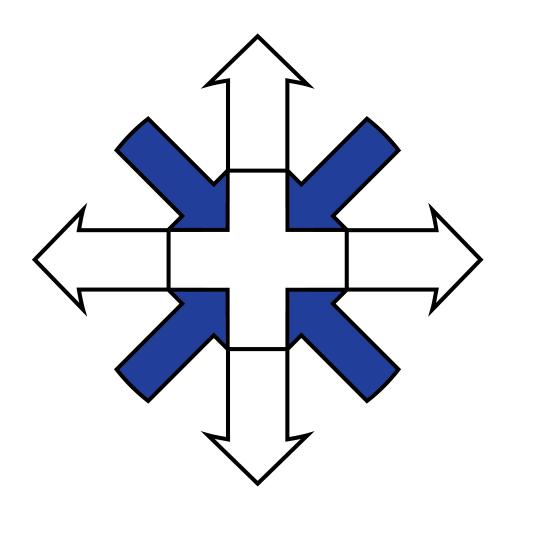
# AMSA-USA Research Exchange Application Guide for Outgoings





## **Introduction:**

Welcome to the AMSA Exchange program! As you know, the American Medical Student Association (AMSA) is the National Member Organization (NMO) that represents the physicians-in-training of the United States within the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA).

Research Exchanges are run through the Standing Committee on Research Exchanges (**SCORE**), one of the IFMSA's six **Standing Committees**. We are excited that you have chosen to participate in the largest and most successful student run exchange program in the world! This Application Guide has been designed to help you navigate the websites, databases, and application forms that are integral to the application process. It is important that you know how to use these databases and online applications so that the exchange process runs smoothly. Please do not hesitate to contact your Local Officers on Research Exchange (**LOREs**) or the AMSA National Officers on Research Exchange (**NOREs**) with any questions or concerns. The NORE can be reached at <u>NORE@amsa.org</u>.

# **Outgoing Applicant Timeline**

## 2013/14 SCOPE & SCORE Applications Timeline

- August 19th- Primary Cycle + Country/NMO List Open
- November 4th, Sunday- PRIMARY CYCLE PRIMARY APP DUE.
- November 11th, Sunday- Primary Cycle Acceptance Notification Deadline
- November 13th Exchange Fee Deadline (48hrs) → eAF Assigned upon payment
- Dec 16th, Sunday- Primary Cycle secondary eAF Deadline
- **Rolling Cycle Open**: Concurrently, non-Local Committee students are wait-listed until Active LCs' applicants are assigned a country/NMO. All remaining spots flip to Rolling Cycle.
  - o Rolling Cycle Notification Deadline: App submission date + 1 week from the next Sunday
  - o Exchange Fee Deadline: Notification Deadline + 48hrs
  - o Rolling Cycle eAF Deadline: Notification Date + 4 weeks (Sunday)

# Qualifications and Eligibility for an AMSA Research Exchange

It might go without saying, but these spots gather some competition for acceptance. This included list of qualifications will help you make sure you are eligible to apply!

Before you can apply for the AMSA Research Exchange program, you need to explore the countries/NMOs and projects that you are interested in putting on your application. Only country choices go on your Primary Application, but those same countries must have projects of interest and open availability in order to be good choices for you. You are choosing multiple countries in the Primary Application Form, being assigned just one country upon acceptance and then selecting 3 projects within the secondary electronic Application Form, and finally being placed into a single research project. Those 3 projects must be open to you during your selected months of exchange— June, July, etc.

### **Applicant Qualifications:**

- I. **AMSA Membership** If not already an AMSA member, join online now at <a href="www.AMSA.org">www.AMSA.org</a>! Both domestic osteopathic and allopathic Medical Members and Premedical Members are eligible to apply. Domestic Medical Membership is now FREE!
  - a. Membership is required in order to be considered, and pay the Primary Application Fee (\$200) online at AMSA.org.
- II. "AMSA-USA Research Exchange Outgoing Applicant Country List"- <a href="http://goo.gl/muTmk">http://goo.gl/muTmk</a>: see what options are available for you to rank this year and never rank a country to which you would not go if accepted. Pay attention to the "Notes" section for spot number, open months, and length of exchange. Five country choices are recommended, but more may be added.
  - a. NOT all countries within SCORE are available each year. You must choose from among the countries which AMSA has partnered with in the Country List. Note that one country may have more than one NMO (National Member Organization).
- III. Student Country and Project Match: IFMSA.net Public Database: <a href="IFMSA.net/Public">IFMSA.net/Public</a>
  - a. Exchange Conditions (EC)- Special Rules regulating what minimum requirements are needed of applicants for each Country/NMO. You must meet the requirements of your selected Country/NMO Exchange Conditions, which are similar across most.
  - b. Projects- While a country may be available, its projects may not be open during the dates you anticipate. Explore available research projects as thoroughly as you can for your countries of interest. (Make sure you are searching the correct NMO)
- IV. **Minimum Course Requirements: Premedical Students-** You will be able to enumerate your academic accomplishments within the application, but AMSA-USA must set a minimum of coursework to assure our students are on par and competitive with international applicants. These are set internally and reviewed by the National Officers on Research Exchange. The Minimum Course Requirements pre-empt any standards found in the **Exchange Conditions**. No transcript is required. See below for a full list.
  - a. International Medical Graduates (IMGs) typically go through a 5- to 7-year undergraduate medical education (UME) directly after secondary school. Their initial years are equivalent to the
    - undergraduate premedical requirements. We ask that you confirm completion of your school's equivalents for the following courses prior to **beginning your exchange-** not prior to applying. It is a perfect time to get active with your Local Committee for Research Exchange while waiting to complete your premedical requirements, and improve your application and program understanding!

| General Chemistry I & II |
|--------------------------|
| Organic Chemistry I & II |
| Physics I & II           |
| Calculus I & II          |
| Biology I & II           |

#### TO STUDENT APPLICANT:

If you are confident in your availability, qualifications and interest in applying to the AMSA Research Exchange Program, begin filling out this year's "AMSA Primary Research Exchange Application Template" Word document. This template is a carbon copy of the online application form, which cannot be saved and completed in multiple sessions. The Primary Research Exchange Application Template can also be downloaded by navigating to AMSA.org/IFMSA.

The Application Fee is due upon submitting the Primary Application Form online. The Application Fee I \$200.

In order to secure your acceptance, the local Exchange Fee is due 48hrs after acceptance. Be prepared to receive your acceptance! This is usually between \$400 and \$600 per month of exchange, but must be calculated locally. Consult your Local Officers on Research Exchange (LOREs) first. Then, if you have questions, contact the NORE at <a href="NORE@amsa.org">NORE@amsa.org</a>.

The Exchange Fee covers each month's accommodations and minimum of one meal per day in your host country and city. Social Programming is typically provided on an individual month and city basis. Ask your hosting officers when you receive your Card of Acceptance in the IFMSA Database (see below).

# The IFMSA Exchange Conditions

Exchange Conditions are unique to each country/NMO, but similar across IFMSA.

There are several important things that you need to consider as you look at the Exchange Conditions for each of the countries you are investigating. It is your responsibility to ensure that the countries and projects you list or intend to list on your application **accept visiting students during the time period you requested** and that you meet any other **necessary qualifications**. There is a lot of information listed in the Exchange Conditions and they are slightly different for each country and NMO. Here we will break down how to evaluate each category.

The best way to do this is to review the Exchange Conditions website, which can be found here: http://ifmsa.net/public/ecscoreselect.php.

Simply click on the link for any countries you are interested in to get more specific information about their exchange program. Remember, you will need to list *multiple* countries on your SCORE Primary Application and it is important that you meet each country's requirements **BEFORE** listing them on your SCORE Primary Application. Official Exchange Condition information and Project Descriptions are on <a href="http://www.ifmsa.net/public">http://www.ifmsa.net/public</a>.

## A. Application Documents and Deadlines:

Can you provide all of the listed required documents in the Exchange Conditions? These are mostly required on the secondary electronic Application Form (eAF)- NOT the Primary Application Form. Reminders are placed within the Primary Application Form.

- a. **Deadline for Application**: Most countries set a deadline by which you must submit your Secondary Electronic Application Form (eAF or AF) in order to be considered as an applicant. In general, this should not be any closer than 12 weeks prior to your requested start date for an exchange (June 1<sup>st</sup> exchange start: March 1<sup>st</sup> secondary application submission). Countries may require submission earlier than 12 weeks.
- b. **Digital documents**: we now send most of our documents digitally, but please bring all hard copies with you when you go on exchange.
- c. **Required Documents** include:
  - **AF** or **eAF**: The official IFMSA **electronic Application Form**. Other Digital Required Documents will be uploaded and attached to the secondary eAF.
  - Motivation Letters: attached with your e-AF. Accepted students will receive the SCORE Guide to Writing a Letter of Motivation. This is like a cover letter for your three projects of interest in your eAF.
  - Recommendation Letter: generally required from a professor or physician you have
    worked with. If they don't want to send it to you directly, ask to have it sent to
    NORE@amsa.org labeled with your name and destination country in the subject
    heading. Only one letter per applicant, not per project or country.
    - Note: the Letter of Recommendation is NOT required with the Research Exchange Primary Application, BUT, it can earn you 2 points in the acceptance rubric and will be required to submit the secondary electronic Application Form (eAF) to the IFMSA Database! Have your referee email the LoR to the NORE at NORE@amsa.org! Include student name and title in subject line.

- **Curriculum Vitae (CV)**: Include professional and research experience, school information, etc.
  - 1. **Minimum Course requirements**: Completed by the start of exchange, often just applicable to Premedical students or BSMD students.

| General Chemistry I & II |
|--------------------------|
| Organic Chemistry I & II |
| Physics I & II           |
| Calculus I & II          |
| Biology I & II           |

- **Photos**: often, electronic copies required, but don't forget to bring originals with you! They are often used for IDs for lab/campus access, etc.
- **Language Certificate**: an English language certificate is almost always listed as a requirement. Native speakers *are exempt* from this requirement, or can simply provide a letter noting that they are native speakers. However, if a language certificate is required for another language, they can often be obtained through the language department at your university.
- **Copy of passport**: the scanned picture and info page generally are required. Check your expiration date and ensure it is up to date. Don't forget to bring the hard copy and a photocopy with you for backup! (Note: IF a Visa is required for your entry to the country, many Visas will not be issued if your Passport expires within 6 months of your Visa Application)
- **Student's Record/Transcripts**: usually asks for your medical school transcripts. It may be worthwhile to include undergraduate transcripts as well if you are still in your first year. Make sure to follow the Exchange Conditions as Transcripts are not needed at the time of Primary Application but as a hard copy carried with you.
- **Health Insurance**: required by many hosting institutions be certain that you are covered outside of the United States. Bring proof of insurance as a hard copy with you.
- **Vaccination documents**: check to make sure you meet any requirements for entering the country and to bring a hard copy with you.
- d. A few countries require HARD COPY documents BEFORE the exchange. If this is required, ask the NORE to connect you with your hosting country's NORE. If you require an extension, please email NORE@amsa.org.
- e. Be sure to give recommenders/referees and your school plenty of time to prepare any of the required documents for you in order to meet deadlines, since documents are now generally sent electronically with the eAF.
- f. Watch DEADLINES and make sure you get documents in on time. Even if these deadlines are respected, countries do fill up, particularly for busier months and more popular countries, and they often send out email notices to the national officers after they have filled up for the month. As the applicant, it is your responsibility to submit your application in a timely manner.
- **B.** Card of Acceptance Deadline: 8 weeks is the general rule. This is the notice you will receive when you have been placed into a project in your host country.
- **C. Card of Confirmation Deadline**: 4 weeks is the general rule. This is the notice that **you** will send to your host project and Local Officers for Research Exchange about your travel plans and last minute information.

- **D. Insurance**: please check this section as it lists requirements for health insurance, and if required, malpractice insurance or liability/travelers insurance (for which you might be covered by your home institution if you are receiving credit).
- **E. Pocket Money**: this describes whether or not pocket money is provided as a part of the exchange (often to cover expenses such as food if it is not provided elsewhere).

## F. Board and Lodging:

- a. Although all Local Committees (**LC**s) are required to provide housing and at least one meal per day, the details are listed here in the Exchange Conditions.
- b. All of our exchanges are bilateral unless you have been told otherwise during the application process. The unilateral fee is often listed here, but generally does not apply to AMSA students.

## **G.** Social Program:

- a. The social programs available vary widely by country and city you are placed in, even by month that you attend. If there is no formal program, however, local students will often make an effort to integrate you into their social activities and attractions.
- b. Regardless of the provided social program, don't be afraid to take the initiative and research opportunities on your own.

#### **H. Substitutions and Cancellations:**

- a. This section refers to substitution and cancellation guidelines for the HOSTING country. Our AMSA substitution and cancellation guidelines still apply outside of the guidelines listed here.
- b. If you are unable to complete your exchange for any reason, it is important that you **advise your Local Officer on Research Exchange and NORE ASAP** so that we can make alternative arrangements. Generally, a partial refund is ONLY available if we are able to find a direct substitution for you.
- I. Visa Information: The Exchange Condition site may not state whether U.S. citizens need a visa to enter their exchange country. To find out if a visa is necessary to enter the country that you are interested in visiting, please visit the U.S. State Department's website at: <a href="http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\_pa\_tw/cis/cis\_4965.html">http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\_pa\_tw/cis/cis\_4965.html</a> and select your country. It is your responsibility to determine if you need a visa and to handle this paperwork! As a side note, it is also recommended that you enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) with the U.S. State Department before you leave. This will register you with the U.S. embassy in the country you are visiting, and you will receive email updates about any travel warnings or advisories for that region.
- **J. Pre-departure Training**: ethical and orientation training may be available to you as an Outgoing Exchange Student, prior to your exchange. Look for National or Local Announcements from AMSA-USA and your LOREs about these opportunities or modules.