The Northwestern Fulbright Companion

FULBRIGHT

FULBRIGHT

☞ **CAMPUS DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 5ᵀᴴ, 2023** ☜

The NU Fulbright Process

If you are in the class of '24, or a graduate student, you must apply through the Office of Fellowships and adhere to the procedures outlined in this document. We invite alumni and Class of '23 to follow the same procedure, which ensures a careful review of your materials by the NU Fulbright Committee.

ଓ CRITICAL RESOURCES ଔ

PRIMARY CONTACT – STUDY/RESEARCH PROJECTS

Dr. Stephen Hill – Sr. Assoc. Director, Office of Fellowships – s-hill@northwestern.edu

PRIMARY CONTACT – ETA

Amy Kehoe – Associate Director, Office of Fellowships – amy.kehoe@northwestern.edu

FULBRIGHT FACULTY ADVISER (FFA)

A member of the NU Fulbright Committee will serve as your Fulbright Faculty Adviser. We will match you with an FFA when you register your intention to apply with the Office of Fellowships.

US.FULBRIGHTONLINE.ORG

Northwestern | OFFICE OF FELLOWSHIPS

⇥   Getting Started

Read the Fulbright website (<u>us.fulbrightonline.org</u>). All Fulbright grants fund a nine/ten-month stay in another country, but the permutations of the Fulbright's possibilities and requirements are many. The "About" area of the Fulbright website will acquaint you with important details.

• PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES. You may apply to one country only. The country summaries on the Fulbright website describe the types of grants available to each country, the requirements for language proficiency (which vary by country), and any encouraged or discouraged fields of study. Many country summaries offer special instructions for applicants in the creative and performing arts. If a country description expresses a preference for graduate students, graduating seniors may still apply, but should propose independent research rather than university study. You also may browse past project titles and descriptions ("Grantee Directory" under "Alumni" on the Fulbright homepage).

> ? **"I've heard it's a disadvantage if you've already been to the country."**
>
> If you have spent fewer than six months in country, you are at no disadvantage. Study Abroad is "off the clock." Students who have studied abroad or conducted a summer research project in the country have a leg up. They have developed a network of contacts; are informed about the region; have strong language skills; and have demonstrated their adaptability to local culture.

• TYPES OF AWARDS. This section of the Fulbright website describes the array of programs that fall under the Fulbright umbrella, including English Teaching Assistantships (in select countries) and the Critical Language Enhancement Awards, which enable grantees to undertake intensive study of certain languages they plan to use in their research.

• STATISTICS. (footer of Fulbright homepage) Here you can see how many students applied to each of the Fulbright countries in the three most recent competition cycles, and grants awarded.

Plan relevant courses. If you still have time before graduation, enroll in language classes that will enable you to meet your chosen country's requirements. If you need additional preparation for the project you envision (e.g. research methods, regional history), seek out relevant offerings or arrange an independent study. Do not neglect summer courses and educational opportunities. Coursework germane to your project and host country will strengthen your application.

> ? **"What if I'm away in Spring or Summer '23?"**
>
> Don't panic. Make an appointment at the Office of Fellowships to discuss your plans before you leave then stay in contact with us while you're away. Many students successfully apply from afar. Between email and Zoom, you can remain in close contact.

Attend a Fulbright Application Workshop at the Office of Fellowships during Spring Quarter. These workshops introduce you to the application, offer strategies for writing effective essays, and answer your questions. After you have attended an orientation workshop, submit a **Registration Form** to declare your intention to apply. Once the Office of Fellowships has received your registration, we will match you with an FFA and facilitate access to the NU Fulbright Canvas site.

↣ Formulating Your Project

Review exemplary project proposals. The Office of Fellowships maintains a collection of past NU Fulbright winners' proposals. See these samples on our site under "Use our Services".

Research your host country. Fulbright proposals must offer a clear and compelling argument that your project requires you to spend nine/ten months in the host country. To this end, you should identify country-specific sites and resources without which your project cannot succeed.

Identify a contact in the host country and secure a letter of affiliation. Fulbright requires that your application include a letter of support from someone in the host country — often a university professor, but sometimes a government official or NGO director. *It can be extremely challenging to secure a letter of affiliation; start your search early!* (See inset box for tips.)

Focus your ideas. A strong proposal makes clear that the applicant has come close to exhausting the possibilities for pursuing her topic on campus — that a year in the host country is the logical next step. Seek out and converse with faculty members with expertise relevant to your project; research extensively in our library.

> **? "I know I need a letter of affiliation from my host country, but where do I even start?"**
>
> Finding a country contact can sometimes seem like a wild goose chase, but with a little tenacity, applicants almost always succeed in securing a letter of affiliation. A few strategies:
> • **Ask NU faculty** who do research in the country; they may be able to put you in touch with colleagues or acquaintances.
> • **Search the web.** Read faculty bios on the websites of universities in the country.
> • **Activate the domino effect**: each time you speak with someone, either in the U.S. or in your host country, ask if they can put you in touch with two other people who might know about your area of study.

↣ Gathering Materials

A complete application includes important supplemental documentation. You should make arrangements **before you leave campus for the summer** to secure the following items. Gather and upload all materials by **Sept. 5th, 2023 @ 12:00 noon**.

Letter of Affiliation from Host Country. Once you have identified an appropriate contact, you need to request a letter of affiliation. Good letters of affiliation communicate three pieces of information: 1. The writer knows you, the applicant; 2. The writer believes that your project is significant and feasible; and 3. The writer will offer concrete assistance relevant to your project. Provide your contact with a draft of your proposal or a detailed abstract. The letter, though it need not be lengthy, should detail your contact's willingness to offer material assistance relevant to your project — occasional advising, access to archives or records, and the like.

The letter must **exist as an original document on institutional letterhead and bear a signature**. Your affiliate may transmit the letter electronically. Printouts of e-mails or texts are *not* acceptable as a Letter of Affiliation. Remember that the mail may be slow, and your contact may be traveling over the summer. **Request this letter as early as you can!**

Three Letters of Reference. Normally at least two of these letters should come from NU professors. Personal or character references are not appropriate; all three letters must speak to the particulars of your project and your abilities. For that reason, it is crucial that you *meet with each of your recommenders* to discuss your plans (after all, they are likely to be good sources of guidance on refining your project and identifying an affiliate) and provide them with a *draft of your proposal*. Contact them early; many professors will be away over the summer.

As a courtesy to your professors, provide lucid instructions on the process. **NB – letter format differs for Full Projects and ETA.** In the online application, you will register your recommenders and their email addresses. They will receive an email with instructions to upload their letter to the online application system.

Transcripts. You will need transcripts for all post-secondary work, *including study abroad*. Be sure to request non-NU transcripts early; registrars at your past institutions may not respond quickly. Request NU transcripts that reflect your Spring Quarter grades *and* Fall Quarter courses.

Language Evaluation. Unless your host country's language is English, you will need to have your language proficiency evaluated. **If English is technically acceptable in your country**, but most people speak a non-English language, you should develop a plan to acquire "hospitality knowledge" of the local language. Some research projects require knowledge of two languages; you must be evaluated in both.

> **? "Whom should I ask to write my recommendations?"**
>
> Strong recommendations come from figures who can attest not simply to your overall talent, but also to your preparedness to undertake the specific project you propose. For that reason, good recommenders include people who have
> • taught you in a **course** that covered your host country or research topic
> • supervised **research** that involved methods akin to those you will use
> • can testify to **other skills or expertise** that you will draw on in your project

For all languages taught at NU, your evaluation must be completed by a member of our faculty. For other languages, a non-NU affiliate qualified to make the evaluation is acceptable (excluding family members).

Contact the relevant department office to inquire how that department conducts language evaluations for Fulbright. Some departments have standing committees for evaluation that meet only during the academic year. We strongly recommend that you plan your language evaluation *before the end of spring quarter*. Remember that language faculty may not be accessible over the summer or in the final weeks before the campus deadline. If you expect your language proficiency to improve considerably during Summer '23, talk to the Office of Fellowships in September about ways to arrange for an update to your language evaluation.

Like your recommenders, your language evaluator(s) must enter their evaluation online.

↠ Writing Your Application

The application's central components are the *project proposal* and *personal statement*, but it also solicits several equally important short answers and additional information. Strong answers to "Abstract/Summary of Proposal" and "Plans upon return to the US" will help your selector see you as well organized and in command of where a Fulbright year may take you. The selectors **will** study you as an investment … what can you promise as return on their investment?

Statement of Proposed Study or Research. The proposal is the centerpiece of the application; in it, you must persuade your audience of the significance of your project, the feasibility of your plan to complete it, and its connection to your preparation and your future goals. *Expect to write many drafts* before you have sufficiently refined your ideas; expect to spend the biggest chunk of your time working on the first paragraph, which should offer a cogent snapshot of the central problematic in your project — **what, when, where, why, and how**. The proposal should run up to two single-spaced pages, a *little* less is OK.

Personal Statement. The Fulbright Personal Statement is *not* a résumé. It is a one-page (single-spaced) narrative autobiography; your intellectual autobiography. Since the national Fulbright selectors will not interview you, this essay introduces you to them personally. It also should capture your motivation for pursuing your proposed project and indicate the ways in which the project may contribute to your future goals. Selectors don't fund great research; they fund great researchers.

☞ *Examine sample Fulbright essays on the Office of Fellowships site* ☜

↠ Reaching the Finish Line

Campus Deadline. All materials, including transcripts and letters of recommendation, must be ready and uploaded by **September 5th, 2023 @ 12:00 noon**. The Office provides timely, detailed instructions to guide you through the process. **Note**: If you will not have Internet access in late September and early October, please notify us in advance.

Application Review. Although there is no national interview for the Fulbright, IIE requires that all colleges and universities speak with their institution's applicants. Our application review meetings will take place in mid-September and will be conducted by members of the NU Fulbright Committee and other faculty members.

↠ DÉNOUEMENT

Applications are first reviewed by panels in the U.S., which make the first and biggest cut. By the end of January, you will be notified whether or not you are a "semi-finalist." If you are not named "semi-finalist", your Fulbright application has not been successful. "Semi-finalist" applications are sent to host countries for final approval. Winners will be announced throughout the springtime, typically between March and May.

REMEMBER YOUR MANY SOURCES OF GUIDANCE

- Each summer several IIE GUIDANCE SESSIONS FOR STUDENTS take place in New York and are video-conferenced to Chicago, Denver, Houston, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. Dates and times will be posted on the Fulbright website.

- The IIE PROGRAM MANAGERS for each region of the world will answer student questions. Find their contact information on the Fulbright website: https://us.fulbrightonline.org/contact-us

- The Fulbright website includes a PLETHORA OF MULTIMEDIA STUFF. Offerings range from testimonials about the Fulbright life from the field to application workshops run by Fulbright staff. https://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/information-sessions

- When you first contact your FFA in the spring, inquire as to his or her summer availability. FFAs generously will work with you even in July and August. They appreciate knowing when you will need their assistance.

- All Fulbright applicants will gain access to a CANVAS SITE administered by the Office of Fellowships. You can post questions to an online discussion board, where Office of Fellowships staff post answers.

- Call the OFFICE OF FELLOWSHIPS or e-mail

The Northwestern University Fulbright Application Calendar

MARCH 31	COMPETITION OPENS! Online application becomes available to applicants
APRIL 13 UNTIL JUNE 2	MAY APPLICATION WORKSHOPS [STUDY/RESEARCH PROJECTS ONLY] Mandatory workshop for potential applicants Office of Fellowships assigns applicants to FFA and enrolls applicants on Canvas site
APRIL 19 UNTIL SEPT. 5	ADVISING PERIOD Applicants work with FFA to refine ideas and polish essays Applicants also rely upon their recommenders and faculty mentors, IIE program managers, Office of Fellowships staff, and overseas contacts
SEPT. 5TH @ 12:00 NOON	**CAMPUS DEADLINE** **All applicants submit complete application to Office of Fellowships**
SEPT. 18 -- 22	APPLICATION REVIEW PERIOD Each applicant participates in a three-person application review panel
LATE SEPTEMBER	INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP & FINAL REVISIONS Follow-up consultations with Office of Fellowships staff (optional) Revise and polish application materials
BEFORE NATIONAL DEADLINE	ALMOST TO THE FINISH LINE! Pursue with vigor missing elements of your application!
OCT. 10TH @ 5:00 PM (EASTERN TIME)	**NATIONAL DEADLINE!!** C O N G R A T U L A T I O N S !

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The Office of Fellowships

1940 Sheridan Rd.	www.northwestern.edu/fellowships
Evanston, IL 60208	847-491-2617

The Three Boxes

1750 character limit.

Prepare an ==executive summary== detailing the what, where, and why of your proposed project. If you are proposing the pursuit of a graduate degree program, summarize the program and relevance to your career/education plans.

1750 character limit.

A key purpose of the Fulbright program is to be a ==cultural ambassador== while living abroad. How will you engage ==outside of the workplace== to fulfill this mission? In what ways do you plan to share your culture and values in your host community? Provide specific ideas.

850 character limit.

Describe your career and/or educational plans after completing a Fulbright grant.
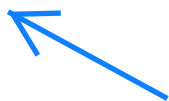
To answer this question I suggest you NOT focus on jobs you hope hold. Instead focus on how the Fulbright will help you make the contributions you intend to author. What will you do in 10 years that will repay Fulbright's investment now?

Statement of Grant Purpose*

This 2-page document outlines the Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How of what you are proposing for your Fulbright year. If you are pursuing a research project, developing a strong, feasible and compelling project is the most important aspect of a successful Fulbright application.

The first step is to familiarize yourself with the award summary for your host country and selected award in order to verify the type of grant you can propose. Depending on the country and award, applicants may also propose to complete a graduate degree program. Some countries have specific arrangements or named awards for graduate study and applicants may propose to complete a graduate degree program. In this case, applicants should focus on demonstrating the reasons for pursuing the proposed program at a particular institution in the host country.

Whether you are applying for a research project or a degree program, the proposal should indicate a clear commitment to the host country community and a description of how you will engage with it.

Develop an intellectually-compelling and feasible project or justification for pursuing a graduate degree program: This is the most important factor in presenting a successful application. The first step is to familiarize yourself with the award summary for the country and program to which you are applying. You should ensure that your Statement of Grant Purpose fits the program guidelines for the host country and award.

For applicants proposing independent study/research projects, address the following points:

- With whom do you propose to work?
- What do you propose to do?
- What is innovative about the research?
- What are the specific research goals and methodologies?
- What is important or significant about the project?
- What contribution will the project make toward the Fulbright goal of promoting cultural exchange and mutual understanding?
- When will you carry out the project? Include a feasible timeline.
- Where do you propose to conduct your study or research? Why was this location(s) chosen?
- Why do you want to undertake this project?
- What are your qualifications for carrying out this project?
- Why does the project have to be conducted in the country of application?
- How will your project help further your academic or professional development?
- How will you engage with the host country community? Give specific ideas for civic engagement.

Design a feasible project: You must demonstrate that your research strategy is viable, including its content, methodology, and time frame.

Address the following points:

- How will the culture and politics of the host country impact the work?
- Will the resources of the host country support the project?
- Have you developed a connection with a potential adviser in the host country who has knowledge of the research topic and access to other appropriate contacts in the field?
- Do you have the requisite academic/field-specific background to undertake the proposed research?
- Do you have sufficient language skills for the project being proposed and to serve the basic purposes of the Fulbright Program? If not, how will you accomplish these goals? You should consider that, even if a country indicates that English will be sufficient for carrying out the proposed project, for purposes of Community Engagement, at least a basic level of language skill should be obtained prior to leaving the United States for the host country.
- What are your plans for improving your language skills, if they are not adequate at the time of application?
- Are there any possible feasibility concerns that the project could provoke?

For applicants proposing to enroll in graduate degree programs, address the following points:

- Why do you want to pursue the proposed program in the country to which you are applying?
- What are your reasons for selecting a particular institution?
- Do you have the requisite academic/field-specific background to undertake the proposed program?
- Why do you want to gain a better understanding of the peoples and cultures of your host country? Please demonstrate a commitment to the community through volunteer and extra-curricular activity.
- Do you have sufficient language skills to successfully complete the program?
- Do you have the flexibility and dynamism necessary for active involvement in the host country?

Candidates applying through U.S. institutions are urged to consult professors in their major fields or faculty members with experience in the host country, as well as their Fulbright Program Advisers, about the feasibility of their proposed projects. At-Large applicants should consult qualified persons in their fields.

- Be clear and concise. The individuals reading the proposal want applicants to get to the point about the 'who, what, when, where, why and how' of the project. Avoid discipline-specific jargon.
- Organize the statement carefully.

- <mark>Don't make reviewers search for information.</mark> We urge you to have several people read and critique the Statement of Grant Purpose, including a faculty adviser, a faculty member outside your discipline, a fellow student, and/or a colleague.

1. Length is limited to a maximum of two single-spaced pages. Longer statements will not be presented to screening committees.
2. Do not include any bibliographies, publications, citations, etc. , except those that will fit in the two-page limit.
3. At the top of the first page, please include the following information:

   Line 1: STATEMENT OF GRANT PURPOSE
   Line 2: Your Name, Country of Application, Field of Study
   Line 3: Project Title as it appears on the Program Information section

   Example:
   STATEMENT OF GRANT PURPOSE
   Jane Smith, Country, Field of Study
   Project Title

4. On the second page of the Statement, enter the same information or just <mark>Last Name, Grant Purpose, Page 2</mark>
5. Before uploading, convert all documents to PDF.

Pay attention to the instructions for headers. The SGP and Personal Statement have different headers.

Personal Statement*

The statement should be a 1 page narrative that provides a picture of yourself as an individual. It should deal with your personal history, family background, <mark>influences</mark> on your intellectual development, the educational, professional, and cultural opportunities (or lack of them) to which you have been exposed, and the ways in which these experiences have affected you. Also include your special interests and abilities, career plans, and life goals, etc. It should not be a recording of facts already listed on the application or an elaboration of your Statement of Grant Purpose. <mark>Rather, it should be specifically related to you and your aspirations relative to the specific Fulbright Program to which you have applied.</mark>

PLEASE ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING FORMAT INSTRUCTIONS

1. Length is limited to a maximum of one single-spaced page. Longer statements will not be presented to screening committees.
2. Use 1-inch margins and Times New Roman 12-point font.
3. See the host country Program Summary for translation instructions, if required.
4. Before uploading, convert all documents to PDF.
5. At the top of the page, please include the following information:

> Line 1: PERSONAL STATEMENT
> Line 2: Your Name, Country of Application, Field of Study or ETA

You should also provide more information on your planned Host Country Engagement(s). Providing details on why you pursue the freetime activities you list can help the selectors see you as a three-dimensional person.

General Comments from Prior Application Cycles

Following the Fulbright application review panels, I asked all interviewers to relate the most commonly observed problems on their panel. The following digest enumerates those comments. Curiously, this list is strikingly similar to lists from past years. Your awareness of these pitfalls at the beginning of your application will help you avoid them.

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1. **Clarify** your research question or agenda. Many, many applicants articulated their projects and presented themselves more effectively orally than in writing. Read your proposal aloud. This will help you identify the sections that don't work. (This was the **number one** comment!!)

2. Urgency -- Why do **YOU** <u>need</u> to go to this **COUNTRY** at this **TIME**?

3. **Weak writing in general**, but particularly in the introduction. Be succinct and use transparent organization to present your ideas clearly. Rid your writing of the passive voice. Also examine all words ending in "-ing" and "-tion" to see whether they can be turned into active verbs. Have agents accomplish actions in your proposal. Identify the problem that needs your attention.

4. All research must answer a simple, two-word question, "**So what?**" (Alt. "Who cares?") Dig to the heart of your project to discover what your research will contribute to your field, knowledge, and/or the world. Why do we *need* you to carry out this work? Most applicants were good and articulating "WHAT", moderately good and clarifying "HOW", but poor at saying "WHY".

5. Fix poorly developed **methodology**/research plan/timeline (this is a killer!).

6. **Scope** of project: overly ambitious or (less frequently) ridiculously narrow. Projects must be feasible (in a general sense) and achievable (in the time you have and with *your* skills and resources.) One interviewer seeks "a more simplified, focused, and detailed version of their vision." (Hint: A timeline often helps you trim/expand your project to a feasible size.)

7. Poorly developed link between your interests (who you are) and the project. (Hint: Fulbright funds not only good research, they fund good researchers. It is *very* important that <u>you</u> come through in the materials.) And so …….

8. **DO NOT** reiterate your project proposal in your personal statement!! The personal statement is your chance to tell them what makes you tick, not plow the project field again.

9. **Organization**: Specifics over details; show don't tell; move from the general to the focused; introduction must captivate reader and give them reason to read on.

10. Lack of seriousness regarding foreign language. NB – Language is a key washout point in the national competition. On every panel sits someone extremely proud of his/her language abilities and *unimpressed* with yours. You must get this person in your camp before you move forward.

11. Abstracts: DO NOT cut and paste from your first paragraph. Seek guidance is uncertain how to write a good abstract.

12. Avoid colloquial or overly flowery language in your proposal. You do not want to appear blasé, or "silly and pretentious."

U.S. STUDENT FULBRIGHT PROGRAM
Foreign Language Evaluation Form

Applicant Last Name	*First Name* *Grant Field*

For Study in (country):

Language Evaluated:

Please comment on the applicant's present language ability in relation to the proposed project in each of the following categories. Based on ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012.

ACTFL LEVEL	LISTENING	SPEAKING	READING	WRITING
None	○ None	○ None	○ None	○ None
Novice	○ Understands simple questions, statements, and frequently used commands	○ Communicates short messages on highly predictable, everyday topics	○ Understands key words and cognates from highly predictable texts	○ Writes in lists and notes, primarily by using words and phrases.
Intermediate	○ Understands simple conversation on familiar or everyday topics	○ Uses sentence-level language, typically in present time and on familiar topics related to daily life.	○ Understands information conveyed in simple, predictable, loosely connected texts.	○ Writes using basic vocabulary and structures to meet practical writing needs
Advanced	○ Understands conversation on a variety of general interest topics.	○ Engages in conversation in a clearly participatory manner, in the major time frames of past, present, and future.	○ Understands the main idea and supporting details of authentic narrative and descriptive texts.	○ Writes in narrative format, using major time frames of past, present, and future
Superior/ Distinguished	○ Understands speech on a wide range topics, including academic and professional discussions.	○ Communicates with accuracy and fluency in order to participate fully and effectively in conversations on a variety of topics.	○ Understands structurally complex texts from many genres dealing with a wide range of subjects.	○ Writes analytically on professional, academic and societal issues, moving toward the abstract.

Please indicate your general opinion of this applicant's ability in the language evaluated relative to the language level needed to carry out the proposed study or research project **OR** for English Teaching Assistantship applicants to engage in a local community where English is rarely spoken.

○ Will require considerable training before necessary competence can be obtained

○ Should be able to manage adequately after some additional formal language raining

○ Should be able to manage adequately after a short period of adjustment abroad

○ Should have no difficulty

Indicate briefly how the evaluation was determined. As space allows, also feel free to comment on applicant's language skills relative to the proposed project

Evaluator Name	*Position or title*	*Date*
Institution/Organization	*City*	*State /Country*

2022 Campus Committee Evaluation (CCE) Form

STUDY/RESEARCH

A Campus Committee Evaluation Form is required of all applicants applying through a U.S. institution. Consult the "Manual for Fulbright Program Advisers" for additional instructions. Use the TAB key to move between fields.

Name of Applicant:	Host Country:	Field of Study:

1. In what ways will the applicant's qualifications and experiences contribute to their success in carrying out or conducting the proposed project? Provide specific examples, if appropriate. (800 characters including spaces)

2. In what ways will the characteristics and personal attributes of the applicant enable them to be a positive representative of the United States and the Fulbright Program in their host community? Provide specific examples, if appropriate. (800 characters including spaces)

3. Describe the applicant's knowledge of the host country and ways the applicant has learned or is learning about the host country or region's culture, society, current events, and/or history. Provide specific examples, if appropriate. (800 characters including spaces)

4. Provide general comments regarding the applicant's suitability for the proposed grant (additional comments regarding academic and/or personal experience, maturity, adaptability, and flexibility welcome): (800 characters including spaces)

5. Does the Campus Committee endorse this candidate for a Fulbright grant? (Yes or No)

Individual Completing Form:	Position:	College/University:

Please limit each response to the character limits noted above. This document may not exceed 2 pages in total length.