

FULBRIGHT CONCISE GUIDE FOR STUDENTS
By Noor Borbieva O'Neill, Ph.D.
Office of Major Scholarship Advising, PFW

<https://us.fulbrightonline.org/about/fulbright-us-student-program>

Putting together a competitive Fulbright application is time consuming. Before starting the application, read through this guide carefully, including the calendar of work at the end, and reflect on your time commitments in the months leading up to the deadline (Oct. 1). Only you can determine whether applying for a Fulbright is right for you.

OVERVIEW

What is a Fulbright award?

- Fulbright awards support one year of post-graduate residence in a country outside the United States for the purpose of research, study, or English teaching in service of the Fulbright Foundation's mission to promote cross-cultural understanding.
- Applicants must be U.S. citizens or nationals and must have completed a Bachelor's degree by the time of the award.
- Applicants can apply to ONE country per cycle. Look at [country pages](#) on the Fulbright website to learn more about the programs supported in specific countries.
- Campus deadline is **October 1**. PFW and IUFW students and recent alumni who desire Fulbright advising and campus nomination should contact OMSA as early as possible, and no later than August 1.
- Find detailed information about the award rates for specific countries and programs [here](#).

Selection criteria. Applications are reviewed in the Washington DC office and in the target country. Each country has its own Fulbright commission, and their needs and criteria differ across the world. Criteria include:

- Quality and feasibility of the applicant's proposed project or activity.
- Applicant's academic, professional, and personal qualifications.
- Language preparation.
- Alignment of the application with the Fulbright mission of promoting understanding among nations.

Application components (also see the Fulbright website [here](#)).

- [Online form](#) with personal and academic information.
- Project Title (90-characters).
- Abstract/Summary of the Proposal (1750-character limit): Description of your project. If you want to use a Fulbright award to pursue graduate education, describe the program you are applying to and its relevance to your professional goals.
- Host Country Engagement (1750-character limit): In alignment with Fulbright's mission, a description of the ways in which you will engage with the host country outside of your grant activities. Address how you will share your culture and values in your host community.

- Plans Upon Return to the U.S. (850-character limit): A description of what you will do when you return to the United States, including how your Fulbright experience will contribute to your future professional activities.
- Two long essays. See more guidance below. On the Fulbright website, find guidance for research/study applicants [here](#) and guidance for English Teaching Assistantships [here](#).
- Three recommendation letters from mentors.
- Transcripts from every institution attended.
- Recommendation from campus Fulbright Committee based on the campus interview (scheduled after the campus deadline of Oct. 1).
- Independent research applicants: Affiliation letter from hosting university.
- If required/recommended by country: Language assessment(s)

GUIDE TO LONG ESSAY PREPARATION

Formatting

- Do not include any sources, citations, or bibliographies except those that will fit on the pages allowed. Citations are not required.
- Do not include information in headers, footers or margins.
- Do not include links or URLs of any kind.
- Use 1-inch margins.
- Use Times New Roman 12-point font.
- At the top of the first page include the following 3 lines of text:
 - LINE 1: Statement of Grant Purpose/Personal Statement
 - LINE 2: Your Name, Host Country, and Field of Study
 - (Independent research grant purpose statements LINE 3: Project Title
- On the second page (if relevant), enter: “[your last name], Grant Purpose, Page 2.”

Personal Statement

One page. A narrative about you as an individual that explains your experiences and goals, and how they relate to your Fulbright application. The statement can address any or all of the following: your personal history, your family background, influences on your intellectual development, the opportunities to which you have been exposed, and/or the ways in which your experiences have impacted your professional/personal development. Unique interests, abilities, and goals should be highlighted.

Statement of Grant Purpose

Read the webpage for your target country to understand the types of grants and projects supported by the award in the country. Follow the guidance for the program you are applying to. See below as well as the Fulbright website: Guidance for academic research/study awards is [here](#). Guidance for English Teaching Assistant awards is [here](#). All statements of grant purpose should be clear and concise and geared toward a general audience. Avoid discipline-specific jargon. OMSA encourages students to show their statements to all relevant mentors, not just the OMSA Director.

RESEARCH/STUDY APPLICANTS: Two pages.

If you are proposing independent research, address some or all of the following:

- What are your goals during the grant (a paper? An exhibition? Collect data for grad school?)?
- What is your research question? What will your research contribute to the discipline within which you are working?
- How is the project innovative?
- What methods will you use? What will you be doing at the research site?
- What is the timeline of different parts of the project? Offer milestones or benchmarks that you intent to reach during the Fulbright award period.
- What host country resources will you draw on? With whom will you work? What institutional connections will you need to be successful and who will help you establish those connections?
- What intellectual and methodological training/experience do you bring to the project? This may include language proficiency (see country stipulations).
- Why does the project have to be conducted in the target country?
- How will the culture and politics of the host country impact the project? What possibly sensitive topics or feasibility concerns might you face in the country, and how might you respond to them?
- How will the Fulbright experience further your professional development?
- What contribution will the project make toward the Fulbright goal of promoting cultural exchange and mutual understanding?
- If you are proposing to do research with human subjects, address your intention to have the project reviewed by the Purdue Institutional Review Board. More info [here](#).

If you are proposing graduate study, address some or all of the following:

- Why did you select the specific graduate program identified in your application?
- What academic background do you have that will allow you to succeed in the proposed degree program?
- How will you integrate yourself into the host country and what personal and professional interests will you bring to your interactions?
- Are your foreign language skills at a level to allow you to study successfully in the program, and if not, are you taking steps to improve them?
- Will you complete a thesis or other project as part of the graduate program? If so, address relevant questions under independent research (above).
- Do you have the personal qualities that will allow you to succeed as a student in a foreign country? Applicants should demonstrate an interest in the country beyond their interest in graduate study there.

ENGLISH TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS: One page.

Applicants should consult the target country page and address questions requested by the country, in addition to some or all of the following:

- What relevant teaching experience will you bring to the classroom?
- What is your pedagogical approach? What methods do you use that are particularly effective or unique?
- How will you navigate cultural difference in the classroom? What knowledge about the host country will help you connect with students and colleagues there? What do you know about the pedagogical traditions common there, and how will you deal with students accustomed to pedagogical traditions other than your own?
- If you have any background in English teaching, discuss your qualifications, training, and experience.
- What personal qualities will help you adjust to living and working in an unfamiliar environment? How have you developed those qualities?

SUGGESTED TIMELINE

Students who begin on August 1 should plan on 45 minutes of daily work and weekly meetings with the OMSA director to put together a competitive application by the October 1 campus deadline. Students who begin earlier will be able to work at a less intense pace.

TIME	WHAT YOU NEED TO DO	WHAT THE OMSA DIRECTOR WILL DO
August 1. NINE weeks to deadline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange and attend meeting with OMSA director. • Research possible country and program options on Fulbright website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with student. • Provide information about Fulbright awards and the writing process.
August 15. SEVEN weeks to deadline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put together a short list of possible countries/programs and meet with OMSA advisor to discuss. • Select one country program. • Begin working on essays, starting with the brainstorming stage for the Statement of Grant Purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide feedback to student on essay drafts. • Meet with student as needed.
August 29. FIVE weeks to deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (For independent research grants) Prepare list of possible institutional affiliations and prepare draft of email query. • Approach faculty for language assessments (as needed). • Prepare new drafts of essays, work with OMSA director on these. • Decide which professors to ask for reference letters and reach out to them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide feedback on writing. • Assist if needed with arranging language assessment and letters of reference.

<p>Sept. 12. THREE weeks to deadline.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take additional steps to secure affiliation (as needed). • Inform all letter writers of need for letters. • Work on drafts of long essays. • Work on online application. Begin drafts of short essays. • Secure transcripts. • Meet with OMSA director as often as needed to make progress on essays. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact members of Fulbright Committee and schedule interview with student. • Meet with student as needed and provides feedback on essays. • Review student's progress on online application.
<p>Sept. 20. TEN days to deadline.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize on-line application, including short essays. • Work on drafts of long essays. • Arrange and attend meetings with OMSA director as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with student as needed.
<p>Oct. 1-8.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit application. • Attend interview with PFW Fulbright Committee. • Meet with director to discuss changes to application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange and lead interview. • Write institutional endorsement letter. • Meet with student to discuss changes to application.
<p>Oct. 8 to national deadline (usually within 1 week).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make final changes to application materials and resubmits by national deadline (changes every year). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check with student to make sure application is finalized and submitted and to answer any questions.

USEFUL LINKS

- Fulbright US Student programs homepage: <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/about/fulbright-us-student-program>
- Fulbright award rates by country, program, and year (last three award cycles): [here](#).
- Fulbright [country pages](#).
- Fulbright general application requirements and procedures [here](#).
- Fulbright guidance for independent research and graduate study applicants [here](#).
- Fulbright guidance for English Teaching Assistantship applicants [here](#).
- Fulbright and IIE [online application system](#).
- Purdue Institutional Review Board, for help with human subjects research [here](#).