IDEAS Grant Competition – Frequently Asked Questions

The following is an account of relevant questions and answers from the IDEAS (Increase and Diversify Education Abroad for U.S. Students) Program. The responses are divided into six categories:

Grant Allowables

1. Would it be possible to use the grant with an audience of high school students or is it restricted to college students only?

A1. No, these grants cannot be used for high school programs. These grants are intended to be used for primarily (although not necessarily exclusively) undergraduate study abroad programs. Graduate students may also benefit from the planned study abroad programs, but the primary focus should be on undergraduate students. The competition is open only to accredited U.S. colleges and universities.

2. To what types of locations are IDEAS Grants allowed to support faculty and/or student travel?

A2. IDEAS Grants can support the development of **virtual** U.S. study abroad programming in all foreign locations, regardless of their U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory level.

IDEAS grants can support the development of *in-person* U.S. study abroad programming in foreign locations with a **U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory** Level 1, 2, or 3. Development of in-person programming in foreign locations with a U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 4 is not permitted. In the event that a proposal is selected for an IDEAS grant and the destination changes to a Level 4, the recipient may be required to change their program location or other planned program activities to align with U.S. Department of State travel policies. The U.S. Department of State reserves the right to request program changes for specific countries or areas if deemed necessary during any stage of the application, selection process, or program period. Final awards are contingent upon the availability of funds and the security situation in-country. Furthermore, grant-funded overseas travel and in-person activities abroad may be suspended in consultation with the U.S. Embassy in-country during the course of the program.

Note: If selected for an IDEAS grant, institutions using funds to support travel to foreign locations will be required to share travel and safety information with the IDEAS Program, and those travelling to Level 3 locations will need to provide additional safety details. More information will be provided on this following award issuance.

Accredited higher education institutions within Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories may apply to the grant competition to build a study abroad program that sends students outside of the United States and its territories.

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1. Example 1: A college in Ohio may <u>not</u> propose sending students to Puerto Rico.
2. Example 2: A college in Puerto Rico may <u>not</u> propose a program to send students to the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam or any other U.S. territories.
3. Example 3: A college in Guam may propose a program to send students to Cameroon.

3. Can a single application cover costs for multiple programs in multiple countries? Can a single proposal fund multiple faculty fact-finding trips?

A3. Yes, a single application can include costs for multiple programs, countries, and/or faculty fact-finding trips as long as said application is within the budget limit.

4. Can two or more institutions apply as partners or a group on one proposal? Can institutions apply in two proposals if they are part of separate consortia in each proposal?

A4. Yes, institutions can apply as partners. However, there are limitations on an institution being included in or submitting more than one proposal. Please refer to Q5 below for information on submitting multiple proposals from the same institution.

5. Can more than one unit from an institution receive the grant? Should institutions seek to find out whether multiple departments at an institution are applying for the grant?

A5. While an institution as a whole may submit more than one proposal, individual units within an institution (i.e., schools, colleges, offices) may submit only one application each. If an institution is organized into a single school or college, it may only submit one proposal. Individual campuses within wider university systems will be considered separate institutions.

1. Example 1: the School of Business of X University and the School of Nursing at the same X University may each submit separate proposals.
2. Example 2: within the School of Business of X University, the Marketing Department and Finance Department may only submit one proposal total.
3. Example 3: the School of Business of X University - City A and the School of Business of X University - City B may each submit separate proposals.

6. Are programs supported by an IDEAS Grant required to be for-credit programs?

A6. Study abroad programs supported by this grant may include both short- and longer-term study abroad programming for academic credit, as well as internships abroad for academic credit. Non-credit granting programs are <u>not</u> permitted.

7. When can grant activities occur? Are grantees required to start and end activities on the start and end date of the grant? Can proposed study abroad programs occur after the technical close of the grant period?

A7. All grant-funded activities should take place within the grant period listed on page 2 of the RFP. Grant recipients may start and end program activities at any time within the grant period. Grantees are not required to conduct program activities for the entire grant period. The creation, expansion, and/or diversification of proposed study abroad programs may occur outside of the grant period as long as the work plan clearly lays out the steps that will be taken during the grant period to prepare for the proposed study abroad travel, including prospective travel dates. Many proposals will have program plans where students travel overseas during the grant period but some may not. For example, projects that set up semester-long exchange programs may propose to have their first round of semester

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students study abroad during the semester after the grant period ends.

Note that any program components that require grant funding must occur within the grant period.

8. What does "near term" mean?
A8. "Near term" does not imply any specific time period but does require that the proposed study abroad take place either within the grant period or within a reasonable amount of time following the end of the grant.

9. Can faculty hire graduate research assistants to travel to investigate the study abroad site, and can the research assistant's salary, cost of travel, living expenses, etc. be included in the budget?
A9. Expenses related to the hiring of graduate assistants as program staff are permitted.

Budget Questions

10. Can grant funds be used to fund U.S. faculty travel abroad?
A10. Yes, grant funds may be used to fund U.S.-based faculty travel abroad as well as travel to the United States for faculty and/or staff at higher education institutions overseas.

11. Given that student travel and scholarship costs are not permitted in the proposed grant budget, what program expenses through the grant may benefit students? Are allowable expenses only those borne by faculty and support staff or program providers? For example: group activities such as site visits (entrance fees) and guest lectures?
A11. Faculty and staff expenses (including travel and salaries) can be covered as a part of the proposed grant budget. In Phase Two of the application, selected semi-finalists will need to provide a justification for all indicated expenses, noting how those expenses would support program goals and how the program would be sustainable in the future after the grant period ended.

12. May the grant cover the cost of travel for student mentors, including if those mentors are also undergraduate students? For example, second-, third-, or fourth-year undergraduate students who act as peer leaders for first-year students on study abroad programs.
A12. Travel costs for student mentors who are considered program staff are permitted in the proposed budget. If the student mentor is considered a study abroad program participant, their travel costs cannot be included in the proposed budget.

13. Does the grant require matching funds or cost share to apply?
A13. Cost share (or matching funds) is not a requirement, but institutions providing cost share should note that in their budgets. A grantee institution that proposes cost share or matching funds will be required to meet said commitment as part of the terms of the grant.

14. Can we request funding to attend a conference in the application for the IDEAS Grant?
A14. Costs for grantee institution faculty and staff to attend conferences are allowable as long as they are justified within the concept of the proposal and tied to the goal of creating, expanding, or diversifying a study abroad program.

15. What are some examples of budget items?
A15. Below are some cost categories to consider as you develop your institution's budget. It is not necessary to budget funds under each line item.

      a.   Administrative costs, which may include:

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- o Salaries and Wages: for example, faculty stipends for developing a short-term program; student workers; graduate assistants. If faculty overload compensation is proposed, please ensure compliance with Uniform Guidance Requirements at **2 CFR §200.430(h)**.
- o Fringe Benefits: this is a percentage cost based on salaries and wages, and it includes but is not limited to the cost of leave, employee insurance, pensions, and unemployment benefit plans. Your sponsored programs or HR department can advise on your institution's rate.
- o Indirect Costs: these represent the expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with a particular grant, contract, project function or activity, but are necessary for the general operation of the organization and the conduct of activities it performs. Your sponsored programs office can advise on your institution's rate and how/if it should be applied to this proposal.

b. Program costs, which may include:
- o Consultants: experts, third-party providers, or other off-campus vendors providing a service.
- o Travel and Transportation: costs associated with domestic or international travel for professional development, program development, etc. These may include but are not limited to air travel, ground transport, meals, lodging, registration fees, etc.
- o Supplies: printed materials, promotional materials, etc.
- o Equipment: the Federal Government defines equipment as an item of non-expendable, tangible personal property, having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the recipient organization for financial statement purposes, or $5,000. IDEAS Grant budgets rarely, if ever, include equipment costs.
- o Other Direct Costs: postage, event space rental, etc.

16. Would Indirect Costs be included in the $35,000 budget limit?
A16. Yes, the $35,000 budget limit should include all Indirect Costs (IDC). IDC should be budgeted in accordance with the applicant institution's currently approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). There is no maximum IDC rate or amount that may be included in the proposed budget total, although applicants should ensure that all costs are justifiable and in compliance with their institution's policies.

Please find more information on Indirect (F&A) costs here: **https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-E/subject-group-ECFRd93f2a98b1f6455/section-200.414**

17. What is the indirect cost allowed if an organization does not have a specific agreement?
A17. If the applicant does not have a NICRA, an institution may elect to use a de minimis rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs in accordance with **2 CFR 200.414.**

University Logistics & Coordination

18. Can institutions or departments receiving funds from another grant (e.g., Title III) apply for an IDEAS Grant as well to further increase study abroad capacity?
A18. Yes, IDEAS grantees may also be recipients of other grant funding.

19. Can a university foundation be the recipient of grant funds?
A19. Yes, university foundations are permitted to be recipients of grant funds as long as the funding is routed to support programming at an accredited, U.S.-based higher education institution.

20. Do you require that a school have a study abroad office established before you will consider a proposal from that school for a faculty-led study abroad program? Does this proposal need to be submitted through the university's Office of Sponsored Programs?
A20. IDEAS Grant applicants are not required to have an established study abroad office in order to apply and/or receive grant funding. In fact, grant funding may be used to help establish a study abroad office. Applicants are also not required to submit their proposal through their university's Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) though it is recommended to seek proposal support from OSP if possible.

21. Is there a disadvantage to being an applicant from a larger state institution that may have existing study abroad capacity?
A21. There is no advantage nor disadvantage to being from a large or small higher education institution with or without a high level of study abroad capacity. IDEAS seeks to engage the full diversity of U.S. higher education institutions.

22. Are former grantees permitted to apply?
A22. Yes, former grantees (institutions or units within institutions) may apply for an IDEAS Grant, although preference may be given to applicants that have not recently received a grant from the program.

Working with Partners and Providers

23. Can education abroad providers with negotiated packages be used for faculty travel? Will a full budget breakdown be required for the negotiated package? Must education abroad provider-purchased flights comply with the Fly America Act?
A23. Yes, education abroad providers with negotiated packages may be used for faculty travel. A budget breakdown of the negotiated package is not required in either phase of the grant competition. All flights purchased with grant funds, including those purchased through an Education Abroad provider, must comply with the **Fly America Act**.

24. Can grant funds be used to support a foreign host institution that hosts students and supports student programming?
A24. Yes, partnership with one or more foreign institutions is encouraged. IDEAS funds provided to a foreign host institution may not be construed as covering student costs, including but not limited to tuition, international travel, ground transportation in the United States or in the foreign country(ies), incidentals, and/or meals. Funding requests to support foreign higher education institutions should be justified within the concept of the proposal in Phase One and explained in more detail in Phase Two.

25. For a virtual or hybrid program, would it be considered a prohibited student cost to pay any provider or partner that would be involved?
A25. Student scholarship costs may not be covered by grant funds. In Phase Two of the application, selected semifinalists will need to justify all indicated expenses, noting how those expenses would support program goals and how the program would be sustainable in the future after the grant period ended.

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26. Are there limits on how much a proposal could request to pay for a study abroad provider/planning entity (as program costs)?

A26. There are no limits on costs budgeted for a study abroad provider or planning entity. In Phase Two of the application, selected semifinalists will need to justify all costs within the budget narrative.

Foreign Policy Goals (FPGs)

27. If the proposed project does not align with a listed U.S. FPG, will that affect the chances of funding? How should a proposed program seek to address the FPGs?

A27. All institutions applying for an IDEAS Grant must substantively address one or more of the U.S. FPGs through their program activities. Competitive proposals will consider these goals in the context of travel and activities abroad as well as potential impact on U.S. communities and students' career readiness. Proposals may fall under any academic discipline but must seek to address an FPG within that discipline. A list of these FPGs can be found on the **IDEAS Program website** and on pages 3-4 of the RFP.

TIP: Proposals that request funding to support the development of resources targeting specific student groups, or to create an institution's first study abroad program, may fit best under the *Economic Development and Entrepreneurship* FPG. The proposal may then detail how the international experience related to the proposed program activities will help students to develop global career skills that they can use to support their future careers in economic development in their local community.

28. Is the proposed project required to address a specific example given under the U.S. FPG or simply fall under the area of the general policy the proposal is addressing?

A28. The proposed project must fall under the general FPG topic. Proposals are not limited to the examples listed under each FPG in the Request For Proposals (p. 3) or on the **IDEAS Program website**. We encourage institutions to be creative in their thinking for substantively incorporating FPGs into their projects. Further explanation of the FPGs, as well as examples for how current IDEAS Grantees have aligned their projects with FPGs can be found in the **webinar recording on FPG Alignment** from February 2022 and will be further addressed in the webinar scheduled for November 17, 2022.

The FPGs listed reflect broad areas of focus for the U.S. Department of State and not any particular document. The RFP purposefully provides no concrete definitions of FPGs so that IDEAS Grant applicants have room to design projects that align with these wider goals but are also catered to the specific needs of their students and community. Applicants looking for examples of how the U.S. government approaches any of the goals are encouraged to explore the websites of the State Department, White House, other federal agencies, and even their own state and local governments. Applicants should focus on clearly outlining how their program activities broadly advance their chosen FPG(s). Applicants do not need to mention or align their proposed activities with any particular document or program, though references to specific initiatives are always welcome.

29. Can proposals align with more than one FPG? Is there any advantage or disadvantage to identifying more than one goal?

A29. Yes, applicants may address more than one foreign policy goal but should identify a primary foreign policy goal of focus. Applicants should be sure that the FPG(s) is/are fully integrated into project activities. There is no advantage or disadvantage to aligning proposals with more than one FPG.

30. Are there any FPGs that have been less represented than others? E.g., is there a specific need for focus on any FPG in particular?

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A30. No, all FPGs are of equal importance and priority to the IDEAS Program and the U.S. Department of State. There is no preference or need for any given FPG.

Other Questions

30. Are abstracts/examples/proposals of former grantees available?
A30. While copies of previous grantees' applications are not available, abstracts of past grantees' projects are available on the **IDEAS Program website**.

31. What has been the average ratio of proposals submitted to proposals awarded for past iterations of the grant? What percentage of funding goes to two-year colleges?
A31. The IDEAS Program small grants competition and capacity building initiatives are open to all accredited U.S. colleges and universities. The program seeks to engage the full diversity of U.S. higher education, including community colleges and Minority Serving Institutions. Past grant competitions have consisted of a single, full-proposal phase, unlike the two-phase application instituted for 2022. World Learning anticipates that approximately 65 applications will move forward as semifinalists to Phase Two; of those, approximately half will be awarded IDEAS Grants. Past applications and ratios appear in the table below.

Year	Proposals Received	Grants Awarded	Community Colleges as % of total grantees
2019	132	26 (20%)	30%
2020	115	24 (20%)	20%
2021	120	22 (18%)	20%
2022	169 (Phase One)	44 (26%)	22%

32. Where is the application located?
A32. The application is located on the **program website**, by clicking on the "Apply for the Grant Competition" button. Please refer to the **Application Instructions** for more details about creating an account and logging into the application.

33. Is it possible to send a draft proposal to World Learning for feedback prior to submission?
A33. No, World Learning will not be available to review draft proposals in Phase One or Two. If you have any specific questions about the proposal, please email **IDEAS@worldlearning.org**.

34. What are the reporting requirements for grantees? Are grantees required to submit reports after the grant ends?
A34. Grantees submit semester reports (three annually) to World Learning during their grant period and a final report following the close of their grant. Following the close of their grant, grantees do not submit formal reports to World Learning but may be asked for updates.

35. Can applicants from past grant cycles receive feedback on their past, unsuccessful proposals?
A35. Yes, past applicants can review proposal feedback on previously submitted proposals in the application portal or by emailing **IDEAS@worldlearning.org**. Feedback will be condensed.

36. Is there a minimum institutional or study abroad program enrollment number needed to qualify for a grant?
A36. No, there is not a required enrollment number needed to qualify for a grant. The grant competition

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is open to all accredited U.S. colleges and universities. The program seeks to engage the full diversity of U.S. higher education, including community colleges and Minority Serving Institutions, of all sizes.

37. What is the nature of the subaward's payment terms?
A37. The subaward payments can be issued on an advance or reimbursement basis, depending on the preference of the recipient institution. Reimbursements may be processed as frequently as monthly. Advance payments may be issued for expenditures that will be incurred during a specified period, not to exceed one month.

38. Are there particular regions which are a priority to the U.S. Department of State?
A38. A goal of the IDEAS Program is to "diversify American student mobility, both in terms of the students taking part and the destinations where they travel". While there are not regions of priority to the State Department for this program, an applicant may refer to the **Open Doors** data regarding leading and less common destinations for U.S. student study abroad.

39. Can a proposal related to a new or existing program focus on the needs and/or participation of a specific student group?
A39. Yes, proposals may focus on the needs of a specific student group.

40. Are applicants permitted to create their own logic model and/or calendar of activities document, still using the elements and language from the template?
A40. We ask that applicants use the templates provided under "**Grant Competition Resources**" on the IDEAS Program website.

IDEAS Consortium Grants

41. Are IDEAS consortium grant applicants eligible for a $35,000 grant if they are not selected to receive a $50,000 grant?
A41. Yes, the IDEAS Program will consider strong applications for the IDEAS consortium grant to receive a $35,000, pending available funding. Consortium grant applicants who are selected to receive a $35,000 grant will be expected to revise their budget and/or activities.

42. What types of resources should be created as part of the IDEAS consortium grant?
A42. Types of resources include but are not limited to creating and sharing study abroad program models and resources; developing one-pagers, videos, or infographics on topics such as student recruitment and support that could be used across different institutions; delivering virtual trainings based on best practices; creating a public webpage with resources; and other creative ideas.

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