



Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program

*A program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State,
and implemented by IREX*

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Advertising and Recruitment

What are best practices for advertising the program?

In addition to listing the opportunity on the Embassy/ Fulbright Commission website, partners have found the following outreach mechanisms effective in previous recruitment rounds:

- Direct recruitment trips to target regions;
- Discipline- specific email listservs for teachers (EFL, Social Studies, Math, Science, special education);
- Facebook; Twitter; and other social networking tools
- Letters to the Ministry of Education;
- Coordination with Education USA Centers;
- Distribution of program information at education conferences or fairs;
- Outreach through alumni of other exchange programs
- Advertisements in local media sources including newspapers, radio, and/or television;
- Distribution of program information to Peace Corps volunteers, Fulbright English Teaching Assistants, English Language Fellows, TEA and ILEP Alumni, etc.;
- Alumni associations for Humphrey, Fulbright, and other USG-sponsored programs
- National English Language Teachers Associations; and
- University contacts, particularly those at Teacher Training colleges or in Departments of Education.

What is the profile of the ideal TEA candidate?

Successful TEA candidates are full-time secondary school teachers with a minimum of five-years teaching experience (not including pre-service practicum years) who demonstrate strong leadership potential and the ability to function well in an intensive and collaborative learning environment with teachers from around the world. Participants should be able to live and work closely with people from a variety of backgrounds and interact in a culturally sensitive way with students (minors) in U.S. secondary schools. Ministry of Education officials, full-time principals or educational administrators, full-time teacher trainers, university faculty, private English Language tutors, and teachers from schools primarily serving expatriates are not eligible.

Applicants who have recently participated in similar programs in the U.S. or other Western countries will be given lower priority. Teachers working in under-resourced communities will be given higher priority. The TEA Program supports educational inclusion and strongly encourages teachers with disabilities to apply.

What materials are provided to help Posts/Commissions recruit teachers for TEA?

Along with this FAQs document, IREX provides:

- An “About TEA” PowerPoint that can be used during informational presentations
- A program announcement flyer for distribution to teachers, administrators, and partners
- All application materials (both in writable PDF format and online versions)

Nomination Target Numbers

How many nominations can Posts/Commissions send to IREX?

Posts/ Commissions are invited and encouraged to send the maximum finalist nominations based on the quota number listed in the cable (see paragraph 3) and 3-6 alternates. Please send a rank-ordered listing of the nominees with accompanying materials to IREX no later than June 15, 2015.



If I send the maximum number of nominees listed in the cable, how many of these candidates will be selected for participation?

Due to the increasingly competitive nature of applying to the program, IREX will convene a panel of internal and external reviewers to evaluate the applications in consultation with ECA, confirm budget levels with ECA, and inform posts and commissions of the status of their nominees by September 15, 2015. Although we will make an effort to consider post recommendations, we cannot guarantee the number of slots or the order of preference. By September 15, 2015, we will provide posts and commissions with a list of nominees who will be invited to participate, and ask posts/commissions to concur with selections and to confirm that the applicants' circumstances and eligibility have not changed (i.e., still employed as a full-time teacher, not accepted into any similar programs by State or other international organizations, no major health or family concerns).

Pre-Departure Travel to Posts and Commissions

How many trips to the Post/ Fulbright Commission will applicants need to make?

ECA is prepared to cover the costs of one trip for applicants and two trips for selected participants:

- Funding is available for twice the number of nominees requested per country (see paragraph 10 of the cable) to travel to the Post/Commission for interviews and TOEFL testing. Posts and Commissions can determine whether it is best to gather the candidates together in the capital to take the TOEFL or allow them to schedule their own tests at regional testing sites on an individual basis.
- Funding is also available for selected participants to travel to the Post/Commission for the visa interview/pre-departure orientation.

How is funding sourced for travel to the Post/ Commission for the TOEFL testing and interviews? ECA/A/S/X will provide funds via a Miscellaneous Obligation document (MO) to posts or via the Payment Management System (PMS) to commissions to cover the following costs:

- travel of candidates to the interview/English testing location plus per diem
- travel of participants to the visa interview/ pre-departure orientation plus per diem costs.

Please contact Patricia Mosley, ECA/A/S/X, at mosleypj@state.gov (cc: Senior Program Officer Michael kuban, ECA/A/S/X, at KubanMM@state.gov) you plan to request funds for the expenses outlined above.

TOEFL Testing

What English tests are required for participation in TEA?

All candidates nominated for the program must take the TOEFL or an equivalent English test. Per paragraph 8 of the cable, it is preferable to have candidates take the paper-based form of the English test; however, internet or computer based tests are acceptable if they are the only or best option for the candidates in your country. Scores from the following tests will be accepted:

- institutional TOEFL (IST)
- paper-based TOEFL (PBT)
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS)
- internet-based TOEFL (iBT)
- Posts/ Commissions may propose further alternatives to their IREX contact for approval. If alternative tests are utilized, please provide official score reports as well as converted scores to reflect their TOEFL score value.

What is the minimum TOEFL (or equivalent) score required for participation in TEA?

In previous years, participation in the TEA program has been open to teachers with a minimum score of 450 on the paper-based TOEFL or equivalent exam. Now Posts/Commissions may nominate a limited number of participants with a paper-based TOEFL score of 425 to 450 to participate in a program with a greater concentration on English language learning. Posts and Commissions may include nominations for this group as part of their normal nomination numbers. However, because the majority of TEA Fellows will still require a TOEFL score of 450 or above, we encourage you to nominate candidates with scores above this threshold where possible.



How many applicants per country should take the TOEFL (or an equivalent English exam)?

Testing should be administered to no more than twice the number of nominees requested per country (see paragraph 3 of the cable). For example, the cable requests two (2) nominees from Romania so four (4) applicants from Romania can be funded to take the TOEFL test.

How is funding sourced for TOEFL tests or equivalent English exams?

- For institutional TOEFL exams (IST), paper-based TOEFL exams (PBT), IELTS exams, or other equivalent English exams: ECA/A/S/X will provide funds via a Miscellaneous Obligation document (MO) to posts or via the Payment Management System (PMS) to commissions to cover associated costs. Please contact Patricia Mosley, ECA/A/S/X, at moslevpj@state.gov (cc: Senior Program Officer Michael kuban, ECA/A/S/X, at KubanMM@state.gov) if you plan to request funds for the expenses outlined above.
- For internet-based TOEFL (iBT): IREX will provide vouchers. These vouchers should be requested from IREX no later than March 2, 2015. IREX will forward the voucher numbers to Posts via email within one to three weeks of receiving the request. Post/ Commissions or TEA candidates will then use the voucher numbers in place of payment when registering for the test.

How should scheduling be arranged for the TOEFL examination?

Posts and Commissions are responsible for making all testing arrangements, including dates, locations and times. Testing dates should be selected so that all English test results can be received by IREX no later than June 15, 2015. Posts can identify iBT and PBT TOEFL dates on the ETS website:

http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/TOEFL/tclists/BOTH_p.html

Once a date has been selected, Posts/ Commissions can either send nominees the date so they can register themselves or Posts/ commissions can register on the nominees' behalf.

IREX's ETS institutional code is **2614**. Please have Fellows include this code when registering for the TOEFL exam, when applicable. If necessary, IREX will accept unofficial copies of score reports as placeholders until official score reports are available.

Interviewing TEA Candidates

How many candidates should be interviewed?

Approximately twice the nominee number listed on the cable should be interviewed by a panel of experts. This is to ensure that the best possible candidates are nominated. In countries where high volumes of applications are received, some Posts and Commissions have implemented pre-screening processes such as asking applicants to complete one page of short answer questions. This pre-screening process is used to select applicants eligible for interviews.

Who should sit on the selection committee (interview panel)?

It is recommended that interview panelists be comprised of 3-4 of the following individuals: Post/ Commission staff that are familiar with TEA and/ or similar exchange programs; TEA or International Leaders in Education Program (ILEP) alumni where possible; Education USA staff; Ministry of Education Officials.

What materials or information do selection committee panelists need?

It is recommended that all interviewers are provided with copies of application materials in advance. Additionally, IREX will send posts/commissions score sheets and selection criteria rubrics that can be distributed to selection committee panelists.

How long should each interview take?

As a best practice, interviewers should plan to spend 20-30 minutes with each candidate. It is also strongly recommended that interviews take place in person rather than over the phone.



Submission of Nomination Materials to ECA

What documents do I need to return to IREX by June 15, 2015?

- One completed “Comprehensive Score and Ranking Sheet” listing all nominees in rank order (this form will be sent by IREX).
- A completed “TEA Score Form” with 3-4 sentences of substantive commentary for each nominee, preferably typed or written very clearly, since forms will be scanned and distributed electronically to the TEA confirmation panel). (This form will be sent by IREX).
- A completed application for each nominee **inclusive of** a completed “Institution Support and Reference Form” signed by the applicant’s School Director with accompanying Letter of Recommendation.
- A copy of the photo and information pages of each nominee’s passport. If teachers do not have a passport at the time of application, please submit a copy of another government- issued ID and encourage them to apply for a passport as soon as possible.

Can the nominees’ application materials be submitted to IREX electronically?

Yes, IREX prefers to accept application materials by email. For files larger than 15MB, we suggest using a sending tool such as Google Drive or Dropbox.com. If you have trouble sending materials electronically, please ask your IREX contact for assistance. Applications submitted to Post/Commissions using the online system will automatically be available to IREX and only the supporting documents should be sent on to IREX.

Notification of Finalist Selection

When will Posts and Commissions be given notification of finalist selection?

IREX will notify Posts of finalists by mid- September 2015. IREX will provide Posts and Commissions with a list of participants who will be offered fellowships and ask Posts/Commissions to concur with selections and to confirm that the applicants’ circumstances and eligibility have not changed.

IREX will also send award letters, terms and conditions documents, medical forms, and pre-program survey forms for distribution to finalists in mid-September 2015.

If a Finalist from my country withdraws from the program will an Alternate candidate from my country automatically fill this slot?

No, when a Finalist withdraws from the program the available slot is filled from the global pool of alternates. The new Finalist is selected based on their overall rank and TOEFL scores as well as gender and teaching discipline if housing and school practicum placements have already been arranged.

Questions?

IREX is happy to answer questions and provide further information at any time throughout the recruitment cycle. Please do not hesitate to email or call your IREX contact. Thank you for your support of the TEA Program.