

BOREN AWARDS (*Last updated 1/7/24*)  
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<https://www.borenawards.org/>

## Overview

- **What?** The Boren is geared towards students who intend to pursue a career in national security and/or public service. It offers financial support (\$8,000 to \$25,000) for 8 weeks to one year of study, including language, outside western Europe and North America. For a list of preferred languages and countries, go [here](#). Applicants may apply to Boren-sponsored regional flagship programs in select countries. Learn more [here](#).
- Boren recipients are expected to fulfill a one-year **federal service** commitment after the fellowship.
- **Eligibility.** Applicants must be enrolled in a degree program. Boren Scholarships support undergraduates. Boren Fellowships support graduate students. Applicants must be US Citizens. Veterans of the US armed forces receive special consideration.
- **Deadlines.** Fellowship (Grad): Third week of January. Scholarship (UG): Last day of January. Programs can start as early as the following June (5 months after deadline) and as late as the March after that (14 months after deadline).
- Boren awards are geared toward students with a strong interest in **national security** and **public service**. Applicants must demonstrate knowledge of the importance of their region and language to US national security. Applicants must demonstrate a commitment to working at least one year for the federal government after earning their degree.
- **Selectivity.** For stats from the previous year's awards, go [here](#).

## Selection criteria.

- Relevance of the applicant's country, language, and field of study to US national security.
- Applicant's commitment to government service.
- Fit between the country/language selected and the applicant's career goals.
- Leadership potential the applicant would bring to a federal government job.
- Evidence that the applicant has the appropriate academic preparation, cultural adaptability, flexibility, and maturity required to succeed abroad.
- Applicant's commitment to language study before, during, and after overseas study.
- Fit between the applicant's program and applicant's expectations.

The Boren gives preferential consideration to the following:

- **Long-term study.** For non-STEM applicants, at least 25 weeks overseas is preferred.
- Applicants interested in "**preferred**" languages in "**preferred**" countries. See Boren website for more.
- Applicants who are **veterans**.

**Putting together a competitive application for a Boren award requires a substantial time commitment during the fall semester, preceding the January deadlines. Applicants should begin work no later than December 1 and budget daily work of 30-45 minutes while the university is in session (or the equivalent if work is begun earlier). Applicants should expect to meet weekly with the OMSA director from December 1 until the deadline, except during the winter break. Before starting an application, students should reflect on their time commitments and determine whether this level of investment is feasible for them. See the calendar below for more information about preparing the application.**

**Application elements.** <https://www.borenawards.org/apply-now>

- Online **form** with personal and academic information.
- Two **essays**, one on the relevance of your chosen language to US national security, one on your professional goals, including your plan for the year of government employment. See below for more.
- **Transcripts** from PFW and all other institutions you have received credit from (official or unofficial).
- Information about your **plan for study**, including the study abroad program you have selected and at least one alternate (see below). Boren Fellowship applicants may also submit a description of research they plan to conduct.
- Two or three recommendation **letters**.
- Language **assessment** by the applicant or a professional (recommended).

### **Essays.**

#### A) Essay 1: National Security (800 words)

- Discuss a national security issue that is related to your academic interests and career goals. Develop an argument the importance of this particular issue.
- Explain the significance of your proposed country, region, and language to US national security and to the specific issue you discussed.
- Discuss the connection between the issue and your academic interests and professional goals.

To prepare, consult the following publications for articles about current US national security issues that relate to your country of interest. It is also helpful if you have taken relevant courses in Political Science, History, Economics, etc.

*The New York Times*

*The Washington Post*

*Foreign Affairs*

*The Wall Street Journal*

*The Economist*

*The Financial Times newspaper*

*Foreign Policy*

*The Asia Society*

Websites for the following research institutes: Brookings, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Council on Foreign Relations (publishes *Foreign Affairs*), Hoover Institute, Woodrow Wilson Center

B) **Essay 2:** Motivation (Scholarship: 800 words; Fellowship: 1000 words)

- Describe an experience you have had that prepared you for living overseas and engaging in intensive language study. Discuss what you learned from the experience (how did the experience help you develop adaptability, resilience, and/or maturity?).
- Discuss relevant academic, extracurricular, volunteer, internship, and professional experiences you have had.
- Outline your career goals and explain how government service fits into your long-term professional trajectory.
- Explain why you are a good fit for government service—what will you bring to government service that is unique?
- Identify specific government service opportunities that you want to pursue after the Boren to fulfil the service expectation (more information [here](#)). ROTC students can fulfill their military commitment and Boren service requirement at the same time.

C) **Study plan** (250 words). For both your preferred program and your alternate program(s).

1. Scholarship applicants (UG): Describe the study program you will use your Boren award to fund. Include the number of hours (per week) you will spend in formal instruction and your plans for extracurricular language study and immersion.
2. Fellowship applicants (Grad): Describe the study program you will use your Boren award to fund. If your proposal involves language immersion as part of a research project, internship, or academic study, characterize how the language will be used and any supplemental language instruction you will receive while pursuing your academic goals. If the proposal involves research, discuss the research and its methodology in greater detail.

## TIME LINE

DATES	APPLICANT SHOULD...
<b>December week 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange to meet with the OMSA director.</li> <li>• Research possible country and program options on Boren website.</li> <li>• Meet with study abroad office director to discuss program options.</li> <li>• Begin brainstorming for Essay 1.</li> </ul>
<b>December weeks 2-3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write up a short-list of possible countries/programs. Meet with OMSA director to select one program and one alternate.</li> <li>• Decide on mentors to write recommendation letters.</li> <li>• Create application in the online system. Begin filling out application fields.</li> <li>• Discuss Essay 1 with OMSA director and begin revisions. Begin brainstorming for Essay 2.</li> </ul>
<b>By end of fall term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask faculty mentors for letters of recommendation.</li> </ul>
<b>WINTER BREAK. PFW CLOSED.</b>	
<b>January week 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach faculty for language assessment (if desired).</li> <li>• Request transcripts.</li> <li>• Work on drafts of both essays.</li> <li>• Work on study plan(s).</li> <li>• Meet with OMSA director to discuss essays and progress on application.</li> </ul>
<b>January week 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize on-line application, including short answer questions.</li> <li>• Continue working on essays.</li> <li>• Meet with OMSA director as needed.</li> </ul>
<b>January week 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue working on essays.</li> <li>• Meet with OMSA director as needed.</li> <li>• FELLOWSHIP applicants: Submit application.</li> </ul>
<b>January week 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SCHOLARSHIP applicants: Submit application.</li> </ul>