

RESEARCH OR STUDY PROPOSALS: Tips for Completing the Fulbright application

(Source: <http://us.fulbrightonline.org/preparingapplication.html>; updated in 2012 to <http://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/application-tips>)

Below are some tips for developing your project proposal and documenting your affiliation, where needed. Although not all-inclusive, these tips are intended to help you as you begin the application process. The earlier you begin, the more time you will have to refine your essays and present yourself well. We also encourage you to make use of the Fulbright multimedia resources (<http://us.fulbrightonline.org/about/resources>) which include interviews, posts, etc. by current and former grantees describing their Fulbright experience (especially the [Applicant Blog](#)).

DEVELOPING THE STATEMENT OF GRANT PURPOSE

Developing a strong, feasible and compelling project is the most important aspect of a successful Fulbright application. Your first step should be to familiarize yourself with the program summary for the country to which you wish to apply. The program design varies somewhat from country to country; some countries encourage applicants to incorporate coursework into a project, while others prefer independent research. Please ensure that your project design fits the program guidelines for your host country. [Click here to view the Country Summaries](#).

It is important that you have adequate formal training for the study that you wish to pursue and that your language skills be commensurate with the requirements of the project.

Graduating seniors (those who will receive a bachelor's degree by the beginning date of the grant) and recent graduates applying for Study/Research grants:

- Will generally be expected to attend regular university lectures
- Should be prepared to supplement lectures with an independent study or research project
- Should describe the study/research programs they wish to follow in terms as specific as possible
- Should develop plans that can be completed in **one academic year in one country**.
- Should not expect close academic supervision.

Advanced degree candidates proposing research for theses or dissertations, including recent master's degree graduates and those just beginning graduate study:

- Will be expected to work independently without close supervision
- Should develop plans that can be completed in **not less than six months** nor more than **one academic year in one country**
- Should determine whether their research will require human subjects review/approval from their home (U.S.) universities. If so, you must indicate in your Statement whether it has already been obtained or the steps you are taking to obtain it
- Ph.D. candidates should indicate when they expect to complete preliminary or comprehensive examinations, and whether their projects have been accepted or approved as dissertation proposals.

Candidates in the creative and performing arts (all degree levels):

- Should submit projects indicating their reasons for selecting a particular country, the form their work will take and the results they hope to obtain
- Should develop plans that can be completed in **not less than six months** nor more than **one academic year in one country**
- Present supplementary work samples demonstrating their ability and/or skill in their field.

Writing or Creative and Performing Arts: General information provided below applies to candidates in the arts. Additional information specific to preparing an application in the arts is provided in the next section Preparing an Application in Writing or Creative and Performing Arts.

AS YOU BEGIN:

The best proposals begin with good ideas. Start by putting your ideas on paper, and list the goals and objectives of your project. Share your ideas with your Fulbright Program Adviser, your academic adviser and professional colleagues in your field. As you work on your proposal, consider the following questions and remember your audience. Avoid discipline-specific jargon. The individuals reading your proposal prefer you get to the point about the "who, what, when, where, why and how" of the project. In a direct and persuasive manner, address the following:

- With whom do you propose to work?
- What do you propose to do? What is exciting, new or unique about your project? What contribution will the project make to the Fulbright objective of promoting cross-cultural interaction and mutual understanding?
- When will you carry out your study or research? Include a timeline.
- Where do you propose to conduct your study or research? Why is it important to go abroad to carry out your project?

- Why do you want to do it? What is important or significant about the project?
- How will you carry out your work? All students should discuss methodology and goals in their statements.
- How will your project help further your academic or professional development?
- Your project statement should contain a **clear commitment to and description of how you will engage with the host country community**.

ADVANCED DEGREES ABROAD:

Candidates considering earning a graduate degree abroad should:

- Make sure that the country to which you are applying will accept such a project. Some countries do not recommend that applicants apply to do a degree program. For example, it is often not possible to complete a degree in one academic year and questions about the feasibility for completion of the degree could affect the selection decision. In addition, the tuition fees that a degree candidate would be charged would not be covered by the Fulbright grant, unless specifically stated in the country summary.
- Make sure that you apply for admission to the host university by their deadline. Do not wait for the Fulbright decision or you may be too late to gain admission to your preferred university.
- If possible, include a letter of admission with the application; although, it is not required at the time of the Fulbright application. You can submit the acceptance letter whenever you receive it. But if your proposal is based on admission to a university or graduate program, a Fulbright award offer would be contingent upon your receiving placement at a university.

Applicants should review the country summaries to determine if there are any restrictions to applying to complete a degree program. If you apply for a degree program to a country that does not offer tuition as part of the Fulbright funding package, then these costs must be covered from an alternative source.

IS THE PROJECT FEASIBLE?

You must also demonstrate that the project research strategy is feasible, including its time frame. Provide answers to the following:

- How will the culture and politics of the host country impact your work?
- How do the resources of the host country support your project?
- If employing such research methods as extensive interviewing and the use of questionnaires, how will you locate your subjects?
- Is your language facility adequate? If not, how will you accomplish your work?
- What are your plans for improving you language skills, if they are not adequate at the time of application?

If there could be any question regarding the feasibility of your project or your background or ability to conduct the project, **address the issue directly in your statement**. Enrolled students are urged to consult professors in their major fields and their FPAs about the feasibility of their proposed projects. At-Large applicants should consult qualified persons in their fields.

Please note: Applicants should be aware if the host country has specific visa or research clearance requirements. This will be noted in the Country Summary. If required visas and/ or research clearance(s) are denied by the candidate's host country, reassignment to a new country is normally **not** an option.

A FINAL WORD

Organize your *Statement* carefully. Don't make reviewers search for information. We urge you to have several people read and critique your Statement, including a faculty adviser, a faculty member outside your discipline, a fellow student, and/or a colleague.

Please adhere to the following format items:

- Statement length is limited to a maximum of **two typed, single-spaced pages**. Longer statements will not be presented to screening committees.
- Do not include any bibliographies, publications, citations, etc. except those that will fit in the two-page limit.
- To ensure a smooth upload and readability, use 1" margins all around and Times Roman 12 pt. font.
- At the top of each page of your Word document on each page type the following, so that it appears in the PDF version of your hard copy application. Do not place this information in a header; it will not upload.
 - On line 1, type **STATEMENT OF GRANT PURPOSE**
 - On line 2, Place your Name, Country of Application, and Field of Study
 - On line 3, type Project Title as it appears on Page 3 (Form 2) of the application (on the first page of the Statement only)

THE AFFILIATION

For Study/Research Grants, affiliation with an educational institution or other sponsoring entity in the host country is required, even if the grantee is engaged primarily or solely in research or artistic activity or does not plan to enroll in regular classes. All grantees **must** have a host country affiliation.

- English Teaching Assistants will be placed by the supervising agency in the host country and **should not** try to arrange their own placements
- Applicants for study or research awards will, in most cases, be responsible for arranging their own host country affiliations and for providing documentation of the affiliation with the application, if possible
- Types of affiliations vary, but may include universities, libraries, laboratories, NGOs, museums, and others as approved by the supervising agency in the host country

WHO NEEDS AN AFFILIATION?

All grantees will have an affiliation in the host country.

Some countries will obtain affiliation for Fulbrighters, while others leave the responsibility for securing host affiliation entirely up to the grantee. Others will work somewhere in between, expecting the grantee to identify a host affiliation and make initial contact, but will then help to formalize the affiliation after the grant is awarded. Make sure you know what is expected of you as an applicant by reviewing the Country Summary thoroughly.

Countries differ in the kinds of host affiliations that are acceptable. Examples of affiliations include universities, laboratories, libraries, non-governmental organizations, and so on. In some cases, particularly in the arts, the affiliation may be a person such as a writer, musician, or artist or an arts organization or foundation. Pay special attention to the requirement in some countries to attend/affiliate with an academic institution.

If you are not planning to matriculate at a university but intend to audit/enroll in courses at a local university, then a support/affiliation letter should be included with your application. This letter will indicate that you have identified an appropriate institution to support your study/research goals. Any documentation of support that you can obtain from a potential host will help to make your application more competitive. The letter will also demonstrate that your project is feasible in terms of in-country support.

IDENTIFYING A POTENTIAL AFFILIATION

IIE cannot provide a list of institutions that acted as hosts to previous Fulbrighters. Past Fulbrighters have used a number of methods to contact hosts and solicit support for their projects. The main way is to use the contacts and advisers that you already have. Ask if one of your current professors can help to put you into contact with an appropriate person, university, or organization overseas.

If your proposal contains a strong research component, you must have host country contacts that can support your research, provide you access to your resources, and/or supervise or advise you during the grant period. It is the applicant's responsibility to identify, contact, and secure a letter of support from potential affiliations, whether they are individuals, organizations, academic departments, or other entities.

Some potential avenues to help you identify an affiliation include:

- International students or faculty on your campus
- Visiting Fulbright Professors in the U.S. or U.S. Fulbright Scholars who had grants to your host country. Directories are available at http://www.cies.org/vs_scholars/vs_dir.htm
- Internet searches of faculty at potential host institutions with your interests, or organizations in the host country that work with issues related to your topic.

Do not hesitate to contact professors from other universities both in the U.S. and in your prospective country, especially if your proposal fits to the professor's expertise. They may also be able to refer you to others with expertise or interest in your topic.

Committed research and perseverance will go a long way in establishing a host affiliation. Once you find a possible host, make contact by sending an introductory letter or email. Keep in mind that many schools are closed during the summer months, so you should begin early. Remember, however, that **IIE does not accept any support materials or letters via email or fax**, and that means sufficient lead time must be allowed to receive hard copy responses, with original signatures.

Please note that only rarely will grantees be permitted to enroll in the graduate programs of U.S. universities abroad or to have as their primary affiliation a U.S.-based institution or organization located in the host country. The objectives of the Fulbright Program are best served by attendance at or affiliation with a host country institution or organization.

LETTERS OF AFFILIATION

The most competitive candidates will include documentation of contacts with potential host affiliations with the application. This could be of a letter of invitation from the host institution/organization/individual indicating research support or allowing access to facilities to the applicant; or, it could be a letter indicating that the admitting institution provides courses in the applicant's areas of study. IIE refers to these letters synonymously as: letters of support, letters of affiliation, letters of invitation and/or letters of admission.

There are no specific requirements for the letter of support from the host institution. Every affiliation relationship will be different depending upon the candidate's project. In general, letters of affiliation on institutional letterhead sent with the application are preferred. The letters should state how the supervisor/host institution will help the applicant to facilitate the project (i.e., what resources will be offered, what kind of supervision will be given, etc.). Some applicants propose to do independent research, so these letters of support are more crucial to establishing the feasibility of a project. Other applicants propose study projects, so letters of support are really a complement to the overall application, but attest to its feasibility. Therefore, you should try to get a letter of support that is as detailed as possible. Ultimately, it is up to your host affiliation as to the level/kind of support that they are willing to offer you.

In the U.S., we have become accustomed to rapid response, especially in electronic communication. Many cultures do not have this expectation, and many people do not enjoy the reliable connectivity or easy access to the Internet that we do. Therefore, be advised that you may not receive a response to your inquiries as quickly as you might hope. Applicants are advised to begin their search for an affiliation as early as possible.

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