WHAT IS PRINCETON IN ASIA?

Princeton in Asia (PiA) is an independent, not-for-profit organization located at Princeton University. Founded by students in 1898, the program has long been driven by a mission to foster mutual appreciation and cultural understanding by connecting service-minded graduates and partner organizations in Asia through immersive work experiences that transform perspectives, cultivate long-lasting relationships and benefit local and global communities. It is PiA’s vision that through extended exposure to Asian workplaces and cultures, Fellows will develop a life-long appreciation for and engagement in this part of the world, as well as a commitment to contributing to the communities they find themselves a part of after PiA. We like to think of PiA as “a change in perspective, a job that matters, a community for life.”

For the 2020-2021 academic year, PiA expects to offer approximately 140 full-year fellowships in the following locations: Cambodia, mainland China, Hong Kong S.A.R., Macau S.A.R., Taiwan, India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. New positions in other locations are always in development and may also be available. PiA offers service-oriented positions that focus on five issues: education, environmental sustainability, public health, economic development, and peace, justice, and access to information. Princeton in Asia Fellows teach in kindergartens, secondary schools, polytechnics and universities; they help run international and local nonprofits as well as some of Asia’s most innovative businesses and social enterprises; they write for newspapers and create content for news platforms with an international reach. Due to the size and diversity of the positions available, we encourage applicants of all disciplines, backgrounds, and levels of familiarity with Asia to apply.

PREREQUISITES

To be considered for a Princeton in Asia fellowship, you must be a college senior or recent college graduate. Please remember that this is a fellowship program, and that the emphasis of a PiA fellowship is contributing to your community and cultural immersion. Though a local stipend will be provided, a PiA fellowship is not a moneymaking venture. Working hours and vacation time vary greatly among the diverse PiA offerings. Some teaching fellowships require fewer teaching hours and provide longer vacations, allowing Fellows the opportunity to pursue intensive language study or other personal projects. Workplace fellowships, however, provide less vacation time and generally require longer hours.

The basic prerequisite for placement is a bachelor's degree. In addition:

- All positions require professional proficiency in English, and English teaching positions require native English-speaking ability. Host countries’ visa restrictions may limit our ability to place citizens of certain nationalities.
- Asian language ability is not a prerequisite for most positions. Non-teaching positions typically require some language skills or specific academic or work experience. For requirements for specific positions, please refer to the “Our Fellowships” section of our website.
• All applicants should have a valid passport by January 2020. For visa purposes, your passport should be valid for at least 18 months from your date of arrival in Asia. If you do not yet have a passport or your passport will expire soon, we encourage you to apply for or renew your passport now.
• Applicants selected for an interview will be invited to attend one of our interview sessions in January. Interviews will be held at Princeton University as well as in select cities in the U.S. Applicants who are based outside of the continental U.S. or are unable to attend the in-person interviews are eligible to be interviewed via Skype.
• All applicants who receive placement in a teaching position MUST attend the TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) certification course held April 24-26, 2020 at Princeton University. While attendance at TEFL is mandatory for all Fellows in teaching positions, you are not required to have any level of TEFL training/experience prior to applying to PiA.
• All applicants who accept offers from Princeton in Asia MUST attend PiA’s Orientation held May 15-18, 2020 at Princeton University.

COSTS

1. Application fee: $60. We accept payment by credit/debit card via PayPal or by check.
2. Transportation and housing expenses for trips to interviews in January.
3. Transportation expenses to Princeton, NJ in mid-April for TEFL and mid-May for Orientation. Housing and most meals will be arranged for you during these weekends.
4. Fellow contribution: $550. Paid via credit/debit card or check upon acceptance of a PiA fellowship. This contribution represents only a small fraction of the total costs of arranging a fellowship. Payment is mandatory upon acceptance for all Fellows.
5. Vaccination and pre-departure health expenses.
6. Visa application fees and transportation expenses to the nearest embassy for most positions.
7. Round-trip transportation to Asia for most positions.

PiA is dedicated to offering these experiences to as diverse and talented an applicant pool as possible. Though PiA has limited resources, financial assistance in the form of application fee waivers, Fellow contribution waivers, and travel grants is offered on a case-by-case basis. We will work with each applicant to ensure that financial considerations do not preclude anyone from applying for or participating in these opportunities. However, please note that PiA is unable to provide travel grants for transportation to TEFL and Orientation for those traveling from outside of the United States.

To request an application fee waiver, please contact piaapps@princeton.edu.
CALENDAR FOR THE 2020-2021 FELLOWSHIP CYCLE

October 31: Deadline for submission of application materials. You must submit your online application and application fee by this date. Your online application form and all application materials must be submitted by 12:00 pm EDT.

November 25: Applicants receive confirmation of completed application status. Please do not contact the PiA office before this date to check on the status of your application.

Early December: Selected applicants are notified of interview date and time.

January 11-12, 25-26: Interviews for selected applicants held in Princeton, NJ.

January 15-17: Interviews for selected applicants held in San Francisco, CA and Los Angeles, CA.

January 18-19: Interviews for selected applicants held in Evanston, IL.

February 1-2: Interviews for selected applicants held in Boston, MA and Washington, D.C.

March-May: Finalization of positions. Upon receipt of an official fellowship offer, candidates must make a commitment within 5 calendar days to accept the position and follow through on related commitments if accepted by the host. PiA partner organizations make final selections, not PiA. Teaching Fellows begin distance learning portion of TEFL training.

April 24-26: TEFL certification course at Princeton University. TEFL training starts on Friday evening and ends on Sunday evening. All Fellows in teaching positions must attend TEFL.

May 15-18: Orientation at Princeton University. Attendance at Orientation is mandatory for all accepted Fellows. Orientation lasts four days, starting Friday afternoon and ending Monday evening.

Late May-September: Fellows depart for Asia and begin their fellowships. Date of departure depends upon the country and employing PiA partner organization. For departure dates for specific positions, please refer to the “Our Fellowships” section of our website.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND ADVICE

As part of a PiA fellowship, PiA Fellows receive:

1) A local stipend, generally paid directly by the host organization.
2) An orientation program including travel, health, visa, and packing information as well as cultural and current affairs background on fellowship locations.
3) Travel medical and emergency evacuation insurance for all Fellows in need of coverage and who qualify for PiA’s international travel plan.
4) Language grants (awarded selectively).
5) Assistance in student loan deferments in the form of letters issued to student loan agencies.
6) Note: airfare and other travel expenses are generally the responsibility of the Fellow. Financial assistance is awarded on a need basis. A limited number of PiA partner organizations provide reimbursement for airfare.

Applicants will designate their countries and fellowships of preference as part of the online application. Keep in mind that maintaining a degree of flexibility increases your chances of placement.
Look through some general resources on your countries of interest prior to making your country selections and attending your interview. We strongly encourage applicants to read past Fellows’ reports on our website, as well as seek advice from fellowships advisors, professors, international students, or friends in your network. Unfortunately, PiA is not able to connect applicants with current or former Fellows during the application process.

**Please do not contact any PiA host organizations directly**; we will put finalist applicants in direct touch with their potential host organization at the placement stage of the process. **Any applicant who circumvents PiA’s selection process by contacting a PiA host organization directly will be automatically disqualified from consideration for a PiA fellowship.**

All applicants are invited to attend one of our online Information Sessions throughout the fall. Princeton University students or applicants who live in the Princeton area may attend an in-person information session on September 25th (details posted on our website) or come by the PiA office during posted office hours to speak to a staff member. Additional information sessions, hosted by PiA alumni, will be held at colleges and universities around the U.S. in September and October (details will be posted on our website).

All applicants should read Fellow reports filed by previous Fellows about their posts, which are available on our website in the “For Applicants” section. Please email piaapps@princeton.edu to obtain the login information to access the Fellow reports. This is one of the best ways to learn about our posts and what it is like to be a PiA Fellow in each post.

The PiA application and selection processes are rigorous and multifaceted. We strongly recommend that applicants attend an in-person interview session in January; however, those who are based outside of the continental U.S. or are unable to attend the in-person interviews are eligible to be interviewed via Skype. We attempt to offer interviews only to those applicants who stand a reasonable chance of being placed; however, being granted an interview does not guarantee placement.

Applicants who are not prepared to commit to the application and placement process in full may want to consider other programs.
APPLICATION CHECKLIST

For your application to be deemed complete, you must submit **ALL application materials** by the application deadline at **12:00 pm EDT on October 31st**. Please see below for a full list of required materials.

APPLICATION MATERIALS: Please review the checklist below and gather the corresponding files for their submission to our online application portal.

- **One** completed online application form found on our online application portal accessible on our website under the “For Applicants” tab, or via the following link:  
- **Three** completed essays in PDF format (see page 7 for essay prompts and submission information).
- **One** short video (see page 8 for video prompts and submission information).
- **One** letter of recommendation (see below for instructions).
- **One** additional reference (contact information only).
- **One** unofficial college or university transcript (all applicants selected for an interview must also submit an official transcript. See next page for instructions).
- **One** up-to-date, 1-page resume in PDF format. Tailor your resume for PiA purposes, highlighting relevant teaching or work experience as well as any language proficiencies and cross-cultural experience.
- **One** 2x2 inch US passport-sized, headshot photo on a white background in JPEG format.
- **Payment** for application fee (see next page for instructions).

**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION:** Princeton in Asia requires one letter of recommendation as part of our fellowship application. The letter of recommendation should be written by someone who has supervised you in a relevant professional or academic environment. The letter should be submitted as a signed PDF (digital signatures are allowed) and should include your full name and the contact information of the recommender.

Your recommender can submit their letter online via the following link:


Please send the link to your recommender well in advance of the application deadline.

In certain cases where the recommender cannot submit the letter electronically, PiA can make an allowance for the recommender to submit the letter via mail. Please write to us at piaapps@princeton.edu if that is the case.

**REFERENCE:** Princeton in Asia requires the contact information for one professional or academic reference. The reference should be a different individual than the one who wrote your letter of
recommendation, but should likewise have supervised you in a relevant professional or academic capacity.

**UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT:** PiA requires an unofficial copy of a recent transcript from your undergraduate institution (and graduate school, if applicable). Transcripts from study abroad programs are not required.

**NOTE:** All applicants selected for an interview will be required to submit an official transcript by January 31st, 2020. This official transcript must be mailed or sent electronically directly from the educational institution and NOT from the applicant.

**APPLICATION FEE:** The application fee is $60.00. Payment may be made by credit/debit card via PayPal or by check.

Online payments can be made through our Online Application Portal. Please write “Application Fee for (Your Name)” in the “Add special instructions to the seller” line on the PayPal payment page.

Checks should be made out to “Princeton in Asia” and sent to the PiA home office. Please write “Application Fee for (Your Name)” in the memo line of the check.

**PiA HOME OFFICE ADDRESS:**

Princeton in Asia
Louis A. Simpson International Building
Princeton University
Princeton, NJ 08544

**ESSAY PROMPTS**

Applicants are required to complete all three essays and submit them through our online application portal in PDF form. Please include your name and the essay prompt at the top of each document and title the document in the proper format (LastName_FirstName_EssayNumber.PDF, e.g. Doe_Jane_Essay1.PDF). For each of the following essays, please keep the word count between 350-500 words.

**ESSAY #1: Why Princeton in Asia?**

Please discuss why you wish to embark on a Princeton in Asia fellowship next year and what you hope to contribute and gain, both personally and professionally, through the experience.

**ESSAY #2: A Change in Perspective**

“One’s destination is never a place, but rather a new way of seeing.” –Henry Miller

Drawing on your personal experiences reflect on an event, a situation, or a time in your life that fundamentally challenged one of your previously held views or understandings.
ESSAY #3: A Community for Life

What is the best community you have ever been a part of?

VIDEO SUBMISSION

All applicants are required to complete one video submission. You may choose ONE of the following THREE prompts to address in your video. There is no right or wrong way to make your PiA video, but we do require that you are featured speaking at some point.

Please keep your video to maximum 60 seconds in length, and feel free to have fun and be creative! Be sure to label your video in the following format: “LastName_FirstName” (eg. Smith_John.mov). You should upload your video to a file sharing site (Dropbox, Google Drive), set the link sharing settings to “anyone can edit”, and then submit the link on our online application form.

Video Prompt #1: SHOW AND TELL

Show or tell us something we should know about you that we wouldn’t already know from your application.

Video Prompt #2: EYE FOR APPRECIATION

What was the best thing that happened to you this year? What made it so special?

Video Prompt Option #3: SAY “YES”

Show or tell us about a time when you said “yes” to something unexpected and what came of it.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I need to be a Princeton University graduate to apply to PiA?
No. PiA is based on campus at Princeton University, but it is open to graduates of all colleges and universities. Though a large proportion of our applicants are Princeton University students, for any specific fellowship opening, we are looking for the best possible candidate regardless of one’s undergraduate institution.

Do I need to be an American citizen to apply to PiA?
No. PiA is open to anyone of any nationality who has earned a bachelor’s degree or will obtain a bachelor’s degree by summer 2020. It is important to note that host country visa restrictions may limit the number of potential posts for citizens of certain nationalities. Moreover, applicants who are in the process of applying for permanent residency or citizenship in the U.S. are advised to consult a legal professional about the impact that a fellowship may have on their immigration status.

Do I need to be a native English speaker to apply to PiA?
No. However, all positions require professional proficiency in English, and English teaching positions require native English-speaking ability.

Can I apply to PiA if I graduated from college several years ago?
Yes. Approximately one-third of the current cohort of PiA Fellows had graduated from college before they applied to PiA.

Can I apply to PiA if I am currently studying or working outside of the U.S.?
Yes. We receive a number of applications from overseas candidates each year. If you are selected for an interview, we will give you the option to interview via Skype. However, if you are selected for a PiA fellowship, you will be required to attend the in-person Orientation at Princeton University from May 15-18, 2020 at your own expense.

What kind of degree do I need?
You must have your bachelor’s degree by the summer of 2020. We do accept candidates with master’s degrees, but not those with professional degrees. Keep in mind that PiA fellowships are entry-level positions and are geared toward recent college graduates.

What are my chances of placement?
Applicant numbers vary from year to year, but there have consistently been four or more strong applicants per opening. Candidates who have clearly defined goals yet demonstrate flexibility regarding placement have better chances.

Is it an advantage to have been to Asia before?
No. There are a handful of positions that require some previous experience and/or Asian language skills (see fellowship descriptions on the PiA website for more information), but for most positions we are looking for an interest in and a desire to learn about Asia, rather than in-depth knowledge. As a key goal of PiA is to serve as a launching pad to Asia and to put people outside of their comfort zones, we aim to identify the post where a Fellow will be challenged and will have the opportunity to learn something new. As such, it is unlikely that an applicant who has spent a meaningful amount of time in a particular country will be placed in that same country as a Fellow. Likewise, applicants with a significant amount of work experience in Asia should consider other programs.

Should I specify a particular country, issue or fellowship on my application?
You will indicate your country and post preferences on the application. These preferences are important information for us; however, they are used as a guideline rather than a restriction. Applicants apply to the program in general, not for specific posts, and we encourage applicants to keep an open mind to ideas outside of their initial preferences during the placement process. Keep in mind that a certain degree of flexibility may increase your chances of placement.

Is PiA only about English teaching?
No. While more than half our Fellows are employed as English teachers at universities, colleges, and high schools, there are also specialized positions with organizations that contribute to the following global issues: education, environmental sustainability, public health, economic development, and peace, justice, and access to information.

How do I learn more about specific positions?
All applicants should read reports filed by previous Fellows about their positions, which are available on our website. Please email piaapps@princeton.edu to obtain the login information to access the Fellow reports. Princeton students or applicants who live in the area may come by the PiA office to talk to the staff during assigned office hours.

Can you put me in touch with current PiA Fellows or alumni? Can you put me in touch with any host organizations?
Not yet. Applicants who reach the finalist stage of the selection process may be put in touch with current Fellows/alumni from the post for which they are being considered. Until that stage of the process, you may learn more about specific posts and countries by reading Fellow reports and conducting your own research. Please do not contact any PiA host organization directly until PiA has officially introduced you. Any applicant who circumvents PiA’s selection process by contacting a PiA partner organization directly will be automatically disqualified from consideration for a PiA fellowship.

Will you be adding any new positions to the ones listed on your website?
Yes. Every year, PiA typically adds new positions and eliminates others, with details not finalized until January. In addition, a certain position may not be available if a current Fellow receives an offer to stay for a second-year fellowship.

How do I decide where I want to go and what I want to do?
Here are some questions we ask candidates to consider as they think about which posts might best suit them: What is your college major/area of interest, and how might you apply that to working in Asia? What kind of climate do you like? Do you like living in big cities or small towns? What do you want to do in your free time? What kind of work environment do you want? Do you want to live in a more developed or less developed area? Do you want to live in a city with a group of PiA Fellows, or a city with just one co-Fellow? Do you have a medical condition that may require access to care during your fellowship year? Do you like spicy food? (We hope so!)

Can I accept a PiA fellowship and stay on the waiting list for other opportunities?
No. Once you have been offered a PiA fellowship and have accepted, you are required to withdraw all applications you have submitted for other jobs and fellowship programs.

What if my college graduation falls on the same weekend as PiA Orientation?
First of all, don’t panic – you can still apply to PiA. Orientation is mandatory, but your program director will work with you closely and on an individual basis to ensure that you can attend both your graduation ceremony and as much of PiA Orientation as possible. Keep in mind that this may require missing other Commencement activities that weekend and/or traveling a great distance for a short amount of time. For example, in the past we have had PiA Fellows fly from the West Coast for Friday night and Saturday of Orientation, and then fly back overnight on Saturday for a graduation ceremony on Sunday. If you have further questions on this topic, please save them for the interview stage of the process. Orientation will be held in Princeton, NJ on May 15-18, 2020.