



June 4, 2015

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS NO 268-15-000002

University Scholarship Program (Phase VII)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

The purpose of this amendment is to amend the solicitation, extend the closing date for Application Submission from June 8, 2015 to June 15, 2015 and provide answers to questions received.

The subject RFA is hereby amended as follows:

Cover Page. Closing Date for Application Submission:

Delete “June 8, 2015 (10:00 am Cairo local time)” and insert “June 15, 2015 (10:00 am Cairo local time)”

SECTION IV – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

ARTICLE A. TECHNICAL EVALUATION FORMAT

Page 39, “5. Technical Application Body”

Delete “ Section 2: Management Plan

Please refer to Part I Section A and Part I B1, B9, B11 and B12”

and insert:

“ Section 2: Management Plan

Please refer to Section I Part A and Part I B1, B9, B11 and B12”

Response to Questions Received:

Question 1

Section I – Program Description, Article 4.a. Majors (Page 10, Second paragraph) states:

“To ensure uniformity across the three recruitment cycles, where each cycle consists of one year of recruitment, selection and enrollment, offered academic majors must not exceed four years, excluding the preparatory year. Accordingly, in each cycle, every

student cohort gets equally the same chance of enrolling in up to one preparatory year (intensive English, etc...), and up to four academic years.”

If the scholar (i.e. in the Engineering School) needs only one semester (fall semester) during the preparatory year, he/she will immediately embark on the engineering program in the spring by taking electives and Liberal Arts requirements. However, since the Engineering program is sequenced by year, and not by semester, the scholar would not be able to begin the engineering courses until the following fall. Such a scholar would then need another 4 years to complete the program. Will USAID take this institutional academic circumstance (program sequenced by year) into consideration and not deprive those academically brilliant students who need a little of English support by allowing, on a case by cases basis, requests to have scholars in the Engineering program complete their Bachelor in Engineering degree in 5 years (1 preparatory and 4 academic)?

Answer 1

As per RFA terms (page 10 under Admissions and Enrollment, cycle duration), academic programs must not exceed four years. Based on the above scenario, it seems that the academic program, though sequenced by year, may take longer than four years. The RFA is clear on page 10 second paragraph that program durations of longer duration than four years for the first and second cohorts are not allowable. Thus, the above request cannot be endorsed and is not allowed. Nonetheless, the applicant(s) may consider in their application, while respecting RFA enrollment and admission terms, the feasibility of enrolling four-year students who follow a sequential program by year, such as the engineering above, as of the Spring rather than fall when the student requires one preparatory semester only. Students will enroll then for one semester of English as needed in the Spring, and will start their regular courses as of the next fall without taking one unnecessary additional semester at USAID's cost. This will be an allowable exception for students who must follow a sequential program and require one semester of intensive English only. Qualifying students must not have enrolled in any private university while waiting for their spring admission. In all cases, students must not take more than four years to complete their academic degree at any point.

Question 2

Section I – Program Description, Article 4. Admissions and Enrollment, states:

“The applicants must reflect in their own terms all considerations below in their application; omission of any section will be negatively evaluated:

4.a. Majors:

Scholarships will be offered in undergraduate fields of studies that have prospects for meaningful employment only. Scholarships should enable students to acquire a job upon completion of undergraduate studies. Undergraduate degrees offered as prerequisite for graduate studies such as biology are highly discouraged and will be critically scrutinized by USAID. Additionally, academic degrees that require a further post-graduation internship, further studies for completion post the initial degree, or additional requirements post-graduation to be licensed are not allowed under USP, unless clear management and financial plan is presented by the applicant detailing

how the cost of such additional studies will be covered beyond USP and from non-USAID sources. This applies to all disciplines except to the mandated teaching diploma.”

The Nutrition program requires licensure for practice beyond the BS degrees similar to the teaching diploma. In order to be eligible to pass the National Colloquium Examination at the Ministry of Higher Education (MEHE) and get licensure for Dietetic practice, B.S. in Nutrition graduates need to conduct an internship at the dietetic department of a Lebanese hospital that is approved by the Ministry of Health. Accordingly, Nutrition graduates can enroll in the Dietetics Internship Program. DIP is open to holders of a BS in Nutrition who wish to obtain the license to practice the profession of dietetics in Lebanon. Is the Dietetics Internship Program (Nine months) acceptable to be funded by USAID?

Answer 2

As per RFA (Page 8, Section 4.a Majors), post-graduation internships, including the specified dietetics one above, are not allowed and cannot be funded by USAID.

Question 3

Section I – Program Description, Article 4.d. Enrollment Conditions Applicable to All Cycles (Page 13, fourth bullet point) states:

“ . Double majors may be allowed if students are academically good. The applicant must determine conditions, criteria and financial implications on USAID. Students in double majors must graduate at least three months prior to project completion”.

USAID allows double majors for academically good strong students. Will USAID accept a dual degree?

Answer 3

As per RFA page 13 (4.d. Enrollment Conditions Applicable to All Cycles), USAID will make a determination whether double majors will be allowed based on conditions, criteria and financial implications that the applicant will propose. The applicant(s) may propose a scheme for dual degree noting the conditions, criteria and financial implications on USAID. USAID will make a final determination upon review. It must be noted though that students must not exceed four academic years in all cases. Moreover, if a dual degree requires a substantial number of additional courses beyond the normal load, than it is most likely that USAID will reject dual degrees. For purposes of this note, substantial means a course load for more than one additional semester.

Question 4

Are students who meet all the criteria for selection for this program but are non-Lebanese (they are Palestinian born in Lebanon carrying a refugee documents issued by the Lebanese government) eligible to be included in this program?

Answer 4

As per “SECTION I – PROGRAM DESCRIPTION”, Article “2.a Student Eligibility and USAID’s Substantial Involvement” only Lebanese graduates are eligible to be included in this program.

Question 5

During the first two years of a cycle, namely year 2 where the main activity is preparation, can we include SAT prep courses if these are required for entry to the university? Clearly we will meet the conditions stated in the RFA in terms of percentages and number of semesters, but we wondered if SAT prep can be considered English remedial course.

Answer 5

SAT or other preparatory English requirement cannot be considered as an English remedial course; it is a qualifying test for university entrance or English proficiency determinant. The Scholarship as per RFA pages 8 through 13 (Admissions and Enrollment Terms), supports students only after admission to the host-university. Thus, these courses must not be considered as remedial classes and must not be charged at USAID’s expense. Additionally, SAT may not necessarily be a requirement for University admission depending on the partnership agreement with the host-university, noting that the host-university must be determined and specified at the application stage (please refer to page 33, Type and Nationality of Applicant; Type and Nationality of Host-University). Other placement exams than SAT may be done at the discretion of the host-university as per RFA page 14 (Preparatory Year): “Language placement exams to determine the language level of scholars in need of such preparation must be clearly delineated in the application along with the placement methodology. The applicant must present in a tabular format each preparatory level along with the corresponding number of required semesters for completion of this level and the basis for qualifying under each level such as test grades.

Question 6

If the answer of question 5 is positive, then can we include the SAT test fees either as part of the cost share or funds requested?

Answer 6

Please refer to the above; the answer to question 6 is negative. Please refer to page 36 (Cost-Share, first paragraph) in the RFA, namely the following that indicates that qualifying tests may be included as cost-share: “A cost share of at least 30% of the total project cost is required as per guidance below. Universities are encouraged to waive their entrance exam fees (English or qualifier test) for scholarship candidates as means to enable highly financially needy students to apply.

Question 7

In the past four years, have any NGOs been part of this program, if yes, are you comfortable naming these so we reach out to learn and possible partner with them?

Answer 7

USAID is not in a position to recommend any organization to partner. A couple of NGOs were engaged in very specific components. For further information on these NGOs interventions please refer to the USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse at <https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/home/Default.aspx> .

Question 8

We are not clear if this program has to send the different students in each of the three cohorts to the same university or different students can enroll in different universities (again, following the conditions stated about the majors etc.)

Answer 8

Please refer to page 33 (Type and Nationality of Applicant, last paragraph) as following:

“Note that the scholarship may be implemented through two models:

- 1. A single applicant who will oversee the entire program, manage the recruitment and enrollment phase and register students at different host universities; or***
- 2. Different universities applying directly to recruit, select, enroll and then manage scholars registered on campus.”***

It is expected that applicants under the first model above recruit three successive cohorts as per RFA, and enroll each cohort at the identified partner host-universities, irrespective of the number of partner universities as long as the latter meet the requirements set on page 33 (Type and Nationality of the Host University).

End of Amendment No. 01