



# Request for Proposals

## Summer Virtual Exchange

U.S.-Egypt Higher Education Initiative (HEI), Public University Scholarships Program

RFP NUMBER: AMIDEAST HEI [RFP 18-0002]

FUNDED BY: USAID

**Proposals must be received NO LATER THAN Wednesday, June 24, 2020,  
By 11:59 pm (EDT).**

This request for proposals is part of the U.S. - Egypt Higher Education Initiative, Public University Scholarships Program, funded by USAID, supported by the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education and administered by AMIDEAST.

June 7, 2020

Dear Potential Applicant,

Under AMIDEAST HEI [RFP 18-0002], AMIDEAST seeks one U.S. host institution to implement a Summer Virtual Exchange program for students of the AMIDEAST-implemented HEI Public University Scholarships program to attend a U.S. university and interact with American students. The U.S. institution will demonstrate a capacity to host 30 Egyptian undergraduate participants virtually, including one visually impaired participant, for a 4- to 6-week program, sometime between early July and mid-September. The program should include academic coursework, a project-based/practical course with group work (entrepreneurship suggested), social/cultural interaction, and a follow-up 2-week program in late January/early February (in-person in the U.S. if possible). Interested institutions must submit a proposal for this virtual academic exchange.

AMIDEAST, under the HEI Public University Scholarships program, is currently seeking proposals from U.S. universities to design and implement a program to expose Egyptian students to U.S. university coursework in their field of study, allow them to apply their knowledge and skills to a project (entrepreneurship suggested) in cooperation with American students, and to learn about American culture through personal connections and virtual exchange between Egyptians and Americans. We encourage applicants to be creative and innovative with virtual classroom within these objectives.

**Location of Program:** Virtual, followed by U.S. university visit

**Performance Period:** July to mid September 2020 (4-6 weeks); with the potential for a follow-up in-person 2-week conference or workshop event at the university in early 2021 (late-January – early-February).

**Maximum Award:** \$200,000

**Application Deadline:** Wednesday, June 24, no later than 11:59 pm Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)

**AMIDEAST contact person:** Ahmed Adel Shehata, [ashehata@amideast.org](mailto:ashehata@amideast.org)

## Background

AMIDEAST is a leading American non-profit organization engaged in international education, training and development activities in the Middle East and North Africa for over 60 years. Additional information about AMIDEAST can be found in the Scope of Work and online at [www.amideast.org](http://www.amideast.org)

## Eligibility Requirements:

Institutions seeking consideration for an award to host Egyptian students participating in the Virtual Academic Exchange program are required to be:

- Registered as an institution of higher education duly organized and existing in the U.S., under the laws of the host institution's state of incorporation
- Acknowledged as an accredited institution by a U.S. Department of Education-recognized accrediting agency

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- Eligible to receive federal funding, and not disbarred

Institutions should also have significant knowledge and experience:

- Designing and managing comprehensive academic exchange programs for international students, preferably from the Arab world.
- Implementing virtual training and cultural exchange programs.

Request for proposal No: **AMIDEAST HEI [RFP 18-0002]**, consists of the following documents, which are enclosed:

ANNEX I **SCOPE OF WORK**

ANNEX II **INSTRUCTIONS**

Applicants are required to address all ANNEXES as per the **SCOPE OF WORK – ANNEX I**, and submit a complete proposal with all deliverables and milestones. Submission of a proposal confirms that the applicant:

- Certifies that the submitted proposal is accurate and complete
- Agrees to provide services identified in SCOPE OF WORK – ANNEX I, at the prices therein offered and summarized in the offer, in accordance with the conditions of this solicitation document. This bid is valid for a period of thirty (30) calendar days from the RFP closing date.
- Acknowledges reading all documents, and is fully aware of all terms and conditions.
- Understands that upon consideration of award or during the negotiations leading to an award, applicants may be required to submit additional documentation deemed necessary for AMIDEAST to make an award.

We appreciate your interest in this project and look forward to receiving your proposal.

Sincerely,

Quincy Dermody

Chief of Party, HEI Public University Scholarships Program

AMIDEAST

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## **ANNEX I. SCOPE OF WORK – Summer Virtual Academic Exchange**

### **BACKGROUND – HEI PROGRAM**

As of 2015, as part of the U.S.-Egypt Higher Education Initiative (HEI) Public University Scholarship program, AMIDEAST has been working with five public universities to host almost 700 students, including 7% with disabilities. The HEI Public University Scholarships program, funded by USAID and supported by the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education, is a scholarship for disadvantaged high school graduates to attend excellence programs at public universities in parallel with specially-designed supplementary enhancement activities such as English, soft skills, leadership, and entrepreneurship training; career planning; as well as internships, community service, and study abroad. The program interweaves the private sector and practical experiences so that graduates are primed to enter and contribute to the workforce in Egypt, in sectors that are critical to the economic development of the country.

### **BACKGROUND – COVID-19 Limitations and Need for Virtual Exchange**

Due to COVID-19—the closing of airports and the movement of most university courses wholly or in part to online—the scholarship program is unable to send Egyptian students to study abroad in person in the U.S. this summer. The purpose of the usual study abroad program is primarily academic in a student’s field of study, but also can include activities such as community service, internships, and cultural exchange. So that the students do not lose their one chance to study abroad, and to continue to pursue the original study abroad objectives, there is a need for creativity in the use of online resources to conduct virtual exchanges, enabling students to continue developing their academic and leadership skills and to interact with U.S. university students. In place of this traditional semester abroad, we are looking for a virtual academic exchange that will provide a similar or even more enriching experience for the participants.

### **BACKGROUND – AMIDEAST**

AMIDEAST is a leading American non-profit organization engaged in international education, training and development activities in the Middle East and North Africa. Founded in 1951, AMIDEAST in its early years focused on promoting U.S. study to students in the MENA region and managing U.S. scholarships and exchanges such as the flagship Fulbright Foreign Student Program. While these important programs continue apace, our work has expanded significantly. Today AMIDEAST programs and services touch the lives of half a million individuals a year – improving educational opportunities and quality, strengthening local institutions, and developing language and professional skills critical for success in the global economy.

AMIDEAST has worked in Egypt for over 60 years, expanding educational opportunities, preparing individuals for jobs in the global economy, strengthening institutions and communities, and empowering women and youth. AMIDEAST has supported students in higher education through scholarship programs and exchange programs, prepared unemployed graduates for employment through training programs and job matching, and offered other youth opportunities to access education and training to improve their opportunities. Since 2011, AMIDEAST has also worked on a range of programs that support youth in Egypt both in English language learning, higher education, and in preparation for employment.

### **VIRTUAL ACADEMIC EXCHANGE DESCRIPTION**

**Virtual Academic Exchange Purpose:** This 4-6 week program for 30 participants studying at Egyptian public universities to expose Egyptian students to U.S. university coursework in their field of study, allow them to apply their knowledge and skills to a project (entrepreneurship suggested) in cooperation with

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American students, and to learn about American culture through personal connections and virtual exchange between Egyptians and Americans. The program coursework will be on hold through the fall semester, and wrap up with a 2-week program (a conference, competition, or workshop event) in early 2021 (late-January/early-February). Should the global situation improve with regard to the pandemic, we hope for this program to be held on the university campus. If not, it will also be virtual. We encourage applicants to be creative and innovative with virtual classroom within these objectives.

The program aims to feature the following key program goals:

- Students experience U.S. higher education in their field of academic study
- Students apply their technical knowledge and personal skills to a team project to gain an understanding of their abilities, practice their leadership skills, and work in a team with Egyptians and Americans.
- Students develop an understanding and appreciation of entrepreneurial values and develop their entrepreneurship skills (entrepreneurship is suggested, but other project areas can be proposed instead – possibly community service)
- Students build social and professional connections with their American colleagues and guest speakers, and gain exposure to American culture
- Students’ broaden knowledge and skills that will help them to later enter the job market.

**Virtual Academic Exchange Content:** The host institution is expected to provide a robust 4-6 week program that exposes program participants to the U.S. academic environment in their field of study, develops their competencies in entrepreneurship (or another area), and supports them in taking a leading role in their universities/communities.

- a. **Academic Course:** Students enroll in an online course related to their major.
- b. **Project-Based Course** (Entrepreneurship suggested): Participants attend a course together (can be more than one class if the class size would be too large to have only one) and work in groups (in the case of an entrepreneurship focus) to create an innovative business or product, create their business, and compete against each other (possibly using computer simulations).
- c. **Collaboration/Cultural Exchange:** Students partner and build relationships with American students on projects and have opportunities for cultural exchange through other activities.
- d. **Follow-Up Program:** 2-week U.S.-based (if possible) academic program

Program activities are expected to be interactive and participatory. Participants are expected to partner with American students on projects, which should inspire the participants to apply activities in their home context. Participants will be expected to present what they have learned, and its implications for their home communities in Egypt and the U.S.

**Virtual Academic Exchange Logistics and Timeline**

- a) AMIDEAST will provide participants with housing and internet for the duration of the program in Egypt.
- b) The program will be 4-6 weeks in length, between July and September 2020.
- c) Follow-up 2-week program in late January/early February (during the time of the Egyptian mid-year break) for a culminating academic activity/competition. (Plan for these 2-weeks to be on your campus, but in the case that is not possible, the activity will be virtual. Please note any budget implications/planning considerations of the change.)
- d) AMIDEAST will cover the 30 students’ costs in Egypt for the virtual program, including lodging, meals, internet, and needed materials/supplies (within reason).

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- e) For the U.S.-based 2-week program, AMIDEAST will process the students' J visas, cover the cost of the 30 students' airfare, and will provide students with travel per diem and an additional small stipend for incidentals. The university should budget for tuition and fees, room and board, local transportation, health insurance, and any other program costs in the U.S.

#### **Virtual Academic Exchange Participant Details**

- a) The 30 participants are from underserved communities across Egypt, and have completed their third year of undergraduate studies in high quality, special programs in the top five public universities in Egypt (Cairo, Alexandria, Ain Shams, Mansoura, and Assiut Universities), studying in Accounting, Agriculture Science, Business administration, Computer Science, Economics, Science and Nursing.
- b) Note that the final number of participants may be a couple more or less than 30, and the university will have the opportunity to adjust their budget as needed to reflect this prior to signing an agreement.
- c) The participants all have TOEFL iBT scores over 60, except one visually impaired student who does not have a current iBT score (postponed by the coronavirus). His last ITP score was 487 in January 2020 and we expect that he will be able to participate actively in the program.

#### **REPORTING**

**Narrative Reporting:** An initial narrative report will be required no more than 30 days after completion of the virtual exchange. The narrative report should include a comprehensive description of the program delivery, program calendar and activities, lessons learned, and feedback about the program. A final report will be required 30 days following the 2-week U.S. component in early 2021.

**Financial Reporting:** Host institutions will be paid in two installments: Up to 50% of anticipated program costs will be provided prior to the commencement of activities. The second installment, for the remaining actual costs, will be disbursed following the completion of the program and receipt and approval of all reports and deliverables. Host institutions will be required to submit a detailed certified financial report and invoice within 30 days of the conclusion of the program. The report should include and delineate actual costs incurred in implementation, and actual cost share obtained and documented.

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## **ANNEX II. INSTRUCTIONS**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

AMIDEAST invites you to send your proposal to design and implement Summer Virtual Academic Exchange, as described in the **Request for Proposals AMIDEAST HEI [RFP 18-0002]**. Offerors of selected proposals will enter into a Cost-Reimbursable Agreement to provide program deliverables. Please note that the following:

- a) These instructions shall not form part of the resulting agreement. They are intended to aid bidders in the preparation of their proposals.
- b) Institutions are invited to submit their proposals, but are under no obligation to do so. Bidders will not be reimbursed for any costs incurred in connection with the preparation and submission of their bids.

### **2. APPLICATION DEADLINE**

- a. The proposal must be submitted in electronic format in one single email. Proposal materials should be saved in two separate parts, technical and financial, and are limited to 6 MB (including attachments). Please include in the subject line of the email: **AMIDEAST HEI [RFP 18-0002]**,
- b. The RFP must be submitted to the following address **no later than Wednesday, June 24, by 11:59 pm Eastern daylight time (EDT)**. Late proposals will not be considered.

Ahmed Shehata      [ashehata@amideast.org](mailto:ashehata@amideast.org)

### **3. QUESTIONS**

AMIDEAST will accept questions pertaining to the RFP in writing via email at [ashehata@amideast.org](mailto:ashehata@amideast.org). All questions must be submitted by Thursday, June 11, by 11:59 pm Eastern daylight time (EDT). No oral answers will be provided. Responses to RFP related questions will be published at <https://www.amideast.org/work-with-us/solicitations-for-goods-and-services> on Friday, June 12.

### **4. PREPARATION OF PROPOSAL**

- a. Bidders are expected to examine these instructions to bidders, the conditions of contract, and the Scope of Work contained in this Request for Proposals. Failure to do so will be at the bidder's risk.
- b. All bids submitted must be valid for a period of not less than thirty (30) calendar days from the closing date.
- c. All correspondence in connection with the bid and the resulting contract must be in English.

### **5. CONTENT OF PROPOSALS**

Applicants are required to complete the following:

- a. Technical Proposal, including:
  - a. Narrative description of the virtual exchange content and activities and how this will help the participants achieve the program goals (as per the Scope of Work) – Format: Microsoft Word, maximum 10 pages, size 11 Calibri font
  - b. Proposed schedule of activities during the virtual exchange
  - c. Past experiences with virtual exchanges for international visitors

- b. Financial Proposal, including:
- a. Detailed, itemized budget in excel format, broken down by major category (e.g. personnel, fringe benefits, contractual, transport, other direct costs, participant costs, indirect costs). (sample below)
  - b. Budget narrative in Microsoft Word for each budget item. This should include the estimated cost elements at a detailed level, plus a description of the basis of estimated costs. The supporting cost information should be provided with sufficient detail and rationale to allow for a reasonable analysis of the proposal.
  - c. Cost Share and In-Kind Contributions should be noted in the budget. Contributions can be either cash or in-kind and can include contributions from the U.S. organizations, private companies, local counterpart organizations, project clients, and other donors (not other USG funding sources). Cost sharing contributions should be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110 - Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations which can be found at the following link <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a110/a110.html#23>.

Budget Template Sample

Category/Item	Unit Cost	Unit	Unit Name	Total Cost	Cost Share	Total (Cost + Cost Share)
<b>Travel</b>						
Airport Transport	\$150	2	trips	\$300	\$15	\$315

**6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Your proposal will be treated as a confidential document and will not be shared outside of HEI;

**STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND NON-DISCLOSURE**

All information within this RFP, regardless of the communication form, is given in absolute confidence and may not be disclosed without written permission. This RFP and the information compiled therein whether verbally communicated or in written form, contain confidential information about HEI, which are provided for proposal purposes only. Your firm shall regard and preserve as confidential this RFP and all non-public information related to the operations of AMIDEAST and its affiliated organizations that may be obtained from any source as a result of this RFP process.

**7. PROPOSAL ACCEPTANCE PERIOD**

Offers must be valid for a period of (30) days from the date set for opening, bids offering less than (30) days for acceptance by AMIDEAST from the closing date, will be considered non-responsive and will be rejected.

**8. SIGNATURE OF PROPOSAL**

The offer must be signed by a person duly authorized to do so.

**9. LATE PROPOSALS**

Applicants will be held responsible for ensuring that their offers are received in accordance with the instructions stated herein, and a late bid will not be considered, even if this was as a result of

circumstances beyond the Bidder's control. A late bid will be considered only if the sole cause of its becoming a late bid was attributable to AMIDEAST.

#### **10. MODIFICATION OF PROPOSALS**

Any Applicant has the right to withdraw, modify, or correct its proposal after it has been delivered to AMIDEAST, provided that the request for the withdrawal, modification, or correction together with full details of the modification or correction, is received by AMIDEAST at the address given above by letter or email before the closing date.

The original bid, as amended by such communication, will be considered as the Bidder's offer. AMIDEAST may ask any Bidder for a clarification of its bid; nevertheless no Bidder will be permitted to alter its Bid Price or make any other material modification after bids have been opened.

However, clarifications which do not change the Bid Price may be accepted. No Bidder may withdraw its bid after the time set for opening bids has elapsed.

#### **11. ADDENDA TO THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

If for any reason prior to the Bid Opening, it becomes necessary to modify the Bid Documents, an Addendum will be issued to, and be binding, on all Bidders. Receipt of all Addenda shall be acknowledged by Bidders. Addenda will be numbered consecutively commencing with No. 1 and Bidders are required to insert the numbers of addenda received in their bid.

#### **12. PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND CONTRACT AWARD**

- A. An award will be made to the eligible, responsible, and responsive applicant, in accordance with the following criteria. These criteria are intended to (a) serve as the standard against which all proposals will be evaluated, and (b) serve to identify the significant areas bidders should address in their proposals. The final decision will be based as follows, for a total maximum score of 100%.
  - a) Responsiveness to the scope of work goals and technical requirements, demonstrating an understanding of participant needs and providing a clear and comprehensive approach to meet those needs. (50%)
  - b) Demonstrated capacity and past performance/experience in virtual exchange programs and with implementation of programs for international participants. (25%)
  - c) Cost effectiveness (25%)
- B. A responsive bid is one which complies with all of the terms and conditions of the RFP without material modification. A material modification is one which affects the price, quantity, quality, or which limits in any way any responsibilities, duties, or liabilities of the applicant or any rights AMIDEAST specified or defined in the RFP.
- C. Award is subject to USAID approval.

Awards are expected to be made by June 24, 2020.

AMIDEAST RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DECLINE ANY BID NOT MEETING THESE CONDITIONS AND TERMS