

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

# Global Undergraduate Exchange Program

(Global UGRAD)

Online Application & Review Platform

For U.S. Department of State programs

*Proposals should be submitted via email in PDF or Word format to  
Jessica Ellerbach at [jessica.ellerbach@worldlearning.org](mailto:jessica.ellerbach@worldlearning.org) by 11:59PM EDT on September 27, 2026.*

# Contents

- 1. World Learning Corporate Profile**
- 2. RFP Objective & Program Background**
- 3. Program Overview & Current State**
- 4. Scope of Work Summary**
- 5. Schedule of Events & Key Dates**
- 6. Submission Instructions**
- 7. How to Read the Requirements**
- 8. Functional Requirements**
  - 8.1 Platform-Wide Requirements
  - 8.2 Foreign Student Application
  - 8.3 Eligibility Screening
  - 8.4 Letters of Recommendation & File Uploads
  - 8.5 Review & Selection Portal
  - 8.6 Matching / Placement
  - 8.7 U.S. Receiving Institution Application
  - 8.8 Post-Selection Forms & Documents (Foreign Students and U.S. receiving institutions)
  - 8.9 Administration, Reporting & Dashboards
- 9. Non-Functional Requirements**
  - 9.1 Accessibility
  - 9.2 Security & Data Privacy
  - 9.3 Hosting, Performance & Availability
  - 9.4 Support
  - 9.5 Branding
- 10. Information Required in Proposals**
- 11. Suggested Response Format for Each Requirement**
- 12. Selection Criteria & Process**
- 13. Contract Provisions Included in All Agreements**
- 14. Notes & Assumptions**
- 15. Questions & Contact**

## 1. World Learning Corporate Profile

World Learning is a 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in the state of Vermont, with offices in Washington, DC and Vermont.

## 2. RFP Objective & Program Background

World Learning is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit proposals from companies that can provide, configure, and maintain an online application and review platform for the Global Undergraduate Exchange Program (Global UGRAD), a program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and implemented by World Learning. World Learning oversees the procurement, configuration, and implementation of the platform.

The objective of this RFP is to identify a vendor (or vendors) offering a detailed solution for two distinct online applications — a Foreign Student Application and a U.S. Receiving Institution Application — together with a review portal for the foreign student applications and ongoing customer service support.

This RFP does not obligate World Learning to accept or contract for any expressed or implied services, nor does it obligate the vendor to accept or contract for any expressed or implied services. Any commitment to purchase will be outlined in a subsequent contract. World Learning reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive irregularities and informalities in the submission process.

World Learning intends to award the entire scope to a single vendor. Proposals should cover all components described in this RFP; proposals for only part of the scope may not be considered. Certain components are optional and are identified as such in the requirements (see the priority designations in Section 7 and the "desired"/optional items in Sections 4, 8.7, and 8.8); for these, vendors should indicate whether their platform can support the component or whether World Learning would need to handle it offline on its own.

## 3. Program Overview & Current State

Through Global UGRAD, World Learning administers an application, review, and placement process on behalf of the U.S. Department of State. Prospective foreign student participants apply from approximately 30 countries; applicants are reviewed and selected by the U.S. Embassy or Fulbright Commission in each country. Separately, U.S. colleges and universities apply to serve as receiving institutions, and finalist students are matched with finalist institutions.

- Foreign Student Application: estimated 4,000–5,000 applicants this cycle.
- Reviewers: U.S. Embassy / Fulbright Commission staff across approximately 30 countries, with multiple reviewers per country.
- U.S. Receiving Institution Application: estimated 100 applicants this cycle.

No migration of historical records or legacy data is required. The initial engagement is for one (1) program cycle / one year, with the option to extend into future years based on World Learning's satisfaction with the product and service. Vendors should provide complete, transparent, and itemized pricing.

## 4. Scope of Work Summary

The platform must support two independent applications that can be configured and opened/closed on separate timelines:

### 4.1 FOREIGN STUDENT APPLICATION

- Completed by prospective foreign student participants applying from approximately 30 countries.
- Begins with an eligibility screening (hard stop), followed by the full application, including document uploads.
- Requires a review and selection process conducted by U.S. Embassies / Fulbright Commissions in each country.

### 4.2 REVIEW & SELECTION (FOREIGN STUDENT APPLICATION)

- A review and selection process conducted by the U.S. Embassy or Fulbright Commission in each country, with each reviewing only its own country's applicants and multiple reviewers permitted per country.
- Reviewers work within the platform: viewing each applicant's consolidated dossier; designating finalists, alternates, and not-selected; rank-ordering finalists and alternates; and adding comments.

### 4.3 U.S. RECEIVING INSTITUTION APPLICATION

- Completed by U.S. receiving institutions. No document uploads and no review process are required.

### 4.4 MATCHING / PLACEMENT (DESIRED)

- A process to match finalist students with finalist U.S. institutions, ideally within the platform, with matched institutions able to view their assigned students' information directly in the system. May be performed offline if necessary.

### 4.5 POST-SELECTION (DESIRED)

- After selection and matching, finalist and alternate students and selected U.S. receiving institutions may complete additional forms and document uploads — ideally in the platform. May be performed offline if necessary.

## 5. Schedule of Events & Key Dates

Vendors should confirm in their proposals that the platform launch dates listed below are achievable and outline any dependencies.

|                                        |                                                       |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>RFP publication</b>                 | September 18, 2026                                    |
| <b>Deadline for vendor questions</b>   | September 23, 2026                                    |
| <b>Proposal due date</b>               | 11:59PM EDT on September 27, 2026                     |
| <b>Vendor selection / notification</b> | By October 2, 2026                                    |
| <b>Contract term</b>                   | One year, with option to extend based on satisfaction |

|                                                             |                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Platform launch (both applications open)</b>             | November 16, 2026                    |
| <b>Foreign Student Application — open window</b>            | Approximately 6–8 weeks from launch  |
| <b>U.S. Receiving Institution Application — open window</b> | Approximately 8–10 weeks from launch |

## 6. Submission Instructions

World Learning is requesting vendors to provide a written response. Please submit your proposal via email in a PDF or Word document to Jessica Ellerbach at [jessica.ellerbach@worldlearning.org](mailto:jessica.ellerbach@worldlearning.org) by 11:59PM EDT on September 27, 2026. Please use the following subject line in your email: Response to RFP — Global UGRAD Application and Review Platform.

Submissions should include a brief description of the company and its services, a proposal outlining the proposed platform, rates of service, the primary point of contact, and demonstrated capability and willingness to perform the required services. See Section 10 for the detailed list of required information and Section 11 for the requirement response format.

## 7. How to Read the Requirements

Each requirement in Sections 8 and 9 carries a priority. Vendors should indicate, for every requirement, whether their platform Meets it out of the box, meets it via Configuration, requires Custom development, or Does not support it (see Section 11).

|                     |                                                                              |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Must</b>         | Required. The platform must provide this capability.                         |
| <b>Should</b>       | Strongly preferred and important, but limited workarounds may be acceptable. |
| <b>Nice to have</b> | Desirable and adds value; not essential to selection.                        |

## 8. Functional Requirements

### 8.1 PLATFORM-WIDE REQUIREMENTS

| ID          | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                   | Priority |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>PW-1</b> | Provide two distinct applications (Foreign Student Application and U.S. Receiving Institution Application) that can be configured and opened/closed on independent timelines. | Must     |
| <b>PW-2</b> | Fully responsive interface that can be completed on both desktop and mobile devices (smartphones and tablets) across current mainstream browsers.                             | Must     |
| <b>PW-3</b> | English-language applicant and reviewer interfaces.                                                                                                                           | Must     |
| <b>PW-4</b> | Administrators can configure open and close dates for each application and manually open, close, or extend each window.                                                       | Must     |
| <b>PW-5</b> | Role-based access control distinguishing at minimum: administrators (World Learning), reviewers, foreign student applicants, and U.S. institution users.                      | Must     |

| ID   | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Priority |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| PW-6 | Data is retained after the cycle closes through the end of the contract.                                                                                                                                                                | Must     |
| PW-7 | Provide both applications, the review portal, and all required components through a single vendor/solution. World Learning intends to award the full scope to one vendor and is not seeking to divide the scope among multiple vendors. | Must     |

## 8.2 FOREIGN STUDENT APPLICATION — FLOW & CONTENT

| ID   | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Priority |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| FS-1 | Support the anticipated volume of 4,000–5,000 applicants this cycle.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Must     |
| FS-2 | Applicants create individual accounts, save partial progress, and return to complete the application at any time during the 6–8 week window.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Must     |
| FS-3 | Provide an online application form using the questions and fields supplied by World Learning. This may be delivered either by the vendor standing up the form from World Learning's content, or through an easy-to-use, no-code form builder that lets World Learning administrators create, edit, and reorder questions and fields themselves (e.g., drag-and-drop). Vendors should describe which approach they offer and the field types supported (text, multiple choice, file upload, conditional/branching questions, etc.). | Must     |
| FS-4 | World Learning administrators can reopen submitted applications so that applicants may make changes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Must     |
| FS-5 | World Learning staff can edit and make changes to applications from the back end / administrative side.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Must     |
| FS-6 | Administrators can close the application window at a defined date and time.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Must     |
| FS-7 | Configurable automated email notifications to applicants (e.g., submission confirmation and outcome). Outcome notification may be handled inside or outside the system.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Should   |

**Scope note:** The application form questions are supplied by World Learning. No application fee or payment processing is required. Applicant interface is English-only.

## 8.3 ELIGIBILITY SCREENING - FOREIGN STUDENT APPLICATION

| ID   | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Priority |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| EL-1 | Present an eligibility screening step first, before the applicant can begin the main application.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Must     |
| EL-2 | Enforce a hard stop: applicants who do not meet eligibility criteria cannot proceed to the application.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Must     |
| EL-3 | Provide eligibility screening questions and pass/fail criteria supplied by World Learning. As with the main application form, this may be delivered either by the vendor configuring the criteria from World Learning's content, or through a self-service interface that lets World Learning administrators set and update the questions and pass/fail logic themselves. | Must     |
| EL-4 | Display clear messaging to applicants who are screened out.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Should   |

## 8.4 LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION & FILE UPLOADS - FOREIGN STUDENT APPLICATION

| ID   | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Priority |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| UP-1 | Applicants can download letter of recommendation template(s) from within the application.                                                                                                                                | Must     |
| UP-2 | Applicants upload completed letters of recommendation and other supporting documents such as government-issued ID, transcripts, etc. (Note: letters of recommendation are uploaded by the student, not by recommenders). | Must     |
| UP-3 | Accept PDF, Microsoft Word (.doc/.docx), and common image files (e.g., JPG, PNG) for the uploads.                                                                                                                        | Must     |
| UP-4 | Support at least four uploads per application (typical), with the number configurable by World Learning.                                                                                                                 | Must     |
| UP-5 | Support the largest practical maximum file size per upload. Vendors should state their maximum.                                                                                                                          | Must     |
| UP-6 | Combine all of an applicant's documents into a single consolidated dossier for review.                                                                                                                                   | Must     |

## 8.5 REVIEW & SELECTION PORTAL (FOREIGN STUDENT APPLICATION)

Reviewers are staff at the U.S. Embassy or Fulbright Commission in each participating country. Reviewers evaluate only the applicants from their own country.

| ID    | Requirement                                                                                                                              | Priority |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| RV-1  | Reviewers see and review only the applicants from their own country (country-level data segmentation across approximately 30 countries). | Must     |
| RV-2  | Support multiple reviewers per country, who share access to the same set of applicants.                                                  | Must     |
| RV-3  | World Learning sets up reviewer accounts; reviewers sign in via email.                                                                   | Must     |
| RV-4  | Reviewers review applications directly within the portal.                                                                                | Must     |
| RV-5  | Reviewers view each applicant's consolidated dossier within the portal.                                                                  | Must     |
| RV-6  | Reviewers can download applicant dossiers.                                                                                               | Should   |
| RV-7  | Reviewers can designate each applicant as Finalist, Alternate, or Not Selected. (See scope note below for more information.)             | Must     |
| RV-8  | Reviewers can rank-order their finalists and alternates. (See scope note below for more information.)                                    | Must     |
| RV-9  | Reviewers can add comments to applicants.                                                                                                | Must     |
| RV-10 | Reviewers can search and filter applications by key information (e.g., name, status, key fields).                                        | Must     |

**Scope note:** A single review stage is required — no multi-stage or panel escalation. No numeric scoring rubric is required. No conflict-of-interest handling (recusal / hiding applicants) is required. Each applicant carries one status and one rank order; if there are multiple reviewers within a country, they reach agreement offline in terms of status and rank, and the decision is recorded by one of the reviewers in the portal. In other words, the platform does not need to aggregate and synthesize status and rankings across multiple reviewers.

## 8.6 U.S. RECEIVING INSTITUTION APPLICATION

| ID   | Requirement                                                                                                                                                             | Priority     |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| RI-1 | Provide a separate application completed by U.S. receiving institutions, on its own open/close schedule (target 8–10 week window from November 16, 2026).               | Must         |
| RI-2 | Institution users can save partial progress and return to complete the application.                                                                                     | Must         |
| RI-3 | Allow multiple users from the same institution to access and collaborate on a single application.                                                                       | Nice to have |
| RI-4 | Configurable automated email notifications to applicants (e.g., submission confirmation and outcome). Outcome notification may be handled inside or outside the system. | Should       |

**Scope note:** The initial U.S. receiving institution application requires no document uploads and no review process. Post-selection forms and document uploads for institutions are addressed in Section 8.8.

## 8.7 MATCHING / PLACEMENT

| ID   | Requirement                                                                                               | Priority |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| MP-1 | Match finalist students with finalist U.S. institutions within the platform.                              | Should   |
| MP-2 | Matched U.S. receiving institutions can view their assigned students' information directly in the system. | Should   |
| MP-3 | If matching is not performed in-platform, provide exports to support an offline matching process.         | Should   |

**Scope note:** In-platform matching is the ideal. World Learning can perform matching offline if the platform does not support it, so vendors should describe whichever capability they offer. Vendors should indicate whether in-platform matching is an additional cost, or whether savings are available if handled offline.

## 8.8 POST-SELECTION FORMS & DOCUMENTS (FOREIGN STUDENTS AND U.S. RECEIVING INSTITUTIONS)

After selection and matching, both selected foreign student participants (finalists and alternates) and participating U.S. receiving institutions may be required to complete additional forms and upload additional documents. Handling this within the platform is ideal, but World Learning can manage it offline through a separate process if the platform does not support it. This stage runs on its own timeline, separate from the initial application windows. Vendors should indicate in their pricing whether post-selection functionality would be an additional cost, and conversely whether cost savings are available if the platform handles only the application and review process without the post-selection stage.

| ID   | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Priority |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| PS-1 | After selection, foreign student finalists/alternates and U.S. receiving institutions can log back into their existing accounts to complete additional post-selection forms and upload additional documents. | Should   |
| PS-2 | World Learning can configure which post-selection forms and document uploads are required, and open/close this stage on its own timeline (separate from the initial application window).                     | Should   |
| PS-3 | Post-selection uploads accept PDF, Word, and image files, with the number and types configurable by World Learning.                                                                                          | Should   |

| ID   | Requirement                                                                                                                                     | Priority |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| PS-4 | World Learning administrators can view, track completion status of, and download post-selection submissions for both students and institutions. | Should   |
| PS-5 | Only selected participants (finalists/alternates) and matched/participating institutions can access the post-selection stage.                   | Should   |

## 8.9 ADMINISTRATION, REPORTING & DASHBOARDS

| ID   | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Priority |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| AD-1 | Central World Learning administrator role with visibility across all countries and both applications.                                                                                                        | Must     |
| AD-2 | Export application data, applicant statuses, reviewer decisions, and rankings to common formats (e.g., Excel / CSV). Download all uploaded application documents (e.g., government-issued IDs, transcripts). | Must     |
| AD-3 | Administrative dashboard(s) showing real-time status and key metrics (e.g., applications started, submitted, under review, decisions).                                                                       | Should   |

# 9. Non-Functional Requirements

## 9.1 ACCESSIBILITY

| ID   | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                    | Priority |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| AC-1 | Conform to Section 508 (and WCAG 2.2 AA) accessibility standards for applicant interfaces. Describe your web accessibility standards of practice for people with disabilities. | Must     |
| AC-2 | Provide a current VPAT or equivalent accessibility conformance documentation.                                                                                                  | Must     |

## 9.2 SECURITY & DATA PRIVACY

The platform will process the personal data of international applicants for a U.S. Department of State–sponsored program. Vendors should describe how they meet the following, consistent with the data-protection provisions in Section 13.

| ID   | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                            | Priority |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| SE-1 | Encrypt data in transit and at rest.                                                                                                                                                                   | Must     |
| SE-2 | Secure authentication for all user types; describe methods used (including reviewer email-based sign-in).                                                                                              | Must     |
| SE-3 | Describe compliance with applicable data-privacy obligations for international applicant data, including safeguarding of personally identifiable information (PII) as required under 2 CFR 200.303(e). | Must     |
| SE-4 | Describe security certifications and audits held (e.g., SOC 2 Type II) and provide documentation on request.                                                                                           | Should   |
| SE-5 | Describe ability to meet federal / State Department data-handling expectations relevant to a U.S. Government–sponsored program.                                                                        | Should   |

| ID    | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Priority |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| SE-6  | Describe how World Learning data is deleted from vendor (and subprocessor) systems upon contract termination or on World Learning's request, including timelines and handling of backups.                                                    | Must     |
| SE-7  | Provide written certification of data deletion upon request, where appropriate.                                                                                                                                                              | Must     |
| SE-8  | Support multi-factor authentication (MFA) for all World Learning administrator accounts and describe MFA options available for reviewer and applicant accounts.                                                                              | Must     |
| SE-9  | Encrypt data in transit using TLS 1.2 or higher, and data at rest using AES-256 or equivalent.                                                                                                                                               | Must     |
| SE-10 | Notify World Learning within 24 hours of discovering a data breach or suspected unauthorized access, with a written incident report to follow within 72 hours.                                                                               | Must     |
| SE-11 | Permit World Learning to request evidence of security testing (e.g., penetration test summary, vulnerability scan results), and to conduct or commission an independent security assessment during the contract term with reasonable notice. | Should   |
| SE-12 | Host and process World Learning data within the United States; disclose any exceptions and the safeguards in place.                                                                                                                          | Must     |

### 9.3 HOSTING, PERFORMANCE & AVAILABILITY

| ID   | Requirement                                                                                                                          | Priority |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| HP-1 | Describe hosting model (cloud/SaaS assumed) and data-residency options, including the proposed technical architecture of the system. | Must     |
| HP-2 | Handle peak concurrent usage, particularly surges near application deadlines, without degradation.                                   | Must     |
| HP-3 | Commit to an uptime target / SLA during the open application windows; state the figure (e.g., 99.5%+).                               | Must     |
| HP-4 | Describe backup and disaster-recovery practices.                                                                                     | Should   |

### 9.4 SUPPORT

| ID   | Requirement                                                                                                                       | Priority |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| SU-1 | Provide support coverage throughout the application windows for both applications and throughout the review and selection period. | Must     |
| SU-2 | Describe support channels, hours, response/resolution targets, and escalation paths.                                              | Must     |
| SU-3 | Provide implementation support and training for World Learning administrators.                                                    | Must     |

### 9.5 BRANDING

| ID   | Requirement                                                                       | Priority     |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| BR-1 | Apply program / World Learning logos (global program branding — not per-country). | Must         |
| BR-2 | Provide a custom URL / subdomain for the applications.                            | Should       |
| BR-3 | Configure fonts and colors to align with program branding.                        | Nice to have |

## 10. Information Required in Proposals

To allow World Learning to compare proposals fairly, each proposal should include the following.

### COMPANY & EXPERIENCE

- Legal business name and ownership (parent company, subsidiaries, and beneficial owners).
- Number of years in business.
- A brief description of the company and its services.
- A brief description of where World Learning data would be stored and processed, including any third-party subprocessors or hosting providers and the country/region of each.
- Relevant experience, especially with scholarship, exchange, admissions, or grant application-and-review platforms of comparable scale (several thousand applicants) and with distributed international reviewers.
- At least two to three references from comparable clients.

### TECHNICAL RESPONSE

- A description of the proposed technical architecture of the system.
- A point-by-point response to every requirement in Sections 8 and 9, using the format in Section 11.
- A live product demonstration covering the applicant experience, the eligibility gate, uploads/dossier, and the review/selection portal, as feasible.

### IMPLEMENTATION

- A proposed implementation plan and timeline demonstrating readiness for a November 16, 2026 launch, assuming selection by early October 2026, including configuration, testing, and World Learning administrator onboarding.

### COMMERCIAL

- Itemized pricing for a one-year term (with option to extend), separating one-time setup/configuration, subscription/licensing, support, and any per-user, per-applicant, or usage-based charges. State clearly what is included versus additional and separately priced optional components (e.g., in-platform matching in Section 8.7 and the post-selection stage in Section 8.8), noting any cost difference if excluded.
- The services covered in reference to the platform, and any additional service fees.
- Cancellation policy and any surcharges related to cancellation.

### COMPLIANCE & DOCUMENTATION

- Hosting, security, privacy, and accessibility documentation (e.g., SOC 2, VPAT), and any applicable data-residency options.
- Support model and SLA details for the application windows (both applications) and the review and selection period.

- Any assumptions, exceptions, or dependencies that affect the proposal.

## 11. Suggested Response Format for Each Requirement

For every requirement ID, please indicate the level of support and add a brief note.

|                      |                                                        |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Meets</b>         | Supported out of the box, standard functionality.      |
| <b>Configurable</b>  | Supported via configuration, no custom development.    |
| <b>Custom</b>        | Requires custom development; note effort and cost.     |
| <b>Not supported</b> | Not available; note any planned roadmap or workaround. |

*Example: "RV-8 — Configurable. Reviewers rank finalists and alternates via drag-and-drop within the review queue; ordering is exportable."*

## 12. Selection Criteria & Process

After receipt of proposals, the Selection Team will evaluate all information presented and select a vendor. The selected vendor will be asked to sign a contract for services that formalizes the provisions (see Section 13). All valid responses will be evaluated on qualitative and quantitative criteria, including:

- Capability and willingness to perform the required services.
- Quality, flexibility, and reliability of the platform and services.
- Relevant experience with comparable programs.
- Ability to meet the required implementation timeline and November 16, 2026 launch.
- Accessibility (Section 508) standards of practice for people with disabilities.
- Security, data protection, and support commitments.
- Competitive, transparent rates.

Successful bidders will be notified by World Learning no later than October 2, 2026. World Learning intends to award the full scope to a single vendor and reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.

## 13. Contract Provisions Included in All Agreements

Below are some key provisions World Learning includes in its contractor agreements. World Learning expects contractors to comply with the requirements outlined below. This is not an exhaustive list and World Learning reserves the right to amend as needed.

- 1. Equal Employment Opportunity.** All agreements shall contain a provision requiring compliance with E.O. 11246, “Equal Employment Opportunity,” as amended by E.O. 11375, “Amending Executive Order 11246 Relating to Equal Employment Opportunity,” and as supplemented by regulations at 41 CFR part 60, “Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, Equal Employment Opportunity, Department of Labor.”
- 2. Debarment and Suspension (E.O.s 12549 and 12689).** In entering this agreement, the Contractor certifies that neither Contractor, nor any of its principals, is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, disqualified, or otherwise excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.
- 3. Ownership of Intellectual Property and Protection of Data.** Contractor agrees that all Works shall be the property of World Learning. Contractor hereby assigns and agrees to assign to World Learning Contractor's full right, title, and interest to all Works and agrees that all copyrightable Works that Contractor creates shall be considered “works made for hire.” Contractor represents and warrants that none of the Works will contain any material that infringes any intellectual property or proprietary rights of third parties.

In the course of performance, Contractor will have access to data generated by World Learning and/or its applicants, including confidential and personally identifiable information. World Learning owns all such data and prohibits Contractor from using such data except in the course of performing the work. Contractor will share such data only with its employees on a need-to-know basis. Contractor will not disclose such data and will take robust measures, including cybersecurity measures, to safeguard confidential information, including protected personally identifiable information and other sensitive information, as required under 2 CFR 200.303(e).
- 4. Preventing Terrorist Financing.** Contractor must not engage in transactions with, or provide resources or support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism, including those individuals or entities designated under E.O. 13224, or that appear on the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List maintained by the U.S. Treasury, or the UN Security Council designation list.
- 5. Trafficking in Persons.** Contractors at any tier, or their employees, labor recruiters, brokers, or other agents, must not engage in:

- Trafficking in persons (as defined in the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime) during the period of this Agreement;
- Procurement of a commercial sex act during the period of this Agreement;
- Use of forced labor in the performance of this Agreement;
- Acts that directly support or advance trafficking in persons, including: destroying, concealing, confiscating, or otherwise denying an employee access to identity or immigration documents; failing to provide or pay for return transportation as required; soliciting a person for employment by materially false or fraudulent pretenses; charging employees recruitment fees; or providing or arranging housing that fails to meet host-country housing and safety standards.

**6. Safeguarding.** Contractor shall not engage in any sexual exploitation and abuse conduct, or child safeguarding violations. Contractor acknowledges and agrees that World Learning applies a policy of “zero tolerance” with regard to sexual exploitation and abuse and child safeguarding violations. For purposes of this Agreement, the following definitions apply:

- “Sexual exploitation” means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes, including profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.
- “Sexual abuse” means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. Sexual exploitation and abuse are strictly prohibited.
- “Child” means any person less than eighteen (18) years of age, regardless of any laws relating to consent or age of majority.
- “Child safeguarding violation” is conduct by a party's employees, personnel, or subcontractors that actually or likely causes significant harm to a child, including any kind of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Sexual activity with any person less than eighteen (18) years of age constitutes sexual exploitation and abuse; mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense. The exchange of money, employment, goods, services, or other things of value for sexual favors or activities constitutes sexual exploitation and abuse. Sexual relationships between beneficiaries of assistance and Contractor are prohibited, as they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics and undermine the credibility and integrity of the work of World Learning.

Before any interaction with participants occurs, Contractor must, for all representatives who could interact with participants: (a) conduct criminal background checks (or, where unavailable, obtain a current police report), disclose to World Learning any causes for concern, and retain these documents on file for provision upon request; and (b) require such representatives to sign the Safeguarding Standards of Conduct (Annex A) and maintain them on file, available upon request.

**7. Ethics and Compliance Hotline.** Contractor MUST report immediately to World Learning any incidents involving safeguarding or other health and safety violations, or fraud, bribery, gratuity, or other ethical misconduct potentially affecting this agreement or the Project. Contractor may disclose through World Learning's Ethics and Compliance Hotline, which allows anonymous reporting of any incidents:

Website: [www.lighthouse-services.com/worldlearning](http://www.lighthouse-services.com/worldlearning)

Email: [reports@lighthouse-services.com](mailto:reports@lighthouse-services.com) (must include “World Learning” in the subject line)

Toll-Free Telephone — English (USA & Canada): 833-400-0039; Spanish (USA & Canada): 800-216-1288; All other countries: 800-31-26-4002 (dial country access code first; codes and instructions are available in World Learning's Universal Toll-Free Dialing Guide).

## 14. Notes & Assumptions

The following reflect World Learning's current assumptions.

- The two applications (foreign student and U.S. receiving institution) are independent and may run on separate open/close schedules; a matching/placement step is the primary point of connection between them.

- Program participants apply from approximately 30 countries, none of which are in the European Union. Vendors should assume GDPR does not apply for the purpose of this program, though all other data-privacy and PII-protection requirements in Sections 9.2 and 13 remain in effect. World Learning will confirm if this changes.
- Cloud-hosted SaaS delivery is assumed; vendors should note any on-premises or data-residency constraints they can accommodate.
- Uptime/SLA and peak-load expectations (Section 9.3) are World Learning's proposed baselines and may be adjusted; vendors should state what they can commit to.

## 15. Questions & Contact

For questions about this RFP, contact Jessica Ellerbach at [jessica.ellerbach@worldlearning.org](mailto:jessica.ellerbach@worldlearning.org).