



February 27, 2011

USAID/Lebanon

Annual Program Statement

Title: University Scholarship Assistance Program II (USAP-II)

APS NUMBER: 268-11-003

AMENDMENT NO. 1

The subject APS is hereby modified as follows:

Cover Page, First initial review of concept papers, delete “February 28, 2011” and substitute in lieu thereof “March 7, 2011” in this section and where it is stated throughout the APS.

The following are answers to questions received:

1) Question:

On page 7 of the APS, there is reference to the first review of concept papers on February 28, 2011. Is the submission deadline also February 28?

USAID Response:

There is no really a deadline. The APS is valid till December 31, 2011. However, as stated in the APS, the first review of concept papers was February 28, 2011. However, this date is extended to **March 7, 2011**. Thus, applicants of concept papers who want to be reviewed on that date need to submit their concept papers any time **before March 7, 2011**.

2) Question:

What attachments are permissible when submitting the concept paper? For example, can an applicant include draft job descriptions for key personnel needed to manage the initiative?

USAID Response:

Attachments are to be submitted with the full application not with the concept paper, if requested to submit an application. Please comply with what needs to be submitted for concept papers stated in Section 6 – Application Process of the APS, item A. Step One: Submit Concept Paper.

3) Question:

Does USAID require letters of commitment from potential partners at the concept paper stage?

USAID Response:

Letters of commitment need to be submitted at the Application stage and not at the concept paper phase. Please refer to Section 6 – Application Process of the APS B. Step Two: Full Application, 1. Program Application, e. Attachments.

4) Question:

Are institutions who received funding under the previous University Assistance Scholarship Program eligible for participation in USAP-II?

USAID Response:

Yes, these are the Lebanese American University and Haigazian University.

5) Question:

Page 3 of the APS states that applicants should allocate USG funding toward student scholarships and ancillary costs should be attributed to cost share. Are there any conditions under which USAID would allow tuition reductions/waivers to be considered an acceptable cost share?

USAID Response:

The tuition reduction is considered cost share if the institution can duly prove it.

6) Question:

Page 3 mentions that USAID/Lebanon anticipates the cooperative agreement for USAP-II to cover a period of performance from 4-5 years. Given that engineering programs often take five years to complete, would a six-year period be an option for engineering students who also need one year of English language training?

USAID Response:

The maximum anticipated duration for the USAP – II is five years and cannot be extended beyond that duration. However, USAID believes that any possible extension of the duration up to seven years to include engineering students will be determined based on the initial recruitment by the implementer of applicants, i.e. if the percentage of recruited students applying for Engineering is quite high, then an extension will be envisaged for an additional year. The costs of this extension will have to be discussed with the implementer whereby the latter will have to put financial contributions towards costs since the last year of the project covers only a relatively small number of students to be managed. This extension and subsequent contribution will be negotiated after nearly the first year of the program when the implementer has a clear picture about how many eligible applicants are wishing to pursue studies in engineering.

7) Question:

Page 4 of the APS indicates that universities participating in this program should have fields of study including Engineering, Marketing, Business, Computer Science, etc. Are there any fields of study excluded from this program?

USAID Response:

Engineering, marketing, business and computer science fields of study are preferred and/or, all fields of studies can be accepted.

8) Question:

In regards to vetting potential students and their parents, would USAID share the Mission Order that details the procedures for ensuring that assistance funds do not inadvertently support individuals associated with terrorism? Would USAID also indicate whether the Mission or USAID/Washington would be involved in the vetting process or whether the implementing agency is expected to conduct the vetting process independently?

USAID Response:

Vetting is to be conducted independently by the awardee, but is subject to periodic verification by USAID/Lebanon. All guidelines and procedures for vetting will be detailed in the cooperative agreement once awarded.

9) Question:

Does USAID anticipate a nation-wide recruitment of students or are you amenable to a more targeted recruitment in more limited communities with the goal of respecting the need for diversity as described on page 6 of the APS?

USAID Response:

The recruitment should be nationwide and not within targeted communities even if these targeted communities have religious diversity.

10) Question:

If invited to submit a full application, when does USAID anticipate review to occur and when would the award be made? For example, would the Mission anticipate making an award by spring 2011 with the hope of recruiting the first cohort of students to begin their respective programs in the fall of 2011? Or, would USAID accept proposals that would include a fall 2012 start for scholarship recipients?

USAID Response:

The targeted academic year for this award should be September 2012.

11) Question:

Could you describe the process for registration or does registration occur after the USAID selection process?

USAID Response:

Student registration in universities will occur after the students have been selected by the implementer, as per the criteria set by the program. If the previous response does not answer the question, please clarify the question to be able to answer you correctly.

12) Question:

While program administration and ancillary costs are to be cost shared, does the program (federal funds) pay for full cost-of-education (i.e. inclusive of room and board)?

USAID Response:

As per section B4 (page 6 of the APS), federal funds are to cover for full costs of education inclusive of housing (room), books and stipends (board). However, cost sharing is encouraged at large and will enhance the cost effectiveness of the program and its subsequent evaluation by USAID.

13) Will the information session be web-cast or otherwise made accessible to those not available to attend at USAID/Lebanon?

USAID Response:

USAID has not decided yet on that. Also, the decision as to whether or not to have an information session will depend on the interest raised for it. Please provide by **March 7, 2011** whether or not you plan to attend this session. Based on the interest received USAID will decide whether or not it will hold the session and will provide the date.

14) Question:

What is the period of performance for USAP II? We are assuming that the award will cover students starting in fall 2012. Is it also safe to assume that the award will start in Oct-Nov 2011 for recruitment activities? If the starting date for the students is Oct 2012, is it possible to allow those who need English training to start in summer of 2012?

USAID Response:

The period of performance ranges from four to five years, including a year of English, as some majors require three years, while others require four. This award will target the academic year 2012, i.e. September 2012. However, the start date of the award is targeted to be September 2011, which is one year before the start of the academic year, to allow for preparations and recruitment. If needed, English language training is required to be taken before the beginning of academic year 2012, and could stretch up to one year. Therefore, starting English training in the summer of 2012 is acceptable as this falls within the timeframe of the award.

15) Question:

The RFA indicates that Engineering should be offered to the USAP II students among other fields of study. The regular Engineering program at our university is normally completed in 4 years including 3 summers. Since the RFA includes leadership requirements, to run during the summers, and since some of the USAP II students will be taking English training, we expect that such students will not finish their degree during the timeline of the published period of performance for the award. Will the award be extended for more than 4 years + English training specifically for those who are accepted into the Engineering program?

USAID Response:

The RFA does not specify that leadership skills should be taken during the summers. These courses/skills can be taken anytime during the course of the studies. Therefore, there is no ground, concerning the leadership requirements, for assuming that an extension will be needed for engineering students. Please refer to answer to question 6 with regard to additional information about engineering students.

16) Question:

We agree that the majority of the public school students are in need of full scholarships, including tuition, housing, books, and stipends. We are aware, however, that some students are in desperate need of assistance for their tuition but have other means of support for housing, for example. Will it be possible to recruit such students in the program on partial scholarships, hence allowing the scholarship program to reach a larger number of students and thus to impact a large number of Lebanese families?

USAID Response:

The objective of the USAP program is to provide full scholarships to needy students. If a student secures housing in Beirut and does not need housing assistance, then this is fine, as long as the applicant provides him with full tuition fees for the entire duration of these studies. No partial tuition fees will be allowed under this program. In this specific case, the student will receive full tuition assistance, books and stipends. The cost of the housing will be deducted and used for another student.

17) Question:

Is it possible to offer full scholarship to graduate students? Our university has a number of professional graduate programs, such as: Master of Science (MS), Master of Arts (MA), Master of Engineering (ME), Master of Business Administration (MBA), and few PhD programs. A number of bright students with financial needs completed their undergraduate studies with the help of the University in providing assistance. These students will have a chance to pursue their graduate studies and have a better chance in employment and improving their and their families' lives in a highly competitive environment.

USAID Response:

Graduate studies will not be considered under this APS.

18) Question:

The RFA states that the concept paper is "to be submitted via internet email only with attachments (5MB limit)". It is unclear whether the concept paper and attachments taken together cannot exceed 5MB, or whether the 5MB limit applies only to the attachments.

USAID Response:

This is changed to 10 MB per e-mail i.e. the maximum size of attachments per e-mail is 10 MB.

19) Question:

The RFA lists a number of websites to be used for vetting students and their parents. Our university already vets USAID financial aid students using the following links:

- a. <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/1267/1267ListEng.htm>
- b. <http://www.epls.gov>
- c. www.ustreas.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac

Is it important to have other lists used and if so, can you provide us with examples? Could you also please explain what does "seeking NGO or international organization reporting" refer to?

USAID Response:

The applicant will be required to vet students and their parents (or guardians if applicable) using the lists mentioned in the APS, which actually include the above lists. There are no other lists. The phrase “press reports, and NGO or international organization reporting” means that the applicant, in addition to the lists noted in the anti-terrorist certification, should rely on their knowledge of local events, partners, and reports in the event that such information would give the applicant reason to believe that one or more of its scholarship recipients has engaged or engages in terrorist activity.

20) Question:

The RFA states that dual nationals who are both U.S. and Lebanese citizens are not eligible for the program. We would like the rationale behind this decision to better explain to such applicants why they are being excluded. Does this apply to other dual nationals, or only those who hold U.S. citizenship?

USAID Response:

Dual nationals holding the Lebanese and American nationalities are not eligible to participate in this program, as it is assumed that holders of the American nationality can benefit from the services of the US government by attending an academic institution in the US. Holders of dual nationalities other than Lebanese-American are allowed to participate in this program. Students should be strictly and clearly requested to provide information about their citizenship.

21) Question:

USAPII requires that applicants have full time staff dedicated to this program. We feel that this requirement imposes additional costs and may create a distinct class of students. The university will assign a coordinator for USAPII program who will monitor the students socially and academically. However, we feel that the coordinator can rely on the already students' available resources to ensure that the students are able to function and flourish in their new environment. Such resources include academic advisors (one for each student), the university preparatory program, the office of student affairs, housing and dormitory staff, student organizations, counseling center, career and placement services among many others. We feel that the USAP-II students will be served better if they are integrated within the larger student body, instead of being a "separate but equal" group of students. Such integration will improve the students' leadership and networking skills. Is it possible to consider that the program be managed by university current staff members (academic and non-academic) who will dedicate part of their time for the program?

USAID Response:

No. As required in the RFA, the USAP II program should have a full time dedicated staff and manager whose sole duty is to oversee the process of recruitment, manage the students once enrolled, report to and communicate with USAID and perform other related duties. This arrangement is not seen to affect the students' integration in the university community.

22) Question:

USAP II clearly specifies that it intends to support public school students. We believe that supporting public school students and providing them with the opportunity to have quality university education is a good cause. However, we would like to know if it is possible to consider private school students from economically disadvantaged families who are already on full, need-based, school scholarships for this program? Such school graduates, who will not have the opportunity to consider our university without full scholarship, will have a greater chance of

success in our programs. These students could also aid in having better regional distribution, when we cannot recruit qualified public school students from some regions.

USAID Response:

No. As the objective of the program is to provide an opportunity for public school students to attend quality higher education. The target beneficiaries of the program are public school students. Students coming from private schools, irrespective of their financial status, cannot benefit from the USAP II. The applicant should make every possible effort to recruit qualified public school students from all Lebanese regions.