

Hallmarks of Successful Sending Participants and Red Flags

With 60+ years of experience in providing intercultural experiences, AFS has identified a number of personality traits which support the student in having a positive intercultural experience. While a student may not exhibit every trait, a student should possess several of them. If a student exhibits weaknesses in these areas, it may be indicative that the student is not ready for an AFS experience.

Eligibility

Age: Participants must meet the age requirements for the given program. Ages 15-18: High School Programs Ages 18 and older: Gap Year and Beyond

Academics: Participants in Year and Semester academic programs must have a cumulative GPA of 2.8 or higher. Academic programs include all Year and Semester length High-school and University programs, as well as Summer Language Study programs. All other AFS programs require that you have a passing GPA.

Health: Participants must be in good mental, physical and emotional health to participate in an AFS program. Dietary restrictions or allergies to food, pets or environment will limit country choice or prevent participation. For more information please refer to AFS Medical Evaluation Policies or speak with a Student Services Advisor at 1-800-AFS-INFO. It is at the discretion of AFS to verify that participants meet our health requirements.

Program Availability: *AFS accepts applications on a rolling basis. Programs may fill prior to the posted deadlines. Check the currently Available Programs. Participants must complete the online sending application, have an interview and submit the deposit to be considered for acceptance into an available program.*

Characteristics of a Successful AFS Participant

- **Curious:** Students who are curious about the world beyond their front doorsteps are more likely to have positive study abroad experiences.
- **Open:** Meeting new people and making new friends is one of the most important parts of studying abroad.
- **Mature:** Showing maturity for their age and having a mature understanding of themselves gives candidates the confidence they will need while studying abroad.
- **Communicative:** Being able to communicate what they are thinking and feeling while studying abroad will enable students to adapt and overcome challenges.
- **Adventurous:** A willingness to take healthy risks leads students into adventures they might not have otherwise experienced.
- **Respectful:** Study Abroad participants should be able to both establish their own and respect the boundaries of others.
- **Pragmatic:** Successful Study Abroad students are able to accept those things that cannot be changed.
- **Patient:** Demonstrating patience with themselves and others will help study abroad participants learn and grow.

- **Flexible:** Being able to cope with new and unfamiliar situations gives students the ability to “roll with it” during their study abroad.
- **Persistent:** Setting goals and going after them despite adversity ensures active and engaged study abroad participants.
- **Motivated:** Study abroad participants take on many great responsibilities and should be eager to get involved and take advantage of the many opportunities their experiences will provide.

Red Flags



The AFS experience is challenging and at times stressful. AFSers find that overcoming the challenges makes them stronger, more independent and self-confident. AFS has also learned that there are some characteristics which make it difficult for a student to succeed during the experience and to reap the potential benefits for student participants. These red flags can be identified and noted during the interview and application process or can arise while a student is on program. Signs to watch for include candidates or participants who:

- Expect an AFS program to be a vacation or who are looking for an escape.
- Exhibit extreme personalities: either totally independent, aggressive, arrogant or extremely withdrawn, passive, always trying to please.
- Illustrate an unwillingness or inability to make emotional commitments and sustain positive interpersonal relationships.
- Have overbearing parents who are pushing their children beyond their own interests or capacities.
- Have parents who are overly protective and resistant to allowing their child space and independence.

Responsibilities of an AFS Participant

Participants on AFS programs should have a clear understanding of the responsibilities and expectations associated with being an AFSer:

- Be flexible and adaptable
- Be open to the challenges of living abroad
- Be prepared to immerse themselves in their host culture
- Be open to learning about themselves and the community they are living in
- Be an ambassador for your home country and AFS
- Help create their AFS experience by actively engaging with their host community

