If you have questions about the online application system or accessibility, please write to cls@americancouncils.org.

2025 CLS Spark Virtual Institutes

Application Form

Section 0: Pre-Application Form

Privacy Notice and Consent

Before you begin your application, we would like to inform you about the data we will collect from you and how we will use and store it. Most data that we collect is necessary to perform under the CLS Terms and Conditions agreement we may conclude with you at a later stage in the application process. Some data will be required to perform certain legal obligations that American Councils is subject to, and for other data, we will ask for your explicit consent. Please note that, if you choose not to give us your consent, you will not be able to start an application.

Questions?

If you have any questions about this Privacy Notice and Consent form, please contact the program staff at: cls@americancouncils.org.

Privacy Notice

1) Applicant name

First Name:

Middle Name:

Last Name:

2) Country of Participation:

3) Country of Current Residence:

4) Date of Birth:

You should read this document carefully, and then indicate your consent decision at the bottom of this page. Contact us at the email address above if you have any questions.

American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS, Inc., (American Councils, we, us, or our) based at 1828 L Street NW, Suite 1200, Washington, D.C. 20036-5136, United States of America, would like to inform you about the **Critical Language Scholarship (CLS)** program and the **Critical Language Scholarship Spark (CLS Spark)**. To participate in the CLS Programs, American Councils requires certain data about you. Your written consent is required to continue with your application.

What Regulation Governs Our Processing of Your Data?

See our About Your Data page.

What is the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program?

The CLS Program provides opportunities for American college and university students to study languages and cultures essential to America's engagement with the world. Each summer, American undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at U.S. colleges and universities across the country, spend eight to ten weeks learning one of a dozen languages at an intensive study abroad institute. CLS is designed to promote rapid

language gains and essential intercultural fluency in regions that are critical to U.S. national security and economic prosperity.

CLS Spark, an initiative of CLS, provides opportunities for American undergraduate college and university students to study Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Russian virtually at the beginning level. Designed to leverage best practices in online language learning, CLS Spark provides students with the opportunity to study critical languages virtually when they may not have access to studying these languages on their campuses.

American Councils manages the CLS Programs on behalf of the [Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State](). For additional information about the CLS Programs, please visit: https://clscholarship.org.

What Data Will Be Collected and for What Purposes, and with Whom Will We Share It?

For this program, your personal data will be collected, used, shared, and stored. Different data is collected for different processes. For more information on the processes for which we collect data, please see Table 1 in the Appendix.

How Long Will American Councils Retain My Data?

Your personal data will be retained by American Councils as referenced in our Data Retention Policy. Unidentifiable statistical data regarding you may be retained indefinitely. For more information on the data retention policy, please see Table 2 in the Appendix.

What Risks May I Have If My Data Is Sent Outside the EEA or My Country?

See our [About Your Data]() page.

What Are My Options?

You have the following options in relation to personal data:

1. The option to access the personal data we hold about you.
2. The option to withdraw your consent. If you withdraw your consent, your personal data will be deleted or anonymized after you have withdrawn your consent, except for the personal data we are obliged to store in compliance with legal obligations.
3. The option to have your personal data corrected if any of your personal data held by us is inaccurate or incomplete. Please contact us using the contact details found at the end of this Privacy Notice and Consent form.
4. Under certain conditions, the option to be forgotten, which is the option to ask us to delete or otherwise dispose of any of your personal data that we have.
5. The option to restrict, or prevent, the processing of your personal data.
6. The option to data portability. This means that you can ask us for a copy of that personal data to re-use with another service or business in applicable cases.
7. The option to object to us using your personal data for a particular purpose or purposes.
8. The option to be informed about our collection and use of your personal data.

9. The option to lodge a complaint with the relevant Data Protection Authority.

All data subject access requests should be made in writing and sent to privacy@americancouncils.org. Please note that we may ask you to verify your identity before responding to such requests. We will respond to your request within 30 days of receiving such request.

Making a Request or Asking a Question

See our About Your Data page.

Contacting the Relevant Data Protection Authority

See our About Your Data page.

Consent for the Collection, Use, and Storage of Personal Data

Please indicate your consent choice for data processing activities related to special categories of your personal data that reveal racial or ethnic origin, reveal religious or philosophical beliefs, or concern health.

☐ Yes, I consent

☐ No I do not consent

Do you really want to answer *No, I do not consent?* **to the above question?** Please understand that **by answering no**, [1] American Councils will not be permitted to collect, use, or store your personal data; [2] your application form will be erased; and [3] you will not be able to participate in the CLS Program, including the CLS Spark virtual initiative.

Date of Consent:

Applicant's Signature:

Please indicate your consent for the transfer of personal data outside your country or the European Economic Area (the EEA consists of all EU Member States, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway).

- I consent that my personal data be transferred to the United States of America (USA) and, on a limited basis, to other countries outside of my country or the EEA.
- I understand that the standard protections afforded to those in my country or the EEA may not fully apply to my data that I voluntarily consent to be transferred to the USA or other countries outside of my country or the EEA.

☐ Yes, I consent

☐ No, I do not consent

Do you really want to answer *No, I do not consent?* **to the above question?** Please understand that **by answering no**, [1] American Councils will not be permitted to collect, use, or store your personal data; [2]

your application form will be erased; and [3] you will not be able to participate in the CLS Program, including the CLS Spark virtual initiative.

Date of Consent:

Applicant's Signature:

Opt-in to Email Communications from American Councils

May we contact you by email to alert you to programs, grants, or other opportunities and information available for CLS participants and alumni?
Choose one

☐ Yes
☐ No

NOTE: You may give or withdraw your consent to receive application support or marketing emails from us at any time. You can do this by writing to us by email at: cls@americancouncils.org.

Campus Advisors Acknowledgement and Consent

The CLS Program collaborates with faculty and administrators at colleges and universities across the United States who support students in the application process. Advisors are faculty and staff at these institutions who have volunteered to assist students applying for the CLS Program. As part of the application process, we share your name, email address, degree program, and language of interest with your school's designated advisor(s) whenever possible. Advisors may use this information to promote the CLS Program, support student success, and may also reach out to offer assistance or encourage you to submit an application.

We strongly encourage you to connect with the CLS advisor(s) on your campus during the application process. You can find a list of CLS advisors across the country on the CLS Program website (https://clscholarship.org/universities). If your campus does not have a CLS advisor, or if you need additional support, consider reaching out to your school's study abroad department, fellowships advising office, honors program, career advising office, or your academic advisor. Additionally, your school's writing center may be a valuable resource for refining your application. With a bit of research, you can make your application the best it can be!

Program Choice

I have reviewed the CLS website and identified an advisor and/or other resources on my campus who can assist me in understanding the CLS Program and preparing an effective application.
☐ Yes, I have reviewed the CLS website to identify an advisor on my campus.
☐ Yes, I have reviewed the website but there is not an advisor on my campus.
☐ No, I have not reviewed the website to look for an advisor on my campus.

If selected, I acknowledge that CLS will share the names of finalists and alternates with CLS Advisors through direct email and press releases to promote the program and student success.
☐ Yes

Please select the type(s) of information you would like to receive from the CLS Program during the application process:

☐ Reminders as the deadline approaches
☐ Worksheets to help with drafting essays
☐ A schedule of webinars and drop-in office hours
☐ Tips and best practices for completing the application
☐ I do not wish to receive any additional information

Please indicate the college or university where you are currently enrolled in a degree program (i.e., if you are studying abroad this semester, you should list your home institution).

Please note that we share the names of finalists and alternates with CLS advisors through direct email and press releases to promote the program and student success.

College or University Name:

Section 1: Program Overview and Requirements

Below is basic information on each of the programs, including eligibility criteria and requirements for participation. Please click on the program to which you are applying to expand the section. Afterward, you will be asked to certify that you have read the information.

CLS Spark

CLS Spark, a virtual initiative of CLS, 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.

CLS Spark provides opportunities for American undergraduate college and university students to study Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Russian virtually at the beginning level, as well as Japanese virtually at the advanced beginning level. Designed to leverage best practices in online language learning, CLS Spark provides American undergraduate students the opportunity to study critical languages virtually when they may not have access to language learning on their campuses or the ability to study abroad.

The CLS Program reserves the right to change or cancel any or all program institutes based on safety, health, and security considerations, and other factors.

Who is Eligible for the CLS Program?

To be eligible for CLS Spark applicants must:

- Be a U.S. citizen or national at the time of their application.
    - Others, including Permanent Residents, are not eligible, even if they anticipate naturalization by the beginning of the program.
- Be at least 18 years old by May 15, 2025.
- Be enrolled in an accredited U.S. degree-granting program at the undergraduate (associate, bachelor's) level at the time of their application. Students who are graduating seniors at the time of application are eligible to apply.
    - Applicants must be enrolled in a program that results in a degree. Applicants in a dual- or joint-degree program in which they earn a bachelor's and master's degree will be considered an undergraduate if the bachelor's degree has not yet been conferred at the time of application, even if the student has already taken one or more graduate-level courses. If the bachelor's degree has already been conferred, the applicant will be considered a master's student. Only undergraduate students are eligible to apply for CLS Spark.
    - Applicants who are taking stand-alone or continuing education classes or who are pursuing a certificate are not eligible.
    - Applicants must be enrolled at an accredited U.S. institution. Students earning degrees at foreign institutions that are not based in the U.S. or its territories are not eligible, even if those institutions are accredited by a recognized U.S. accrediting agency. For students enrolled in dual-degree programs in which they take some courses at a U.S. institution and some courses at an international institution, students who can produce a transcript from the U.S. institution will be considered eligible.

- o Applicants must be enrolled in at least one credit-bearing class at or through their home institution in the fall term of 2024. There are limited exceptions to the enrollment requirement; please read the following information carefully:
    - ▪ If applicants are enrolled in a degree-granting program but taking a leave of absence to participate in an organized term- or year-long study abroad program; national scholarship program; or to participate in a substantive internship program, they may request an exception to the enrollment requirement. Exceptions may only be granted in these three cases, and decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis beginning in late January.
        - • **If applicants are not taking classes at or through their home institution in the fall term, they must submit a CLS Enrollment Confirmation form completed by their home registrar in the U.S. Applicants must also submit a signed letter from the study abroad or internship program provider explaining the opportunity and confirming their participation. American Councils will provide the CLS Enrollment Confirmation form and further instructions to applicants selected as semi-finalists on how to submit documentation. If selected as a finalist, American Councils may ask the finalist to submit updated documentation from the program provider confirming their successful completion of the program.**
    - o Applicants must successfully complete academic requirements for the fall term in order to remain eligible for the CLS Program. Applicants who withdraw or fail to maintain a passing grade average are not eligible to participate in the program.
- • Applicants must complete at least one full year of study (two semesters or three quarters) by the beginning of the CLS Program in Summer 2025.
- • Have no more than one semester of formal classroom training in the language they want to study at the beginner level (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian, or Arabic) OR, if applying for Japanese at the advanced beginner level, have no more than one year of formal classroom experience.
- • Applicants may only apply once, for one language and for one of CLS' models (i.e., Overseas or Spark), each year. Applicants who submit multiple applications will be considered ineligible.

Who is Ineligible for CLS Spark?

The following persons are ineligible for the CLS Spark:

- • Individuals who previously participated in the CLS Program or CLS Spark. This provision does not apply to CLS Spark applicants for Advanced Beginner Japanese.
    - o Alumni of CLS Spark who studied Japanese at the beginning level are eligible to apply for CLS Spark at the advanced beginning level.
- • Students at the graduate level (master's, doctoral or professional degree programs).

For a period ending one year following the termination of such employment, association or service:

- • **Employees of the U.S. Department of State/U.S. Agency for International Development.** This provision includes all employees, paid or unpaid (including part-time or temporary

employees, consultants, externs, fellows and personal services contractors). This provision does not apply to interns.

- **Immediate family members (e.g., spouses or dependent children) of employees of the U.S. Department of State/U.S. Agency for International Development are ineligible.** This provision includes immediate family members of all employees, paid or unpaid (including part-time or temporary employees, consultants, externs, fellows and personal services contractors). This provision does not apply to immediate family members of interns.
  - o Non-dependent children are eligible to participate, provided that their parents do not work directly on the Critical Language Scholarship Program.
- **Employees (and their immediate family members) of private and public agencies under contract or grant with the U.S. Department of State to perform services on behalf of the Critical Language Scholarship Program programs are ineligible.** This includes employees who do not work directly on the program. This provision does not apply to immediate family members of interns.

Participation Requirements

With reasonable accommodations, participants in CLS Spark must:

- Have reliable Internet access to some type of electronic device to participate in live classes weekly including the ability to be on camera and use a microphone;
- Complete pre-program orientation virtual sessions (both recorded and live);
- Complete pre-program assessments and surveys, where applicable;
- Attend all classes and activities and complete homework assignments, as dictated by the program schedule and for the duration of the program (program dates will be announced prior to the deadline for accepting the award, if offered);
- Complete mid- and post-program surveys; and
- Complete post-program proficiency testing.

Additional Requirements

If you are selected for a CLS Spark award, as a requirement of your participation, you must agree to the terms and conditions of the award. You may review a sample of the terms and conditions from a previous year. The award terms and conditions are revised on an annual basis and may change before the start of the program.

Terms and Conditions of Award

You may review a sample of the terms and conditions from a previous year.

Program Benefits

Participants in CLS Spark will receive:

- Language instruction and cultural programming;
- Textbooks and language learning materials;
- Language gains certified using the widely recognized ACTFL OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview) assessment;

- Non-competitive eligibility for U.S. government employment for up to three years after program completion;
- Academic credit issued through Bryn Mawr College; and
- A stipend towards supplemental equipment and connectivity costs (for example, a web camera or microphone).

The following expenses will *not* be covered:

- The cost of necessary equipment (for example, a new laptop);
- The cost of phone or internet connectivity plans;
- Living expenses; or
- Physical and mental health expenses.

Selection Criteria and Process

Applicants for CLS Spark will be selected on the basis of merit, with consideration for the following:

- Impact of participation
- Motivation for language learning
- Readiness and resolve
- Unique background and experience

Preference will be given to veterans of the U.S. armed forces, and to applicants from campuses that do not offer their Spark language.

All other factors being equal, applicants are selected from a wide range of U.S. States, D.C., and territories; colleges and universities; backgrounds; and fields of study.

All applicants will be contacted in **late January** by email with a notification of whether their application passed the initial review process.

Finalists, alternates, and non-recipients will be notified of their statuses by email in **early March**.

Those selected for the award will have approximately two weeks to accept or decline. Alternates are promoted on a rolling basis throughout the spring.

Finalists and alternates will receive further information on program requirements at this time.

Read the full selection criteria at https://clscholarship.org/applicants/selection.

If you have questions about the online application system or accessibility, please write to cls@americancouncils.org.

Section 2: Application Instructions

How to Apply

- Check the eligibility requirements at www.clscholarship.org/applicants/eligibility.

- Review the detailed instructions for the application.

- Applications are due November 19, 2024 at 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

Do not wait until the due date to submit your application. Submitting your application before the due date allows time to resolve any technical difficulties or last minute questions.

The CLS Program strongly encourages you to submit your application well in advance of the application deadline. The CLS Program and American Councils for International Education bear no responsibility for problems in submitting the application.

Accessibility

Only if you are unable to submit any portion of your application materials online, you may submit them by mail. Those documents must be received at American Councils for International Education by November 19, 2023.

If you must submit a paper application, materials should be sent by certified post to American Councils at the following address:

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

Questions?

For information about the CLS Program, please visit www.clscholarship.org

Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions page (https://clscholarship.org/faqs) for more information on common questions that arise during the application process.

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

Toll-free number: 1–877–257–9922

Email: cls@americancouncils.org

Section 3: Eligibility

Please refer to the Eligibility Requirements listed in Program Overview and Requirements.

1) I am a U.S. citizen or national (including naturalized U.S. citizen).

Naturalized citizens are eligible for the CLS Program, but must be naturalized by the date of the application deadline, November 19, 2024. For more information about naturalization, please visit the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website (https://www.uscis.gov/).

☐ Yes

☐ No

2) I will be at least 18 years old by May 15, 2025.

☐ Yes

☐ No

3) I am currently enrolled in a degree-granting program. Students who are taking stand-alone or continuing education classes or who are pursuing a certificate are not eligible.

Note that applicants for CLS Spark must be enrolled at the undergraduate level

☐ Yes

☐ No

4) I am currently taking at least one class for credit at or through my home institution.

Students who are not taking classes at or through their home institution are only eligible if they are participating in an organized semester- or year-long study abroad program, a national fellowship or scholarship program, or a substantive internship program and intend to re-enroll following its completion. (Exceptions can be made for students who are graduating.)

☐ Yes

☐ No

4a) If no, are you currently studying abroad?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please provide a one sentence description of your study abroad program, location(s), and provider. You will also be asked to provide information on this topic in the Language Study and Travel section.

4b) If no, are you currently participating in a scholarship or fellowship program and intend to re-enroll following its completion?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please provide the complete name of your scholarship or fellowship.

4c) If no, are you currently participating in a substantive internship program and intend to re-enroll following its completion?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, please provide the complete name of the host organization and duration period for your internship.

5) My institution is an accredited institution based in the United States.

Note: Students earning degrees at foreign colleges or universities that are not based in the United States or its territories are not eligible. Students enrolled in a dual-degree program between the U.S. and another country are eligible and should respond based off the location of their current enrollment. All semifinalists will be required to submit a transcript from a U.S.-based institution to confirm eligibility.

If you have questions or concerns about your institution's eligibility, please email cls@americancouncils.org.

☐ Yes
☐ No

6) I am completing a dual-degree program between an institution based in the U.S. and an international institution.

☐ Yes
☐ No

7) By the program start date (summer 2025), I will have completed at least one academic year of study at the undergraduate level (two semesters or three quarters).

☐ Yes
☐ No

8) I am submitting only one CLS Program application for only one language and for one model (i.e., Overseas or Spark).

☐ Yes

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

CLS Program staff will review each applicant's eligibility for the program during the evaluation process. A full description of the eligibility requirements is available at https://clscholarship.org/applicants/eligibility.

☐ Yes

10) I am a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces.

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

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Decline to State

10a) If yes, attach a copy of your DD214 or NGB-22 Form as proof of your veteran status.

Section 4: Biographical Information

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

2) Is your legal name different from your preferred name?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2a) Legal name (i.e., the name on your government-issued ID):

3) Have you had a different legal name before?

☐ Yes

☐ No

3a) Previous legal name(s) used:

4) Gender

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

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Non-binary

☐ Self-describe:

☐ I do not wish to respond

5) Date of Birth:

6) Place of Birth

    Birth City:

    Birth State/Province/Region:

    Birth Country:

Permanent Address and Congressional District

The CLS Program reports to members of Congress when constituents from their states or districts receive a CLS award. Your address should fall within the congressional district you indicate.

7) Permanent Residential Address

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

    Street Address:

    City:

    Province/State/Governorate:

    Country:

    Postal/ZIP Code:

8) U.S. Congressional District

If you are a registered voter, please list your congressional district. This may be where your permanent residence is located or where your institution is located.

If you are not a registered voter or if your primary residence is located outside of the United States, please select the congressional district where your institution is located.

    State/Territory:

    District:

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

    Indicate the district number for your Congressional district.

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

Current Contact Information

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

Please note that all applicants may be contacted by the CLS Program with surveys to provide feedback on their application experience.

9) Primary Telephone Number:

Please provide a phone number at which you will be reachable throughout October 2025.

10) If selected as a finalist or alternate, I give American Councils permission to:

Standard texting rates apply.

☐ Call AND text my primary telephone number.

☐ Call my primary phone number ONLY.

☐ Text my primary phone number ONLY.

☐ I do not consent to being contacted by my primary telephone number about selection updates.

11) Alternate Telephone Number:

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

12) Primary Email Address:

*Will be used to notify you of your selection status in January and March 2025, as well as through the duration of the program (i.e. October 2025). **We do not recommend using your university address** if you are graduating in the upcoming year, because it might expire when you graduate.*

13) Alternate Email Address:

Will be used to continue to communicate with CLS alumni after their university addresses expire.

Section 5: Current Academic Information

Please indicate the college or university where you are currently enrolled in a degree program (i.e., if you are studying abroad this semester, you should list your home institution).

Please note that we share the names of finalists and alternates with CLS advisors through direct email and press releases to promote the program and student success.

1) Current College or University Name:

2) University City and State:

3) Start Date:

4) Anticipated Date of Graduation (if applicable):

5) Type of Degree:

For joint- or dual-degree programs in which a student will complete a bachelor's and master's degree, applicants will be considered an undergraduate if the bachelor's degree has not yet been conferred, even if you have already taken one or more master's level courses. If the bachelor's degree has already been conferred, you will be considered a master's student. Note that applicants for CLS Spark must be enrolled at the undergraduate level.

☐ Undergraduate (Bachelor's or Associate)

☐ Master's

☐ Dual or joint undergraduate-graduate degree

☐ Doctoral (PhD)

☐ Professional degree (DDS, MD, DO, PAC, JD, etc.)

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

For example, "Associate of General Studies," "BA in East Asian Studies," "Master of Public Health," or "Doctor of Philosophy in Education," or "Doctor of Dental Surgery ."

7) Current or Anticipated Academic Major(s)

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

☐ Yes

☐ No

9) Type of term

☐ Quarters

☐ Semesters

☐ Other

9a) If other, please explain:

9b) Number of Terms Completed at Time of Application:

9c) What is Your GPA on the 4-Point Scale?:

Spring 2025

10) Will you be enrolled in courses at this college/university during the Spring 2025 academic term?

☐ Yes

☐ No

10a) If yes, when is the anticipated date of your last final exam?

10b) If no, will you be transferring to or enrolling at another U.S. institution for the Spring 2025 academic term?

This has no impact on your application, it is used for internal purposes only.

☐ Yes

☐ No

10c) If yes, when is the anticipated date of your last final exam?

11) Will you be graduating before Spring 2025 (i.e., in December 2024)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

12) Will you be studying abroad during the Spring 2025 academic term?

☐ Yes

☐ No

12a) If yes, where?

(i) City:

(ii) Country:

13) Anticipated Spring 2025 Courses

Please list all courses you anticipate taking between January and June 2025.

Fall 2025

14) Will you be enrolled in courses at this college/university during the fall 2025 academic term?

This has no impact on your application, it is used for internal purposes only.

☐ Yes

☐ No

14a) If yes, when is the anticipated date of your first day of class for fall 2025?

Section 6: Transcript and Grades

Please provide a list of the courses you have taken and the grades you have received at your current college or university. Include in-progress courses for Fall 2024.

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

Please contact us with any questions regarding the transcript reporting requirements: **cls@americancouncils.org.**

Section 7: Previous Academic Information

1) Have you attended a college/university previous to your current school in the past five years?

Applicants who took dual enrollment college courses in high school that later transferred to their undergraduate institution do not need to list the college as a separate "previous institution" on their application and can select "No". You won't need to attach an additional transcript, as the credit for the college courses you took in high school should show up on your current transcript.

Please contact us with any questions regarding previous academic information:
cls@americancouncils.org.

☐ Yes
☐ No

2) Please list all previous colleges and universities you attended in the past five years. If relevant, you may also list previous colleges and universities from beyond five years ago.

a) Country:

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

b) College or University Name:

c) Type of Program
☐ Undergraduate (Bachelor's or Associate's)
☐ Master's
☐ Doctoral (PhD)
☐ Professional Degree (DDS, MD, DO, PAC, JD, etc.)
☐ Non-Degree

c(i) Degree Awarded:

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

c(ii) Date Degree Awarded:

d) Field of Study:

e) Start Date:

f) End Date:

g) Attach Transcript:

Section 8: Previous Programs, Activities, Honors, and Fellowships

CLS Program Awards

1) Have you applied for the CLS Program overseas or the CLS Spark virtual initiative in the past?

☐ Yes, I have applied for the CLS Program overseas.

☐ Yes, I have applied for the CLS Spark virtual initiative.

☐ Yes, I have applied for the CLS Program overseas and the CLS Spark virtual initiative.

☐ No

1a) If yes, have you received a CLS award for overseas study in the past?

☐ I received a CLS award for overseas study and completed the program

☐ I received a CLS award for overseas study, but did not attend the program

☐ I received a CLS award for overseas study but declined

☐ I received a CLS award for overseas study but did not successfully complete the program

☐ No, I have not previously received a CLS award

1b) If yes, have you received a CLS award for CLS Spark in the past?

☐ I received a 2024 CLS award for CLS Spark and completed the program

☐ I received a CLS award for CLS Spark for a year other than 2024 and completed the program

☐ I received a CLS award for CLS Spark, but did not attend the program

☐ I received a CLS award for CLS Spark but declined

☐ I received a CLS award for CLS Spark but did not successfully complete the program

☐ No, I have not previously received a CLS award

Please note: Applicants who have previously received a CLS award (for the overseas program or CLS Spark) and completed the program are not eligible to apply for CLS Spark unless the applicant previously completed CLS Spark for beginner Japanese and is now applying for CLS Spark for advanced beginner Japanese.

1a(i) If you have received a previous CLS award for overseas study, are you applying for the same language as the CLS Program you completed previously?

☐ Yes, I am applying for the same language as a CLS Program I completed previously.

☐ No, I am applying for a different language than the CLS Program I completed previously.

1b(i) If you have received a previous CLS award for CLS Spark, are you applying for the same language you studied through CLS Spark?

☐ Yes, I am applying for the same language as a CLS Program I completed previously

☐ No, I am applying for a different language from the CLS Program I completed previously

1(i-i) If no, please explain how you are maintaining your language skills in the language for which you first received a CLS award. Please address how learning an additional language will contribute to your academic and professional goals. Please comment on how you plan to use knowledge of both of these languages in your professional future.
Maximum of 150 words allowed.

1(i) If you did not attend or you declined, please provide a short description of the reason that you declined the previous offer to participate in CLS. Please describe the difference that would allow you to participate in the program if awarded a CLS this year.
Minimum of 150 words required.

1(ii) If you did not successfully complete, please provide a short description explaining why you had to withdraw or were asked to leave.
Maximum of 150 words allowed.

1(iii) If you completed the CLS Program/CLS Spark previously, please explain why CLS is the best way for you to continue your language study. Please comment on why your additional participation in CLS would be a good investment for the U.S. government.
Maximum of 150 words allowed.

1(iv) If you completed CLS Spark previously, please explain why the CLS Program is the best way for you to continue your language study. Please comment on why your additional participation in CLS would be a good investment for the U.S. government.
Maximum of 150 words allowed.

1c) Please indicate all CLS Programs attended from 2006-2024. Include the following information:
- Year
- Award type (Overseas, Virtual (due to the pandemic), CLS Spark)
- Language
- Level
- City

U.S. Government Programs

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

This list is for statistical purposes and may not include all programs. If you participated in a program that is not listed here, you are welcome to discuss it in your essays or in the other international travel section.

Check all that apply
☐ Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship (Gilman)
☐ Boren Award (Fellowship or Scholarship)

☐ Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Program

☐ Charles B. Rangel Summer Enrichment Program

☐ Citizen Diplomacy Action Fund

☐ Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX)

☐ Donald M. Payne International Development Fellowship Program

☐ Foreign Affairs Information Technology (FAIT) Fellowship

☐ Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (FLAS)

☐ Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program

☐ Fulbright U.S. Student Program (English Teaching Assistantship)

☐ Fulbright U.S. Student Program (Study/Research)

☐ Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Abroad

☐ Language Flagship Program

☐ National Security Languages Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y)

☐ Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program

☐ STARTALK

☐ Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Graduate Fellowship Program

☐ Title VIII Award (Research and Training on Eastern Europe and Eurasia)

☐ Other (please specify)

2a) If you checked any boxes above, please indicate the program, year and country for each. Include the following information:
- Program Name
- Program Location, including city, state/region, and country
- Language studied (if applicable)
- Year

2b) If you received a Fulbright U.S. Student Program (Study/Research) Award, were you also the recipient of a Critical Language Enhancement Award (CLEA)?
☐ Yes
☐ No

Honors and Fellowships

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

Activities and Employment

4) List up to five jobs, internships, and/or volunteer or campus activities that you have engaged in that demonstrate leadership capacity, community involvement or a connection to your professional goals. Include the following information:
- Activity Name
- Start Date
- End Date

Section 9: Language Choice

CLS Spark provides beginning level instruction in five critical languages only as virtual instruction (no travel).

Language	Beginner (No Prior Language Study Required)	Advanced Beginner (Requires One Year of Prior Study)	Intermediate and Advanced (Requires Two Years of Prior Study)
Arabic	✓		
Chinese	✓		
Japanese	✓	✓	
Korean	✓		
Russian	✓		

CLS Spark is a *virtual program* and participants in Spark do not study abroad. Participants who complete CLS Spark are considered automatic semifinalists for the CLS Program in the same target language the year following their completion of CLS Spark, if they choose to apply.

Instruction for CLS Spark is designed for absolute beginners (except for advanced beginner Japanese level), starting with learning alphabets, characters, and phonetics. The focus on absolute beginners allows students who have not taken formal courses to benefit from high-quality language instruction taught by experienced teachers abroad.

Preference is given to applicants from campuses that do not offer their Spark language. If you do have language classes available to you in these languages on your campus, you will need to make a compelling argument in your CLS Spark application for why you have not been able to take courses in your chosen target language and why CLS Spark provides you with a unique and necessary opportunity to study the target language.

1) Indicate the Language for which you are applying.

2) Is this language offered on your campus?
☐ Yes
☐ No

2a) If yes, please provide additional relevant information for context (i.e., this language is only offered once a year, offered to students who have earned a certain number of credits, only offered to students pursuing the language as a major, offered as part of the larger consortium).

3) By checking the box, I acknowledge that CLS Spark is a virtual program. Participants in CLS Spark do not travel.
☐ Yes

Section 10: Language Study and Travel

Instruction for CLS Spark is designed for absolute beginners (except for advanced beginner level Japanese), starting with learning alphabets, characters, and phonetics. The focus on absolute beginners allows students who have not taken formal courses to benefit from high-quality language instruction taught by experienced teachers abroad.

If you have taken formal language classes already, consider applying for the overseas CLS Program.

a) Which statement best describes your post-secondary language experience with your CLS target language?

☐ I have taken classes in my CLS target language

☐ I have studied or have other experience in my CLS target language, but have not taken formal classes

☐ I have never taken classes in my CLS target language nor do I have any other experience in my CLS target language

Applicants for Advanced Beginning Japanese must complete 1 year of Japanese language study or the equivalent prior to the start of CLS Spark.

Target Language Experience

1) Which statements best describe the ways, if any, in which you have engaged with the target language?

Check all that apply

☐ Private or small group study or tutoring in the target language

☐ Formal classes in college/university

☐ Formal classes in high school/elementary school

☐ Interactions with friends, family, coworkers, or community members who speak the target language

☐ Self-study (e.g., apps or software, podcasts, films, TV, books, music, etc.)

☐ I am a heritage speaker (family background in the language, practicing the language at home)

☐ None of the above

2) Please describe any coursework and/or activities at the college or university level you have undertaken in the target language. Please include, if applicable, the frequency and number of hours, content, books or materials used, chapters or topics covered and level of engagement. If you have taken formal coursework in your target language in college or high school, please describe it. If you are a heritage speaker, please indicate the degree of your language use at home. If you are a true beginner, you may have limited to no activities to describe.

Maximum of 150 words allowed.

3) Do you plan to enroll in a language course in the target language for the Winter/Spring 2025 term?

☐ Yes

☐ No

3a(i) Course Title:

3b(ii) Institution:

3c(iii) Start Date:

3d(iv) End Date:

Target Language Travel

4) Have you previously traveled to or lived in any countries where the target language is spoken?

☐ Yes

☐ No

4a) Please provide information on any travel you have taken (excluding Fall 2024) to countries where the target language is spoken starting with the most recent. Include the following information:

- Country
- Year of Visit
- Sponsoring Organization (if any)
- Travel Duration
- Travel Purpose

5) Are you currently traveling to or living in a country where the target language is spoken?

This would include studying, researching, or completing an internship abroad.

☐ Yes

☐ No

5a) Please provide information on your current target language travel:

- Country
- Year of Visit
- Sponsoring Organization (if any)
- Travel Duration
- Travel Purpose (Study, vacation, family, work/internship, other)

6) Do you plan to travel to or live in any countries where the target language is spoken for the Winter/Spring 2025 term?

☐ Yes

☐ No

6a) Please provide information on your Winter/Spring 2025 target language travel. Include the following information:

- Country
- Year of Visit
- Sponsoring Organization (if any)
- Travel Duration
- Travel Purpose (Study, vacation, family, work/internship, other)

Other Language Experience

7) Have you studied or do you speak languages other than English or your target language?

☐ Yes

☐ No

7a) List the other language(s) you speak or have studied. Include the following information:

- Language
- Primary Study Method
- Number of Years Spoken/Studied

Other International Travel Related to Work or Study

8) Please list all significant international travel opportunities you have participated in previously for the purposes of work or study, including the country name, reason for travel, and the approximate dates and length of your visit.

Section 11: Essays

The following essays are designed to encourage reflection and self-discovery and allow the reviewer to connect with your story and understand your motivations. Using AI to generate content for your essays can interfere with this process and make it harder for a reviewer to evaluate your fit for the program. Instead, we recommend you review the information on the CLS website related to your language and watch the relevant video providing guidance on writing effective application essays before you start your essays.

If you have participated in the CLS Program before, you cannot reuse the same essay responses from previous application(s). However, if you applied in the past but were not selected, you are welcome to reuse material from those applications.

1) Motivation and Commitment

Maximum of 350 words allowed.

CLS Spark seeks to support students who are motivated and committed to advancing their knowledge of other languages and cultures to support their long-term academic and professional goals.

Please address the following points:

- What interests you about your chosen language and the region in which it is spoken?
- How will increased knowledge of your target language and culture help you achieve your long-term academic or professional goals?
- What aspects of this program do you anticipate will be the most challenging? What knowledge, skills, and experience will help you sustain your engagement and learning throughout this program?

2) Access to Language Learning Opportunities

Maximum of 300 words allowed.

CLS Spark seeks to provide beginners with an opportunity to begin their language learning journey. Students who have completed beginner languages courses for Arabic, Chinese, Korean, and Russian and students who have completed two years of Japanese should apply for the overseas CLS Program. Spark prioritizes providing access to critical language learning opportunities for those who lack access or who have encountered barriers to pursuing significant study abroad or language learning opportunities.

Is this language offered on your campus?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, please provide additional information for context.

If you would like to update your responses to this question, please go to Section 9: Language Choice.

Please address the following points:

- What opportunities, if any, have you taken advantage of in pursuit of studying your target language? Have you faced any barriers in your attempts to study your target language?
- How will CLS Spark help you overcome these barriers? How does CLS Spark fit into your plan to develop proficiency in your target language?
- How do you plan to continue your language learning journey after CLS Spark?

3) Statement of Experience

Maximum of 350 words allowed.

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

Please address the following points:

- How will your experiences, perspectives, and/or background contribute to your cohort?
- How will your experiences, perspectives, and/or background contribute towards the goal of building mutual understanding?

Section 12: Statistical Information

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

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

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

1) How did you learn about the program?

Check all that apply

☐ CLS Alumni or Participants

☐ Email Announcement

☐ Magazine

☐ Newspaper

☐ Poster

☐ School Presentation

☐ Social Media

☐ Study Abroad Fair

☐ University Staff

☐ Website or Internet Search

☐ Word of Mouth

☐ Other

1a) If you checked University Staff above:

Check all that apply

☐ Academic Advisor

☐ Campus Organization

☐ Diversity/Inclusion Office

☐ Fellowship Advisor

☐ Study Abroad Advisor

☐ Teacher/Professor

☐ Career Counselor

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

Maximum of 250 characters allowed.

2) What is your race or ethnicity?

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

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ Asian

☐ Black or African American

☐ Hispanic or Latino

☐ Middle Eastern or North African

☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

☐ White

☐ Some Other Race

2a) If Some Other Race, please explain:

Maximum of 20 words allowed.

4) Are you a first generation college student?

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

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I decline to state

5) Are you a Pell Grant recipient?

Note: Federal Pell Grants are generally awarded only to undergraduate students. If you are a graduate student, please indicate whether you received a Pell Grant as an undergraduate.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I decline to state

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

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I decline to state

7) Do you have a disability?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I decline to state

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

      City:

      Province/State/Governorate:

      Country:

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

☐ Major City

☐ Other City or Town

☐ Rural Area

Section 13: Review and Submit

Final Review of Application

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

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

Certification

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

I certify:

- I completed this application and the written portions are my own work;
- Everything in this application is complete and true to the best of my knowledge; I certify that the information provided in all parts of the CLS application is truthful, and understand that any misrepresentation, omission of key information, or false answer(s) may be grounds for elimination of candidacy for or revocation of a CLS award;
- No supplemental materials have been included nor will supplemental materials be accepted after the application is submitted;
- I understand that limited information from my application may be shared with representatives of my university, for example study abroad or fellowships advising offices, including my name, email address, degree information and choice of language;
- I understand that American Councils and the U.S. Department of State will not discuss individual selection decisions with applicants; and
- I understand that my application is in no way an offer or a guarantee of an offer for a Critical Language Scholarship award.

Signature:

Date:

Additional Information

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

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

☐ Yes! Please add me to your mailing list.

Appendix

Table 1

Name of Process	Description of Purpose	Categories of Personal Data	Which Third Parties Might Have Access to My Data?	Legal Basis
Recruitment	Application and testing for programs, letters of support, tracking, and support and encouragement for submitting an application	o Biographical information o Contact details o Cultural information (*which may include data revealing race, ethnicity, and religious and philosophical beliefs*) o Educational history o Essays o Non-English language skills o Program participation history o Related-party information o System access history o Work and volunteer history	o Cloud computing platforms o Communications platforms o Third-party system developer o U.S. Department of State o Program advisors at universities and colleges	o Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject o Performance of a contract o Performance of a legal obligation o Explicit consent for special categories of personal data
Evaluation and Selection	Evaluating candidates and selecting finalists and semi-finalists	o Biographical information o Cultural information (*which may include data revealing race, ethnicity, and religious and philosophical beliefs*) o Educational history o Essays o Non-English language skills o Program participation history o Related-party information o Work and volunteer history	o Cloud computing platforms o Evaluators o Third-party system developer o U.S. Department of State o U.S. Embassies	o Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject o Performance of a contract o Explicit consent for special categories of personal data

Name of Process	Description of Purpose	Categories of Personal Data	Which Third Parties Might Have Access to My Data?	Legal Basis
Notification and Registration	Notifying candidates of their status and confirming program participant enrollment	o Biographical information o Confirmation of identity o Contact details o Cultural information (*which may include data revealing race, ethnicity, and religious and philosophical beliefs*) o Deposit account information o Essays o Health information o Non-English language skills o Photographs and videos o Program participation history o Related-party information o System access history o Work and volunteer history	o Banking services provider o Cloud computing platforms o Communications platforms o Consulting medical professionals o Implementing organizations o Learning management systems o Third-party system developer o Third-party testing service providers o U.S. Department of State	o Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject o Performance of a contract o Performance of a legal obligation o Explicit consent for special categories of personal data
Visa Issuance (For overseas programs, only)	Securing international visas	o Confirmation of identity o Contact details o Passport information o Additional personal biographical and health information required for visas, including marital status, photographs, health information, and biometric data	o Cloud computing platforms o Non-U.S. Embassies o Implementing organizations o Third-party system developer o U.S. Embassies	o Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject o Performance of a legal obligation o Explicit consent for special categories of personal data
Travel (For overseas programs, only)*	Booking participant travel and providing travel support	o Confirmation of identity o Contact details o Passport information	o Accommodations providers o Cloud computing platforms o Implementing organizations o Third-party system developer o Travel services provider	o Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject o Performance of a legal obligation

Name of Process	Description of Purpose	Categories of Personal Data	Which Third Parties Might Have Access to My Data?	Legal Basis
*Participant Medical Insurance * (For overseas programs, only)*	Securing medical insurance coverage for participants	o Contact details o Health information	o Cloud computing platforms o Insurance providers	o Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject o Performance of a legal obligation o Explicit consent for special categories of personal data
Orientation	Preparing participants for programs	o Contact details	o Accommodations providers o Cloud computing platforms o Communications platforms o Learning management systems o Third-party system developer o U.S. Department of State o U.S. Embassies	o Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject o Performance of a legal obligation
Program Placement	Placing participants in host families and host institutions	o Biographical information o Contact details o Cultural information (*which may include data revealing race, ethnicity, and religious and philosophical beliefs*) o Educational history o English language skills o Essays o Health information o Non-English language skills o Photographs and videos o System access history	o Cloud computing platforms o Implementing organizations o Third-party system developer o U.S. Department of State o U.S. Embassies	o Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject o Performance of a legal obligation

Name of Process	Description of Purpose	Categories of Personal Data	Which Third Parties Might Have Access to My Data?	Legal Basis
On-Program Support	Supporting participants during their programs	o Biographical information o Contact details o Deposit account information o Health information o Non-English language skills o Photographs and videos o Related-party information	o Accommodations providers o Banking services provider o Cloud computing platforms o Communications platforms o Healthcare providers o Implementing organizations o Third-party system developer o U.S. Department of State o U.S. Embassies	o Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject o Performance of a contract o Performance of a legal obligation o Explicit consent for special categories of personal data
Post-Program Reporting	Participants prepare and deliver a an anonymous survey on their program activities and results	o Biographical information o Confirmation of identity o Contact details o Cultural information (*which may include data revealing race, ethnicity, and religious and philosophical beliefs*) o Deposit account information o English language skills o Essays o Non-English language skills o Photographs and videos o Program participation history o Related-party information o System access history o Work and volunteer history	o Banking services provider o Cloud computing platforms o Communications platforms o Implementing organizations o Learning management systems o Program funders o Recruiting organizations o Third-party system developer o Third-party testing service providers o U.S. Department of State o U.S. Embassies	o Performance of a contract o Performance of a legal obligation o Explicit consent for special categories of personal data
Post-Program and Alumni	Providing professional development, volunteering, and grant opportunities to alumni	o Biographical information o Confirmation of identity o Contact details o Cultural information (*which may include data revealing*	o Accommodations providers o Cloud computing platforms o Communications platforms	o Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject o Performance of a contract

Name of Process	Description of Purpose	Categories of Personal Data	Which Third Parties Might Have Access to My Data?	Legal Basis
		race, ethnicity, and religious and philosophical beliefs) o Educational history o English language skills o Essays o Health information o Interview notes o Non-English language skills o Passport Information o Photographs and videos o Related-party information o System access history o Work and volunteer history	o Consulting medical professionals o Evaluators o Insurance providers o Implementing organizations o Learning management systems o Placement organizations o Program funders o Recruiting organizations o SEVIS o Social media platforms o Third-party system developer o Third-party testing service providers o U.S. Department of State o U.S. Embassies	o Performance of a legal obligation o Explicit consent for special categories of personal data
Marketing	Promoting the organization and its programs	o Contact details o System access history o Photographs and videos	o Cloud computing platforms o Social media platforms o Third-party system developer	o Performance of pre-contractual measures at the request of the data subject

Table 2

Record Type	Must Keep For	Must Delete After
Applicant Data (Statistical)	Forever	Never
Applicant Data	Six (6) Months	One (1) Year After Application Deadline
Participant Records (Statistical Data)	Forever	Never
Participant Records	Six (6) Months After the Completion of the Program	One (1) Year After the Completion of the Program