

NSEP David L. Boren Undergraduate Scholarships

Application Forms

The National Security Education Program (NSEP) David L. Boren Scholarships offer a unique opportunity for U.S. undergraduates to study abroad. NSEP awards scholarships to American students for study of world regions critical to U.S. interests (including Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Eurasia, Latin American & the Caribbean, and the Middle East). The countries of Western Europe, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are excluded.

Program Areas of Focus

NSEP focuses on geographic areas, languages, and fields of study deemed critical to U.S. national security. It draws on a broad definition of national security, recognizing that the scope of national security has expanded to include not only the traditional concerns of protecting and promoting American well-being, but also the challenges of global society, including: sustainable development, environmental degradation, global disease and hunger, population growth and migration, and economic competitiveness.

International Focus

Boren Scholarships are intended to provide support to U.S. undergraduates who will pursue the study of languages and cultures currently underrepresented in study abroad and critical to U.S. national security.

Language Study

NSEP emphasizes the importance of language study as a major component of your study abroad program. Study of a foreign language appropriate to the identified country must be an integral part of each proposal. In addition, you must meet any language requirements of the study abroad experience you propose.

All study abroad programs do not offer the same opportunities to learn a language. The language component must incorporate opportunities to learn a language in a context that is meaningful to your language proficiency and language learning goals. You should take into account any prior knowledge and experience in the proposed language when selecting and designing your study abroad program. If you already have studied the language, you should consider what opportunities the program will provide for you to advance your proficiency. If you have not studied the language, you should consider what the program offers you in opportunities to make substantial progress.

Among the issues you should consider in selecting your program are:

- Does the program offer language courses that emphasize rigorous study and practical use of the contemporary language leading to increased proficiency in reading, speaking, and listening?
- How many classroom contact hours are offered in the language study? Will this be sufficient to increase your language proficiency?
- Are there opportunities to study the language in small groups tailored to your proficiency level?
- Who are the faculty who teach the language? Are they native speakers with extensive experience in teaching foreign students?

Is there a full-time U.S. resident director at the institution who will help oversee your academic and cultural programs and monitor your language learning?

Are there serious opportunities for living in university housing or home-stays where the foreign language will be spoken on a regular basis? How are home-stay families selected?

Since NSEP encourages students to study in countries whose languages are less commonly taught at U.S. institutions, it is anticipated that many students will not be familiar with the language of their chosen country. Prior study of another language will serve as an indication of interest and aptitude.

NOTE: Study of Spanish or French is permissible only when it is at an advanced level of competency. In such cases, the study abroad experience should not focus on language acquisition, but rather on academic coursework. **Special Exception:** NSEP will consider applications from students at the intermediate level of Spanish or French if their field of study is in the sciences, engineering, or business. At the time of application, determination of intermediate/advanced language level will be self-assessed. IIE/NSEP will have the competency level verified. Any award granted for the study of Spanish and French will be made contingent upon verification of the advanced level (or intermediate level for students in science, engineering or business).

If you have an advanced-level proficiency in Chinese or Russian, you are eligible for support under the Boren Scholarship to participate in the Chinese or Russian Language Flagship Overseas Program. Please see [The Language Flagship](#) for further details.

The NSEP Service Requirement

The NSEP service requirement stipulates that award recipients work in the federal government in positions with national security responsibilities. The Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, State, or any element of the Intelligence Community are priority agencies. If an award recipient demonstrates to NSEP that no appropriate position is available in one of these agencies the award recipient must seek to fulfill the requirement in a position with national security responsibilities in any federal department or agency. Approval of service outside of a priority agency is contingent upon satisfactory demonstration of a full and good faith effort in accordance with conditions established by NSEP.