



Guiding our Partnership

A Manual for ASSIST Representatives
at Day Schools

The ASSIST Mission

ASSIST creates life-changing opportunities for outstanding international scholars to learn from and contribute to the finest American independent secondary schools.

Since 1969, more than 6,000 students from 52 countries have studied in the U.S. fostering cross-cultural friendships for global harmony. Supported by American independent schools that offer scholarships, our partnership has laid a strong foundation for student success.

Guiding Our Partnership compiles essential information for ASSIST Representatives, drawing from our 55 years of experience, student feedback, U.S. State Department regulations, and CSIET standards.

The key responsibilities of the ASSIST Representative are:

- Register annually as ASSIST Representative and complete the criminal background check.
- Read and refer to two important documents: *Guiding our Partnership* and *The ASSIST Scholars Handbook*.
- Recruit Host Families
- Meet monthly with each student and submit a brief report to ASSIST using this link. Include host family updates as well. Use this link:
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfy5dUFMwuVhqpUE47H-OPTJWkL99wzO5J1YAPvdtv-6vI2Q/viewform?usp=sharing&oid=100543767712582269713>

School Enrollment

- ASSIST Member Schools reenroll each fall.
- Schools must offer at least one full scholarship to a student.
- Schools can choose preferred countries for the full scholarship student.
- Schools can specify special requirements (e.g., gender, class placement)

*As noted in the CSIET standards, ASSIST does not fill special requests for athletes. Our students are scholars first, although each brings other special talents to share (e.g. music, art, debate, sport, etc.). We place students so that they can use their talents to contribute to their school communities while enriching themselves in the process.

Student Selection

With schools making a membership commitment in November, ASSIST begins its interview season knowing how many full and partial scholarship offers it can make to international students. Our colleagues overseas spend the fall promoting the program, receiving applications, and prescreening candidates. During the fall (Germany and Austria) and the winter (all other countries), ASSIST staff and volunteers interview finalists who have been selected through the screening process.

ASSIST uses the following criteria in selecting scholarship recipients:

- A history of notable academic achievement.
- A high degree of competence in spoken and understood English; evidence of competence in written English.
- An engaging personality, an instinct to learn and to share, and evidence of strong character.
- Talents and interests that can be utilized at receiving schools, including instrumentalists, vocalists, athletes, artists, and debaters.
- Upon returning home, the potential to share what has been learned and to become a leader in his or her chosen field.

Student Placement

ASSIST concludes its interviews by the end of January, and by early March generally has received responses to its offers of scholarships. In March, the placement of students at individual schools begins and extends through April.

ASSIST places students one at a time, taking into account the ability and talents of the student; the unique strengths and character of each school community; and requests made by the school for the upcoming academic year. After the file is sent to the school, the school reviews the student's file, utilizing its own protocols for student admission. In almost all cases, the student presented by ASSIST is accepted for admission. In those few cases where the school feels the match is not ideal, the file is returned immediately to ASSIST, and another candidate is presented.

The student file includes:

- An introductory write-up that summarizes the candidate's strengths and includes feedback from the interview.
- The ASSIST application form.
- An official transcript with appropriate translation guides (where needed).
- Recommendations from teachers and/or school administrators.
- The results of the DuoLingo test for most non-native speakers.

When the candidate is accepted for admission, the school informs ASSIST of this decision. ASSIST then writes the candidate to inform him or her of the acceptance and the award of the full or partial scholarship. The school also notifies the scholar and sends an official letter of acceptance, as well as:

- An I-20 form and instructions on how to apply for the F-1 visa or, ASSIST will issue the DS-2019 form and the student will apply for a J-1 visa.
- Materials that fully describe the school to the student and his or her family.
- Information regarding personal expenses for which the student is responsible.
- A student handbook and any other materials that will help the student integrate into the school community.

Visa Process

If the school is responsible for issuing the I-20 form to the student, they should provide instructions on how to apply for the F-1 visa. The ASSIST Rep should keep in touch with the colleague at the school responsible for issuing I-20s to ensure that the student receives the necessary paperwork to apply for his/her visa.

Student Acculturation & Support

We select ASSIST students whom we feel will adjust well to a new culture and make a notable contribution. However, every student will need some level of help, from modest to significant, in making the transition to a new culture, language, education system, and physical climate. Upon arriving to school, we suggest that you have some low-level planned activities that help to introduce the student to the community of people who will form his or her new home. We advise that you refrain from organizing large welcoming parties but instead give the student time to acculturate at a pace the student finds comfortable. Each school has a system in place for welcoming, orienting, acculturating, and supporting new students, and in many cases, schools have significant experience with this sequence for international students specifically.

In addition to your own experiences, encourage the ASSIST student to become active immediately. Beyond classes, we have found it beneficial for the adjustment of the student and school if the student gets involved in a sport or group activity during the first term. This may mean selecting a popular club, athletic team, music, and/or theater group to which they can contribute and from which they can learn.

Our Partnership

The ASSIST exchange experience works best when the student, school, and ASSIST work well together. In that regard, please call upon us whenever we may be helpful to you. We are available during normal office hours, but we may also be reached during the evening or on weekends if an acute situation calls for our experience and support. We look forward to working with you in the year ahead and to hearing about the contributions our students make to your community.

CSIET

(Council on Standards for International Educational Travel)

ASSIST is an authorized student exchange organization and a member of CSIET. Please use the link below to review the standards for international educational exchange.

[Council on Standard for International Educational Travel \(CSIET\) Standards](#)