Fulbright Program Application
Deadlines, Tips, and FAQs

The website for all Fulbright competitions is https://us.fulbrightonline.org. The electronic application and instructions are found here. If you haven’t been on this site, and you are intending to apply for a Fulbright, drop everything (including this document) and go there now. It is the authority on application requirements, and it is chock full of helpful information.

The Fulbright Advisor for the Laney Graduate School of Emory University is Associate Dean Mark Risjord (mark.risjord@emory.edu, 404-727-2160). Contact him if you have any questions.

Deadlines and Dates

NOTE: Due dates below are subject to change. Watch the Graduate School Grant Writing Program website for campus deadlines: http://www.gs.emory.edu/grantwriting/resources.php?entity_id=158

Now. Go to the Fulbright website and sign up for the E-mail mailing list. One the website, read through the country page for the country in which you are interested. Familiarize yourself with any special requirements (e.g. language or affiliation requirements) for your country.

Email Leah Carswell leah.carswell@emory.edu when you intend to submit a Fulbright application. If you have questions about the application, contact Associate Dean Mark Risjord at mark.risjord@emory.edu

1 May, 2011. Online Application becomes available. Go to the web site and begin filling it out. Familiarize yourself with the idiosyncrasies of the online application before the deadlines loom.

Now-August

Work through several drafts of your research proposal with your advisor and any others who may have relevant expertise.

Begin collecting your materials. Have your language evaluations completed. Get original copies of your transcripts. Begin to set up an affiliation. Don’t leave these things until August!

August 29, 5:00 PM. This is the campus deadline. Complete your electronic application and “submit it” electronically. All transcripts, letters, and language evaluations are uploaded to the electronic application and are due at this time. Faculty writing letters for you (including language evaluators) fill out their letters/evaluations on line. Again, all materials are due on Monday, August 29. (Applications received after the campus deadline will not go through the campus committee process, but must be submitted “at large.”)

12-16 September 2011. The Graduate School Fulbright Committee will interview all applicants.

Interviews are scheduled around faculty availability. Once we receive your application, you will receive a request to identify times that you are available. Be flexible: if you cannot attend any of the available interview times, you must apply “at large.” The Committee will provide feedback after the interview and you will be able to rewrite your proposal before the Institute of International Education (IIE) deadline. At this time your application will be “released” so you will be able to revise it.
6 October 2011, 5:00 PM. Submit your application electronically. Notice that this is earlier than the deadline published by IIE in the application. We MUST have the application by this earlier deadline so that the committee can write recommendations for the nominees.

31 January, 2012. IIE expects to inform applicants of first round results. Applications that are successful at this round go on for Host Country Review. Final selection letters are sent between mid-March and late June.

Application tips
1. Go to the on-line application immediately and become familiar with it. While the on-line application is very user friendly, you may be frustrated by the technology if you wait until the last minute to use it. Know the application’s quirks and limitations long before you have to submit your proposal. (For example, you should print out sample forms and make sure that no text is cut off by word count limits.) The on-line application allows you to make entries, save your work, and return to edit.

2. Faculty who will write letters for you will do so on line. These letters must be submitted by the campus deadline.

3. Faculty (or others) who provide language evaluation follow the same procedure as recommenders. Language evaluations must be submitted by the campus deadline.

4. One function of a letter of support is to establish the feasibility and intellectual interest of your project. It is therefore very important for the letter writer to be familiar with the details of your project. Provide a copy of the research proposal and the personal statement.

5. Remember that faculty who are writing your letters are also writing letters for other students and are juggling a great many professional obligations. Let them know in advance what grants you are applying for and what your deadlines are.

6. You will need one official copy of your Emory transcript, one official transcript from each post-secondary school you have attended. These will be scanned and uploaded to the application.

7. Do not trust the mechanical grammar and spell checks of your software to find errors of spelling, punctuation, or word usage. Proofread the entire application. Have a friend or associate proofread the entire application. Then check it again.

Application FAQ
Do I really need an affiliation?
Yes, you must have an affiliation. The Fulbright web page includes some helpful pointers about it: https://us.fulbrightonline.org/howtoapply_tips.html#affiliation.

Why do I need an affiliation?
Fulbright is not just about research. Fulbright is looking for academic ambassadors, and your affiliation is one avenue through which you can contribute to the host country.

What form should the letter affiliation take?
IIE prefers letters of affiliation to be written on letterhead, but emails are acceptable if necessary. Please provide a translation of the letter if it is not in English. You will scan and upload the letter.
What if my letter of reference or language evaluation comes in after the campus deadline?
If all materials are not turned in by the deadline, you may be required to apply at large. We will try to be flexible, but the Laney Graduate School Fulbright Committee needs to review everything that will go in the final submission.

What about late letters of affiliation?
The IIE and the LGS Fulbright Committee understand that communication with resource-poor countries can hamper receipt of an affiliation. This is the one thing about which we can be flexible. If you have not received a letter of affiliation by the campus deadline, then be prepared to tell the committee what your anticipated affiliation may be. Countries often have different affiliation requirements or recommendations, so be sure to consult the country page on the Fulbright website.

Who should do my language evaluation?
IIE prefers that the evaluation be done by a faculty member.

I will be using one language for research, but the language of the host country is different. In which language should I be evaluated?
Get an evaluation for all languages you may need to use either for research or for getting along on a daily basis. The feasibility of your research proposal depends on your language ability, so an evaluation in your research language is absolutely essential. You will also be an academic ambassador, so you should expect to have a tourist-level knowledge the commonly used local language, even if it is not your research language. Show an interest in learning the local language and explain what you are doing to get it.

Everybody speaks English these days. How important is language, really?
Really, really, important. The National Committee’s opinion of your language abilities and/or plans to develop them is a significant part of their evaluation. You don’t necessarily need to be fluent, but if you aren’t, have a clear plan for linguistic development.

Research Proposal Tips
1. Write and re-write. Show drafts to your advisor, friends, neighbors, parents, drinking buddies, and anyone else you can think of.
2. Remember that Fulbright committees at all levels are composed of experts from a wide variety of disciplines. It is possible that your discipline will not be represented at all. It is therefore essential that your proposal be comprehensible to someone outside your field. It also means you should:
   2.1. Find a friend in another field and show it to him/her. If s/he misunderstands it, then so will the committee.
   2.2. Be careful with technical terms. For example, the word “realism” looks simple and easily comprehensible, but it means very different things to scholars of literature and scholars of politics. Eliminate technical terms where possible, elucidate them where necessary.
   2.3. Write so that you capture a generally educated reader’s attention. Make them curious about your questions, no matter what their background.
3. Eliminate any cute, clichéd, corny phrases or unnecessary plays on words. Do not make your project title sound like a newspaper headline. Avoid terms that are so over-used as to have lost their meaning, such as “deconstruct.”
4. Write concretely. Use the active voice.

5. A good proposal answers the following questions in this order: What? Where/when? How? Who?

5.1. **What.** Begin with the broad intellectual issue you will be investigating. Try to make this compelling to a general audience; it should be a question that will grab a reader from any background. The main or primary question should be clear, and—as a matter of logic—there can only be one primary question. Other questions will relate to the primary question or problem.

5.2. In this first part of your proposal, you will also provide some background to your question. Synthesize what is known in a succinct way. Try to relate your question to issues in the field; do not be narrowly focused on your discipline.

5.3. **Where/when.** Fulbright looks for knowledge of the place. Your broad intellectual question should be made more specific by relating it to a location in space and time. You are proposing to study in a particular country because something there will shed light on the big question. What contribution will knowing something about this place (time) make to the larger intellectual problem articulated in the opening section?

5.4. In this section, your question gets specified. It should become clear how answering your question will contribute to the larger intellectual problems.

5.5. It sometimes happens that the country you choose is not closely related to research. For instance, you may be proposing to work in a laboratory setting. In this kind of case, explain how you will engage with local scholars or the local community. Are there ways you can use your expertise to contribute to the community or academic institution? If the committee thinks that you are going to simply stay in the lab and learn or contribute nothing to the locality, your proposal will look bad.

5.6. **How.** This is the “methodology” of your proposal. Avoid jargon here too. Your audience may not know what a chi square test or a phenomenological interview is, or they may never have worked with literary texts. You will be doing something in the field. In concrete terms, what will you be doing and how will that provide information that answers the main question of your study? What, specifically, will you be doing to this information to put it in a useful form?

5.7. If you will be working in an archive or similar location, this is where you should show that you have a good sense of what is there to be found. Funding agencies do not support fishing expeditions. Give them reason to believe that you know what you are looking for and have a good chance of finding it. If you are working with specific texts, museums, archives, or libraries, name them.

5.8. **Who.** A good proposal must convince the reader that you are qualified to do the proposed research. Some of this can go in the personal statement, but it is appropriate to mention research affiliations, previous experience, language skills, etc. in the main proposal.

6. There is no bibliography. In academic writing, we often use names as shorthand because author and audience have read the same books. In a Fulbright proposal there is no space for a bibliography, and the reader probably is not familiar with the key works in your field. Therefore, describe the debates, ideas, or theories to the reader. Show that you know the field by concise
synthesis. Using names of key figures is OK—you don’t have to be cagey about referring to Aristotle or Einstein—but be sure that you are explaining to the reader what s/he needs to know about them.

7. Use what you know. If you have already done preliminary research, or if you have experience in the country that is relevant, explicitly build on it. It can help make your proposal more concrete and specific.

Proposal FAQ

Can I add a bibliography?
Don’t even think about it. IIE will not accept more than two pages, and you need every bit of available space to explain your research.

What if I need to refer to a specific work?
If you absolutely positively need to refer to a specific work, use the author's name and the title of the work. If it is really well known in the broad field, you might just use the name and date.

Is the page limit absolute?
Yes. Proposals that do not conform to the requirements get rejected without being read.

Personal Statement Tips

1. The personal statement gives you a place to convince the reviewers that you are qualified both for the research and the ambassadorial functions of a Fulbright Fellowship.

2. The personal statement is thus both a narrative CV and story of your own professional trajectory. Talk about experiences that helped form your project in this country, what you expect to gain from being there, how you will engage with the local communities (both scholarly and non-scholarly), and how the trip will contribute to your future plans.

3. Be concrete, but don't be cute. Do you include stories about how much you love your parents, friends, or travel to exotic lands? Do you wax eloquent about what a caring, concerned individual you are? Omit these sections and share them with mom on the phone.

4. The personal statement is a good place to discuss:
   • Your plans to develop the language skills required for your research.
   • Your experience in the country or other relevant experiences.
   • Your training, including coursework or specialized research techniques. Again, think in terms of a field, not your discipline. A committee member with a political science background may be unimpressed when you say you took a course on Hegel; s/he may be much more interested when you talk about your training in political philosophy.

The Interview

1. Interviews are scheduled at 45-minute intervals. Arrive at least five minutes early and, because some interviews run overtime, prepare to wait. The committee is asked to evaluate how you will respond to the stresses of overseas research, including the everyday frustrations of life. If you respond to a delay in your scheduled interview with anger, impatience, or petulance, it will be difficult for the committee to certify that you are equipped to handle the dual pressures of conducting dissertation research and representing the United States abroad.
2. Committee members often pose questions in the language your research requires (e.g., Arabic, French, Hindi, German). If your language skills are not what they should be, have a concrete plan for gaining competence. Language skills make the difference between a good proposal and a funded proposal.

3. Expect tough questions about your research problem, methodology, and your preparation to do what you propose. The purpose is to engage you in a serious, if brief, discussion of your proposal. You may find them more critical of your work than any other faculty or students have been. The ability to think on your feet, remain composed, and respond thoughtfully is one of the things that Fulbright is looking for.

4. The goal of the committee is to help you make your proposal as strong as it can be. If they find defects or confusions, you can be guaranteed that the National Committee will too. So, expect them to be critical, but they will also try to helpful. Feel free to email committee members after the interview and follow up on specific points or suggestions.

5. Be prepared to listen to other perspectives and to be open to suggestions. Avoid patronizing or defensive tones. Expect to take notes; bring paper and pencil.

6. Recommendations for revision, if any, will be emailed to you after your interview. Do not wait for written comments to begin revising your proposal. Consider possible revisions as soon as you walk out the door. Think about questions raised in the interview. Discuss the interview and follow-up comments with your advisor. In all cases, the committee’s recommendations are advisory; you know the area best and the ultimate proposal is yours.