

# Student Leaders Program

*A Program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State*

## PROFESSIONAL REFERENCE INSTRUCTIONS

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE APPLICANT:

Give this form to a relevant professional reference and ask him/her to fill out the form completely.

**Please make sure to provide your professional reference with the same first and last name and email address that you use to submit your application so that they can include the same information on their professional reference form.**

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDENT LEADERS PROGRAM FOR THE PROFESSIONAL REFERENCE:

The Student Leaders program is an intensive 6-week exchange program to the United States for approximately 120 undergraduate and graduate students **ages 20-24 from the Middle East** and North Africa. The Student Leaders program has operated continually since 2003.

Students are divided among up to six U.S. academic institutions where they develop leadership skills and expand their understanding of civil society, as well as the democratic process and how both may be applied in their home communities. Participants have the opportunity to meet their American peers, engage in local community service activities, and observe and take part in the governmental process on the local, state, and federal levels.

The institutes include academic coursework, as well as study tours to various regions of the United States. Upon completion of the U.S.-based programs, host institutes work with participants to implement civic engagement programs in their home communities.

A follow-on training is generally held in the region approximately 6 months after the U.S. portion of the program.

### Instructions for Professional Reference:

The Student Leaders program features a unique kind of educational experience. This applicant will be involved in an exchange program with close contact with other leaders from the Middle East and North Africa region in a challenging learning environment that will require cross-cultural adjustment and an extended period of functioning as a member of a group. To succeed, the applicant must have a high degree of motivation and the ability to adjust to people of different social and cultural backgrounds. Please be very honest in your assessment of the applicant to help us to determine whether the applicant is an appropriate fit for this kind of program. Please indicate your estimate of the following characteristics as to how they pertain to the applicant by marking an "X" in the appropriate box. If you wish to add comments, please do so on another sheet of paper. **Your answers will remain confidential.**

## I. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant First Name:	Ahmed
Applicant Last Name:	Gharmoul
Applicant Email Address:	ahmedgharmoul@gmail.com

## II. PERSONAL INFORMATION

First Name:	Ahmed
Last Name:	Marsaoui
Street Address:	4 rue ennil cité ennour
City:	Msaken
Country:	Tunisia
Telephone Number:	+216 52 423 818
Email Address:	ahmed.marsaoui@supcom.tn
Job Title:	AI engineer
Place of Employment:	Tunisian Bank company (STB), Tunisia

In what capacity have you know the applicant?

The ability to involve himself in the civic society and to show leaderships skills

How long have you known the applicant? From: \_\_\_\_\_ October 2016 \_\_\_\_\_ to:  
\_\_\_\_\_ August 2018 \_\_\_\_\_

Year

Year

## III. APPLICANT RANKING

Applicant Quality	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Unknown
Consideration for and interest in others and their views		*			
Leadership potential			*		
Ability to take direction cheerfully		*			
Takes Initiative		*			
Sense of responsibility	*				
Ability to adjust to and cope with new situations		*			
Intellectual curiosity and imagination	*				
Ability to express self	*				

Participation in community and extracurricular activities	*				
Ability to follow through with projects		*			

#### IV. SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS

**Please print your responses to the following questions:**

What do you see as the strengths of this applicant? And weaknesses?

As for the strengths, I qualify Ahmed as a creative person that has a special passion for the associative work via different organisms (mainly clubs and associations). Such creativity was well demonstrated thanks to its graphic design abilities during each event and/or project. By the time I was the chief of the external relationships department within the youth council of Msaken, Ahmed showed a special talent for leading the entire group into another success when he was nominated as the action leader/coordinator. Another strength that must be mentioned is his communication skills: He was always able to express well his points of view within the council and defending them in front of all the other membres.

As for the weaknesses, I can say that Ahmed is a quick decision maker: Sometimes he seems so motivated about one action/ project that he doesn't study well its faisability(logistic and financial ones) and jump directly into its implementation . Such weakness is overcome by the other members suggestions and Ahmed's high capacity to accept the latter ones.

How well will the applicant be able to work with others in the Student Leaders group to resolve problems?

I knew Ahmed when I was the coordinator(Aka president) of the Youth council of Msaken (2016-2017) and its external relationships department's chief (2017-2018). During this period, Ahmed showed an extraordinary communication ability and started to cooperate quickly with the rest of the team despite joining it in the barely end of season. As far as resolving problems, the candidate was always qualified as a reason voice: in each conflict he faced, he was calling all the involved members to sit around the same table in order to discuss the reasons behind the problem/conflict and try to get out with the most reasonable solution for all. I ensure that Ahmed will always follow the same strategy to resolve any problem including those that he might face in the Student Leaders group.

What challenges do you foresee the applicant might face in participating on this program?

Like any other person trying to live a new experience, Ahmed might face some challenges due to its unfamiliarity with these programs. Among the challenges that this candidate might face I mention his nostalgia to its local support network mainly in the first weeks of the program. Such challenge can be quickly overpassed thanks the candidate's communication skills and his well knowledge of the English language ( a must in these programs). Another challenge Ahmed might face when

participating in the civic society activities is the familiarization and getting used to the American model of associations and their workflow that may be different from the Tunisian one. A challenge that I believe Ahmed could overcome quickly thanks to its different civic engagements in Tunisia (different associations and clubs, each one has its unique characteristics).

Please comment on the applicant's overall suitability for the program, including leadership and interpersonal skills.

As a conclusion, and as being a direct responsible of him ( as a president of the Youth council of Msaken and as its external relationships department's chief during the previously mentioned periods), **I declare that Ahmed Gharmoul fits entirely to this program** for all the following reasons:

1-His experience within Youth council of Msaken made of him **a well communicator** with both **Tunisian members** and **Polish ones** (since the youth councils used to be financed and managed with the partnership of the Polish foundation MILA: foundation of active places and people).

2-His **quick integration** within our council proves well that he will fit well within any other group of people in just few weeks.

3-This same experience gave him the opportunity to be some of our actions' coordinator and therefore gave him the chance to show and to enhance further his **leaderships skills**: These positions demonstrated also his creativity and resolving problems aspects needed to lead any actions abroad and to deal with any potential conflict (due to racial and cultural diversity).

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Ahmed Marsaoui** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **02/12/2019** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please submit this reference form before the application deadline. Thank you!*