

Application Overview

Important Notes

Primarily, ASSIST selects students entering the 11th grade, although a small number of 10th-grade and 12th-grade students are placed. Students study in the States for 10 months and then must return to their home countries for one year following their ASSIST year.

Candidates offered scholarships are placed at American independent schools that are members of ASSIST.

Candidates may not express a preference for a particular school, geographic region, or type of school (day or boarding). The final decision for acceptance lies with the school, and ASSIST works carefully to present candidates to schools where the fit is felt to be optimal.

Candidates must remain in the U.S. for the full ten months, spending vacations and holidays with their American host families. Parental visits are discouraged until the springtime to ensure a successful cultural transition.

The Application

Students are asked to provide thorough applications to the committee evaluating their candidacy. Students with the most promising applications are invited to the interview stage. The elements of the application are:

The Essay. The candidates discuss what makes them unique, focusing on special talents, meaningful experiences, and personal philosophies. The committee is interested in family relationships, interests and activities, and a clarification of the desire to be part of the ASSIST program – what the candidates will bring to it, gain from it, and share after it.

Academic Transcript. We require an official academic transcript, translated into English, that includes the courses and academic achievement for both the current and previous school years.

Recommendations. Personal recommendations must be submitted by the candidates' current English teacher, current Mathematics teacher, and the person in the candidates' school who handles academic matters (guidance counselor, Head, Principal).

Application Form. This form includes contact and biographical information, as well as a detailing of personal information. We also ask that the candidates submit informal candid photographs of themselves with family and friends.

The Interview

For successful applicants, interviews take place from October through January

in each country where ASSIST maintains a presence. ASSIST representatives and colleagues form interview committees in each country, and students have an opportunity to present themselves. As part of the interview or before, candidates will sit for the Secondary Level English Proficiency (SLEP) Test to help determine language proficiency (except in Australia).

Selection and Notification

ASSIST makes decisions in December, January and February following each of three interview trips. All candidates are notified of the status of their candidacy. Students not offered a full or partial scholarship might be placed on a waiting list.

Transition and Support

Once named ASSIST scholars, candidates are presented to member schools, which make the final decision regarding admission. Once a placement has been made, ASSIST will notify students and families. The schools will also notify candidates of their acceptance and begin to correspond directly with students and families to begin to plan the academic year. At the same time, ASSIST begins a yearlong program of student and family support. In each country, orientations take place prior to departure for the U.S., and each family and student will receive extensive preparation materials from ASSIST, including the forms necessary to secure a student visa. Upon arrival in the U.S., all ASSIST students gather at an independent school near Boston, MA, for a four-day orientation. Students are introduced in even greater depth to the American educational system, to one another, and to American society. Following the orientation, transportation is arranged to the school or host family. Once at school, students will be welcomed by the ASSIST representative on campus. Students will also receive communication from ASSIST each month, and the staff in America and one's home country remain available throughout the year to support the student and family. ASSIST staff also travel to schools on a rotating schedule to visit students and meet with colleagues.

Financial Responsibilities of the Family

An ASSIST program fee, set by the ASSIST Board of Directors, is charged to

the family of each candidate who is chosen and wishes to be part of the program.

As a nonprofit educational organization, ASSIST seeks to keep its fees low and responsive to family needs.

This fee covers ASSIST's administrative and operating costs, both in America and around the world; the cost of the orientation in America; and the cost of transportation to the host family or school.

The fee is published annually prior to the commitment to join the program.

Families are also responsible for round-trip airfare to the U.S., the return trip from the school to point of U.S. departure in the spring, health and accident insurance, visa application fees, a medical examination, and spending money for personal expenses.

Most schools will ask the family to establish a personal spending account for books, supplies, uniforms, special trips and other personal expenses.

A nonrefundable deposit is required once the student selection occurs to communicate the family's serious intent to accept the scholarship and reserve a place in the program.

This deposit is subsequently credited toward the ASSIST fee.

The remaining payments are due prior to departure for the U.S.

The student and family will sign an agreement with ASSIST that enumerates the rules and financial obligations related to participation in the program.

Students in some countries, who come from families of very modest financial means, are sponsored by generous donors. Some or all of the costs associated with participating in the ASSIST program are underwritten by the donors.