

Frequently asked questions COMENIUS

Comenius Assistants	
Who can become a Comenius Assistant?	<p>If you want to become a Comenius Assistant, you must be a national or permanent resident of a country participating in the Lifelong Learning Programme, or be registered as stateless or hold refugee status in one of these countries. You should not have been previously employed as a teacher, but you should hold a qualification leading to a career as a teacher or have been studying for at least two years towards such a qualification. You must not have previously received a Comenius Assistantship grant.</p> <p>If in doubt, please clarify with your National Agency if you are eligible to receive funding for a Comenius Assistantship.</p>
What are Comenius Assistants supposed to do?	<p>Assistants receive grants to enable them to undertake an assistantship in a host school in another country participating in the Lifelong Learning Programme. The tasks entrusted to an assistant may include for example: assisting in classroom teaching, supporting pupils' group work, participating in project-based teaching (e.g. European projects, such as eTwinning, Comenius School Partnership or Comenius Regio), teaching their mother tongue and providing information on their own country. Assistants are not supposed to act as full-time teachers. The assistant's school-based activity must not exceed 12 to 16 hours and must be agreed beforehand with the host school.</p> <p>You may also ask your National Agency for the contact details of a person who undertook a Comenius Assistantship in order to gain a better understanding of the role of a Comenius Assistant.</p>
When and where can I find the application form?	<p>The application forms are published on the websites of the National Agencies. There is a separate application form for assistants and for host schools.</p>
What information do I need for my application?	<p>In your application you should mainly explain your motivation to</p>

	<p>apply for the assistantship and describe what you would like to bring to your future host school. It is also important to describe what impact you expect on your personal and professional skills. You will also have to define your assistantship profile, which will, if the application is successful, be used to find a host school for you. It will be easier to find a host school if you show that you are flexible, especially as to the choice of host country. Make sure that you answer all the questions in detail.</p>
<p>How will my application be assessed? What kind of criteria will be used?</p>	<p>Applications from assistants and host schools are assessed separately by their respective National Agencies. First of all, an eligibility check is carried out on the applicant and the application. Eligible applications are then assessed from the quality point of view on the basis of the award criteria published in the Guide for Applicants 2009, Part II: Sub-Programmes and Actions (Comenius Assistantships). Some participating countries have also decided to apply national priorities to candidates in their country. This means that in the selection of assistants, applicants in these countries can get extra points if they address one or more of the national priorities. National priorities and also the weighting of the award criteria are published on the website of your National Agency.</p>
<p>What costs are covered by the grant?</p>	<p>Assistants receive a grant to help cover travel and preparatory costs (pedagogic, linguistic and cultural preparation) and to contribute towards subsistence costs. In order to give more applicants the chance to undertake assistantships, many agencies apply ceilings. Please contact your National Agency in order to get detailed information on the rates applicable.</p>
<p>How will the National Agency find a host school for me?</p>	<p>Once the National Agencies have finished assessing applications received from assistants and host schools, they start intensive interagency consultations (called "matching") in order to match approved assistants with approved host schools on the basis of their preferences. It is easier to find a host school for assistants who are</p>

	willing to go to any European country.
I am from Spain and would like to undertake an assistantship in a French school I already know (due to a former stay as a pupil). Is that possible?	<p>In principle yes, but there is no guarantee that it will be possible to arrange it. Please refer to your preferred choice in your application, give your reasons and make sure that your proposed host school also applies to its National Agency.</p> <p>If both applications are accepted, the National Agencies will try to arrange the match. Please note that there is no guarantee you will get a grant for your preferred school; you should also consider acquiring new experience in a school which is not known to you.</p>
My friend and I would like to do an assistantship together, going to the same school or at least to the same town. Is that possible?	<p>Please note that it is not possible to submit a joint application form; you will each have to apply separately. Also, it is not very likely you will get the chance to go to one and the same school as schools are often able to receive only one assistant at a time.</p> <p>Going to the same town or region might be more realistic, but this depends also on the situation on the ground, e.g. the availability of two accepted host schools in a given region which are both interested in receiving an assistant with your profile.</p> <p>Please indicate your wish in your application form, giving your reasons. If both applications are not accepted and/or two suitable host schools are not found in the same town or region, the National Agency might offer you other options.</p>
Do I have to teach languages or be especially talented in languages?	<p>Since 2007 Comenius Assistantships have been available to future teachers of all subjects. Assistants are therefore not expected to teach foreign languages, but you should of course be able to communicate with pupils and teachers in your host school. Often the preferred language is either the language of the host country or one of the languages taught at the host school.</p> <p>Comenius Assistants are also often asked to teach their native language. In this case it might be useful to prepare for this and bring some teaching material with you.</p>

	You do not have to be especially talented in languages, but you should be open-minded towards language learning.
Do I have to know the language of the host country when submitting my application?	<p>No, not necessarily. In your application you can indicate preferences concerning the country you would like to go to. National Agencies will try to respect your preferences, but it cannot always be guaranteed that an appropriate host school can be found in one of those countries. You might be offered an assistantship in another country, whose language you don't speak.</p> <p>If you do not speak the language of your host country or you would like to improve your language skills, you can apply for additional funds for linguistic preparation.</p> <p>In some cases it is also possible to attend Erasmus Intensive Language Courses (EILCs — courses organised for less widely taught and used languages) prior to your assistantship and you can also attend language courses during your stay.</p> <p>Comenius Assistantships are also a chance to learn more about a country and a language which is entirely new to you.</p>
Can I combine an assistantship with other activities (studying/work experience/voluntary work)	<p>Activities outside the school can help you to integrate better in your new surroundings, but your main occupation should be your assistantship. You should arrange your stay in such a way that both you and your host school can get the maximum benefit from it.</p> <p>A Comenius Assistant must spend 12 to 16 hours per week in his/her host school. You might also have to prepare some activities and your opportunities to work or study in addition to the assistantship will be limited.</p>
Host schools in Comenius Assistantships	
Our school would like to host a Comenius Assistant, but we are not sure if we are eligible to become a host school.	<p>A list of all schools eligible to apply under Comenius is published on the Comenius website.</p> <p>Please consult:</p>

	http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/comenius/index_en.html .
When and where can I find the application form?	The application forms are published on the websites of the National Agencies. There is a separate application form for assistants and for host schools.
What information do we need for our application?	In your application you should mainly explain your motivation to host an assistant and describe how you plan to involve him/her in school activities. It is also important to describe what benefits and outcomes you expect from the assistantship. You will also have to define the assistantship profile, which will, if your application is successful, be used to find an assistant for you. It will be easier to find an assistant if you show that you are flexible, especially as to the choice of the assistant's country of origin and mother tongue. Make sure that you answer all the questions in detail.
How will our application be assessed? What kind of criteria will be used?	Applications from assistants and host schools are assessed separately by their respective National Agencies. First of all, an eligibility check is carried out on the applicant and the application. Eligible applications are then assessed from the quality point of view on the basis of the award criteria published in the Guide for Applicants 2009, Part II: Sub-Programmes and Actions (Comenius Assistantships). Some participating countries have also decided to apply national priorities to candidates in their country. This means that in the selection of schools, applicants in these countries can get extra points if they address one or more of the national priorities. National priorities and also the weighting of the award criteria are published on the website of your National Agency.
How will the National Agency find an assistant for us?	Once the National Agencies have finished assessing applications received from assistants and host schools, they start intensive interagency consultations (called "matching") in order to match approved assistants with approved host schools on the basis of their preferences. It is easier to find an assistant for schools which are willing to receive an assistant from any European country.

<p>We understand that the host schools do not receive funding, but benefit from the presence of the assistant. They are also asked to provide support to the assistant, e.g. by appointing a mentor. What are the minimum standards for supporting an assistant? And what could we expect to get in return?</p>	<p>Host schools are asked to designate a teacher to supervise the assistant, look after his/her welfare and monitor his/her progress. The school should also try to fully integrate the assistant into school life.</p> <p>In order to define the tasks an assistant is to perform in the school, school and assistant should draw up an agreement specifying the assistant's activities. Assistants are expected to work 12 to 16 hours per week in the school; this could be work on a project or assisting in classroom teaching.</p> <p>The assistant is not expected to work as a full-time teacher and host schools should have in mind that assistants still need to learn. The better a school can support the assistant, the more both assistant and host school will benefit from this experience.</p>
<p>We currently have a Comenius School Partnership, which is successful and is leading to many additional activities. Is it possible to involve a Comenius Assistant in this type of work? Or in other project-related work in our school?</p>	<p>Certainly! Many Comenius Assistants are involved in project work and support European or international projects in their host school, such as eTwinning, Comenius School Partnership or Comenius Regio.</p> <p>Assistants could also help schools to start European projects, e.g. by using existing contacts with schools in their home country or supporting communication with the partner schools.</p>
<p>If we apply for a Comenius Assistant, could we ask for a specific country of origin?</p>	<p>You can indicate preferences in your application. The National Agencies try to respect these preferences as much as possible, but this is not possible in all cases and we recommend being flexible concerning your preferences as to the country of origin and the mother tongue of the assistant.</p>
<p>Could several schools share an assistant?</p>	<p>Yes, but one school should take the main responsibility. All schools should agree with the assistant on his/her work programme and make sure that it does not go beyond 12 to 16 hours per week and that the assistant has enough time for preparation or his/her own language learning (if need be).</p>