

CLS Review Criteria Guide

General Essay Tips:

- Answer every single part of the essay prompts.
- As much as possible, use **specific examples, details, and brief anecdotes** to demonstrate your qualifications as a CLS candidate.
- Avoid ambiguity.
- Talk about what sparked your interest in your target language and culture, what has sustained it, and what will continue to sustain it in the short and long term (your future goals).
- Demonstrate **your unique perspective!** A.k.a., “write the essay only *you* could write.” Everyone’s perspective, background, and experiences are unique. What will you contribute as a CLS student and alum that no one else could? What do you bring to the table?
- Why CLS? Of all of the study abroad programs, why is CLS the program for you? Why is participating in CLS in summer 2026 essential to your short and long term academic and career plans.
- Why you? What makes you the best candidate for CLS? Pro tip: ***believe*** that you are the best candidate. That might sound corny, but it is step one to writing a compelling application! Let yourself believe you are the best candidate for the opportunity and then convince me (the reviewer) why.

Criterion: Preparation for the CLS Program

- How well does the candidate understand the challenges of the CLS Program as a **group-based, intensive academic study abroad** program, and how well are they **prepared to meet these challenges**?
- How well have the student's academic, professional, and personal experiences prepared them to succeed on the CLS program?
- **Demonstrates an understanding of the challenges specific to the CLS Program and provides examples of how they might address those challenges AND evidence of an ability to succeed in challenging environments.**
- Uses **specific and nuanced examples** that **demonstrate the ability to thrive** in the environment of the CLS Program.

Criterion: Adaptability, Sensitivity and Resilience

- Does the applicant exhibit **maturity and self-awareness** when considering potential challenges they may face abroad?
- Does the applicant demonstrate **open-mindedness** when faced with people who think differently from them?
- **Demonstrates high flexibility and resilience** by demonstrating an **appreciation for challenging situations as opportunities for growth and learning** while having **realistic**

expectations of own adaptability AND demonstrates clear tolerance and solid interest in learning from alternative viewpoints and perspectives.

Criterion: Contribution to the CLS Program and Program Goals

- Has the applicant considered what their unique experience, perspectives and/or background might contribute to the program?
- Does the applicant make a good case for how they will serve as an effective citizen diplomat?
- Demonstrates **self-awareness** through discussion of **how their unique perspective will contribute to the cohort AND clearly addresses how they might serve as an effective citizen diplomat**, acknowledging the **value of a two-way exchange**.
- **Clearly articulates both what they might teach their host community, and what they might learn through an exchange.**

Criterion: Commitment to Language Learning

- Does the applicant **demonstrate awareness of and interest in the target language/host culture** to which they are applying?
- Is the applicant **committed to further developing their language skills and cultural knowledge after participating in the CLS Program?**
- How well has the student **leveraged available resources** to develop appropriate foreign language skills and cultural knowledge for the CLS program?
- Using **specific and engaging examples**, applicant **illustrates knowledge of and interest in the target language and host culture AND**
 - (IF BEGINNER) Articulates a **specific and creative plan for building on skills and knowledge after CLS that optimizes available resources.**
 - (IF ADVANCED) Has appropriate language proficiency and **demonstrates regular use of specific resources** to advance language skill and cultural knowledge.
- A student without access to language learning resources may still demonstrate their future commitment by showing **creativity or resourcefulness in their approach to continuing language learning.**

Criterion: Connection between Language and Goals

- What **impact** will the **specific target language and cultural knowledge from the CLS program** have on the student's **academic, personal, and professional development?**
- How **integral** is that knowledge to the **student's future plans?**
- Illustrates **concretely** how **specific target language and cultural knowledge are connected to academic and/or professional goals AND supports statements by drawing a specific connection** between linguistic competence and future plans