**Recruitment and Testing**

**Goal:** To recruit and screen applicants through a transparent merit-based competition and develop a more standard recruitment process to be used in all countries.

The recruitment and testing process must be open to make it possible for any student who meets the eligibility criteria to apply. Recruitment and selection must be conducted on the basis of merit and be free of *even the appearance or perception* of political influence and corruption. No organization or person recruiting for the YES program may charge a fee for students to apply to the program or charge for the application.

Remember to consult with the U.S. Embassy in your country and provide a comprehensive schedule well in advance of every event.

**YES program eligibility requirements**.

Eligible applicants must:

* Be citizens or permanent residents of the country of application\*
* Meet the published age and grade requirements for the country of application – NO EXCEPTIONS
* Be enrolled in a secondary school at time of application
* Have the equivalent of a B average or better without failing grades
* Have not completed more than 11 years of primary education nor received a high school diploma by the start of the program
* Demonstrate sufficient English language ability to speak and study in English
* Meet U.S. visa eligibility requirements

The following criteria for YES Inbound Students is outlined in the POGI:

1. *Citizen or a permanent resident of the country of application*
2. *Ages 15-18.5 at the program start date (Specific age requirements may be set in each country based on local education system restrictions.)*
3. *Sufficient ability to speak and study in English*
4. *Preference will be given to applicants who have spent more than 50% of the last 5 years in the country of application*
5. *Preference will be given to applicants who have not previously studied in the United States*
6. *Commitment to cultural immersion in the United States through a home-stay experience*
7. *Ability to meet cross-cultural challenges with maturity, humor, and an open mind*
8. *Plans for sharing their U.S. experience with their home school and community upon return home*

**Recruitment and Support**

In addition, students’ health records will be reviewed by a U.S. medical team to ensure that they are sufficiently healthy to participate on the program.

YES program eligibility requirements reflect the POGI (project objectives, goals, and implementation) for the Kennedy – Lugar Youth Exchange Program published by the State Department and ECA and the J-1 requirements for secondary school students published in the Federal Register. Students who do not meet the eligibility requirements will be disqualified

from the program. ***Students who do not meet these requirements can be rejected by a placement organization.***

\*The eligibility of non-citizens must be approved each year by the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassy and ECA.

**Selection**

**Goal:** To select students who have the personal qualities, motivation, academic background, language and social skills to be successful on program.

**Essential Components for YES Program Selection**

Prior to being selected as a finalist all applicants must:

* Complete the Kennedy-Lugar YES 2022-23 program application
* Participate in an individual interview with a program representative, the interview must include an assessment of the applicant’s English-speaking proficiency.
* Participate in a group activity (if possible).
* Write ‘in-class’ essays designed to elicit information that indicates the applicant’s preparedness for an academic year program; essays should be proctored.
* Take the English Language Test for International Students (ELTiS) or equivalent approved test.
* Provide current academic year grades and a certified copy of last two academic year transcripts.

**Essays**: Questions should be selected from the list provided by American Councils at the beginning of recruitment.

**ELTiS Score**: To remain eligible for the YES program any finalist or alternate who receives a score below 212 must retake the test so that the new score can be reported to the Placement Organization prior to Wednesday, June 1, 2022. In addition, the recruiting organization must inform American Councils how they plan to assist these students improve their English language skills prior to arriving in the U.S.

At the time of arrival in the U.S. YES inbound students should possess the ability to speak English at the standard required by U.S. school districts for foreign exchange student admission without recourse to remedial ESL instruction.