Fulbright U.S. Student Program Study/Research Grant

CUSE Pre-Application Advice | 2015-16 Application Cycle

Please consult this application advice as you are completing the Fulbright U.S. Student Program Study/Research Grant Pre-Application Form. If anything on the form is unclear, please contact fellows@nd.edu for clarification. Please remember that the Pre-Application does not commit you to anything, and it’s okay if some of the answers are tentative or not fully worked-out.

One general point is that you should make liberal use of the official Fulbright website at http://us.fulbrightonline.org. You should pay special attention to the information in Fulbright’s application tips (or, if you are applying in an arts field, Arts tips). Although the Fulbright site will be updated on March 31, much of the information will remain the same, so you should feel comfortable using it. You’ll have plenty of time to make adjustments in light of the March 31 information, if necessary.

**Proposed Host Country:**

Be as specific as you can here. If you have narrowed it down to a particular country, that’s great; if you’re still winnowing things down, then it’s perfectly OK to list a few possibilities here. We can help you with the decision. However, be sure that you review the country information available at Fulbright's Countries Page. Some countries have specific preferences in terms of language proficiency or candidate profiles, and you want to be sure that you meet them.

You will also want to start considering your affiliate. If you are conducting research, the affiliation letter is a critical part of your application. If you are applying for a study grant, affiliations are not essential, though they are still useful. Be sure to review the country summary/summaries for the country/countries you are considering, since their requirements for affiliations vary.

In short, it is ideal to have an affiliation related to each element of your proposal that requires access to certain individuals, groups, or information. For instance, if you require access to archives, you will want a letter of affiliation from the archive staff, confirming that they will allow you this access. If you plan to work with a certain professor, you will want a letter from that professor. If you are planning to interview a group of people, you will want a letter confirming that you will be able to do this. And so on. We don’t expect you to have confirmed affiliations at this point in the process, but it would be helpful if you could list your ideal affiliations here. Finally, note that you can have more than one affiliation; and, depending on your project, you might require more than one affiliation.

**Brief Explanation:**

It will be essential that you have compelling reasons for why you want to conduct study or research in a particular country. What about this location or available resources are unique as a motivating draw for your inquiry? Does the study/research absolutely have to be done in a particular place? Are there cultural/geographic/societal/political aspects of the country that are especially relevant to your personal and professional interests? Please be as specific as you can at this point.
Primary Recommender:
This is the person who can speak most effectively and enthusiastically to your credentials, passion, and fit for the Fulbright program. We will contact them only after meeting with you to outline some of the specifics for what makes a great recommendation. For students pursuing research, it is critical that you work with faculty to fine-tune the technical details of your grant proposal. CUSE can help you write it to the correct audience and keep Fulbright-specific logistics in mind, but your primary recommender should be a resource for making sure the nitty-gritty details of your proposal are sound and feasible. They are invaluable. Please note that you will ultimately need three recommenders.

Miscellaneous
Foreign Language Proficiency: Some countries prefer it. Some countries have no preference, (though it’s never a bad thing to have some proficiency in the host country’s language in order to facilitate civic engagement). If you don’t have any proficiency in the host country language, strongly consider working language study into your proposal, and better yet, get started learning the language now. It doesn’t have to be some hardcore commitment, but beginning to get the basics under your belt goes a long way towards establishing your sincere interest in the program.
Research:
For the walkthrough on Study, please continue to page 4

Brief Abstract:
In a short paragraph, describe what you’re interested in researching. Why is this something worth investigating?

Background Information:
What is the general context of your inquiry? Give a brief history of your topic. What have recent inquiries looked like? What sort of progress is being made? What is the broader significance of this work? What sort of work/research/activity have you engaged in that has prepared you to undertake this research?

Research Plan:
How, specifically, are you going to engage in your research? What methods are you going to utilize in your approach? What means and resources will you incorporate into your program? What, broadly, are the steps that you will take to achieve your goal? What role will your affiliate play in your proposal?

Significance:
How does this research project fit into the wider conversation? This can be through broad implications, specific contributions, or a sense of what you’ll gain for your personal or professional trajectory. This isn’t necessarily to test you on how universal and world-changing your topic is, but to make sure that you have a sense of purpose and context for your research.

Feasibility/Timeline:
Why do you believe this is going to work (for those of you in the hard sciences, this is a very broad definition of the word “work’’)? How do you know that you will be able to set out and complete what you propose in the allotted time (often 9 months)? What sort of challenges are you anticipating? How can you be reasonably assured that you will be able to overcome them?

Cultural Engagement:
The fundamental mission of Fulbright is to promote cultural exchange through educational exchange, so civic engagement has to play some role in your application. Although much of your time will be taken up with your study/research project, they want to be sure that you’ve given some thought to how you’ll immerse yourself in the culture when you’re in the host country. (Remember that Fulbright Students are seen as cultural ambassadors of the U.S., so you will be representing the U.S. in the host country and representing the host country when you return.) So: What will you do to contribute to the country while you’re there? Does your study/research plan directly involve civic engagement? What will you do “on the side”? Will you volunteer? Will you give presentations about U.S. culture? Will you try to connect with an NGO? Think about ways to engage that also connect to your interests.
**Study:**

**Background Information:**
Briefly contextualize the field of study that you are looking to pursue, and what specific topic or degree you’re interested in. What are some of the graduates of this degree program doing? What doors will be open to you upon graduating from this program? Why is this university the best place for you to study? You will have to be able to articulate convincingly why this program is a unique fit for you (as opposed to staying in the U.S. to study).

**Course of Study:**
Outline the requirements, challenges, and benefits of the program you’re applying for. Be specific about in which ways this degree will contribute to your knowledge or experience and think critically about what opportunities will be afforded to you as a student of this program.

**Feasibility/Qualifications:**
Why are you qualified to enroll in this degree program? What work have you done that will lay the foundation for continued success through this academic field? What transferable skills have you developed that will be applicable to this degree?

**Trajectory:**
What will this degree allow you to accomplish in the professional sphere? How will it enable your future success? What opportunities during the course of your degree will have practical applications in your aspirations and career goals?

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Official Resources
We highly recommend that you review all of the information at the following websites before beginning your pre-application. You will also want to consult them throughout the application process.

- [http://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/getting-started](http://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/getting-started)
  - General information
- [http://us.fulbrightonline.org/application-components/academic](http://us.fulbrightonline.org/application-components/academic)
  - An overview of the required components of a Fulbright S/R application
- [http://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/application-tips/academic](http://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/application-tips/academic)
  - More information about what reviewers expect to see in the application; this may be your single most important resource throughout the process
- [http://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/application-checklists/academic-applicationchecklist](http://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/application-checklists/academic-applicationchecklist)
  - Checklist of steps in the application process
- [http://us.fulbrightonline.org/studyresearch-grant-application-statistics](http://us.fulbrightonline.org/studyresearch-grant-application-statistics)
  - Statistics from past Fulbright competitions
- [http://us.fulbrightonline.org/countries/regions](http://us.fulbrightonline.org/countries/regions)
  - Country information
- [http://us.fulbrightonline.org/alumni/alumni-ambassadors](http://us.fulbrightonline.org/alumni/alumni-ambassadors)
  - Profiles of former Fulbrighters
- [http://us.fulbrightonline.org/about/resources](http://us.fulbrightonline.org/about/resources)
  - Here you will find a wealth of useful information – webinars, videos, tutorials, and more – which you should definitely consult as you are applying for the Fulbright

If you’d like to review some examples of successful Fulbright applications, please visit CUSE in 110 Brownson Hall. We have a binder of successful applications available that you can peruse in our offices. If you are off campus, please email fellows@nd.edu to request access to selected successful applications.