15 July 1998	Ineligible if graduated

*NOTE: Students who change their grade level to an ineligible grade before their departure to the United States will be disqualified

2. Be enrolled in a secondary school at the time of application
3. Have an academic standing of «good» or better
4. Have previously studied English and demonstrate English language ability at the time of registration
5. Meet U.S. visa eligibility requirements
6. Be a citizen of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan or Ukraine and able to receive an international (zagan) passport in the country where they apply to the program.

Who is not eligible?

- Students are ineligible to apply if:
- ⇒ S/he does not meet the above criteria
 - ⇒ S/he has stayed in the U.S. for three (3) months or more during the past five (5) years
 - ⇒ His/her family (or member of family):
 - has applied or is applying to emigrate to the United States
 - has made plans to emigrate or has already emigrated to the United States.

How are students selected?

Independent panels of American professionals in education and international relations in the United States will select program finalists and alternates. Selection will be based on merit as evidenced, and comprehensive application, teacher reference, and demonstrated preparedness for a year-long exchange experience. Students also will be required to provide medical evaluations and be certified as medically fit to participate in the program.

The selection process will be completed in spring 2013, and all applicants will receive notification of their status by mid-May 2013. English-language proficiency is important but it is not the sole element in selection.

What happens after notification?

Upon notification, finalists, alternates and their parents will receive orientation materials to prepare them for departure. They must officially notify their FLEX representative in writing that they accept the scholarship and must provide any additional documentation requested as well. Students must begin the process of applying for an international passport and U.S. visa immediately upon acceptance to the program.

From May through August 2013 selected U.S. exchange organizations will match finalists with qualified U.S. host families and arrange for enrollment in local secondary schools. In June and July 2013, scholarship recipients will participate in a pre-program orientation in their home country. Students will then travel to their U.S. host families and communities to begin the exchange experience in August 2013.

Please note: Students participating in the FLEX program must return to their home country at the end of the program on the date assigned by American Councils. The U.S. visa issued for program participants will not be amended or extended beyond the program end date for any reason.

When and how can I apply?

Representatives of American Councils will visit the capitals of regions (oblasts) and autonomous republics within the ten participating countries to conduct testing during fall 2012. Applicants should come to the designated testing center at the time of initial registration and bring proof of eligibility (birth certificate), one recent 3x4 cm photo, and a pen. Testing center locations will be announced as soon as possible through press and radio announcements;

information can be accessed via the Internet at <http://flex.americancouncils.org>. Programs form Eurasia. Applicants may only participate in round 1 testing at ONE test center in fall 2012.

All applicants will take a short English test (round 1). Those who pass the first test will take a longer English-language proficiency test and write a composition in English (round 2, which usually occurs on the day after round 1). Candidates must successfully complete the first two rounds of the competition before they receive final application materials and are interviewed. After successful completion of rounds 1 and 2, English language ability is no longer considered as a basis for selection.

How will I benefit from the exchange experience?

The FLEX program offers students an opportunity to learn about the people and culture of the United States. FLEX scholars are also young ambassadors who teach Americans about the people and culture of Eurasian countries. Students gain an appreciation for and develop sensitivity to other cultures, experience personal growth and independence, and become better prepared for an increasingly interdependent world. Students form strong ties with their American host families and U.S. communities, building relationships that often last a lifetime. Many alumni have attended prestigious universities upon their return home, and later found exciting jobs that use skills learned during their stay in the United States.

What are some of the possible disadvantages?

- Students who are interested in this program should consider the possible negative effects of this program:
- ⇒ You may not return home in 2014 in time to sit for university/institute entrance examinations.
 - ⇒ Your university or institute may not defer your admission if you have already been accepted.
 - ⇒ You may not return home in 2014 in time to take your final school examinations.
 - ⇒ You may be required by your country to serve in the military upon return.
 - ⇒ You may have to repeat a year of school.
 - ⇒ You may not be eligible to receive a gold medal at your home school.
 - ⇒ Although students participate in an academic program in the U.S., the school curriculum is substantially different than that in your home country and you will not learn the same subject material.

Who organizes the program?

The recruitment, selection, orientation, and travel arrangements for the program are organized by American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS. American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS is an international non-profit organization working to advance education, research, and mutual understanding across the United States and the nations of Southeastern Europe, Eurasia, and South Asia. American Councils designs, implements, and supports innovative programs in education, professional development, and scholarly research.

Over the past 36 years, American Councils has developed into one of the premier education and training organizations working in this region. It administers more than 30 exchange and training programs, including several U.S. government programs for secondary school students, university students and graduate students, teachers, and professors.

Many other private, non-profit organizations in the United States also support the FLEX program. The U.S. government has asked these organizations to match FLEX participants with U.S. host families and to organize local activities during the year-long program.

Where can I get more information?

Armenia, Yerevan	(374-10) 56-00-45
Azerbaijan, Baku	(994-12) 436-75-29
Georgia, Tbilisi	(995-32) 229-21-06
Kazakhstan, Almaty	(7) (727) 259-88-03
Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek	(996-312) 66-48-38
Moldova, Chisinau	(37-322) 22-58-60
Russia, Moscow (Central Southern Russia, Ural and Siberia Regions)	(7)(495) 638-45-58
St. Petersburg	(7)(812) 320-79-81
Vladivostok	(7)(423) 240-82-13
Tajikistan, Dushanbe	(992-37) 221-21-03
Turkmenistan, Ashgabat	(993-12) 97-10-21
Ukraine, Kyiv	(044) 289-39-52

<http://flex.americancouncils.org>

Inquiries may also be made at the U.S. Embassy, Public Affairs Section or American Corners or Centers located in any of the countries listed above.