



2022 CLS Spark Program Application

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Privacy Policy and Use of Personal Data

Your privacy is important to us. American Councils for International Education (American Councils) follows a few fundamental principles with regards to your data.

- We are thoughtful about the personal information we ask you to provide and the personal information that we collect about you.
- We store personal information for only as long as we have a reason to keep it.
- We aim for transparency on how we gather, use, and share your personal information.

By starting an application to CLS Spark, you agree to our privacy policy, which incorporates and clarifies these principles. You can review our full privacy policy at <https://clscholarship.org/privacy-policy>

Campus Advisors Acknowledgement and Consent

The CLS Program works with faculty members and administrators at colleges and universities across the United States who assist students with the CLS application process. As part of the application process we share your name, email address, and information on your degree program and the language you are applying for with the designated advisor(s) at your school, who may reach out to you to offer assistance and encourage you to submit an application.

We also encourage you to reach out to advisors on your campus proactively. You can search for CLS advisors on your campus using the CLS Program website at <https://www.clscholarship.org/universities>. If you do not have a CLS advisor on your campus, or if you would like additional assistance, staff at your school's study abroad department, fellowships advising office, honors program, career advising office, and/or your academic advisor may be good resources. Your school may also have a writing center that would be happy to work with you on your application.

Your choice to submit this application indicates your consent to have this information shared as described. Please see our Privacy Policy at <https://www.clscholarship.org/privacy-policy> for more information about how the CLS Program protects your information.

I have reviewed the CLS website and identified an advisor or other resources on my campus who can assist me in understanding the CLS Program and preparing an effective application.

- Yes
 No

This PDF is provided as an accessible example of the application.

Please submit your application using the online application system at <https://clscholarship.org/apply>

Section 1: Application Instructions

How to Apply

- Eligibility: Check the eligibility requirements at <http://www.clscholarship.org/spark/eligibility>.
- Applications are due May 26, 2022.
- If you need to submit any portion of your application materials by mail, those documents must be received at American Councils for International Education by May 26, 2022.

Mailed materials should be sent by certified post to American Councils at the following address:

ATTN: CLS Program
American Councils for International Education
1828 L St NW, Suite 1200
Washington DC 20036-5136

The CLS Program strongly encourages you to submit your application well in advance of the application deadline. Submitting your application before the due date allows time to resolve any technical difficulties or last-minute questions. The CLS Program and American Councils for International Education bear no responsibility for problems in submitting the application.

Questions?

For information about CLS Spark, please visit www.clscholarship.org/spark.

Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions page at www.clscholarship.org/spark/faqs for more information on common questions that arise during the application process.

Contact CLS Program staff during normal business hours, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. U.S. Eastern Time, Monday-Friday, toll-free at: 1-877-257-9922

Email: cls@americancouncils.org

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Section 2: Program Overview and Requirements

CLS Spark is a pilot virtual initiative for U.S. undergraduate students to learn languages essential to America's engagement with the world. Designed to leverage best practices in online language learning developed by the CLS Program during the pandemic, CLS Spark provides American students the access and opportunity to start their language learning journeys even when these critical languages may not be offered on their campuses or when they may have responsibilities that limit their ability to go overseas. Participants will spend an academic year learning either Arabic, Chinese or Russian through online classes and activities facilitated by native speakers at a host institution abroad.

A program of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program and CLS Spark are part of a U.S. government initiative to expand the number of Americans studying and mastering foreign languages that are critical to national security and economic prosperity. CLS Spark is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government. It is supported in its implementation by American Councils for International Education.

Eligibility

To be eligible for CLS Spark applicants must:

- Be a U.S. citizen or national at the time of their application.
 - Others, including Permanent Residents, are not eligible, even if they anticipate naturalization by the beginning of the program.
- Be enrolled and working towards a degree in an accredited U.S. degree-granting program at the undergraduate (associate's or bachelor's) level at the time of their application.
 - Applicant academic institutions must be accredited U.S. institutions. Students earning degrees at foreign institutions that are not based in the U.S. or its territories are not eligible, even if those institutions are accredited by a recognized U.S. accrediting agency.
 - Be enrolled at this academic institution in the spring term of 2022.
 - If an applicant is not taking classes at their home institution in the spring term, they must confirm that they are, in fact, enrolled. Institutions have different requirements to maintain enrollment status and applicants will be required to provide a signed letter from their registrar stating that they were enrolled during the spring term.
- Applicants must remain in good academic standing at their institution to remain eligible. Be at least 18 years old by September 1, 2022.
- Applicants may only apply once per application cycle for a single language. Applicants who submit multiple applications will be considered ineligible.
- Participation in CLS Spark is limited to one award per individual.

The following persons are ineligible for CLS Spark:

- Individuals who have been selected for and participated in the CLS Program (CLS Program alumni).
- Employees of the U.S. Department of State who work in offices under the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Academic Programs, in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), for a period ending one year following the termination of such employment;

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- Employees of private and public agencies under contract or grant with the U.S. Department of State who perform services related to the Critical Language Scholarship Program, for a period ending one year following the termination of their services; and
- Immediate family members (i.e., spouses and dependent children) of the individuals described in the above paragraphs, for a period ending one year following the termination of such employment or service. This provision does not disqualify self-supporting members of families who live apart from their parents.

These provisions do not extend to part-time or temporary employees, consultants, or interns of the U.S. Department of State (including at U.S. Embassies and Consulates), or to contract employees of the U.S. Department of State, unless such persons perform services related to the Critical Language Scholarship Program.

Program Requirements

With reasonable accommodations, each participant must:

- Have reliable Internet access some type of electronic device to participate in live classes weekly including the ability to be on camera and use a microphone.
- Complete pre-program orientation virtual sessions (both recorded and live).
- Complete pre-program proficiency and placement testing (Chinese only).
- Maintain an 80% rate of attendance and completion of homework assignments.
- Complete mid- and post-program surveys.
- Complete post-program proficiency testing.

In addition, if you are selected for a CLS Spark award, you must agree to the terms and conditions of the award. The award terms and conditions are revised on an annual basis.

Program Structure

- Two 11-week semesters:
 - Fall session: September 6, 2022 to November 18, 2022
 - Spring session: January 9 or January 30, 2023 to March 24 or April 14, 2023 (dependent on host institution)
- Two hours per week synchronous language coursework arranged on either a Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday schedule. Start times are scheduled to facilitate participation by both instructors abroad and U.S.-based students (no earlier than 9am Eastern Time and no later than 9pm Eastern Time). [See the CLS Spark website for more details on the academic schedule for each program.](#)
- Two hours per week of asynchronous homework.
- Once each month, a class will be replaced with a cultural activity with a language learning component.
- Once each month, participants will schedule 30 minutes with their main instructor for individual feedback and have the option for an additional 30 minutes of optional individualized tutoring.
- Optional workshops throughout to foster community, network and develop academic and professional skills.

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Program Benefits

The main benefit of the program is the opportunity to engage virtually in high quality language study and experience the culture and educational system of the host country. Additional benefits include:

- Language instruction and participation in monthly cultural programming
- Course materials
- Language gains certified using the widely-recognized ACTFL OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview) assessment
- Consideration as a semifinalist for the Critical Language Scholarship Program's summer institutes in the year following their participation in CLS Spark
- A stipend of \$300 towards equipment and connectivity costs
- Alumni of CLS Spark will join a vibrant community of U.S. Department of State International Exchange Alumni

CLS Spark does not provide the following:

- Academic credit
- Equipment
- Phone or internet connectivity plans
- Living expenses
- Medical benefits

Selection Criteria

Award recipients are selected on the basis of merit, with consideration for the following:

- **Impact of participation** in CLS Spark on their access to language and intercultural learning opportunities
- **Motivation**, including personal, academic, and professional goals and consideration of how participation in CLS Spark may contribute to the achievement of those goals
- **Readiness and resolve** to successfully complete an online co-curricular language program
- **Ability to contribute** to ECA's mission of building mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other nations by demonstrating interest in learning about others' perspectives and articulating how their unique experiences and background will be an asset to the cohort.

Preference will be given to veterans of the U.S. armed forces, and to applicants from states or institutions historically underrepresented in study abroad or in the CLS Program.

Applicants will be selected with the goal of representing geographic diversity and a diversity of institutions and fields of study.

Section 3: Eligibility

Please refer to the Eligibility Requirements listed in the Application Instructions.

1) I am a U.S. citizen or national (naturalized U.S. citizens should select "Yes"). Finalists will be required to provide proof of citizen or national status in the form of a passport, birth certificate or naturalization certificate.

Yes

No

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2) I will be at least 18 years old by September 1, 2022.

- Yes
- No

3) I am currently enrolled in a degree-granting program.

- Yes
- No

4) Are you currently taking a leave of absence? At most institutions, students on a leave of absence are not considered enrolled. Students currently on a leave of absence will be asked to provide proof of enrollment for the Spring 2022 semester (usually available in the form of an enrollment verification letter from the Registrar).

- Yes
- No

5) My institution is an accredited institution based in the United States (Note: Students earning degrees at foreign colleges or universities that are not based in the United States or its territories are not eligible.) Accreditation can be checked using the Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs maintained by the U.S. Department of Education

<https://ope.ed.gov/dapip>

- Yes
- No

6) Have you received a CLS Program award in the past?

- I received a CLS award and completed the program
- I received a CLS award but did not attend the program
- I received a CLS award but declined
- I received a CLS award but did not successfully complete the program
- No, I have not previously received a CLS award

7) I am submitting only one CLS Spark application.

- Yes

8) I certify that I have reviewed the eligibility requirements, and that I am eligible to apply for CLS Spark.

A full description of the eligibility requirements is available at www.clscholarship.org/spark/eligibility

- Yes

9) Are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces?

All other factors being equal, CLS Spark gives preference to veterans of the armed forces. Active duty members of the military do not qualify for a veteran's preference. If you respond yes to this question, you will be required to attach a copy of your DD214 or NGB-22 Form as proof of your veteran status.

- Yes
- No
- Decline to State

12a) If yes, attach a copy of your DD214 or NGB-22 Form as proof of your veteran status.

Section 4: Language Choice

1) Indicate the Language and Level for which you are applying.

- Arabic (Beginning)
- Russian (Beginning)
- Chinese (Advanced Beginning)

[Questions for CHINESE LANGUAGE applicants]

How many years of Chinese language classroom study (or equivalent) will you have completed by fall 2022?

1a) Years in high school

1b) Years in college or university

Previous Language Study

1c) Which statement best describes your Chinese language study?

- I have taken or am taking classes in Chinese language
- I have studied or have other experience in Chinese language, but have not taken formal classes
- I have never taken classes in Chinese language.

1d) What have you already done, and what will you do prior to participation in the CLS Program, to learn the Chinese language?

Check all that apply

- Interactions with friends or family members who speak the target language
- Personal history with the language or related dialect
- Private or small group study or tutoring in the target language
- Independent study or personal research efforts
- Other efforts or activities to gain linguistic and cultural knowledge in the target language
- Formal classes in college/university
- Formal classes in high school/elementary school
- Study abroad program
- I am a heritage speaker (family background in the language, practicing the language at home)
- Other (explain below)

1d(i) Please explain

Maximum of 150 words allowed.

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Language Courses

1e) Please list any previous and current Chinese language courses you have taken. Include the following information:

- Course Title
- Institution
- Start Date
- End Date
- Grade
- Average number of hours per week spent in classroom

Planned 2022-2023 Language Course

2) Do you plan to enroll in language courses in the next academic year?

Yes

No

2a) If yes, what language(s)?

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Section 5: Biographical Information

1) Applicant Name (please provide your preferred name that you would like to be called)

2) Previous Legal Name Used

If none, leave blank

3) Legal Name (if different, the name on your government-issued ID)

4) Gender

Please select the option that best describes your gender. This information will not be shared with application evaluators.

Female

Male

Non-binary

I do not wish to respond

5) Date of Birth

Permanent Address and Congressional District

Please enter your permanent residential address, at which you are eligible to register to vote. The CLS Program reports to members of Congress when constituents from their states or districts receive a CLS Spark award.

Your address should fall within the congressional district you indicate.

9) Permanent Residential Address

For example, if you live in Rhode Island but attend school in Illinois, then please indicate your address in Rhode Island.

Street Address:

City:

Province/State/Governorate:

Country:

Postal/ZIP Code:

10) U.S. Congressional District

To find your congressional district, please visit <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>

10a) State/Territory

10b) District

Indicate the district number for your Congressional district.

Enter "At Large" for states with only one Congressional representative (Alaska, Delaware, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming), and for the District of Columbia and U.S. territories (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands)

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Current Contact Information

If you are selected to participate in the program, we will contact you using the information that you enter here, so please provide contact information that you will be available at through the fall of 2022. If you are selected, you will have an opportunity to update your contact information at that time.

11) Primary Telephone Number

Will be used for duration of program

12) Alternate Telephone Number

*We will only contact you at this number if we are unable to reach you and there is important or time-sensitive information to share. We **strongly recommend** you enter an alternate number or the number of a close friend or family member.*

13) Primary Email Address

This email address will be used to inform you of your selection status in late summer 2022.

14) Alternate Email Address

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Section 6: Current Academic Information

1) Current College or University Name

1a) Department, campus or school division, if applicable

2) University City and State

3) Start Date

4) Anticipated Date of Graduation (if applicable)

5) Type of Degree

Undergraduate: Bachelor's

Undergraduate: Associate's

6) What is the name of your current degree program?

For example, "Associate of General Studies," "BA in East Asian Studies," "BS in Chemistry"

7) Current or Anticipated Academic Major(s)

8) Are you a first term student in your degree program?

Yes

No

8a) Type of term

Quarters

Semesters

Other

8a(i) If other, please explain

8b) Number of Terms Completed at Time of Application

Do not include your current term.

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Fall 2022

9) Will you be enrolled in courses at this college/university during the Fall 2022 academic term?

Yes

No

10) Will you be studying abroad during the Fall 2022 academic term?

Yes

No

10a) If so, where?

(i) City

(ii) Country

Spring 2023

11) Will you be enrolled in courses at this college/university during the fall 2022 academic term?

Yes

No

12) Will you be studying abroad during the Spring 2023 academic term?

Yes

No

12a) If so, where?

(i) City

(ii) Country

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Section 7: Current Academic Grades

Please provide a list of your previous and current courses and the grades received, from your current college or university.

Please note that anyone who is accepted to the CLS Program will be required to submit an official transcript at a later date to verify the information provided below. Any discrepancies between the information provided in your CLS application and your official transcript will result in the revocation of the CLS award unless the institution verifies that a change (e.g., grade change, course removed, etc.) was made on your official record. Please contact us with any questions regarding the transcript reporting requirements.

Section 8: Previous Academic Information

1) Have you attended a college/university previous to your current school?

Yes

No

2) If yes, please list all previous colleges and universities you attended. You should list institutions you attended from which you received a degree as well as non-degree programs. Include the following information:

a) Country

Please first tell us the country your institution was located in (including the United States)

b) College or University Name

c) Type of Program

Undergraduate (Bachelor's or Associate's)

Master's

Doctoral (PhD)

Professional Degree (DDS, MD, DO, PAC, JD, etc.)

Non-Degree

c(i) Degree Program

e.g., Bachelor of Arts, Master of Science, or Doctor of Education

c(ii) Date Degree Awarded

d) Field of Study

e) Start Date

f) End Date

Section 9: Activities, Employment, and Honors

Activities and Employment

The success of CLS Spark relies on students' commitment to both sustained language-learning and community-building within a virtual environment. Activities and employment should speak to your demonstrated ability to:

- Build a sense of community and make a positive contribution to a diverse student group;
- Form sustained and mutually beneficial partnerships;
- Build respectful, vibrant, and inclusive communities; and/or
- Commit to a substantive extracurricular activity.

1) List up to five jobs, internships, clubs, sports, or volunteer activities that you have engaged in that demonstrate leadership capacity, community involvement, or a connection to your professional and personal goals. Include the following information:

- Activity Name and short description (20 words max)
- Start Date
- End Date

U.S. Government Programs

2) Which of the following U.S. Government programs have you participated in?

Check all that apply

- Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship (Gilman)
- Boren Award (Fellowship or Scholarship)
- Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX)
- Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (FLAS)
- Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program
- Fulbright U.S. Student Program (English Teaching Assistantship)
- Fulbright U.S. Student Program (Study/Research)
- Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Abroad
- Language Flagship Fellowship
- National Security Languages Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y) Program
- STARTALK
- Title VIII Award (Research and Training on Eastern Europe and Eurasia)

2a) If you checked any boxes above, please indicate the program, year and country for each. Include the following information:

- Program Name
- Program Location, including city, state/region, and country
- Language studied (if applicable)
- Year

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2b) If you received a Fulbright U.S. Student Program (Study/Research) Award, were you also the recipient of a Critical Language Enhancement Award (CLEA)?

Yes

No

Honors and Fellowships

3) List up to three other fellowships or academic honors that you have received.

Section 10: Short Essays

Before you begin your essays, it is strongly recommended that you read the information on the CLS website pertaining to your language and watch the video providing guidance for writing effective application essays for CLS Spark at www.clscholarship.org/apply.

1) Statement of Motivation and Commitment

Maximum of 350 words allowed.

CLS Spark seeks to support students who are motivated and committed to advancing their knowledge of other languages and cultures to support their long-term personal, academic, and professional goals. Participation requires attendance in virtual language classes and cultural activities outside of traditional for-credit classroom hours.

- What interests you about your chosen language and the people who speak it?
- How will increased language and cultural knowledge help you achieve your long-term academic or professional goals?
- What aspects of this program do you anticipate will be the most challenging? What knowledge, skills, and experience will help you sustain your engagement and learning throughout this program?

2) Statement of Experience

Maximum of 350 words allowed.

A key goal of CLS Spark is to increase the number and diversity of Americans who study and speak critical languages in order to develop mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. Languages offer an opportunity for communication and exchange between people of different backgrounds, both within a U.S.-based cohort and with our partner communities abroad. Spark provides an opportunity for motivated students interested in a common language to form a dedicated, lively group of learners. Spark scholars will share their unique perspectives in an open-minded, mutually respectful, virtual environment.

- Consider how your unique experience and perspective might contribute to your cohort.
- How will your background and experiences contribute to building a supportive, understanding, and diverse cohort of language-learners?

3) Access to Language Learning Opportunities

CLS Spark prioritizes providing access to critical language learning opportunities for those who lack access or who have encountered barriers to pursuing significant study abroad or language learning opportunities.

Does your campus currently offer courses in the language you are applying to study with CLS Spark?

- Yes
- No

Maximum of 200 words allowed.

- How have you used the opportunities available to you to pursue your educational goals?
- How will CLS Spark help you overcome barriers preventing you from pursuing language study?

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Section 11: Statistical Information

This information will **not** be shared with application reviewers and will have no bearing on your selection for CLS Spark. It may be used in aggregate for the production of external reports or public presentations.

The U.S. Department of State and American Councils welcome all eligible applications and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity.

The information you provide below will not affect your eligibility for the award, or have an impact on the evaluation or selection process.

1) How did you learn about the program?

Check all that apply

- CLS Alumni or Participants
- Email Announcement
- Magazine
- Newspaper
- Poster
- School Presentation
- Social Media
- Study Abroad Fair
- University Staff
- Website or Internet Search
- Word of Mouth
- Other

1a) If you checked University Staff above:

Check all that apply

- Academic Advisor
- Campus Organization
- Diversity/Inclusion Office
- Fellowship Advisor
- Study Abroad Advisor
- Teacher/Professor
- Career Counselor

1b) If you checked Other above, please specify:

Maximum of 250 characters allowed.

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2) What is your race or ethnicity?

Select all that apply. **Note:** Categories adhere to Office of Management and Budget's Statistical Policy Directive No. 15: Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting, which also guide the U.S. Census.

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Some Other Race

2a) If Some Other Race, please explain:

Maximum of 20 words allowed.

4) Are you a first generation college student?

Answer "No" if one of your parents or grandparents graduated from a four-year college

- Yes
- No
- I decline to state

5) Are you a Pell Grant recipient?

Note: Federal Pell Grants are generally awarded only to undergraduate students.

- Yes
- No
- I decline to state

6) Are you a veteran, or active or reserve duty member of the U.S. Armed Forces?

- Yes
- No
- I decline to state

7) Do you have a disability?

- Yes
- No
- I decline to state

6a) If yes, please explain:

Maximum of 50 words allowed.

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8) Where did you graduate from high school, if applicable?

City:

Province/State/Governorate:

Country:

9) Select the location that best describes where you grew up.

- Major City
- Other City or Town
- Rural Area

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Section 12: Review and Submit

Final Review of Application

Before you submit your application, please be sure to review all sections. Make sure you have answered all the questions, attached all the required documents, and that you are satisfied with your responses.

Once you submit your application, you will no longer be able to make changes to any section of the application. Please note that due to the large volume of applications received, the CLS Program is unable to provide feedback on individual applications.

Certification

1) Please sign your name below to indicate your agreement with this statement:

I certify:

- I completed this application and the written portions are my own work;
- Everything in this application is complete and true to the best of my knowledge;
- I understand that limited information from my application may be shared with representatives of my university, for example study abroad or fellowships advising offices, including my name, degree information and choice of language;
- I understand that American Councils and the U.S. Department of State will not discuss individual selection decisions with applicants; and
- I understand that my application is in no way an offer or a guarantee of an offer for a CLS Spark award.

Signature:

Date:

Additional Information

2) Would you like us to contact you with information about CLS and other U.S. Study Abroad programs in the future?

You may unsubscribe from emails at any point in the future.

Yes! Please add me to your mailing list.

3) Would you like to receive automated status updates about your application via text message?

Your primary telephone number listed in section 5 will be used to contact you. Standard texting rates apply.

You may stop text alerts at any point

Yes!