

American Studies Direct Exchange

American Studies Direct Exchange Program

General Information & Required Forms

This document contains all the information you will need to apply for the Direct Exchange program at the Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies. In particular, these are (in order of their chronological importance):

1. **Interview Template** for the initial interviews with Ms. Deq/Dr. Velten or Ms. Bull/Ms. Meerwein respectively (including personal details and course lists for either Bachelor OR Bachelor + Master courses)

You must bring a copy of this document (filled in as appropriate) to your interview!

2. **Checklist** for application documents
3. **Guidelines** for Cover Letters, CVs, and Personal Statements
4. **Contact Information** of partner universities

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Interview Template

Personal Data

Name:

First name:

Date of birth:

Permanent address:

Semester address:

Phone number:

E-mail address:

Studies

Student ID number:

Study program and objective:

Semester:

Previously attended universities (from ... until ...):

Additional ongoing or planned applications:

Are you currently waiting to be admitted a program with restricted admission (e.g. medicine)?

Financing of your studies:

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School internships or other teaching activities:

Vocational training, volunteer services, military service:

Summer jobs, professional activity before and during your studies:

Other

Stays abroad (where? when? what manner?):

In which student or non-university associations/clubs/social organizations are you actively involved?:

Modern language skills:

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Course of study to date (B.A. American Studies)

Where do you see your particular strengths and interests in American Studies?

American Studies lectures attended:

Title	Instructor

Attended American Studies classes (course instructor, grade, if applicable essay/presentation topic):

Please state in full!

Type Ü/PS/S	Title	Instructor	Grade

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Course of study to date (M.A. American Studies)

American Studies lectures attended (Master):

Title	Instructor

Attended American Studies Master classes (course instructor, grade, if applicable essay/presentation topic)

Please state in full!

Type Ü/PS/S	Title & Essay	Instructor	Grade

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Course of study to date (B.Ed. English)

Where do you see your particular strengths and interests in American Studies?

Attended American Studies (English) lectures other than introductions:

Title	Instructor

Attended American Studies (English) classes (course instructor, grade, if applicable essay/presentation topic):

Please state in full!

Type Ü/PS/S	Title	Instructor	Grade

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Course of study to date (M.Ed. English)

American Studies (English) lectures attended (Master):

Title	Instructor

Attended American Studies (English) Master classes (course instructor, grade, if applicable essay/presentation topic):

Please state in full!

Type Ü/PS/S	Title	Instructor	Grade

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Checklist

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For the interview:

- ☐ Interview template, filled in
- ☐ Photo

For the application:

- ☐ Cover letter
- ☐ CV
- ☐ Personal statement
- ☐ Academic records

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Guidelines

Writing a Cover Letter

There is only one purpose to the cover letter: to inform the recipient of your application that it is an application in a courteous and concise fashion. Therefore, keep your cover letter short, as you say more about yourself in the personal statement. Put the usual items of a letter on the top (your address, their address), and briefly address the matter at hand:

Dear Dr./Ms./Mr./Mx. ____:

[Short note on the purpose of your writing, a brief thank you for their time, express your hope that you might be a suitable candidate...]

With best regards/sincerely/...,
Your name

This is sufficient. Your cover letter should not exceed one page, and should be formatted in the style of your CV and personal statement (your “corporate identity”).

Writing a CV

Please do some research on the internet on structural requirements of an American-style CV.

Do not leave out significant foreign experiences, work and educational experiences. Also think about what people should know about you: extracurricular activities, long-time engagement in a sports club, the Scouts, or for a non-profit organization obviously go on the CV; short-term employment might not be needed, unless the number or frequency of these employments say something significant about your personal ability to cope with shifting job situations.

Your CV complements your personal statement. It allows you to portray briefly how you have spent your life so far, while your personal statement should narrativize this information.

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Writing a Personal Statement

Personal statements are extremely difficult to write, even for Americans. The best way to approach the personal essay is to take it as an opportunity to reflect upon yourself, your past, and your future—and then to write up those more serious reflections into the most flattering presentation you can come up with.

General Recommendations

It is very important to have a good first draft at least a week—if not two weeks—before the due date. You should think very carefully about what you are going to write. You may want to discuss your ideas with a (very candid) friend before you sit down.

Remember that admissions committees will read many of those essays, so choose your material carefully. Avoid overly sentimental anecdotes and clichéd phrases. Try to come up with vivid details.

Your essay should be read by a competent second reader in order to ensure:

- 1) a clear, logical structure,
- 2) tightly structured paragraphs, and
- 3) formal and absolutely correct prose.

You should consider asking an instructor to read your statement, but if you have trouble with your written English, you should also consider finding a tutor or an editor. It is wise to have your essay read by a number of people before you submit it.

Personal Statements for Foreign Exchanges

More mature than a high school graduate, less scholarly than a doctoral candidate, a prospective exchange student should be able to demonstrate both strength of character and seriousness of purpose. An admissions committee evaluating potential foreign exchange students will likely ask themselves two basic questions:

- 1) Will this student be able to cope with the stress of living in a foreign culture?
- 2) Will this student take advantage of the opportunity to come to our university?

1)

The first question addresses your character. The university officials want to know that you will not arrive in the United States and become so depressed that you have to go home. An anecdote might help you to make the point that you are a self-reliant, capable person.

- Have you faced challenging situations before?
- Have you ever lived in a foreign country, and for how long?

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- Did you ever manage to accomplish something that you had thought impossible or difficult?
- What kinds of experiences have given you a strong sense of identity?

This part of the personal statement also allows you to tell a good story so that the admissions committee has a better sense of what kind of person you are. Any specific detail that can make your application memorable will work in your advantage.

2)

The second question addresses your sense of purpose. The university officials will want you to demonstrate that you will not arrive in the United States and spend all of your time at nightclubs. They would like to believe that by allowing you to attend their university, you will make some progress towards an

interesting future. So, if you have a clear sense of what you will be doing in five years, you should mention this future goal in your personal statement and explain how spending a year at an American university would help you to accomplish this goal.

- Why are you interested in American Studies? Is it the literature, the history, the language, or the culture that triggers your interest?
- Why would living in America help you make progress toward your goals?
- What classes would you take at the host university?
- Why have you chosen to apply for this specific host university (as opposed to another)?

This part of the essay should show that you are a serious student, that you have thought about your future, and that you have done some research to plan your time abroad. Mention the name of the university to which you are applying and state your reasons for choosing this institution. From the committee's perspective, you are asking to attend that specific university, not to experience American culture in general.

GOOD LUCK!

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Contact Information

Direct Exchange Universities

Please verify that addresses are up to date before including them in your letters!

Prof. Scheiding/Fr. Meerwein, M.A./Dr. Frank Newton

Hood College

Scott E. Pincikowski
Associate Professor of German
401 Rosemont Avenue Frederick, MD 21701

Washington College

Nicole Grewling, PhD
Chair, Department of World Languages & Cultures
Director, Humanities Major & European Studies Minor
Washington College, 300 Washington Ave
Chestertown, MD 21620

Middlebury College

Bettina Matthias
Professor of Language & Linguistics
Chair of German Department
Middlebury College
Middlebury, VT 05753

California State University, Chico

Katie Daywalker
Advisory, Study Abroad & Exchange
Direct Exchange, CSU IP & National Student Exchange
Student Services Center 440
California State University, Chico
Chico, CA 95929-0825

Kansas University, Lawrence

Jason Foster
Study Abroad & Global Engagement
University of Kansas
Lippincott Hall, Room 108
1410 Jayhawk Blvd.
Lawrence, KS 66045

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Prof. Banerjee/Dr. Velten/Fr. Deq

University of Louisville, Louisville, KY

Elizabeth Liebschutz-Roettger, Ph.D.
Manager of Global Initiatives & Partnerships
Jouett Hall
2220 W. Centennial Walk
Louisville, KY 40292

Bowdoin College, Brunswick, ME

Dr. Jill Smith
Associate Professor of German and Chair of German Department
Visual Arts Center - 309
239 Main St
Brunswick, ME 04011

Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA

Elizabeth West, Ph.D.
Professor and Amos Distinguished Chair in English Letters
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York University, Toronto, CAN

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Clark University, Worcester, MA

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