

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who should apply to the USA/USA Program?

Students studying in the eighth through eleventh grade of Ukrainian schools are eligible to apply.

How do I apply?

Eligible students should submit a full application package by mail to the USA/USA address in New York. Eligibility criteria are specified in the UVAHA statement.

Are there any application forms?

There is a short registration form and a teacher evaluation form, but no other application forms. The UVAHA statement has the full list of materials that need to be submitted.

Why do I have to register?

A student can register early. In this case, we will be able to notify him/her when and whether his/her application has arrived. Nevertheless, a student can simply send in the registration form with his/her application materials if he/she so wishes.

What is the best grade from which to apply to the USA/USA Program?

Since the application process to preparatory schools and colleges abroad is difficult and time consuming, students are encouraged to apply before the 11th grade. If selected, this will give them more time to prepare for the college application process. Regardless of grade, a successful USA/USA applicant must have a good record of achievements, maturity, and independence.

What is the approach to applications from younger students?

Ninth grade and even eighth grade applications are welcomed. Such students are regularly accepted, especially if they demonstrate truly outstanding academic skills, determination in their extra-curricular activities and maturity beyond their years. These students must also demonstrate truly

superior English language skills for their age group. In most cases, if a younger student is not selected, we may recommend that the student re-applies the following year.

Do students have to take a TOEFL to apply to the USA/USA Program?

Students do not have to take an official TOEFL exam in order to apply. They are welcome to submit an official score if they have taken the exam before. However, the USA/USA conducts unofficial TOEFL and mathematics testing as part of its selection process. We inform students when and where we will administer the examinations and interviews in Ukraine. This may be their oblast capital city or any other convenient neighboring city. For example, Zhytomir applicants may have to travel to Vinnitsa or Sevastopol applicants may have to travel to Yalta. Much depends on the distribution and number of applicants.

Why cannot students take the TOEFL and then apply? This way they will not have to submit the burdensome materials and will save themselves a lot of work.

We require that students submit the materials before taking the TOEFL to demonstrate their serious interest in the USA/USA Program.

I am a FSA/FLEX student studying in high school in America for one academic year. Can I apply to the USA/USA Program from the United States?

Of course, you can. Students can mail their applications from America while they are in the USA. They will have to travel back to Ukraine after their academic year in any case. They will be able to take our unofficial TOEFL exams after they return to Ukraine. FSA/FLEX students are encouraged to take full advantage of their year in the US by taking the most challenging courses, getting involved in extracurricular activities and learning about the US college system.

Students are also encouraged to apply to the USA/USA Program if they are applying to the FSA/FLEX Program. They can attend the USA/USA Seminar (if selected) and then depart to America for their year abroad. In all cases, we expect students to fulfill their obligations with reference to their promise to return to Ukraine for a two-year home-stay as required by their FSA/FLEX Program J-1 visa.

Are there any fees for applying to the USA/USA Program?

Absolutely not! If someone does try to charge you a fee, please inform the USA/USA office immediately.

Can I submit my materials in handwritten form?

Of course, you can. However, they must be neat and easy to read. It is the quality of the materials rather than their format that counts. Transcripts should be Xerox copies of originals with a school seal or originals.

Does it make any difference when I submit my application? Is there any advantage to submitting my application materials early?

Your application should arrive on time. However, there is no benefit to sending the application too early. Students who proof-read and improve the quality of the materials are the most likely to succeed. It takes about two weeks for mail to be delivered to the US from Ukraine; the service is reliable. If you decide to spend money and send the application materials via special express mail, you must be certain that they can deliver to a US Government post office box.

Why do I have to submit the last four years of grades?

We ask for a four-year transcript to make sure that a student has strong academic record. American colleges and prep ►►

► schools require four years of grades for the same purpose.

How do I have to submit the last four years of grades?

Your transcripts should include all schools attended in the last four years. The students must submit photocopies or print-outs of school transcripts and atestats. These should include quarterly reports, not just summations. Students who have spent any time abroad must submit their grades from the school abroad.

I have participated in various Olympiads and after school programs. Should I submit documentation of my prizes and supplementary diplomas?

While you are not expected to send in copies of all your diplomas, we encourage you to submit the copies of diplomas earned at city, regional (oblast), national, and international Olympiads/competitions. The organizer of the competition should also be listed with a complete address so that we can verify the results. Any misrepresentation of awards will be a reason for denial of admission to and expulsion from the USA/USA Program.

Can you give me more information about the essays? What should they be about? How long should they be?

Essays should demonstrate the ability of the student to write in literary English. They should demonstrate something about the student or about his thinking that will be important or memorable. They should stand out. Writing is a very important element of elite American and English education. We would recommend that you write about something that you know or about something that concerns you. This can represent your public or private concerns.

We do not recommend writing about why you want to see America or meet Americans. We are neither a tourist agency nor an agency that runs a lottery for dream vacations. Students should also not write simple descriptive essays of Ukraine,

their hometown, or their family. Essays should demonstrate imagination.

Americans are people who value time. A long essay must be very good. It cannot bore the reader. More than length, we emphasize quality of writing and originality of approach. Normally the essay should be something that you could very carefully write in an hour. You should spend much more time editing it afterwards. It should in almost all cases be under three double spaced written pages. However, if you are Shakespeare please write more. We do recommend that you check your spelling and grammar. Quality over quantity! An essay should be thoughtful and should reflect your best abilities in writing. Proofread, proofread, and proofread, as we say.

How important is submission of my telephone number?

Telephones are very important. We phone students to tell them of their acceptance. Some students did not submit proper telephone numbers in the past, which made it impossible to contact them when we decided to accept them. If you do not have a telephone at home, please indicate exactly whose telephone it is, and when it should be utilized.

I wish to apply to both Ukrainian universities and American colleges. Is that possible?

Of course, it is possible. This pertains to students who are completing their high school education in Ukraine or in America. Unfortunately, Ukrainian universities hold exams at different times. So it is impossible to schedule our seminar at a time that would not conflict with any university entrance exam in Ukraine. We do try our best to minimize the number of potential conflicts.

What is the most common mistake students make?

Students fail to submit a complete set of materials listed in the UVAHA statement, particularly grades or a proper final academic transcript (atestat). Even if the grades are included, the atestat fails to in-

clude the name of the student and the name of the school. That is, the name and the address of the school are not clear and the signature of the school official who testifies to the veracity of the document is not clear. The atestat should also include the date of the student's graduation. It should be fully legible. The atestat should come in the original language. Reformatted atestats to be comprehensible to the American school are NOT acceptable.

What is the worst mistake that I can make? What will result in immediate rejection?

Any discovery of dishonest or destructive behavior will result in immediate expulsion from the program.

Why is the USA/USA Program limited to eleven oblasts and Sevastopol?

We are limiting the program to regions where we have a complete or rapidly growing list of schools that teach English. We also limit the program to where we have volunteers.

In addition, the Program's current resources and the number of volunteers limit us as to how much we can do. We sent notices and invitations to apply to our program to over 1,173 schools in Ukraine for the USA/USA Seminar 2005. In 2007 we sent notices and invitations to about 1,850 schools in Ukraine. We are increasing the number of schools that we are contacting, but this takes time and effort. If you are interested in volunteering to help establish the USA/USA Program in your oblast, please contact us.

We pick students for their academic excellence, but we are also paying greater attention to the social character and leadership potential of our selected students. The USA/USA Program depends greatly upon the work of the students we select. The Program cannot continue without this cooperation and work. This may be the most important sentence in the whole FAQ list. This Program cannot continue without your input and help. ■