



# The U.S. Department of State Critical Language Scholarship Program 2024 Policies Book

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The CLS Program 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.

# Terms and Conditions of Award

## Preface

Congratulations on being selected as a finalist for the U.S. Department of State's Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program. **Please read over the following terms and conditions carefully, as by signing this document participants agree to follow all CLS policies and procedures.** Failure to abide by the policies outlined here may result in disciplinary actions, including potential removal from the program.

These policies are designed with participants' health and safety as a top priority, and to establish a positive environment for language study and cultural engagement. These policies also cover aspects of the CLS Program that participants will find important, such as completing program requirements, expectations for the academic program, travel and logistics, independent travel, and day-to-day participation.

In addition to these terms and conditions, individual CLS Institutes (overseas universities and language centers that host the summer institutes) may have additional policies specific to the location of the program, such as curfews and culturally appropriate dress codes, that participants will be required to sign and adhere to as part of participation in the CLS Program. Institute-specific policies will be shared with finalists prior to the program.

1. **Purpose** – The Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program is a program of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs supported in its implementation by American Councils for International Education (herein, "American Councils"). The CLS Program is part of the U.S. government's effort to increase the number of U.S. citizens studying and mastering foreign languages that are critical to U.S. national security and economic prosperity. The CLS Program provides funding for intensive language institutes to advance language learning through formal instruction, facilitated language learning opportunities, and structured cultural activities.
2. **Finalist Requirements** – Applicants who are selected for the CLS Program are referred to as "finalists" prior to the program start, and as "participants" or "scholars" during the course of program activities. It is critical that finalists provide complete and accurate information; satisfactorily complete all requirements, including eligibility requirements; and submit all documents necessary for their participation in the program.

**Conditional Acceptance:** Finalists acknowledge that acceptance into the program is conditional upon meeting all eligibility and program requirements. These requirements include:

- The timely submission of all forms, including medical and disability accommodation request forms;
- Successful completion of the medical review process;
- Completion of all pre-program orientation activities;
- Meeting all entry requirements necessary for the host institution and country/location including but not limited to visa requirements, infectious disease testing, vaccination, and quarantine requirements;
- Completing the academic placement requirements specific to the assigned host institution;
- Remaining in good academic standing.

Documents must be submitted online through the AIS Forms platform, to American Councils or directly to the host institution according to the instructions provided. The CLS Program is committed to providing

equal opportunity to all applicants and finalists for the CLS Program. Finalists who require accommodations in regard to any aspect of the CLS Program due to a medical condition or disability should complete the appropriate form(s) in AIS Forms. Contact [cls@americancouncils.org](mailto:cls@americancouncils.org) for any questions or concerns regarding medical or disability accommodations.

Finalist status does not guarantee the ability to participate. Acceptance into the CLS Program is also contingent upon the ability of the host CLS Institute to accept and place the finalist, and the ability of the finalist to travel, be admitted to and reside legally in the host country/location **on a U.S. passport** for the duration of the program dates, to obtain the appropriate visa for entry to the host country/location if required, and to be able to participate in full, with reasonable accommodations, in program activities in person. The CLS award may be rescinded if a student fails to meet eligibility and program requirements and/or is the subject of legal or disciplinary action, or is unable to participate in the program for any reason.

**Duty to Inform:** Finalists acknowledge that they must inform American Councils of changes in contact information, academic standing, medical issues, travel plans, or other circumstances that may affect participation in the program.

**Any changes in physical and/or mental health status** following the submission of the application and above documents, prior to the start of the program, or during the course of program participation, must be reported immediately to American Councils (See [Section 9](#)).

A scholarship offer may be terminated if a finalist a) fails to meet or maintain eligibility requirements, b) fails to complete pre-program requirements (see [Section 4](#)), c) fails to provide requested information by stated deadlines, or d) exhibits behavior that may pose a risk to the standing of the CLS Program, including, but not limited to charges or convictions for crimes of moral turpitude (e.g., fraud, theft) or inappropriate behavior or social media activity. If a finalist cannot meet the placement or visa requirements of a CLS Institute, the U.S. Department of State and American Councils may terminate the award. The CLS Program provides reasonable accommodations and reviews accommodation requests on a case-by-case basis. The CLS Program reserves the right to request additional independent medical examinations, evaluations, or other appropriate information from the finalist (see [Section 9](#)).

3. [Accepting or Declining the Award](#) – Information submitted by finalists through AIS Forms, including the decision to accept or decline the CLS award, is final (see [Sections 36](#) and [37](#)).
4. [Program Tasks](#) – The CLS Program requires that scholars complete the following pre-program, on-program, and post-program tasks by the indicated due dates:

Pre-program:

- Submit all applicable forms in AIS Forms
- Complete a CLS Program medical review (see [Section 9](#))
- Submit an official transcript
- Complete the pre-program Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) assessment (see [Section 26](#))
- Complete language placement testing
- Complete the orientation process (see [Section 20](#))
- Obtain a visa, if applicable (see [Section 17](#))

On-program:

- Complete quarantine requirements, if applicable
- Complete the mid-program evaluation (see [Section 26](#))

Post-program:

- Complete the post-program evaluation (see [Section 26](#))
- Complete the post-program OPI assessment (see [Section 26](#))

The CLS Program reserves the right to add, remove, or modify requirements at any time.

5. **Security** – The U.S. Department of State, American Councils, and the CLS Institutes take participant safety and security seriously and make every reasonable effort to inform CLS Program participants about health and security risks in the relevant host countries and in relevant local areas.

The CLS Program recommends that participants follow all health and safety advice provided to U.S. citizens through U.S. Department of State postings, emergency and other messages provided by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate in the host country/location, and/or provided to participants in handbooks, resources, briefings, and orientations. All participants are registered with the U.S. Department of State’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) prior to the start of the CLS Program. Finalists are advised to consult the online resources related to international travel available through the U.S. Department of State (<https://travel.state.gov>) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>) to review information related to health, safety, and security while overseas.

American Councils and CLS Institute staff will endeavor to notify participants of relevant recommendations and warnings from the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Embassy/Consulate. Participants should monitor health and safety advisories for their host country/location directly as well, particularly as they pertain to any personal travel. Failure by participants to follow health and safety advice provided by the U.S. Embassy/Consulate messages, travel, or emergency warnings to U.S. citizens and/or provided by CLS Institute or U.S. Embassy/Consulate staff in briefings may be grounds for American Councils and the CLS Program, with concurrence from the U.S. Department of State, to dismiss the participant from the program.

Every country/location has unique conditions and risks, which may vary by locality or community. Participants should exercise care in their everyday activities and travel and should be attuned to their surroundings. Participants should be aware that infrastructure quality varies and may not follow the same inspection and regulation requirements as in the U.S. For example, railings, balconies, and stairwells may not meet the same requirements or conditions as in the U.S.; fire safety, inspections, and the response to fires may differ; water and air quality may not be monitored or managed; public swimming locations may not include signage or offer lifeguard services; pedestrian crossings may not be marked or respected; traffic laws may be regularly disregarded, and medical care may differ from what is available in the United States. Participants are responsible for understanding the particular conditions and risks associated with their program location and taking steps to mitigate these risks in their conduct. Please review the COVID-19 Informed Consent and Safety Expectations policy for more information regarding potential health risks as well as preventative measures that may be implemented in response to the pandemic.

The U.S. Department of State, American Councils, and the CLS Institutes and their employees are not responsible for injuries or damages resulting to participants from health and security risks, third-party actions, or participation in inherently risky or prohibited activities while on program (see [Section 33](#)). The CLS Program reserves the right to change or cancel any or all overseas institutes based on safety, health, and security considerations.

6. **Right to Alter Placement or Cancel the Program**– The CLS Program reserves the right to alter aspects of the program including but not limited to format, placement, and duration. Additionally, the CLS Program reserves the right to cancel any institute based on safety and security considerations, availability of funding,

capacity of implementing organizations, local or global emergencies, and other factors. Selection as a CLS finalist does not guarantee the ability to participate in a CLS Summer institute, or the ability to defer participation to a later year, or to retain any stipend funds issued for participation in the program. Programs that are cancelled or curtailed may mean that finalists may not be able to participate in full, may not be able to receive academic credit, and/or may not be eligible for alumni status and benefits, such as non-competitive eligibility.

In the event a program is cancelled outright prior to the start date, no stipend will be issued. If a program is cancelled after a stipend has already been issued, students will be required to return it. If a program is transitioned to a virtual format, the amount of the stipend may be different than the stipend provided for the in-person program. Stipends for virtual programs are not intended to cover the cost of housing and living expenses in the United States and additional CLS Program funds will not be issued to cover these expenses.

In the event of program curtailment or cancellation prior to the program start date, the CLS Program, U.S. Department of State, American Councils, and CLS Program partners will make every effort to alter placement and provide an alternate program or location, and/or alternate program dates. This may include a change to an online format for the program, though it may not be possible to provide academic credit for online programs.

In the event that a CLS Institute is cancelled or suspended while in progress, all participants are expected to return to the United States on flights arranged by the CLS Program. The participant may be required to return a pro-rated portion of the stipend. Participants may not extend their stay on the visa sponsored by the CLS host institution after the suspension of the program. Academic credit may not be provided and alumni status and benefits may not be available. Participants who elect to stay in the host country/location after the suspension of the program will forfeit their return flight and be considered “off program.” No alternate flight will be provided, and the participant will receive no further program benefits, including the Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) health benefits plan.

7. **Communication** – Information about the CLS Program will be communicated electronically through AIS Forms, e-mail, and the online orientation platform, Canvas. Institute-specific information about the CLS Program, program requirements, deadlines, and formal decisions regarding CLS policies and program arrangements will be primarily communicated to finalists by e-mail. In some cases, finalists or participants may be contacted via telephone call or text message by the CLS Program. It is the responsibility of finalists and participants to maintain a valid e-mail address and phone number, to communicate changes to their contact information to the CLS Program in a timely manner, and to read all program communications thoroughly, including all instructions regarding program deadlines and requirements. It is the responsibility of CLS finalists to make arrangements in order to be able to receive communications from CLS Program staff in the event that e-mail or Internet access is not available to them for a prolonged period of time (for instance, due to personal travel or other circumstances), to ensure completion of the program requirements by the program deadlines. When on program, participants are expected to be reachable at all times through the CLS host institution-provided local phone number.

**Emergency contact(s):** The CLS Program will reach out to emergency contacts provided by the participant in the online acceptance portal only in cases when a participant is incapacitated, poses a danger to themselves or others, or is unable to make decisions regarding their medical care. Participants are expected to communicate with family members directly regarding their medical care, when capable, as all are over the age of 18. If asked by a participant to communicate health status and treatment information to family members, CLS Program staff may do so provided that the participant authorizes staff to do so.

8. **Limited Health Benefits** – CLS participants are strongly encouraged to maintain their current healthcare coverage during their overseas program. Participants' primary medical insurance coverage will be supplemented by a limited emergency and accident medical benefits plan from the Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE). ASPE covers CLS participants only during the in-country portion of the CLS Program, beginning upon departure from the United States and ending upon arrival back in the United States. If a participant declines the return flight provided by the program, ASPE benefits cease on the last day of the program. If a participant withdraws from the program early or the award is terminated, all ASPE benefits cease. ASPE health benefits are not provided during domestic travel within the U.S. In the event that an accident or illness sustained while on the CLS Program overseas requires a return to the United States, continued treatment in the United States may not be covered by ASPE benefits. Participants will receive information about ASPE benefits prior to the start of the CLS Program.

The CLS Program, American Councils, local CLS Institutes, the U.S. Department of State and its employees and their representatives, and host families are not responsible for any medical bills not covered by personal insurance or the health benefits provided by the program incurred by a participant. On rare occasions in the case of financial need, the CLS Program may issue a temporary payment on a participant's behalf, with the understanding that the student will be responsible for repayment, regardless of decisions regarding reimbursement on the part of ASPE or a participant's primary insurer. Neither American Councils nor the U.S. Department of State bears any responsibility for any complications and/or negative results associated with medical treatment or decisions relating to whether to obtain medical treatment.

**ASPE Assist and Mental Health Services**– ASPE Assist is a mental health consultation and referral service that operates remotely. It is available 24 hours a day, seven (7) days per week, by The ANVIL Group, in partnership with Seven Corners. ASPE Assist can provide consultation and referral services related to mental health, sexual assault response, violent crime response, and can provide advice to CLS participants when they feel at risk or vulnerable in both urgent and non-urgent situations.

Finalists are advised that living overseas and participating in an intensive and immersive language and cultural program are inherently stressful experiences. Additionally, incidents such as harassment, discrimination or crime may cause trauma. The CLS Program does not provide on-site mental health counseling resources as part of the program. In a limited number of cases, a host institution may have English speaking counseling service, but these are rare and are not guaranteed to be available to CLS Participants. All finalists are advised to consider mental health resources that will be available to them throughout the CLS Program, including ASPE Assist, remote accessibility to mental health providers they have worked with in the past, and mental health resources on their home university campus and within their home communities that may be accessed remotely during the program or in-person upon the conclusion of the program. Participants who have been treated by mental health professionals in the past five (5) years will be required to complete a mental health portion of the CLS medical review process (see [Section 9](#) below) and may be required to outline a plan for maintaining mental health during the CLS Program, including but not limited to ongoing counseling or other mental health services.

9. **Health and Medical** – All finalists should complete the required CLS Medical Forms, have a licensed physician (M.D. or D.O.), licensed Physician's Assistant (P.A.), or licensed Nurse Practitioner (N.P.) review and complete the Self-Assessment (Part 1) and the Physician's Form (Part 2). The Mental Health Form (Part 3) and the Specialist Form (Part 4) must be completed if applicable. All forms must be uploaded to American Councils' online system by the stated deadlines. Filling out the Self-Assessment Form, Physician's Form, Mental Health Form, and Specialist Form accurately and completely will expedite the medical review process. The completion of these medical forms is voluntary. However, failure to complete the medical

forms may result in the CLS Program being unable to determine appropriate placement and may preclude participation in the CLS Program.

The omission or falsification of pertinent medical information may result in revocation or termination of the CLS award at any time prior to, or during, the program (see [Section 35](#)).

All medical forms will be reviewed by CLS Program staff at American Councils and a contracted medical professional. If the contracted professional has questions or requires more information about the finalist's medical history, such as, test results, prescription records, or medical forms and records, it is the finalist's responsibility to provide timely and complete responses. Any requests by the contracted professional for further information must be satisfied before the medical review process is complete. Students who are not medically cleared by both their own medical professional and by the CLS contracted medical professional may not be allowed to participate in the CLS program.

The CLS Program may share any information from a finalist or participant's medical forms and the medical review process that is necessary to facilitate placement, to arrange housing and medical accommodations, or to comply with local laws, regulations, and institutional policies (see [Section 38](#)). The CLS Program recognizes that protecting the confidentiality of a finalist's medical information is extremely important. Participant medical information is protected pursuant to applicable federal and state privacy laws and pursuant to CLS's Privacy Policy. Medical information will be shared only with CLS Program staff or medical staff and other medical professionals with a need to know in order to care for or treat participants. Limited medical information may be shared with CLS Program personnel or U.S. Department of State staff only to the extent that these individuals have a specific need to know the information in order to fulfill their official job-related responsibilities. For information on CLS's policy on medical confidentiality, see the [CLS Privacy Policy](#).

If any medication or treatment is cited as a condition for participation in the program by the medical provider completing the forms, participants must adhere to the treatment plan outlined as a condition for participation. Finalists must be stable on a course of medication or treatment before departure for program participation. In the case that a participant finds it necessary to adjust the medication or treatment plan in advance of the program or while the program is in progress, the participant must bring this to the attention of CLS Program staff in a timely manner. The CLS Program may require the finalist to undergo an additional medical evaluation prior to or during the program.

Participants are required to bring enough medication to last the length of the CLS Program, as it can be difficult or impossible to obtain prescriptions while overseas. Medications that are easily obtainable in the U.S. may be unavailable abroad. This limitation includes medication that may be carried as a precaution in case of allergic reactions, asthma attacks, etc. It is the responsibility of participants to accompany any prescription medication brought with them abroad with proof that the medication is prescribed by a doctor.

As each country/location has different rules and regulations regarding approved medications, it is the responsibility of participants, as CLS Program staff are not able to advise on this topic, to research whether there are any restrictions or prohibitions on prescription or over the counter medication they plan to take with them into the host country/location. Some common medications in the U.S., including but not limited to those for pain, ADHD, anxiety, depression, or insomnia, are illegal in some countries. Alternative medication or treatments should be discussed with the prescribing health care provider well in advance of travel in the event a specific medication, or a class of medications, is illegal in the host country. CLS Program staff cannot advise on questions of legality related to medication.

Some locations may not have the capacity or facilities to provide treatment for emergency or chronic medical conditions. In certain situations, after completion of the medical review process, the CLS Program may have significant concerns for the safety and well-being of a finalist in the assigned host country/location. In some cases, it may be possible to transfer placement to another country/location. In other cases, the CLS Program may determine that it cannot place and support a finalist in any location, and may, after careful review, withdraw the CLS award.

Any finalist who has experienced a significant change in physical or mental health after the submission of the required medical forms or during program participation must inform CLS Program staff immediately. Such changes in a finalist's medical condition include, but are not limited to, diagnosis of a new medical condition; recurrence of any previous illness or medical condition; hospitalization or urgent outpatient treatment; changes in a regular course of medication or beginning a new course of regular medication; and/or the need for regular or frequent follow-up related to a medical concern. Disclosure of an unreported significant medical condition or previous treatment for any conditions, disorders, or symptoms may require medical confirmation of the finalist's ability to participate, as determined by the CLS Program. Failure to report significant changes in physical or mental health may result in termination of the award (see [Section 35](#)).

In the event of a significant change in physical or mental health or disclosure of a previously unreported condition during the CLS Program, the CLS Program may require an evaluation by a medical professional in order to confirm a participant's ability to continue the CLS Program.

CLS Program staff are not medical professionals and cannot provide medical advice. Finalists should consult a physician and monitor the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) travel guidance pertaining to their host country/location. Finalists are encouraged to comply with CDC guidance regarding immunizations and other health precautions. Finalists are responsible for any consequences resulting from failure to comply with the CDC recommendations. American Councils, CLS Program staff, and the U.S. Department of State cannot provide medical guidance on immunizations and are not responsible for identifying recommended or required immunizations for travel. The CLS Program does not cover costs associated with immunizations. If finalists have any questions or concerns about their participation in the program related to infectious diseases, they should speak with their medical provider. Finalists should review travel advisories by the U.S. government, especially the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>) and the U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>), for health recommendations and advice regarding COVID-19 precautions for travel.

The U.S. Department of State, American Councils, the CLS Program, and CLS host institutions assume no responsibility and do not have the authority or the professional ability to assess the qualifications of or reputation of any physician or medical facility in the host country/location including those shared in program-issued materials. The inclusion of any physician or medical facility is solely for the participants' reference and is in no way an endorsement or recommendation by any of the aforementioned entities. Participants are ultimately responsible for choosing their own medical care. Program staff will assist students to access care at the facility of their choice.

Participants who experience medical incidents while participating in the CLS Program may seek the assistance of American Councils, the CLS Program, and CLS Institutes in obtaining treatment or addressing the situation. American Councils, the CLS Program, and CLS Institutes will take reasonable steps to assist participants with medical incidents that occur on program, but participants should recognize that they are not trained medical personnel. In addition, treatment for some conditions may not be available in some countries or may differ from American standards.



American Councils, the U.S. Department of State, the CLS Program, and CLS Institutes and their employees, agents, and instrumentalities are not liable for any claims, injuries, losses, or debts incurred in connection with treatment for any medical condition, assisting a participant in seeking treatment for any medical condition, the decision to return a participant to the United States as a result of any medical condition, or a participant's decision to return to the United States. Participants agree to cover any costs related to these events, except to the extent covered by the ASPE health benefits as described above.

10. **Allergies and Food Intolerances**– CLS participants are responsible for managing their allergies and food intolerances.

Participants should discuss with their medical provider(s) in advanced of departure that many allergies and food intolerances that are common or generally understood in the U.S. are less common – or even completely unfamiliar – in other countries. Participants should expect to exercise more caution than in the U.S. in order to avoid allergens. Particular caution should be exercised around severe food allergens, such as nuts, as such allergies may be virtually unknown amongst members of the host community and the allergens may appear in unexpected contexts such as ground into sauces and desserts. Cross contamination is also a significant risk, and participants are advised to be vigilant regarding the monitoring and management of exposure to allergens. Participants who have been prescribed an EpiPen for use in case of emergency, are advised to carry it with them at all time throughout the program. This includes during class, organized excursions, free time, and on any independent travel.

While local staff will make reasonable efforts to accommodate food allergies and provide appropriate training to host families and/or roommates (where applicable), participants are advised that ultimately, they themselves are responsible for taking active steps to monitor food and ensure avoidance of any allergens.

Depending on the location of the program and the housing and meal arrangements provided, special dietary requests (medical or otherwise) may be difficult to accommodate and are not guaranteed. Participants should contact American Councils with any questions regarding dietary restrictions.

11. **Disability and Medical Accommodations** – The CLS Program makes every effort to provide accommodations for finalists and participants with disabilities. Information provided in medical files, as well as disability accommodation requests, are not considered as part of program selection. However, finalists and participants are strongly encouraged to inform appropriate staff of potential accommodation requests as early as possible to maximize the time available to develop resources, manage logistics, and collaborate with overseas partners, as necessary, to address such requests. The program is not required to provide attendants, individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study, or other devices or services of a personal nature.

While awareness and understanding of the needs of people with disabilities continue to grow throughout the world, many countries lack accessible infrastructure, services, and laws similar to those supporting people with disabilities in the United States. Therefore, conditions in some countries hosting the CLS Program may limit the CLS Program's ability to meet some accommodation requests, even if these accommodations are provided at the participant's U.S. educational institution. In instances in which accommodations cannot be provided, the CLS Program makes every effort to transfer a participant to an alternate program site.

To request disability accommodations, finalists must submit the appropriate CLS Program accommodation form(s), including supporting documentation, on AIS Forms by the stated deadline. Documentation may vary by situation, but may include educational or medical records, reports, and assessments created by

health care providers and disability services offices, school psychologists, teachers, or the educational system, including documents that reflect accommodation history. Finalists who are enrolled at an academic institution must include written documentation demonstrating that the accommodation in question is currently provided by the student's home academic institution; this documentation must be provided by the disability services office of the finalist's home institution. If the accommodation in question is not provided by the home academic institution or the finalist is not an enrolled student, the treating physician or the finalist must provide a written request for accommodation. Medical documentation may be required along with the request. Information provided will be handled consistent with the CLS Program's Privacy Policy. The requested accommodation for an individual with a disability will be considered on a case-by-case basis. An accommodation will not be granted if it would fundamentally alter the nature of the study program or result in undue financial and administrative burdens.

If a finalist seeks to have a service animal while on program, in addition to the above-referenced documentation concerning the need for the accommodation, the finalist is responsible for providing all required medical documentation for the animal, including proof that the animal has received all vaccinations as required by U.S. and local law and other travel requirements, and, if needed by the host country/location or airline, proof of the animal's training and certification. The finalist acknowledges that travel and local law restrictions may require that a service animal be subject to quarantine, additional vaccinations, or other special handling. Participants should be aware that some locations may not recognize service animals as a category, and that the CLS Program has no ability to affect a designation or recognition of such a category. The CLS Program makes no representations about these requirements and cannot be held responsible for such requirements. The participant agrees to release and waive any and all claims against the U.S. Department of State, American Councils, including the American Councils' Board of Trustees, the CLS Program, and CLS Institutes and their employees, agents, and instrumentalities and other institutions or individuals providing services for the CLS Program that may arise out of the accompaniment of the participant by a service animal while on program, including but not limited to claims arising out of any travel or local law requirements, the handling, injury to or the well-being of any animal that accompanies the participant, and any injury caused by or resulting from any service animal.

Non-service animals are not allowed to accompany participants on the CLS Program.

12. **Religious Accommodations** – The CLS Program makes every effort to accommodate students who request religious accommodations. However, participants should be aware that all accommodations may not be possible in every CLS host community, including access to regular religious services, specific living arrangements, or food that meets religious dietary requirements. Participants with religious accommodation needs should share those needs with their Program Officer as soon as possible after their acceptance in the program. Additional communication may be required for program staff to understand that participant's specific needs. Information about the participant's needs will be communicated to host institution staff and may need to be communicated with host family members, roommates, language partners, etc. Absences based on religious accommodation needs should be discussed in advance with CLS Program staff and students may be expected to complete make-up or alternate assignments or class hours in order to meet program requirements.
13. **Award Benefits** – CLS Program funding is intended to cover all program-approved costs, including program-provided housing, meals, incidentals, CLS institute activities, international travel between the United States and the host country/location, visa fees, accident and emergency health benefits coverage to the extent provided under ASPE, and tuition.

CLS participants receive a stipend to cover some of the above costs incurred while on program. Stipend amounts and distribution vary by program site and are determined by each CLS Institute in consultation with the U.S. Department of State and American Councils. CLS Program stipends are not intended to cover passport fees (with limited exceptions for those who qualify for CLS passport assistance), costs associated with completion of the CLS medical forms, non-program related travel, or costs associated with outside interests. Participants are responsible for these non-covered fees and costs. Participants are responsible for providing accurate banking information for the issuance of the stipend. Provision of inaccurate information will delay issuance of the stipend.

The CLS Award does not cover the cost of any immunizations or vaccinations that may be necessary to travel to a CLS host country/location. All participants must ensure they have all required immunizations or vaccinations to enter the CLS host country/location. In addition, in order to maintain the safety of fellow students, staff, instructors, and members of the host community at large, unvaccinated participants, if able to travel to a host country/location and meet host institution placement requirements, may have to meet additional testing and quarantine requirements. Unvaccinated participants may be responsible for additional costs associated with testing, for identifying a testing location on site, and for arranging their own travel to and from the testing site on a regular basis.

14. **Deferral** – The scholarship cannot be deferred to an alternate year. The scholarship is valid only for the year that the applicant was selected as a finalist. If an awardee chooses to decline the scholarship, or is unable to participate for any reason, including for reasons outside of the applicant’s control such as not being issued a visa in time for scheduled departure or being ill at the time of departure, they may apply again in any future year provided they meet the eligibility requirements. Delayed arrivals will also not be offered for students who are not able to depart as scheduled.
15. **Successful Completion of the Program** - Successful completion of the program entails adhering to all the following conditions: participating in all in-person activities including classes, cultural activities, language partner meetings (unless an absence has been approved by program staff), completion of all assignments such as homework, examinations, presentations, and other assignments and receiving grades that are passing or higher.  
  
A decision by a participant to withdraw from the program, an inability to participate in the program in full, or the termination of a scholarship prior to the completion of the program will result in not having successfully completed the program. Alumni benefits, including academic credit, non-competitive eligibility (see [Section 16](#) below), certified Oral Proficiency Interview score, certificate of completion, and eligibility for other alumni benefits such as access to alumni grants and admission to the U.S. Department of State’s International Exchange Alumni are only conferred on those CLS alumni who are considered to have successfully completed the program. Participants who withdraw, neglect, or decline to participate in full, or who have their award terminated will not be considered as having successfully completed the program.
16. **Non-Competitive Eligibility** – Under Executive Order 13750, CLS Program alumni who successfully complete the program are eligible for 12 months of Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) hiring status within the federal government, with the possibility of extensions if certain criteria are met. CLS alumni will be issued an NCE certificate after all program and post-program requirements are completed. More information about NCE is available on the U.S. Department of State website at <https://alumni.state.gov/highlight/noncompetitive-eligibility-federal-employment>.
17. **Passports and Visas** – Participants are required to travel to the program site on a U.S. passport. CLS Program staff will advise finalists regarding the requirements and visa application process for the applicable

CLS Institute host country/location. CLS Program and CLS Institute staff will assist finalists in procuring visas, where they are able to do so. However, successfully obtaining a valid visa for travel, where required, is ultimately the obligation of the finalist. Travel on an alternate passport or visa, including a passport issued by the government of the CLS host country, is not allowable.

Visa requirements, including whether visas are required and the process for obtaining a visa, are determined by the host country/location. The issuance of visas is entirely at the purview of the host country/location. The U.S. Department of State and American Councils are not responsible for other countries' visa requirements, visa processing procedures including changes of procedures, and/or the denial of a visa application. The U.S. Department of State and American Councils are not responsible for other countries' interpretation of the terms of the visa status and activities that may constitute a violation of the terms of the visa. In cases where a finalist already holds a valid visa to the host country/location, depending on the visa type, the valid visa may need to be cancelled in order for the finalist to apply for a new visa that allows for participation in the CLS Program.

Factors that may impact the issuance of a visa include vaccination or medical testing requirements related to infectious diseases, eligibility for dual citizenship (including for those participants who were adopted outside of the United States or who have close relatives who hold or have held foreign citizenship), travel history, country of birth, or parents' origin. **Finalists must notify CLS Program staff immediately if (a) they are eligible for or hold dual citizenship or permanent residence with the CLS host country/location, (b) have been previously refused a visa or denied entry to the CLS host country/location, or (c) have previously overstayed a visa in or been deported from the CLS host country/location.**

- a. **Pre-Program:** Participation in the CLS Program is contingent upon receipt of the appropriate visa according to the deadline established for each program site. If an appropriate visa has not been received by the established deadline, the CLS award may be terminated. **All finalists must meet deadlines set by American Councils to submit required materials, forms, photos, and U.S. passports for visa processing. Failure to do so may result in termination of the CLS award** (see [Section 35](#)). Finalists may be required to submit a U.S. passport for visa processing before participation in the CLS Program. If a finalist is planning any international travel during the months between selection and the beginning of the CLS Program requiring a U.S. passport, it is the responsibility of the finalist to work with CLS Program staff and/or the host embassy or consulate to secure an appropriate visa by the established deadline. Failure to do so may result in termination of the CLS award (see Section 29). In the event a passport or visa is lost or damaged prior to the program start, a participant may not be eligible to participate in the program, if a new passport and visa cannot be secured in time for the scheduled date of departure.
- b. **Post-Program:** Participants are expected to return to the United States on the group flight provided at the end of the program. Participants **may not** extend their stay in the host country/location on the visa sponsored by the CLS host institution. If a participant chooses to stay in the host country/location upon completion of the CLS Program, it is the responsibility of the participant to obtain the proper visa and/or registration required by local law. CLS Program staff are not able to provide assistance with a visa extension or visa application to stay in the host country/location following the conclusion of the CLS Program.

18. **Travel Policies** – Round-trip travel from a participant's home city in the United States to the program site will be provided by the CLS Program. There may be limits on the extent to which individual travel requests can be accommodated. Travel arranged by the CLS Program cannot be used to travel from another country to the United States before the start of the CLS Program, or to travel to another country/location upon

completion of the CLS Program. In the case that a student is located outside of the United States directly prior to the start of the CLS Program and prefers to travel from that location to the location of the program site, the student will be required to arrange and pay for their own transportation to the program site. Such travel may be heavily constricted by visa or other entry requirements to the host country. The student is expected to arrive to the program site on the same day as other participants.

If a participant would like to arrive early to the program site, they must discuss it in advance with the program officer. In some cases arrival prior to the scheduled group arrival date may not be permissible. In cases where it is possible, the participant is responsible for covering any costs related to early arrival. Costs may include higher or additional visas costs, registration fees, housing and meal expenses incurred prior to the group's arrival. Additionally, the participant will be required to sign a waiver and provide a copy of their itinerary to program staff at least two weeks prior to arrival to the host country/location.

If a participant plans to remain in the program country /location or travel to a country other than the United States at the conclusion of the CLS Program, they will be responsible for arranging and paying for all transportation and visas required to do so. The CLS Program will not be able to assist in making travel or visa arrangements, and no additional funds or reimbursement will be available from the CLS Program following the group departure. The participant's health benefits coverage will end on the date of the group departure from the program site. The participant will also be required to sign a waiver and provide a copy of their itinerary to program staff at least two weeks prior to departure from the program site. In all cases, participants who elect to decline the group return flight must provide proof that the proposed travel plan adheres to all visa and visa registration requirements necessary for participation in the program. It also may not be possible for the participant to remain in the program country or location on the visa they used for the duration of CLS Program. Participants are not permitted to unilaterally change their program-provided international or domestic travel arrangements.

In the event that a CLS Institute is cancelled or suspended, all participants are expected to return to the United States on the flight(s) arranged by the CLS Program. Participants will be held responsible for all costs incurred as a result of missed, cancelled, or changed travel arrangements caused by participants.

Any country/location, including the United States, may change entry or exit requirements, quarantine and testing requirements, and other measures to reduce health risks at any time. American Councils and the U.S. Department of State cannot reverse or influence these decisions.

In response to any program disruption or health and safety concern, participants may be required to return to the United States earlier than expected. Participants agree to comply with those directions, if given. CLS Program staff will support participants' return travel but cannot provide alternate programming or financial support if the program ends early. Participants must comply with the planned return travel arrangements. For any participant who chooses to remain in the host country/location, the CLS Program will not be able to support their continued presence in the host country/location. Those participants will no longer be considered 'on program,' their health benefits and visa support will be invalidated, and they will be responsible for their own return travel arrangements. Participants must comply with return travel arrangements and complete all program requirements to be considered in good standing and attain alumni status.

All CLS Program-provided air travel must conform to the Fly America Act, which requires that all U.S. government-funded travel be on American Flag Carriers where such service is available. Participants are also subject to the airline's group rate restrictions and policies, including any COVID-19 testing, vaccination, and mask requirements. Participants are expected to return to the United States on the flight provided for

the program. Group tickets cannot be converted to individual tickets. In the event a participant requires a change to their travel plans for any reason, they must consult with CLS staff.

The CLS Program is not responsible for the disruption of participants' plans or related costs arising from unforeseen travel delays.

**Lost or delayed baggage:** In the event of lost/delayed baggage, the owner of the baggage is responsible for filing a claim and working with airline representatives to recover the baggage or seek compensation. Participants are advised to include their name, contact information, and an address for delivery in the luggage so that it can be more easily identified by airline staff in the event it is delayed or lost. The CLS Program does not provide compensation for lost or delayed luggage.

**Delayed arrival to program site:** Delayed or late arrival to the program site is not permitted. Participation in all arrival activities and in-country orientation is mandatory and begins on a set schedule based on the group's arrival date.

**Travel during the CLS Program:** Each CLS Institute incorporates group excursions designed to enhance participants' understanding of language and culture. Participants are required to participate in all scheduled group travel unless they have been excused in advance in writing by the CLS Program.

Participants are not permitted to leave the host country/location at any time during the CLS Program. All independent travel, either day trips or overnight stays, outside of the CLS Program host city requires the submission of an Independent Travel Form and prior acknowledgement from the CLS Program. Independent travel within the host country/location may only take place during dates designated by the host institution, and participants are not allowed to miss classes or program activities in order to accommodate independent travel; these dates are subject to change at the discretion of the host institution. Independent travel for some or all CLS sites may be prohibited due to restrictions put in place by the host country/location, host community, host institution, or the CLS Program in response to health and safety concerns. Participants assume all risks and costs related to independent travel. The CLS Program is not responsible for financial penalties or losses incurred as a result of changes relating to independent travel, and participants will be held responsible for any fees and penalties incurred.

Participants are expected to return to the host city and program-provided housing arrangement the evening before program activities resume. Returning in the morning prior to the start of classes or other program activities is not permitted. Participants must ensure they have cell phone reception for the full duration of their independent travel and must respond to calls and texts from program staff while they are participating in independent travel. Students are not permitted to participate in independent travel during the final weekend of the program. .

Further guidelines on independent travel, including restrictions and prohibited areas, are specific to each site and will be communicated in the site-specific policies prior to the start of the CLS Program. Locations cited as high risk in the U.S. Department of State's Travel Advisories (see <https://travel.state.gov/>) are off-limits to all participants, unless specifically advised otherwise by the U.S. Department of State and American Councils. **Unauthorized travel may result in the immediate termination of the CLS award** (see [Sections 34](#) and [35](#)).

19. **Pre-Departure Information** – Finalists are required to read all pre-departure materials provided and participate in all required webinars, orientation sessions and meetings before the beginning of the CLS Program. Any questions regarding the materials or the CLS Program should be directed to CLS Program staff.

20. **Orientation** – Pre-program orientations will be conducted virtually. Participants are required to complete all pre-program orientation assignments and sessions. Failure to complete orientation assignments and sessions may result in termination of the CLS award. Participants are required to attend all arrival and in-country orientation sessions. Specific dates and further information about the orientations will be shared at a later date.
21. **Living Arrangements** – Participants are required to live in CLS Program-provided housing, which in 2024 may consist of host families, or group housing (hotel rooms, dormitory rooms, or apartments) with roommates or flat mates drawn from the host community or fellow CLS participants. The CLS Program does not discriminate on the basis of race, disability, religion, gender, or ethnic origin with respect to participants, host families, or roommates drawn from the host community.

Part of the CLS Program is to experience authentic living conditions in the host community and participants should be prepared to be housed in circumstances that may differ significantly from what they are accustomed to in the United States. There is no uniform overseas living experience, and participant experiences may vary significantly in different CLS host locations. Housing configuration may vary significantly between CLS host locations.

Accommodations may include double occupancy rooms and participants' housing arrangements may mean that they are close to other participants. Living arrangements are subject to change if circumstances require and such a change is directed or approved by CLS staff. Students may not unilaterally change their housing without approval of CLS staff. Participants are expected to follow all program rules and guidelines and to conduct themselves appropriately at all times.

**Dependents and Companions:** No dependent(s) or companion(s) may accompany a participant during the program. Visitors may not participate in any program activities or live in program-arranged housing.

**Wi-fi access:** Wi-Fi and other types of internet access may be limited in program housing and in the host community compared to what participants might be used to in the U.S. Some host families have limited Wi-Fi capability and students are expected to work with their host family on internet usage so as not to cause a financial burden to the family.

Program staff will orient students to internet accessibility, including identifying public spaces where Wi-Fi connections may be made as well as options for purchasing individual use plans (such as individual hot spots or “sticks”), where available. Stipend funds are not designed to cover the cost of unlimited 24/7 Wi-Fi access. Students are encouraged to reach out to program staff if they are having trouble connecting to the internet for personal needs, for example, if they need to speak to a mental health provider online.

22. **CLS Program Participation and Conduct** – The CLS Program is first and foremost an academic experience. Participants are expected to participate to the fullest extent. Attendance at all scheduled classes and program activities and excursions is mandatory, unless explicitly excused by program staff. Full CLS Program participation includes, but is not limited to, complete attendance at all classes, completion of work assigned as part of the academic program, attendance at all mandatory cultural activities, arrival on time and at the correct location to all mandatory events and activities, and adherence to the specific language policy of the CLS Institute. Participants who fail to participate fully may be considered as not having successfully completed the program and may not receive a CLS Program completion certificate, academic transcript, language test certificate, NCE certificate, or access to benefits and/or resources that are available to CLS Program alumni.

Participants are expected to attend classes and program activities in person, rather than virtually, with the exception of participants who are isolating after testing positive for COVID-19 and feel well enough to

attend classes. Virtual instruction is not intended to be offered as a replacement for attending classes and activities in person.

Participants are expected to be respectful, follow all program policies, and maintain the highest level of professional conduct with CLS Program staff, language partners, host families, roommates, and fellow participants. Participants are expected to maintain the highest levels of cultural sensitivity towards the host country/location and culture and to maintain a standard of conduct and integrity that is in keeping with the spirit and intent of the CLS Program. [If a participant wishes to bring attention to an issue regarding another participant's participation or conduct, they may report to CLS staff. While all reported information will be taken seriously, CLS staff have limited ability to respond to anonymous or third-party reports.](#) If CLS Program staff determines that a participant is being disrespectful or not following program directives, that participant may be subject to immediate disciplinary action (see [Section 34](#)). [CLS staff are not obligated or able to share any actions taken with the reporter.](#)

23. [Language Policy](#) – All CLS host institutions have a language policy that all CLS participants are expected to adhere to. The specific language policy of the CLS host institution will be discussed during orientations and may include provisions for absolute beginners.
24. [Non-Fraternization Policy](#) – All CLS affiliates, including participants, are expected to maintain a professional level of conduct at all times. Romantic and/or sexual relationships are not allowed between participants and staff, participants and the Resident Director, participants and instructors, and participants and others who have a formal or professional relationship with the CLS Program. Romantic and/or sexual relationships are also not allowed between participants and their own language partner(s), roommates, and host family members who live in the same home while the program is in session. If a romantic or sexual relationship exists between participants and any of these parties prior to the start of the CLS Program, both parties are expected to disclose the relationship prior to the arrival date and must maintain a professional level of decorum during the program. If a relationship is discovered during the program, the CLS affiliate (staff, instructor, host family, roommate, language partner, or other party with a formal relationship to the CLS Program) may be removed from their role on the program.
25. [Academic Honor Code](#) – Participants are expected to approach their academic work and program requirements such as pre- and post-program testing, with dedication and integrity, understanding that they are responsible for enhancing their own learning through personal effort. Participants agree to be fully prepared for each class session and refrain from engaging in disruptive, offensive, or distracting behavior. Further, because the program is designed to integrate classroom work with excursions to local sites, attendance at all classes and cultural activities is mandatory. Participants who fail to attend program sessions without prior explicit permission of CLS Program staff may be subject to immediate disciplinary action and considered for dismissal from the program (see [Sections 34](#) and [35](#)).

While the highest instructional standards are expected and applied, participants should be aware that local teaching methods may differ from U.S. standards of instruction. Participants should bring concerns regarding the academic program to their Resident Director or Program Coordinator. Questions related to grades, assignments, and homework should be communicated directly to the classroom teacher.

The following behaviors are prohibited:

- a. **Plagiarism:** Submitting material that in part or whole is not entirely one's own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source.
- b. **Cheating:** Using unauthorized notes, study aids, or information on an examination; altering a graded work after it has been returned, then submitting the work for reevaluation without permission;



allowing another person to do one's work and submitting that work under one's own name; submitting identical or similar papers for credit in more than one course without prior permission from the course instructors. Persons who facilitate another participant's cheating are considered guilty of cheating themselves.

- c. **Obtaining an unfair advantage:** (a) Stealing, reproducing, circulating, or otherwise gaining access to examination materials prior to the time authorized by the instructor; (b) stealing, destroying, defacing, or concealing library materials with the purpose of depriving others of their use; (c) unauthorized collaboration on an academic assignment; (d) retaining, possessing, using, or circulating previously given examination materials, where those materials clearly indicate that they are to be returned to the instructor at the conclusion of the examination; (e) intentionally obstructing or interfering with another participant's academic work; or (f) otherwise undertaking activity with the purpose of creating or obtaining an unfair academic advantage over other participants' academic work.
- d. **Fabrication:** Falsifying or inventing any information, data, or citation; presenting data that were not gathered in accordance with standard guidelines defining the appropriate methods for collecting or generating data; and failing to include an accurate account of the method by which the data were gathered or collected.
- e. **Falsification of records and official documents:** Altering documents affecting academic records, forging signatures of authorization, or falsifying information on an official academic document.
- f. **Conducting research activities that have not been approved by the CLS Program and certified by a recognized Institutional Review Board (IRB) process:** Participants are not allowed to conduct personal research (including coursework, thesis, or dissertation writing) or other non-CLS Program academic work if it in any way detracts from full participation in CLS Program activities. Participants interested in conducting research during the CLS Program must first receive approval from CLS Program staff before initiating any research activities. All participants conducting research will be required to submit proof of approval from their home institution's IRB for any research involving human subjects.
- g. **Unauthorized access to computerized academic or administrative records or systems:** Viewing or altering computer records; modifying computer programs or systems; releasing or dispensing information gained via unauthorized access; or interfering with the use or availability of computer systems or information.
- h. **Recording class sessions and other program activities:** Recording classes, cultural activities, group meetings, language partner sessions, or other program activities is not allowed unless a specific disability accommodation has been approved by the CLS Program. If participants are interested in recording or photographing other program participants, language partners, or host family members/roommates, they should ask for permission before doing so.

Participants who engage in the above behaviors may be subject to immediate disciplinary action and considered for dismissal from the program (see [Sections 34](#) and [35](#)).

26. **Testing, Evaluation, and Survey Requirements** – Finalists are required to complete testing, evaluation and survey requirements as outlined below.

Language testing for the program is conducted by Language Testing International (LTI), an affiliate of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). LTI will arrange for an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) examination to be conducted with an ACTFL-certified tester via telephone.

- a. **Pre-Program Requirements:** Finalists must complete all required program forms and an ACTFL OPI language evaluation by the stated deadlines.
- b. **Mid-Program Requirement:** Participants are required to submit a short mid-program evaluation using the provided form by the stated deadline.
- c. **Post-Program Requirements:** All participants are required to (a) complete a post-program evaluation by the date indicated by program staff (but no later than September 13 and (b) take a post-program ACTFL OPI language evaluation by the date indicated by program staff (but no later than, September 13).

All participants will receive an official certificate of completion from the U.S. Department of State, a certificate of Non-Competitive Eligibility, and an official ACTFL OPI score certificate after completing testing and post-program reporting requirements for the CLS Program by the stated deadlines.

**Missed OPI Fee:** Participants who fail to take their pre- or post-program language test at the scheduled time will be responsible for any fees incurred. **The current penalty for a missed ACTFL OPI exam is \$60, but the cost is subject to change without further notice.**

Individualized test score data, surveys, and program evaluations will be shared with the U.S. Department of State, American Councils, and CLS Institute staff for the purposes of placement, measuring program outcomes, assessing the effectiveness of the CLS Program, basic record keeping, and other needs that may be determined for program administration and/or evaluation. These data are stored and shared consistent with the CLS Program's Privacy Policy.

Aggregate test score data and program evaluation data may be shared with the U.S. Congress as measures of program effectiveness. Additionally, the U.S. Department of State and American Councils may prepare external reports or make public presentations about the CLS Program using testing and evaluation data in aggregate form. By virtue of its presentation in aggregate form, this information will be anonymized such that no single student's test scores, program evaluation, or identification will be shared.

By signing these Terms and Conditions of Award, finalists indicate that they understand how test score and program evaluation data will be stored and used (see [Privacy Policy](#)).

27. **Academic Credit** – Credit for coursework completed on the CLS Program is issued through Bryn Mawr College. Before the beginning of the program, finalists must elect, through AIS Forms, either to request academic credit for their coursework or to waive their right to do so. After the start of the program, a participant may not alter the decision to receive or waive academic credit.

Participants who have requested academic credit and who have successfully completed the program will receive two units of undergraduate academic credit, equivalent to approximately four semester hours per unit. Successful completion of the academic program requires attendance for the duration of the CLS summer institute. Participants who face situations requiring an early return from the CLS Program site, including for disciplinary reasons, may not be eligible for academic credit; partial credit is not given.

In the event that a participant must leave the program site early, academic credit may be awarded, provided that all of the following conditions have been met: the reason for the early return must be approved by CLS Program staff and the U.S. Department of State; the participant must have attended over

87% of the summer institute before departing the program site; required work for the program must be completed within three weeks of the final program date; and CLS instructors must have the ability and capacity to complete the assessment of the participant's work. Participants must achieve passing grades in their courses in order to earn academic credit.

In the event a program is cancelled prior to the start or during the program, academic credit may not be available. Academic credit may not be available if a program is changed from an in-person format to a virtual format.

Finalists are advised that not all institutions may accept academic credit from another institution. Finalists should work with the study abroad office or office of the registrar at their home institution to determine the procedures for transferring academic credit for the CLS Program. In many cases, it is important to do this before the start of the CLS Program.

At the end of the summer program, CLS Institute Directors submit lists of grades from each institute to American Councils. These grades are converted from the grading scale used by the host institution to the Bryn Mawr College four-point scale. Upon successful completion of the CLS Program, grades are forwarded to the Bryn Mawr College Registrar. Grades usually become available eight to twelve weeks after the conclusion of the program. Once all post-program requirements have been completed, transcripts can be requested by following the instructions outlined on the Bryn Mawr College website: [www.brynmawr.edu/registrar/](http://www.brynmawr.edu/registrar/).

“Incomplete” grades will not be given for courses on the CLS Program. CLS host institutions and teachers are contracted only for the duration of the summer institute and are not available after the end date of the CLS Program. All assignments, including exams, presentations, homework, etc. must be submitted in full by the last day of class. Any outstanding assignments after the last day of class will receive a grade based on what is submitted on the last day of class. If assignments are missing as of the last day of class, they will receive a score of zero. An exception to this policy may only be made if the following conditions have been met: the reason for the incomplete work must be approved by CLS Program staff and the U.S. Department of State; the participant must have attended over 87% of the summer institute; required work for the program must be completed within three weeks of the final program date; and CLS instructors must have the ability and capacity to complete the assessment of the participant’s work. Academic credit will only be available to participants when average grades received on work submitted are equivalent to passing scores.

Participants may appeal a final course grade if they can demonstrate that an inappropriate grade was assigned as a result of discrimination, unfairness, or other improper conditions. To appeal a final grade, program participants must submit a written request to their program officer or to [cls@americancouncils.org](mailto:cls@americancouncils.org) by December 31 of the year the program was conducted. Grade appeal requests received after the December 31 deadline will not be accepted. The appeal request should include the participant’s name, program language and location, year, course name, and the reason(s) for contesting the grade. The request should also include any supporting documentation deemed relevant to the appeal.

No appeals will be undertaken for participants who have violated the CLS Terms and Conditions or have outstanding program requirements, including but not limited to payment, evaluations, and testing. Appeal requests will be accepted when all program requirements are met.

28. [Internet and Media Guidelines](#) – Participants who share their CLS experiences publicly via Internet-based media acknowledge that theirs is not an official U.S. Department of State website, blog, or posting, and that the views and information presented are their own and do not represent those of the CLS Program or the U.S. Department of State. Participants must agree to adhere to the CLS Program Internet and Media

Guidelines on AIS Forms as a condition of participation in the CLS Program. Participants are expected to abide by U.S. and local laws regarding internet and media.

29. **Personal and Program Property** – Participants are responsible for safe-guarding stipend funds and other CLS Program-provided equipment or property, including but not limited to cell phones, textbooks, and housing keys. Lost or stolen stipend funds, equipment, or other property cannot be replaced by the CLS Program and must be re-paid or replaced by CLS participants as determined by individual CLS Institutes. The CLS Program does not provide insurance for participants' personal property and does not reimburse or replace participant's personal property that may be damaged, lost, or destroyed.

Participants who willfully lose, damage, or destroy program property, or who exercise an unreasonable lack of care regarding program property, may be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of the CLS Program award (see [Sections 34](#) and [35](#)).

30. **Host Country/Location and U.S. Laws** – Participants are subject to the same laws and regulations that govern the host country/location's citizens and any other laws that are applicable to a foreign citizen in the host country/location. It is the responsibility of CLS Program participants to be aware of local laws and to abide by them. **American Councils, the U.S. Department of State, and CLS Institutes cannot provide any immunity from local laws or their enforcement, including prosecution, and are unable to provide any defense from prosecution.** Participants are also expected to abide by U.S. law. Any violation of local or U.S. laws may result in the immediate termination of the CLS Program award (see [Sections 34](#) and [35](#)), and any resulting legal fees or costs will be the responsibility of the participant.

National and local laws in the United States and/or in the host country/location and/or institutional requirements may change at any time to reflect public health situations, including regulations related to COVID-19. In the event that local rules and regulations restrict the participation in daily life to such an extent that a participant may not significantly benefit from living in the host community, the U.S. Department of State may make the decision to change the format of a program, change a program site, or cancel a program in its entirety. Participants are required to comply if a host country/location or local community, airline, host institution, or other applicable stakeholder requires participants to be vaccinated, provide proof of vaccination, quarantine, mask, or take other precautions related to public health concerns, including COVID-19.

31. **Harassment**– The CLS Program is committed to maintaining high standards of conduct and an environment for participants and staff that is free from harassment. Any concerns related to inappropriate conduct involving program staff, teachers, host family members, language partners, or fellow CLS participants should be reported to the Resident Director, Program Officer, or another CLS staff member. This allows CLS Program staff to document concerns, report them as necessary, and issue corrective feedback. Participants are discouraged from handling issues related to inappropriate behavior or personal boundary violations themselves and withholding the information from program staff.

**Sexual Harassment Policy** - Finalists must review the CLS Sexual Harassment Policy and agree to adhere to the policy on AIS Forms as a condition of participation in the CLS Program. Participants and staff are prohibited from engaging in sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, which includes unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; or other spoken, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Depending on the severity of the incident, disciplinary actions for sexual harassment by a participant may include a warning, probation, or a termination of the CLS award (see [Sections 34](#) and [35](#)).

If a participant reports to CLS Program staff that harassment or a sexual assault has occurred on the CLS Program, or if CLS Program staff otherwise learns of a sexual assault or sexual harassment incident, CLS

Program staff will provide prompt support and assistance, including access to professional medical care and counseling and support (online or on-site depending on availability), as requested by the participant and as possible in the host community and within the parameters of the CLS Program.

CLS Program staff, including the Resident Director, are required to report the incident to their supervisor or program director. Known incidents must also be reported to the U.S. Department of State. Participants should review the [CLS Sexual Harassment Policy](#) for information regarding resources that they may access directly and that will not result in communication about the incident to the CLS Program or U.S. Department of State.

32. **Alcohol and Drug Policy** – Participants must obey local and U.S. laws regarding alcohol consumption. The CLS Program prohibits the consumption of alcohol by or distribution of alcohol to participants who are not of U.S. and local legal drinking age. Participants who are of U.S. and local legal drinking age and choose to consume alcohol do so with the knowledge that they remain responsible for their actions at all times.

Participants who choose to consume alcohol are expected to do so responsibly and be sensitive to their own safety and local customs and norms when consuming alcohol. Excessive and/or irresponsible drinking leading to intoxication and behavior that interferes with the program or the rights of others, is disrespectful to others or to the host culture, and/or compromises the safety of the individual or other participants is subject to immediate disciplinary action and may result in dismissal from the program. Participants may not use alcohol during CLS Program activities, including, but not limited to, in classes, on program excursions, and on CLS organized transportation. **Any alcohol infraction is considered a grave violation of policy and will result in immediate disciplinary action, including possible dismissal from the CLS Program** (see [Sections 34](#) and [35](#)).

Participants are prohibited from selling, using, or possessing any drugs (including marijuana) that are illegal under either U.S. Federal or host country/location law. Participants are cautioned that the possession of drugs is often dealt with harshly by local law enforcement. **Any drug infraction is considered a grave violation of policy and will result in immediate disciplinary action, including possible dismissal from the CLS Program** (see [Sections 34](#) and [35](#)).

Participants are additionally cautioned that laws and regulations in CLS host countries related to marijuana-derived products (such as “CBD” products) are often criminalized and may carry significant fines and jail time associated with their possession, use, and distribution, regardless of whether they have been prescribed by a medical professional or procured recreationally. Participants should not plan to travel, procure, or use **any** marijuana or marijuana-derived products during the CLS Program. If a participant has a current prescription for marijuana or a marijuana-derived product, they should speak to their health care provider about alternatives well in advance of departure.

There are laws or rules restricting smoking and/or vaping in some countries/locations, schools, and host families; participants must honor these restrictions.

33. **Prohibited Activities** – The following activities are prohibited while participating in the CLS Program and will result in disciplinary action, including possible dismissal from the CLS Program (see [Sections 34](#) and [35](#)):
- a. **Violation of local or U.S. law** (see [Section 30](#)).
  - b. **Theft, damage, or vandalism** of any kind, including but not limited to the belongings of other participants or any other person, CLS Institute property, property of host universities, dormitories, host family accommodations, apartments, program arranged transportation, or facilities used by the program (see [Section 29](#)).

- c. **Violent, abusive, disruptive, inappropriate, or offensive behavior** against others, including but not limited to faculty, staff, participants, language partners, host families, roommates, or host country/location nationals (see [Section 22](#)) including:
- Any form of physical violence, including striking or any other physical harm to oneself or another person;
  - Any form of verbal abuse, bullying behavior, or cyberbullying, including the use of profanity, derogatory or degrading comments, obscene gestures, or threats; and
  - Disorderly, disrespectful, disruptive, threatening, or intimidating conduct, including disruptive actions that interfere with the learning environment or impede the ability to carry out program-related activities.
- d. **Culturally insensitive or disrespectful conduct, including but not limited to the following:**
- Behavior, including online activity, that impairs current program, diplomatic, or cultural relations or could have an adverse impact on future relations between the U.S. Department of State and its CLS Program and the host institution, host families, host country/location, program staff, or other partner organizations;
  - Engaging in any behavior, including online activity, that is considered culturally offensive to the host country/location and its population; or
  - Initiating conversations, including online discussions, on topics that are considered inappropriate or offensive for discussion with program staff, host families, language partners, fellow participants, and/or members of the host community.
- e. **Risky behavior or dangerous activities, including but not limited to the following:**
- Engaging in risky behavior or knowingly placing oneself or others in a dangerous situation;
  - Participating in protests, demonstrations, or strikes in the host country/location; or
  - Engaging in dangerous activities, such as parachuting, skydiving, hang-gliding, bungee jumping, or use of weapons while on the program. Activities such as skateboarding, rollerblading, biking, and boating are allowed as long as participants use adequate safety gear and exercise reasonable precautions.
  - Renting, driving, or operating motorized vehicles of any kind in the host country/location is not permitted while on the CLS Program.
  - CLS participants are advised to review the policies of their health insurance and the Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) health benefits for activities and behaviors that may not be covered.
- f. **Sexual harassment (see [Section 31](#)).**
- g. **Academic misconduct (see [Section 25](#)).**
- h. **Alcohol or drug policy violations (see [Section 32](#)).**
- i. **Failure to follow site-specific policies, guidelines, directives, timetables, and instructions of CLS Program staff:**

- Individual CLS Institutes may provide guidelines for appropriate attire for all or part of a participant's stay in the CLS Program host country/location. Participants are expected to dress appropriately according to local customs.
- Residential guidelines and/or rules may be established by the CLS Institute or host family, including but not limited to unauthorized overnight guests, curfews, excessive noise, rowdy conduct, or intoxication. Violations of residential guidelines or rules are considered CLS Program violations.
- Individual CLS institutes may establish specific rules or guidelines for management of COVID-19 risk, exposure, and/or infection. This may include but is not limited to social distancing, contact tracing, mask wearing, quarantines, and/or testing.

j. **Unauthorized entry to or use of CLS Program facilities or host institution facilities or technology.**

k. **Violation of the Travel Policy (see [Section 18](#)).**

l. **Unauthorized housing:**

- Participants are required to stay in program-provided housing, except during independent travel outside of the host city. Participants who choose to stay in the host city during independent travel weekends are required to stay in program-provided housing.
- During independent travel, participants may not stay in short-term rentals, including but not limited to online hospitality services (e.g., VRBO or Airbnb) or private house rentals. Participants should stay in hotels or other similar commercial housing accommodations.

m. **Violations of Internet and Media Guidelines (see [Section 28](#)).**

n. **Engaging in any income-generating activities.**

o. **Engaging in any proselytizing activities.**

34. **Disciplinary Measures** – The CLS Program reserves the right to carry out disciplinary measures for inappropriate and prohibited conduct as outlined in this document. CLS Program staff may carry out appropriate disciplinary measures based on an assessment of the severity of the offense after consultation with the U.S. Department of State.

When a CLS staff member receives information about any suspected incident of prohibited activities, violation of CLS Program policies or Terms and Conditions, or other inappropriate behavior involving a participant, the CLS Program staff will take appropriate steps to investigate and resolve the matter promptly and equitably. Depending on the nature of the incident, the investigation may include interviews, review of written materials or recorded information, and any other reasonable steps necessary to investigate the incident. Any investigation may have reasonable limits based upon the length of the program, financial resources, access to information, faculty and staff availability, and U.S. and local law. [If a participant wishes to bring attention to an issue in which they are not directly involved, they may report to CLS staff or encourage the involved party to report directly. While all reported information regarding potential violations of the CLS Terms and Conditions and/or site-specific policies will be taken seriously, CLS staff have limited ability to respond to anonymous or third-party reports.](#)

In the case of a minor policy infraction, a participant may receive a written warning outlining the nature of the infraction. Two or more minor infractions or any major policy violation may result in being placed on probation. A participant placed on probation will receive a written notice regarding the nature of the policy

violation(s) and requirements for continued participation in the program. A participant may contest the warning or probation by submitting a written statement, via paper submission or email, to CLS Program staff. CLS Program staff will review the case and provide a written response, which will be the final determination of disciplinary measures for the particular incident. The terms of any probation notice remain in effect during the review period.

In the case of a single incident comprising multiple infractions, or if CLS Program representatives deem one violation of program policy to be of great significance or severity, including violation of any health and safety requirements developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a recommendation for immediate termination of the award may be presented to the U.S. Department of State (see [Section 35](#)). All warnings and probation letters will be provided to American Councils and the U.S. Department of State.

35. **Termination of the CLS Award** – Decisions concerning termination of a CLS Program award will be made by the U.S. Department of State upon the recommendation of, and in consultation with, CLS Program staff and American Councils. CLS Program staff and American Councils have primary authority for recommending that the U.S. Department of State terminate a CLS award. In the event that the CLS Program in any or all locations is suspended or canceled, all participant awards will be terminated, and participants will be expected to return to the United States.

**Grounds for termination of the CLS award** include the following: (1) failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress and observe appropriate professional standards; (2) failure to attend all classes and program activities for reasons other than approved absences; (3) physical or mental illness that prevents fulfillment of program obligations with or without an accommodation; (4) failure to disclose pertinent medical conditions which significantly impact participation on the program; (5) failure to comply with the CLS Program Terms and Conditions of Award; (6) material misrepresentation or omission made by any participant in a program application form or document; (7) conduct which may have the effect of bringing the U.S. Department of State, American Councils, CLS Institutes, or the CLS Program into disrepute; (8) for U.S. military personnel, failure to receive requisite country, theater, or special area clearance or other relevant approvals to participate in the CLS Program; (9) acts likely to give offense to the host country/location; (10) violating terms of the host country/location visa; (11) engaging in a prohibited activity described in [Section 33](#), (12) failure to comply with the terms of probation, and/or (13) failure to complete post-program requirements.

**Dismissal for Medical Concerns:** In the event that a medical issue (mental or physical) impedes a participant's ability to attend classes or participate fully in program activities and excursions for a cumulative of 15 hours or four consecutive days, unless approved otherwise, or if treatment of the issue exceeds the level of care available in the host location, a recommendation may be made to the U.S. Department of State for termination of the CLS award.

In the event that a physical or mental health condition impedes a participant's ability to attend classes, program activities, or excursions and the student wants to continue to participate in the CLS Program, the CLS Program in consultation with the U.S. Department of State may require the participant to submit a medical reevaluation of the participant's ability to fulfill the terms of the program. As part of this reevaluation process, a participant may be required by CLS staff to seek additional treatment as a condition of staying on the CLS Program. Failure to comply with a medical reevaluation requirement may result in a recommendation for termination of the CLS award. If, after a medical reevaluation, the participant's ability to participate fully in classes and program activities is still impeded and such absences have not been approved, or if the CLS Program determines that an appropriate level of care and support cannot be provided in the host location, a recommendation may be made to terminate the CLS award.



**Procedure for the termination of the CLS award:** The CLS Program reserves the right to suspend or terminate a participant’s CLS Program participation immediately for severe violations or medical incidents or conditions, including where there is risk to the safety of the participant, CLS Program staff, or others. In certain situations, a participant may be immediately suspended from participation in CLS Program activities, removed from assigned living arrangements, and/or removed from the program site pending a decision on termination.

During a suspension, or when immediate termination of the award is otherwise not necessary, (1) the participant will be placed on probation and informed that termination of the award is a possibility, as well as the basis for possible termination; (2) the participant will have a reasonable opportunity to provide relevant information in writing pertaining to the condition, incident, or behavior at issue; (3) American Councils, in consultation with the CLS Institute, will prepare a written statement explaining the reason(s) for the recommendation of termination, with all relevant documents, including the participant’s statement, for review and evaluation by the U.S. Department of State; (4) the U.S. Department of State will inform American Councils of its final determination; (5) American Councils and the CLS Institute will inform the participant in writing of the decision to terminate the award and the reasons therefore.

36. **Withdrawal from the CLS Program** – Participants may withdraw from the CLS Program at any time. If a participant chooses to withdraw from the CLS Program at any point after signing the Terms and Conditions of Award , the participant may be responsible for the repayment of some or all award costs (including but not limited to travel to and from the host country/location, any advance stipend issued for the program, and all housing and meals).

Participants who choose to withdraw from the program will not be considered as having successfully completed the program and will not receive alumni benefits such as academic credit, a certificate of completion, their certified Oral Proficiency Interview score, and non-competitive eligibility. Participants who withdraw will not be considered CLS alumni and will not be eligible for CLS alumni grants or participation in alumni programming.

Arrangements for completing the program away from the program site, virtually or at a later date, will not be considered or counted as successful completion of the program.

If a participant requests to withdraw from the program the participant will be required to return to their final destination on the earliest available, reasonably-priced flight, as determined by CLS Program staff. If the participant declines to take the provided flight, the flight will be forfeited and no alternate flight will be provided. The participant will no longer be considered a CLS participant and all benefits, including ASPE, will cease from the date of the earliest-available flight, or participant’s departure from the host country/location, whichever comes first.

37. **Result of CLS Program Withdrawal or Termination** – Subject to fulfillment of CLS Program conditions in [Section 22](#), after a decision to withdraw from the program or termination of the CLS award, participants may be considered as not having received the award and will not receive program certificates, academic credit, or be considered alumni of the CLS Program. Unless otherwise stated, the award will be considered to have ended when the U.S. Department of State has made the decision to terminate the award and this decision has been communicated to the participant.

In the case of a decision to withdraw from the program or termination of the CLS award, disbursement of any allowances, stipends, and benefits will cease (except for return travel), including any medical benefits under the U.S. Department of State's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges. The participant will also be required to repay immediately any advances in allowances, stipends, or benefits disbursed or

intended for use in the period of time following the termination or withdrawal. Unless otherwise authorized by the U.S. Department of State, no further claim for disbursements of allowances, stipends, or benefits will be honored.

38. **Privacy and Use of Personal Data** – Finalists have already shared (during the application process) and will be required to share some additional personal data before and during the program. The CLS Program shares information about participants under limited circumstances and with appropriate safeguards on privacy as detailed in the full [Privacy Policy](#).

In keeping with the CLS Program Privacy Policy, program staff may have to share participants' health information with the host institution, housing provider, government authorities, the U.S. Department of State, and/or other entities pursuant to applicable law or at the discretion of the program for public health reasons. Overseas authorities and institutions may have different, less restrictive regulations regarding privacy of health information, including for contact tracing, and the CLS Program may not be able to prevent the release of participants' personal information by overseas entities.

39. **Notifications and Consents** – Participants agree to allow the U.S. Department of State, American Councils, and individual CLS host institutions to cite a participant's name, CLS language and language level, U.S. college or university, educational level (undergraduate or graduate), field of study, CLS Institute, and host country/location in all print, broadcast, and online publications, as part of the promotion of the CLS Program.

Participants agree to allow phone numbers, mailing and email addresses to be provided in annual notification letters to elected representatives, including members of the U.S. Congress, governors of U.S. states and territories, and the mayor of the District of Columbia. Elected representatives will be informed of the names, phone numbers, and addresses of CLS Program participants from their respective locales should they wish to congratulate them.

Participants grant permission to the CLS Program and its administrators to anonymously quote or publish sections of surveys and program evaluations in connection with CLS Program activities, including but not limited to staff and partner development and CLS Program promotion.

Participants hereby grant permission to the U.S. Department of State, American Councils, CLS Program and/or individual CLS Institutes to photograph, film, reproduce, transcribe, or otherwise record and use (including release, publish, quote, or broadcast) their image and/or voice in connection with the U.S. Department of State's public information programs and activities connected with the CLS Program, including but not limited to CLS Program promotion.

Participants hereby give consent that any and all photographs and any other audio/visual materials taken by CLS Program staff can be used in the promotion of the CLS Program or other exchange programs by the U.S. Department of State, American Councils, CLS Program and/or individual CLS Institutes through print, web, and/or social media platforms. Further, participants grant the CLS Program and its administrators perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, and non-exclusive license to use, distribute, reproduce, modify, adapt, and publicly display materials provided voluntarily by participants to CLS Program staff.

40. **Waiver and Release** – Participants agree to hold harmless and waive any and all claims against the U.S. Department of State, American Councils, including the American Councils' Board of Trustees, the CLS Program, and CLS Institutes and their employees, agents, and instrumentalities and other institutions or individuals providing services for the CLS Program, for illness, injury, accident, death, emotional distress, theft, loss or damage of personal property including theft or loss of data, legal issues, or other contingencies which may befall the participant during the program or in connection with the participant's

activities while receiving support from this award. Such claims include, but are not limited to, (a) claims for personal injury, wrongful death, or property damage and (b) claims arising out of natural disasters, war, terrorism, pandemic or health crises, third-party actions, local infrastructure failings or transportation, and civil disturbances. Insurance coverage for theft, loss, or damage of personal property is not provided by the CLS Program.

The CLS Program makes use of independent businesses such as commercial airlines, hotels, restaurants, transportation companies, and others. Participants must follow their COVID-19 mitigation requirements, including wearing a mask, maintaining safe distance, having temperature taken or other measures, as required. The CLS Program may provide limited resources for personal protective equipment, such as masks and hand sanitizer, or provide a limited amount of funds through the stipend to purchase small amounts of supplies. Participants should be prepared to purchase additional personal protective equipment directly. Participants agree to not hold the U.S. Department of State, American Councils, including the American Councils' Board of Trustees, the CLS Program, and the CLS Institutes and their employees, agents, and instrumentalities, and other institutions or individuals providing services for the CLS Program liable for the efficacy of such products, or the actions required by these organizations if participants contract COVID-19 or experience complications related to preventive measures.

Participants agree to release and waive any and all claims against the U.S. Department of State, American Councils, including the American Councils' Board of Trustees, the CLS Program, and CLS Institutes and their employees, agents, and instrumentalities and other institutions or individuals providing services for the CLS Program which may arise out of failure to enter upon or to complete the outlined program, including as a result of termination of a participant's CLS Program award or the cancellation of the program. Participants also agree to release and waive any and all claims against the U.S. Department of State, American Councils or American Councils' Board of Trustees, the CLS Program, and CLS Institutes and their employees, agents, and instrumentalities and other institutions or individuals providing services for the CLS Program which may arise out of dissatisfaction with placement, housing, and other programmatic determinations for the CLS Program, including a disruption or cancellation of the program.

41. **Tax Responsibility** – Please be advised that some award monies are taxable, although there might be exemptions on certain items. The U.S. Department of State, American Councils, the CLS Program, CLS Institutes or any of their affiliated partners cannot advise participants on tax matters. As with most tax issues, it is essential that each taxpayer consult with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or a tax professional to determine liability. Please refer to the IRS website (<http://www.irs.gov>) or call 1-800-TAX-FORM (1-800-829-3676).

I understand that it is my responsibility to contact American Councils directly to discuss any circumstances that would interfere with my ability to adhere to the Terms and Conditions of Award or meet the CLS Program requirements. Any special arrangements or requests to modify the Terms and Conditions of Award must be raised with American Councils **before accepting** the CLS Program award.

In signing these Terms and Conditions of Award, I acknowledge having read and understood them fully. I agree to the expectations, requirements, releases, consents, and waivers laid out in the Terms and Conditions of Award and pledge to meet all expectations and requirements as a finalist and participant of the CLS Program. I certify that the information provided in all parts of the CLS application and acceptance process is truthful, and understand that any misrepresentation, omission of material information, or false answer may be grounds for termination of the CLS award. I also acknowledge that by accepting the terms and conditions of the award I am committing to make a good faith effort to complete the program in its

entirety on site and understand that arrangements for completing the program away from the program site, in a virtual format, or at a later date will not be considered.

**Signature**

**Printed Name**

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**Date**

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# COVID-19 Informed Consent and Safety Expectations

The CLS Program wants participants to have a successful and safe experience abroad and has developed this document to describe the potential health and safety risks posed by the COVID-19 virus, outline safety expectations and guidelines for participation in the program, and provide information regarding health measures, policies, and penalties related to efforts to curtail the pandemic that have been, or may be, issued by other governments and institutions. The intention of this document is to ensure that CLS Program participants understand the health risks as well as additional requirements and restrictions that may be imposed in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Traveling abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic involves potentially significant health risks: COVID-19 is a serious and potentially fatal illness that may result in personal injury, illness, temporary or permanent disability, or death. Health and safety monitoring, as well as requirements or guidance in the host country/location may differ from that issued by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Similarly, medical care abroad may differ in terms of standards and procedures commonly found in the United States. Although CLS Program staff will take all reasonable precautions, participants may be exposed to and contract COVID-19.

1. CLS Program staff are not medical professionals and cannot provide medical advice. Any questions or concerns about participation in the program related to COVID-19 should be directed to a medical provider. Participants should review travel advisories published by the U.S. government, especially:
  - a. U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html>)
  - b. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>) for advice regarding health recommendations and COVID-19 precautions for travel to CLS host countries.
2. Authorities in CLS Program host countries/locations have been working to contain COVID-19 by putting in place a number of procedures and requirements. Any country/location, including the United States, may change entry or exit requirements, quarantine and testing requirements, and other measures to reduce health risks at any time. To contain COVID-19, national, regional, and/or local authorities, airlines, host institutions, or entities responsible for managing housing, may implement COVID-19 testing requirements, quarantines, or other measures prior to departure, upon arrival, or at any other time. American Councils and the U.S. Department of State cannot reverse or influence these decisions. While CLS Program staff will work to provide updates on these requirements in advance, the program will not be able to guarantee that participants will not be subject to changes in policies and procedures and will not be able to remove participants from a quarantine location if they are required by local authorities to be there. Participants who violate local laws, may be arrested, imprisoned, and/or returned to the United States, and may be subject to other penalties. CLS Program staff may make a recommendation to the U.S. Department of State to terminate a CLS award for violating host country/location, regional or local laws, or policies implemented by the program or host institution. Participants are responsible for any legal action brought against them, and for any return travel and related accommodations.
3. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, and laws and institutional requirements continue to change as well. That means that local restrictions and public health rules may change at any time at the discretion

of federal, state, and/or local authorities in the United States or those of the host countries/locations. CLS Program staff will make reasonable efforts to keep participants informed, but circumstances may change quickly and unexpectedly.

4. Traveling abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic involves potentially significant health risks. Program housing arrangements may mean that participants are close to other participants as well as other residents over whom program staff have little influence or control. Although CLS Program staff will take all reasonable precautions that are within its power, participants may be exposed to and contract COVID-19.

Health and safety monitoring as well as requirements or guidance in the host country/location may differ from that issued by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Similarly, medical care abroad may differ in terms of standards and procedures commonly found in the United States. Should a participant become ill with COVID-19, common treatments found in the United States may be unavailable at program locations including medical oxygen, ventilators, and alternate treatments. Ill participants may not be able to return to the U.S. for treatment and the CLS Program may not be able to evacuate students with COVID-19 to a nearby country where other treatments are available. If participants are taken to a hospital for treatment, they may not be allowed to leave until health professionals determine that they may do so. It is possible that program staff may not be allowed to accompany, visit, or contact participants, though we will try to do so. It may not be possible to establish contact with friends or family members. Participants may be required to cover the cost of treatment out of pocket at the time of admittance and need to work with their primary insurance or the CLS-provided health benefits plan (ASPE) for possible reimbursement. If finalists have any questions or concerns about their participation in the program related to COVID-19, they should speak with their medical provider.

5. **Vaccinations:** While the CLS Program does not require vaccinations for participation, many host countries/locations and/or host institutions may have vaccination requirements that prevent participation by unvaccinated students. Any country/location, including the United States, may change entry or exit requirements, quarantine and testing requirements, and other measures to reduce health risks at any time. Exemptions from a vaccination or other requirements on medical or religious grounds in one jurisdiction may not be recognized or granted by host countries/locations or host institutions.

Local ordinances and/or private business, including host institutions, airlines, entities managing housing or travel, as well as cafes, restaurants, grocery stores, and cultural venues may have policies that restrict access for unvaccinated participants entirely or that impose additional requirements, such as wearing masks and social distancing, that may differ for vaccinated participants. Unvaccinated students may not be able to participate in certain CLS program sites, may not be able to participate in program activities, or may face additional travel restrictions or rules.

Vaccination requirements or other measures may change prior to departure, upon arrival or at any other time. Finalists must share their COVID-19 vaccination status as part of the CLS medical review process. This information is collected due to host country/location and/or host university vaccine and/or quarantine requirements. All participants must adhere to host country/location and host university COVID-19 mitigation policies and practices.

6. **Testing Requirements:** All participants may be required to undergo COVID-19 testing in order to meet travel or country/location entry requirements, or to meet requirements imposed by regional or local health authorities, the host institution, or entities providing travel or housing services. Program participants may be required to provide results to local/regional authorities, host institution staff or program staff, or other entities imposing testing requirements.

In order to maintain the safety of fellow students, staff, instructors, and members of the host community at large, unvaccinated participants, if able to travel to a host country/location and meet host institution placement requirements, may have to meet additional testing requirements. Unvaccinated participants may be responsible for additional costs associated with testing, for identifying a testing location on site, and for arranging their own travel to and from the testing site on a regular basis.

7. **Quarantine Requirements:** All participants may be subject to quarantine policies, which vary across CLS host countries/locations. Some CLS host countries/locations may require a strict quarantine regardless of vaccination status. Strict quarantine policies may involve a stay in government-designated housing for an extended period of time, and/or severe restrictions on leaving quarantine housing. Strict quarantine requirements implemented in some countries may mean not being permitted to step outside of a hotel or dorm room for any reason other than a critical medical emergency. Exiting quarantine for a medical emergency may restart the quarantine period. Quarantine housing may or may not have windows and have varying conditions. Meals are typically provided as part of the quarantine accommodations, and it is important to note that the facility may not be able to accommodate dietary restrictions or allergies, and that program staff may not be allowed to provide alternate meals. Penalties, including substantive fines, arrest, and/or deportation have been documented for even brief violations of quarantine requirements.

In order to maintain the safety of fellow students, staff, instructors, and members of the host community at large, unvaccinated participants, if able to travel to a host country/location and meet host institution placement requirements, may have to meet additional quarantine requirements either based on local regulations or CLS program requirements. Quarantines often last for a minimum of 10 days.

8. **Program Housing:** In 2024 students may live in host families, dormitories, hotels, or other rooming configurations. CLS prioritizes host families and host country roommates who have received the COVID 19 vaccination but cannot guarantee that all members of a host family or roommate will be vaccinated. Dormitories or hotel rooms are likely to be double occupancy, with roommates drawn from the host community or from the CLS participant group. Single rooms are not guaranteed, even if a participant's home institution has been able to provide them as an accommodation.

In the event of a necessary quarantine, participants may remain in their program housing or be housed in a separate location, such as a hotel room, depending on the housing configuration, risk to others, regulations of the local government, and policies of the host institution. Specific information about program housing at each program site will be shared later in the spring.

9. Participants should understand that the CLS Program may institute additional requirements and restrictions to contain COVID-19. The CLS Program may require additional periods of isolation or quarantine or implement additional prevention measures during the program, including during travel to and from the host country/location. Failure to comply with these measures may result in termination of their CLS award.
10. The CLS Program makes use of independent businesses such as commercial airlines, hotels, restaurants, transportation companies, and others. Participants must follow their requirements, which will likely include wearing a mask and maintaining safe distance, but may also involve having temperature taken or other measures. The CLS Program will provide limited resources for personal protective equipment such as masks and hand sanitizer. Participants agree to not hold the U.S. Department of State, American Councils, including the American Councils' Board of Trustees, the CLS Program, and the CLS Institutes and their employees, agents, and instrumentalities, and other institutions or individuals providing services for the CLS Program liable for the efficacy of such products, services, or the actions required by these organizations if participants contract COVID-19 or experience complications related to preventive measures.

11. Participants agree to cooperate fully in adhering to program rules and policies designed to minimize the risk of COVID-19, including voluntary and involuntary quarantines, testing, health screening, social distancing, wearing a mask, and other procedures required before, during, or after the program. Participants agree to inform CLS Program staff immediately if they test positive for COVID-19, exhibit any symptoms of an illness or if they have come into contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Participants agree to follow any travel restrictions during the program. When participants return to the United States, they should be prepared to comply with local laws and travel restrictions, including but not limited to testing and quarantine.
12. In keeping with the CLS Program Privacy Policy, program staff may have to share participant health information with the host institution, housing provider, government authorities, the U.S. Department of State, or other entities pursuant to applicable law or at the discretion of the program for public health reasons. Participants agree to release their health information related to communicable disease as decided by program staff. Overseas authorities and institutions may have different, less restrictive regulations regarding privacy of health information, including for contact tracing, and the CLS Program may not be able to prevent the release of participant personal information.
13. While we are planning for an in-person institute, the U.S. Department of State, American Councils, and CLS Program staff cannot guarantee that the program will take place as planned. It is possible that the institute will need to be cancelled, potentially at the last minute, or that the program may be curtailed in progress. Participants agree to comply with those directions, if given. CLS Program staff will support participant return travel but cannot provide alternate programming or financial support if the program ends early. Participants must comply with the planned return travel arrangements. If not, the CLS Program will not be able to support their continued presence in the host country/location. Participants will no longer be considered 'on program,' their health benefits and visa support will be invalidated, and they will be responsible for their return travel arrangements. Participants must comply with return travel arrangements to be considered in good standing and attain alumni status. Please ensure that you have considered where you might live in the United States if the in-person CLS program is cancelled and/or consider your ability to procure housing and the means to support yourself during the summer if the overseas program is cancelled on short notice.

In the event a program is cancelled outright prior to the start date, no stipend will be issued. If a stipend has already been issued students will be required to return it. If a program is transitioned to a virtual format the amount of the stipend may be different than the stipend provided for the in-person program. Stipends for virtual programs are not intended to cover the cost of housing and living expenses in the United States and additional CLS Program funds will not be issued to cover these expenses.

If the in-person institute is cancelled, we will make every effort to provide virtual instruction, but cannot guarantee that it will be provided, or that it can be provided within the timeframe of the original program.

14. Participants are taking all related risks and liability by participating in the CLS Program. Participants agree to not hold the U.S. Department of State, American Councils, including the American Councils' Board of Trustees, the CLS Program, the CLS Institutes and their employees, agents, and instrumentalities, and other institutions or individuals providing services for the CLS Program liable if they test positive for COVID-19, or suffer from it.

### **Agreement**



By checking this box, I acknowledge that I have read and agree to the COVID-19 Informed Consent and Safety Expectations set forth above and agree to take an active role in avoiding risk to promote health and safety before, during, and after the CLS Program.

Agreed

**Student signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Sexual Harassment Policy

The CLS Program expressly prohibits sexual harassment and sexual violence, which includes sexual abuse, sexual coercion, and stalking, in all of its programs and at all of its locations, including homestays and social settings where students gather as part of their participation in the program. This policy applies to the conduct of all students, staff, and third parties that work with CLS Program participants.

When CLS Program staff know of possible sexual harassment, including sexual violence, it will take appropriate steps to investigate or otherwise determine what occurred. If an investigation reveals that a violation of this policy occurred, CLS Program staff will take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the harassment, eliminate the hostile environment, prevent the harassment from recurring, and, as appropriate, remedy its effects.

## Definitions

**Sexual Harassment** is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, which includes unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates a hostile environment, including rape, sexual assault, and sexual exploitation. Conduct is considered “unwelcome” if the student did not request or invite it and considered the conduct to be undesirable or offensive. Participation in the conduct or the failure to complain does not always mean that the conduct was welcome. This policy prohibits sex-based harassment by peers, employees, or third parties that is sufficiently serious to deny or limit a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the CLS Program and activities (i.e., creates a hostile environment). Harassing conduct may take many forms, including verbal acts and name-calling, as well as non-verbal behavior, such as graphic and written statements (including the use of cell phones or the Internet) or conduct that is physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating. Unwelcome conduct does not have to include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents. The more severe the conduct, the less need there is to show a repetitive series of incidents to prove a hostile environment, particularly if the conduct is physical. Indeed, a single or isolated incident of sexual violence may create a hostile environment.

Examples of sexual harassment include but are not limited to: making sexual propositions or pressuring a program participant for sexual favors; touching of a sexual nature; writing graffiti of a sexual nature; displaying or distributing sexually explicit drawings, pictures, or written materials; performing sexual gestures or touching oneself sexually in front of others; telling jokes of a sexual nature; spreading sexual rumors or rating students, teachers, staff members, or other program affiliates as to sexual activity or performance; or circulating or showing e-mails or websites of a sexual nature.

**Sexual violence** is a form of sexual harassment and refers to physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person’s will or where a person is incapable of giving consent (e.g., due to the person’s age or incapacitation). A number of different acts fall into the category of sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sexual abuse, sexual coercion, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking.

**Consent** is a voluntary agreement to engage in sexual activity. Someone who is incapacitated cannot consent. Incapacitation can occur due to the use of drugs or alcohol, when a person is asleep or unconscious, or because of an intellectual or other disability that prevents the person from having the capacity to give consent. Past consent does not imply future consent, and silence or an absence of resistance does not imply consent. Consent to engage in sexual activity with one person does not imply consent to engage in sexual activity with another. Consent can be withdrawn at any time, and coercion, force, or threat invalidates consent.

**Gender-based harassment** is another form of sex-based harassment and refers to unwelcome conduct based on an individual's actual or perceived sex, including harassment based on gender identity or nonconformity with sex stereotypes. This policy protects all individuals from sex-based harassment, regardless of the actual or perceived sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity of the alleged perpetrator or complainant. Sexual harassment, including sexual misconduct, may occur between persons of any gender.

## Reporting

Program participants who are victims of sexual assault or harassment, or who witness or learn of assault or harassment, are urged to inform CLS Program staff. In addition to their resident director, local program staff, or program officer in Washington, D.C., who can be reached 24-hours per day, participants are encouraged to contact the following staff, who have been designated as Coordinators under this policy, at any time, to report harassment or assault:

Jeanette Owen, Senior Director, Critical Language Scholarship Program, American Councils for International Education: [jowen@americancouncils.org](mailto:jowen@americancouncils.org)

1828 L St. NW

Suite 1200

Washington, D.C. 20036

+1-202-833-7522

Becca AbuRakia-Einhorn, Director, Critical Language Scholarship Program, American Councils for International Education: [becca.ae@americancouncils.org](mailto:becca.ae@americancouncils.org)

1828 L St. NW

Suite 1200

Washington, D.C. 20036

+1-202-833-7522

All CLS Program staff have a responsibility to report suspected or confirmed incidents of sexual assault or harassment to their supervisor.

The Coordinators have responsibility for compliance with this policy.

If participants report to CLS Program staff that a sexual assault or harassment has occurred on the CLS program, or if CLS Program staff otherwise learns of sexual assault or harassment, staff will provide appropriate support and assistance, including access to professional medical care and online or on-site counseling, depending upon availability, as requested by the participant. CLS Program Staff will report the incident to the U.S. Department of State.

Participants may also access the following resources, which are independent of the CLS Program:

- Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN): This is the largest anti-sexual violence organization in the United States. RAINN created and operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline (+1-800-656-HOPE) in partnership with providers across the United States. (<https://www.rainn.org/>)
- Pathways to Safety (formerly Sexual Assault Support and Help for Americans Abroad): Pathways to Safety provides resources regarding sexual assault prevention & response. (<https://pathwaystosafety.org/>)
- Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in the United States. The number may not be accessible when calling from outside of

the United States but may be accessible when using a Wi-Fi connection or a remote calling service such as Skype. The crisis line is 988 from within the United States.

Contact information for these organizations is also provided to all participants in CLS Program materials and during orientations. These confidential resources will not report information to the CLS Program or U.S. Department of State. More information about confidentiality is provided below.

The CLS Program will provide students with information during orientations about how to seek medical treatment. In the event of a sexual assault, it may be important to obtain immediate medical treatment and to preserve evidence in order to press charges against the assailant.

Participants who seek to report incidents of harassment or assault to local police should consider local laws, investigatory procedures, and courtroom rules governing such cases, as these may differ significantly from those of the United States and in some cases may compound the victim's trauma. **The CLS Program recommends contacting the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in the host country/location to learn about possible resources to help participants understand local laws and procedures before making a decision to report incidents of harassment or assault to local police.**

### **ASPE Assist**

As part of the limited medical health benefits, all CLS participants are given access to a virtual mental health resource during their time in the CLS host country called ASPE Assist. ASPE Assist is a mental health consultation and referral service that operates remotely. It is available 24 hours a day, seven (7) days per week, by a company called The ANVIL Group, in partnership with Seven Corners. ASPE Assist can provide consultation and referral services related to mental health, sexual assault response, violent crime response, and can provide advice to CLS participants when they feel at risk or vulnerable in both urgent and non-urgent situations. Finalists will receive more information about ASPE Assist prior to the start of the CLS Program.

Access to ASPE Assist begins upon departure from the United States and ends upon departure from the host country on group return flight to the United States. If a participant declines the return flight provided by the program, ASPE Assist benefits cease on the last day of the program. If a participant withdraws from the program early or the award is terminated, ASPE Assist benefits cease. ASPE Assist benefits are not provided during domestic travel within the U.S. In the event that an illness or event experienced while on the CLS Program overseas requires a return to the United States, continued treatment in the United States may not be provided by ASPE Assist.

### **Non-Retaliation**

The CLS Program prohibits retaliation against program participants and other members of the CLS community for filing a complaint of discrimination or harassment, for assisting in the filing of a complaint or advocating for another person's rights under this policy, or for participating in an investigation, hearing, proceeding, or the resolution of a complaint. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, threats, intimidation, coercion, and adverse actions in relation to evaluation or program participation. The CLS Program will investigate allegations of retaliation and will take strong responsive action if retaliation occurs; in the case of retaliation engaged in by participants, such behavior will result in discipline up to and including immediate dismissal from the CLS Program.

### **Investigating Complaints**

Upon receiving a report of sexual assault or harassment, the CLS Program will take appropriate, interim measures as needed to ensure the safety and freedom from retaliation of all parties. Examples of interim

measures include separation of the parties, no-contact directives, and alternative arrangements for housing, classroom locations, class schedules, and other program components. Such arrangements will be made to the fullest degree possible while recognizing the reasonable limits imposed by each program's financial resources, faculty and staff availability, educational options, housing availability, and visa requirements.

To initiate the formal investigation of an incident, participants should submit a written complaint, including a detailed description of the conduct, any supporting documentation, and the names of any witnesses or others with relevant information to one of the Coordinators identified above.

The CLS Program may also begin an investigation on its own initiative depending on the severity of the incident and the need to mitigate a significant risk to an individual or the community. While pursuing resolution through CLS Program internal processes, complainants may also file a criminal report with the local police department or other appropriate law enforcement agency (see above recommendation for contacting the U.S. Embassy in the host country/location to learn about possible resources to help participants understand local laws and procedures). The CLS Program will not delay its investigation if criminal charges are filed. However, the investigation may be delayed at the request of criminal investigators while they gather evidence.

## **Investigation and Resolution**

The CLS Program encourages, but does not require, informal resolution when possible. A student who brings forth a complaint is under no obligation to engage in informal resolution and will not be pressured to do so under any circumstances. Possible conclusions for the informal resolution process include but are not limited to the creation of a no-contact environment between the two parties, the referral of one or both parties to counseling, targeted training for one or both parties, or other remedies.

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate given the nature of the complaint, a formal complaint may be filed in writing to one of the Coordinators listed above who will conduct an investigation or designate an investigator who will conduct a thorough, impartial investigation. More than one investigator may be assigned. Depending on the nature of the allegations, the formal investigation may include interviews with the complainant, the respondent, and any witnesses; review of written documentation and policies; and any other reasonable steps necessary to investigate the allegation to the fullest degree possible. During the investigation, the complainant and respondent will have an equal opportunity to identify witnesses and provide evidence. The investigator will not consider evidence about the complainant's prior sexual conduct with anyone other than the alleged perpetrator. In addition, evidence of a prior consensual dating or sexual relationship between the parties by itself does not imply consent or preclude a finding of sexual misconduct.

Once the investigator has completed the fact-finding, the CLS Director will consult with the Review Committee for Higher Education Programs ("review committee") and determine a) whether there was a violation of this policy; and b) the appropriate response.

The review committee will use a preponderance of the evidence standard when evaluating the facts and making a determination regarding violations of this policy. A violation of this policy may be found based on a majority vote of the review committee.

The CLS Program will seek to complete its formal investigation within 60 calendar days of receiving a written complaint and the review committee will seek to complete its determination within 14 calendar

days of receiving the results of the fact-finding. However, all timeframes stated in this policy may be extended solely at the discretion of the CLS Program.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the committee will notify the concerned parties simultaneously in writing of the outcome of the investigation and the option to appeal, as described below.

The CLS Program will take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the harassment, eliminate the hostile environment, prevent the harassment from recurring, and, as appropriate, remedy its effects.

## **Appeals**

Appeals may be filed in writing to the President of American Councils for International Education at:

1828 L St. NW  
Suite 1200  
Washington, DC 20036  
+1-202-833-7522

Either party may file an appeal within 14 calendar days of notification of the review committee's decision. Appeals may be filed only when there was a material failure to follow procedures or when significant evidence was not considered that would have altered the outcome of the investigation. The other party will be given an opportunity to respond to the appeal within 7 calendar days. The President will make the final decision regarding the appeal and may decide to: 1) support the full results of the investigation and resolution; 2) support the results of the investigation but recommend different corrective action; 3) reach a different result and/or corrective action; or 4) require additional fact-finding.

## **Confidentiality and Obligation to Respond**

The CLS Program encourages students to talk to someone about what happened so they can get the support they need and so CLS can respond appropriately. The CLS Program recognizes that reporting sexual assault or harassment is often a painful, deeply personal matter. However, CLS staff are not confidential resources. All CLS staff must report incidents of sexual assault or harassment to the U.S. Department of State. CLS Program staff will preserve a student's confidentiality to the fullest degree possible consistent with the need to respond appropriately to allegations of sexual assault or harassment. When a student reports an incident of sexual harassment or sexual violence to a CLS staff member, the CLS Program will take appropriate steps to investigate what happened and to resolve the matter promptly and equitably. Unless required by law, the CLS Program will not report an incident to law enforcement without a student's consent.

## **Records**

Records of all complaints will be maintained by the Director for the CLS Program pursuant to the applicable record retention policy. Disciplinary actions will become part of a participant's record and a copy of the final written notification of disciplinary action and the reasons therefore will be provided to the U.S. Department of State.

## **Prevention and Education**

The CLS Program informs students of this policy and available resources through its orientation program, which is conducted at the beginning of the program. CLS Program staff working with participants are trained on this policy. Those who respond to, investigate, and adjudicate complaints under this policy also

receive training. The CLS Program further requires CLS Institutes to train their staff and contractors working with participants overseas.

## Agreement

By checking this box, I acknowledge that I have read and agree to the Sexual Harassment Policy set forth above.

Agreed

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Internet and Media Guidelines

Agreement to these guidelines is required for participation in the CLS Program.

With the myriad of Internet and other social media platforms available (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, and Snapchat), CLS participants have many opportunities to share their experiences with friends, family and the Internet community. This brings positive attention to the CLS Program and highlights the program’s impact, not only on the CLS participant, but on the host community as well.

To share their CLS experiences safely on the Internet or through other social media platforms, participants are required to comply with the following and acknowledge receipt of this policy:

- **Be clear that participants are speaking for themselves.** Participants must not present their profile and content as representing the U.S. Department of State or as in any way associated with the U.S. Department of State. Participants should make clear that the views and information presented are their own and do not represent the CLS Program, the U.S. Department of State, American Councils for International Education, or the CLS hosting institution.
- **Be mindful that participants’ conduct reflects on the CLS Program.** While participants in all U.S. State Department-sponsored academic exchange programs have full academic and artistic freedom to write, publish, and create, they are also expected to maintain a standard of conduct that is in keeping with the spirit and intent of the CLS Program – to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.
- **Participants are personally responsible for their content.** When participating in social media, we urge participants to do so responsibly, exercising sound judgment and common sense. What is deemed culturally acceptable in the United States (or, more specifically, on the Internet in the United States) may not be received well overseas. The use of disparaging language or images to describe the country/location or the people participants live and work with can undermine the goals of the program and, in some cases, violate local laws. Participants should be aware that because they are legally responsible for their postings, they may be subject to liability by third parties if their posts are found defamatory, harassing, or in violation of any other applicable local laws. Participants may also be liable if they make postings which include confidential or copyrighted information (e.g., music, videos, or text) belonging to third parties.
- **Participants must adhere to the CLS Program Terms and Conditions Policy.** The use or posting of inappropriate, offensive, or culturally insensitive online comments, photographs, videos, or other content is strictly prohibited in the CLS Program and is subject to disciplinary action (See [Sections 33](#) and [34](#)).
- **Participants must follow guidelines for sharing media with CLS Program staff.** Participants should be careful sharing or posting any information that could infringe upon the proprietary, privacy, or personal rights of others, such as taking photographs or videos of others without their permission. If submitting a photograph and/or video to staff of the CLS Program, participants must confirm that they have a) secured permission from any individuals pictured and b) informed the individuals pictured that they plan to share the image and/or video footage with CLS Program staff, who may use the image and/or footage publicly.

Participants should contact American Councils for International Education if they have any questions.

By checking this box, I acknowledge that I have read and agree to the Internet and Media Guidelines Agreement set forth above.

Agreed



# Privacy Policy

This Privacy Policy applies to personally-identifiable information, also known as personal data, collected from applicants, alternates, finalists, and participants in the CLS Program and used for the administration of the CLS Program. In this policy, CLS Program institutes in each country/location are referred to as “our programs.” This Privacy Policy does not apply to programs and services unrelated to the CLS Program.

## Information We Collect

We only collect information about participants if we have a reason to do so to facilitate the administration of the CLS Program.

Alternates, finalists, and participants of the CLS Program are required to share some personal data with us, including: contact information; education history; personal information and history; demographic information; medical health information; and other information they choose to disclose to program staff or that is necessary for participant placement or disability accommodations.

We also ask for personal data about finalists’ parents, legal guardians, and emergency contacts. This may include their names, addresses, email addresses, telephone numbers, and other information.

## How and Why We Use Personal Information

It is our practice not to collect personal data unless we need it or intend to use it for the purposes of administering the CLS Program. We use the information we collect to manage our programs and related alumni activities, as well as to fulfill our legal responsibilities to provide monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on behalf of our program funders.

We use personal data as mentioned above and for the purposes listed below:

- To communicate with participants;
- To facilitate the administration of our programs—for example, to make selection decisions, to facilitate placement of students in individual program sites or with host family and roommate accommodations, to respond to request for accommodations, and to assist participants with obtaining visas for travel, when necessary;
- To provide support to participants before and during our programs; and
- To facilitate CLS Program alumni connections and events.

## Legal Bases for Collecting and Using Information

Our use of participant personal data is made on the following legal bases:

- The use is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation;
- The use is necessary to protect participants’ vital interests or those of another person;
- We have a legitimate interest in using the participant information, as described below; or
- Participants have given us their consent.

We rely on several legitimate interests in our use and sharing of participant personal data, including:

- Providing and improving our programs;
- Administration of our operations;
- Determining appropriate academic placement, and reporting relating to completion and academic performance of the respective CLS Program and language evaluation;

- Promoting the success of our current and former students;
- Maintaining ongoing relationships with alumni, and helping them to connect with one another;
- Providing opportunities for participation in events;
- Conducting research;
- Understanding how our services are used;
- Ensuring the safety and security of our students, employees and others;
- Meeting reporting requirements set by the federal government;
- Maintaining records;
- Recommending appropriate programs for potential participants;
- Evaluating and selecting participants for our programs;
- Making program, host country/location and host family placements and accommodations, when applicable;
- Facilitating student travel and program arrangements;
- Meeting our obligations and enforcing our legal rights.

## How We Share Information

The CLS Program may share student personal data with various American Councils' offices, affiliated organizations, and third-party business partners. Our third-party business partners may include program funders, service providers, foreign partner host universities or language centers, host families, and others located in the United States of America and throughout the world that work with us to deliver our programs and other services. All third-party business partners that we share participant personal data with are required to comply with applicable regulations and privacy requirements. We also seek to ensure that our various American Councils offices, affiliated organizations, and third-party business partners will safeguard and protect the student data we provide. We do not sell or otherwise transmit student personal data to third parties for any purpose other than CLS Program administration.

We share information about students in limited circumstances, using appropriate safeguards for their privacy and taking reasonable steps to minimize the amount or nature of information shared:

- **Funders:** The CLS Program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, with funding provided by the U.S. Government and supported in its administration by American Councils for International Education under a cooperative agreement. Personal data collected by American Councils may be provided to the funders of the CLS Program at their request to facilitate their legitimate interest in the administration of the CLS Program.
- **Partners, Employees, and Independent Contractors:** We may disclose information about participants to our partners, our employees, and individuals who are our independent contractors who need to know the information in order to help us facilitate our programs or to process the information on our behalf.
- **Third-Party Vendors:** We may share information about participants with third-party vendors who need to know certain information about participants in order to provide their services to American Councils, or to provide their services to participants on our behalf.
- **Legal Requests:** We may disclose information about participants in response to a subpoena, court order, or other governmental request. We will strive to limit the scope of information furnished under these circumstances to only that which is necessary to satisfy the specific request and our legal obligations to provide such information.
- **To Protect Rights, Property, and Others:** We may disclose information about participants when we believe, in good faith, that disclosure is reasonably necessary to protect the property or rights of American Councils, third parties, or the public at large.

- **With Participant Consent:** We may share and disclose information with participant consent or at participants' direction. For example, we may share participant information with third parties with which participants authorize us to do so.
- **Aggregated or De-Identified Information:** We may share information that has been aggregated or reasonably de-identified, so that the information could not reasonably be used to identify a participant.

## Medical and Housing Information

In order to facilitate our programs, the CLS Program may share any information from a student's medical forms, disability accommodation forms, and the medical review process that is necessary to facilitate placement, to arrange housing and medical accommodations, or to comply with local laws, regulations, and institutional policies.

In order to facilitate the students' placement in program housing, the CLS Program shares limited personal data and medical information with prospective hosts, including students' ages, genders, allergies, dietary restrictions, medical conditions that require specific accommodations as determined by the medical review process and CLS Program staff, and other personal information, such as religious affiliation, that students choose to provide that would affect placement.

## Testing and Program Evaluation Data

All CLS Program finalists and participants are required to take an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) language evaluation, administered by Language Testing International, before the CLS Program begins and again upon completion of the institute. In addition, all CLS participants are required to complete mid-program and post-program evaluations. Individual CLS Program sites may also require pre- and post-program language tests.

On occasion, the CLS Program may receive and review requests from academic researchers in second language acquisition for access to CLS Program test score data and measures for program evaluation. Research scholars in second language acquisition and related fields may find the CLS data a valuable resource for purposes of improving our understanding of how languages are learned and the impact of immersion language programs on the acquisition of language and cultural knowledge, leading to improvements in the teaching and learning of foreign languages.

In such cases, following a review of the research project and protocols for protecting data, the U.S. Department of State and American Councils may provide test score and program evaluation data to scholars with all personally identifying information about individual participants removed. Generic data such as language level, age, gender, and years of language experience may be shared, if relevant to the project, but only after all names and other identifying information has been removed.

## Educational Records

The CLS Program will share participant student record information, including academic progress, general health and well-being, program activities, language assessments, disciplinary actions, and other components of the participant's application or information in the participant's CLS Program file with third parties, including CLS Institutes staff, host families, and other third parties and vendors working with American Councils and the CLS Program, to facilitate placement, to arrange housing and medical accommodations, to comply with local laws, regulations and institutional policies, to otherwise administer the CLS Program, and in the case of emergency. The CLS Program will further share this information with Bryn Mawr College.

## **How Long We Keep Information**

We keep the personal data that participants share with us for as long as it is necessary for us to provide participants with our program services, for as long as it is necessary for us to administer alumni and other outreach activities, and for as long as it is required for us to meet our oversight and reporting requirements and responsibilities. American Councils retains identifying student information for a period consistent with applicable data retention policies. American Councils also retains a participant’s medical records, accommodation forms, and academic performance within the CLS Program for a period consistent with applicable document retention policies. Personal data may be retained for a longer period of time if necessary to establish and assert any claims or defend against them.

## **How Data is Maintained and Transmitted**

American Councils uses a secure system for collecting, storing, and handling personal data. Such system is used when working with its partner universities, host families, the U.S. Department of State, and other third parties. American Councils transmits personal data by methods that maintain the security of such data. American Councils restricts access to, receipt of, and use of participant personal data to those in need of access to such data to complete specific CLS Program tasks.

## **Contact Us**

Participants with any questions or concerns about this policy, our privacy and data security practices, or if they feel that we are not abiding by this Privacy Policy, should contact us immediately, as follows:

Becca AbuRakia-Einhorn, Director, CLS Program  
American Councils for International Education

1828 L St NW Ste 1200  
Washington DC 20036-5136

[cls@americancouncils.org](mailto:cls@americancouncils.org)

+1-202-833-7522