



# FULBRIGHT

U.S. STUDENT PROGRAM



Allyson Hoffman,  
English Teaching  
Assistantship, Norway



UNIVERSITY of  
**SOUTH FLORIDA**



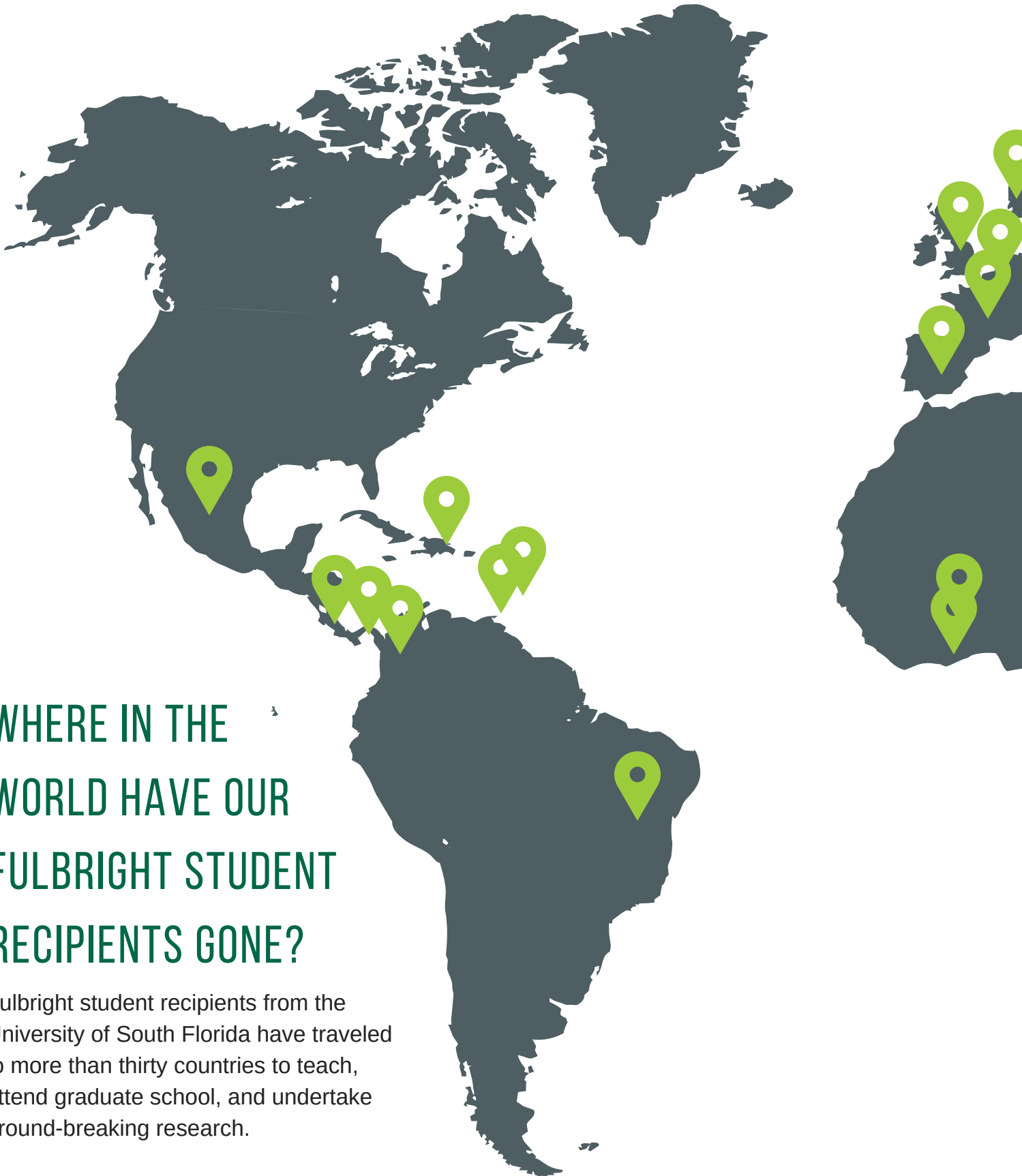
*"My experience this past year has changed me into a completely different person."*

-Natalie Kass, English Teaching Assistantship (ETA) to Macau



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Fulbright Recipient Map.....                  | 3  |
| Featured USF Fulbright Recipients.....        | 5  |
| What is Fulbright?.....                       | 7  |
| Application Timeline.....                     | 10 |
| Choosing a Grant Type.....                    | 11 |
| Choosing a Country.....                       | 13 |
| Application Checklist.....                    | 14 |
| Tips for a Strong Application.....            | 16 |
| Statement of Grant Purpose.....               | 17 |
| Personal Statement.....                       | 19 |
| Writing Tips.....                             | 21 |
| Recommendation Letters.....                   | 23 |
| Working with ONS and the Campus Deadline..... | 25 |
| Addressing Concerns.....                      | 27 |
| The Value of the Process.....                 | 28 |
| Notes.....                                    | 29 |
| Statement of Grant Purpose Worksheets.....    | 31 |
| Personal Statement Worksheet.....             | 34 |



# WHERE IN THE WORLD HAVE OUR FULBRIGHT STUDENT RECIPIENTS GONE?

Fulbright student recipients from the University of South Florida have traveled to more than thirty countries to teach, attend graduate school, and undertake ground-breaking research.



# FEATURED USF FULBRIGHT RECIPIENTS

Throughout this workbook, you will find advice from these past USF Fulbright recipients. Their words are here to inspire, reassure, and guide you as you go through the application process.



**Trina Halfhide**

Research Grant: Norway

**Jenna Dionisio**

English Teaching Assistantship: Malaysia



**Paola Gonzalez**

Research Grant: Brazil

**Aroushad Tahsini**

Study Grant: Spain



**Roberto Roldan**

Study Grant: United Kingdom



## **Kevin Orner**

Research Grant: Costa Rica

## **Natalie Kass**

English Teaching Assistantship: Macau



## **Kate Ashmore**

English Teaching Assistantship: Germany

## **Dalia Elmelige**

Study Grant: United Kingdom



Not pictured: Bryan Shuler (Research Grant to Ghana), Rose Bishop (English Teaching Assistantship to Kazakhstan), and Zak Boggs (Study Grant to the United Kingdom)



# THE FULBRIGHT U.S. STUDENT PROGRAM

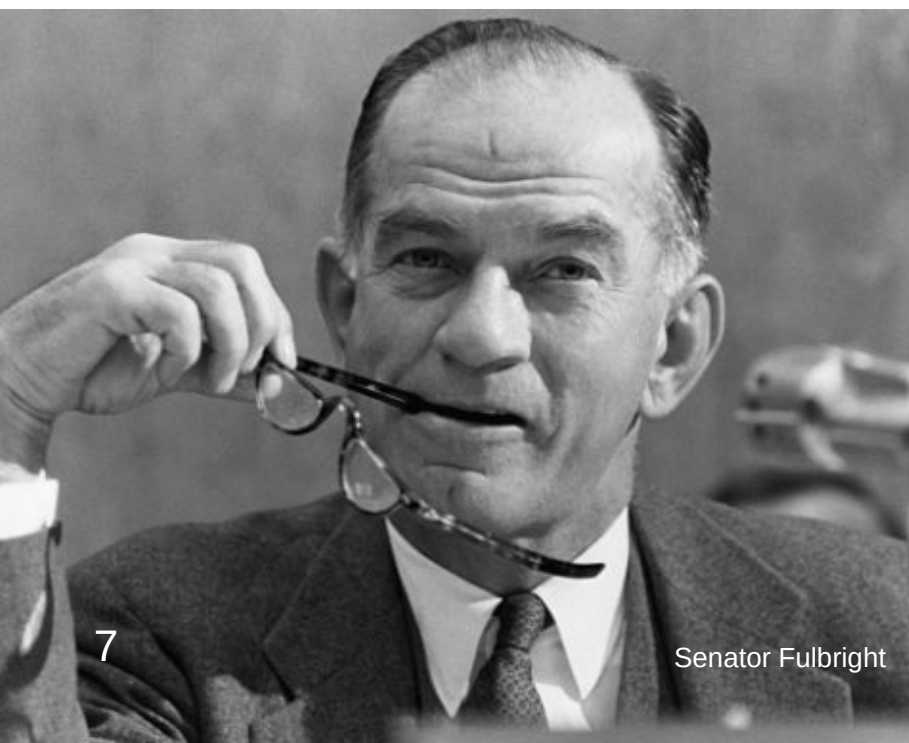
Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the Fulbright U.S. Student Program is the largest U.S. exchange program funding fellowships abroad for one academic year to graduating college seniors, graduate students, and alumni. Each year, approximately 1,900 Americans travel to more than 140 countries through the Fulbright U.S. Student Program.

**The Fulbright Program consists of three grant types for American students:**

- Teaching Assistantship: One year of teaching English
- Study Grant: One year of graduate study
- Research Grant: One year conducting an independent research project

## Eligibility Requirements:

1. Citizen of the United States,
2. Must have a conferred bachelor's degree or equivalent by start of grant,
3. Be in good health (will be required to submit a medical certificate from a physician),
4. Have proficiency in the written and spoken language of the host country sufficient to communicate with the people and to carry out proposed work (Not required in all locations),
5. Have an ambassadorial spirit!



The Fulbright Program was established in 1946 under legislation introduced by Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas. Fulbright used money from the sale of surplus materials after World War II to fund a program that would promote international goodwill through the exchange of students.



*"My Fulbright experience took me out of my comfort zone and helped me become a stronger person. I realized what my limits were, but also that I can rely on myself to make positive decisions in difficult situations."*

-Rose Bishop, ETA to Kazakhstan

*"My Fulbright experience inspired me to dream big. It showed me that I was capable of performing at a high level."*

-Roberto Roldan, Study Grant to the United Kingdom at the University of Aberystwyth

**“DO IT.**

*Don't psyche yourself out, and just go for it. Think about what you're passionate about and how you can be a cultural ambassador, and just lay it out in your essays. No idea is too strange for Fulbright, so pursue your passion. If it aligns with Fulbright's mission, you are good to go!"*

-Dalia Elmelige, Study Grant to the United Kingdom at the University of Bristol



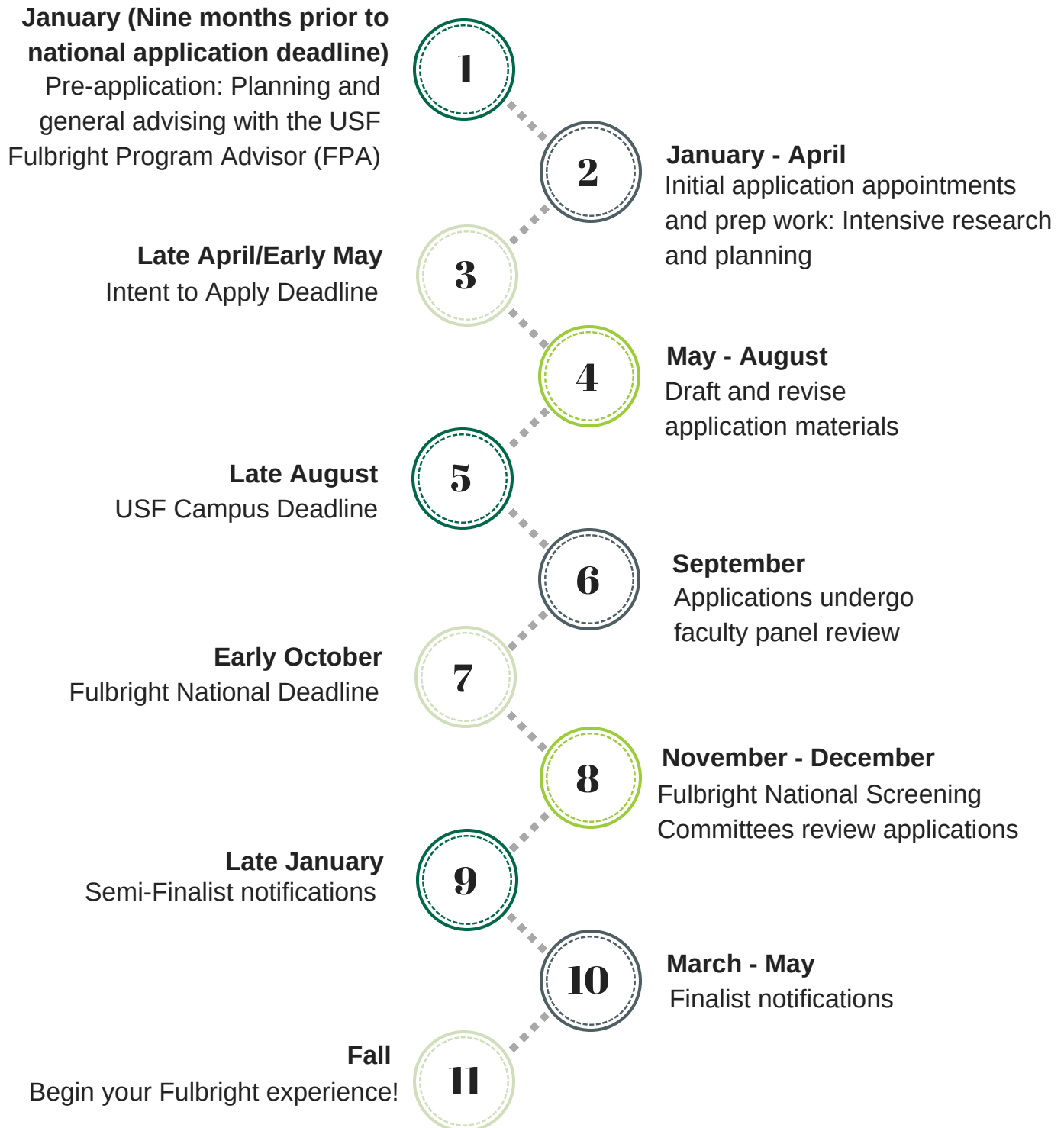
# “ THE FULBRIGHT APPLICATION PROCESS IS A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT.

*The reward for your efforts is not immediate. Utilize the resources of the Office of National Scholarships, your advisors, and other connections to systematically develop your application. Take the time to research your country, its values, and its organizations. Start developing relationships that will strengthen your application and your potential experience. I visited my host site to meet potential collaborators, and I believe that strengthened my application."*



-Kevin Orner, Research  
Grant to Costa Rica

# APPLICATION TIMELINE



# CHOOSING A GRANT TYPE

## English Teaching Assistants (ETA):

- Are placed in a primary, secondary, or post-secondary school,
- Do not have much (if any) control over where they are placed within the host country,
- Typically work 20-30 hours per week,
- Have a teaching responsibility that can vary greatly depending on the site,
- Develop community engagement projects that help connect the ETA with the host culture,
- And typically have some sort of teaching (mentoring, tutoring, coaching, etc.) experience and are extremely flexible individuals who are independent and can think on their feet. Knowledge of the host language may be required in some locations.

## Study Grantees:

- Select their own study location, university, and graduate program,
- Arrange an affiliation from the international graduate program at the proposed host institution,
- Engage with the community,
- And have extensive, relevant experience in their area of proposed study. They will be able to create connections with people at their potential university, and may need to have language experience, depending on the graduate program requirements.

## Research Grantees:

- Develop a plan to conduct research, engage in a creative project, perform an internship, or other full time commitment,
- Select their research location, project, and affiliation,
- Arrange to have an affiliation letter from a sponsoring institution,
- Plan a project that provides opportunities for immersion or engagement with the host culture,
- And have extensive relevant experience in research methods. They will be able to create connections with people at their potential university, and may need to have language experience, depending on the proposed project and affiliation. Even though you are applying to undertake an independent research project, you will be working with someone while abroad on your Fulbright - your affiliation. The affiliation will be both a person and an appropriate institution. The affiliation should be someone who is doing similar research as proposed in your application, in the host country. Different countries have different requirements for who the affiliation can be. The process for establishing an affiliation can take many months.



*"I was attempting to find a society in which my focus was an integral part of their culture."*

-Bryan Shuler, Research Grant to Ghana

*"I chose my country because I think Central Asia is a fascinating, yet generally underrepresented, area of the world. Kazakhstan always piqued my interest. It's the ninth largest country in the world, yet many people don't seem to know much about it. I chose to apply for the ETA Fulbright since I am passionate about ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) education."*

-Rose Bishop, ETA to Kazakhstan

*"Lots of research, then I went with my gut."*

-Dalia Elmelige, Study Grant to the United Kingdom





# QUESTIONS FOR CHOOSING A COUNTRY

Do I have personal, professional, or academic links to any countries already?

Are there certain countries that have features integral to my study or research plans?

Which universities have the best departments/programs for my field of study or research?

Because an ETA focuses on deep cultural immersion, is there a culture I am particularly interested in, and would I be comfortable being placed anywhere in the host country?

How will study in this particular country impact my academic and professional goals? What connections can I make, and will it create a solid base for my future career?

What about the potential host country resonates with me and my interests and values?

Where can I envision myself making local friends and getting involved in the community?

What could I offer to my host community in the country?



# APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- Online Application Form
  - Biographical Data (basic resume/CV information)
- Statement of Grant Purpose (one- to two-page grant proposal)
- Personal Statement (one-page narrative essay)
- Letters of Recommendation for the Research or Study Grant (three) or Reference Forms for the ETA (three)
- Transcripts

*Depending on the grant type and requirements of the host country, applicants may also need to submit the following:*

- Affiliation Letter (proof of connection with proposed host institution)
- Language Self-Assessment and Foreign Language Evaluation
- Supplementary Materials (for students in the creative and performing arts)

## NOTES:

**A STRONG APPLICANT...**

**“ DARES TO BE  
DIFFERENT.”**

-Trina Halfhide, Research Grant to Norway





# TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION

## **Start early, and practice patience.**

*"It's a long, tedious application process. I set short-term and long-term goals and slowly plugged away at the application. It's also hard after you submit your application in October to wait five months for a response. I had to be patient and willing to accept the ambiguity of not knowing where I would be in one year."*

-Kevin Orner, Research Grant to Costa Rica

## **Be authentic.**

*"Spend a lot of time reflecting on your aspirations, and pen your most authentic self. Choose a destination that best fits your goals and ambitions. Do not play the numbers and choose a program based on better odds of winning. This would be doing yourself a disservice."*

-Jenna Dionisio, ETA to Malaysia

## **Utilize your resources.**

*"ONS is your best friend when applying. I met with the Fulbright Advisor multiple times, exchanged several emails and drafts with her, and found her incredibly helpful. I would also recommend asking a few friends, family members, and mentors with strong writing skills to read your essays and give feedback. The more people who can read your essays and come away with the ideas and impressions you're trying to give, the more successful your application is likely to be with the Fulbright Commission."*

-Kate Ashmore, ETA to Germany

## **Understand Fulbright's mission.**

*"The main goal of Fulbright is mutual understanding and international cooperation on a personal level. If you center your application on this mission, while showing (not telling!) the unique skills you have to offer, you have a pretty good chance."*

-Rose Bishop, ETA to Kazakhstan

# THE STATEMENT OF GRANT PURPOSE

A Fulbright Statement of Grant Purpose models a traditional grant proposal as it describes a specific objective, designs an experience to address that objective, and solidifies why this grant is the best way to achieve the objective.

## Research and Study Grants

In a direct and persuasive manner, address these questions in your Statement of Grant Purpose:

- What do you propose to do? What is new, exciting, or unique about your work?
- What contribution does your project or study make toward the Fulbright Program's mission and goals?
- Why is your research project or graduate study significant? Why do you want to do it? Who does it impact?
- Where and with whom will you work or study? Why is it important that you do it there and with those people?
- What is your timeline for your time abroad?
- If you will be doing research, how will you carry it out? What is your methodology?
- How will your research project or graduate study further your academic and professional development?
- How will you engage with the host community?
- Why have you chosen this particular country?

## English Teaching Assistantships

In a direct and persuasive manner, address these questions in your Statement of Grant Purpose:

- Why would you like to undertake an English Teaching Assistant assignment?
- Why have you chosen this particular country?
- What specific qualifications, training, and/or experiences do you have related to teaching English abroad?
- How will you meaningfully engage with the host community outside of the classroom?
- How do you expect to benefit from teaching abroad, and how will you make use of the experience upon your return to the United States?

# “ YOUR ESSAYS HAVE TO BE VERY CLEAR AND SUCCINCT.

*Use all of the resources available to you to enhance the essay. Your proposal should be as specific as possible, and your institutional affiliation should reflect how your knowledge and skills will be utilized and developed by the grant."*



-Paola Gonzalez,  
Research Grant to Brazil

# THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

- This essay is not an entire autobiography or a space to list everything on your resume. This is where you can give the reviewer personal context for your past accomplishments and future goals.
- This statement should be a narrative giving a picture of you as an individual. Candidates are not interviewed on the national level, so this is where you let the reviewer get to know you, your passions, and your motivations.
- This is where you can talk about meaningful experiences in your life that have led you to this moment. You may talk about family, cultural influences in your life, previous travel - anything that has impacted your "why" when it comes to Fulbright. What excites you about your goals?
- Know that not everything you want to say will fit in this essay. Craft a consistent story with rich vocabulary and detailed descriptions. Illustrate your life for the reader.
- This is also a place for you to reinforce your connection to your country of choice.

*"Show your personality with personal anecdotes, while also showing your ability to be flexible, hard-working, and dedicated."*

-Rose Bishop, ETA to Kazakhstan

*"If you write from the heart, you will be confident sending your essays because, at the end of the day, it's you."*

-Natalie Kass, ETA to Macau



“ I BELIEVE THAT BEING ABLE TO TELL YOUR PERSONAL STORY, OF HOW YOU GOT WHERE YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU WISH TO GO, IS KEY IN BEING A SUCCESSFUL FULBRIGHT APPLICANT.

*When the applicant has clear goals, especially for one's time as a Fulbright grantee, the Fulbright Program can confidently send that person abroad as a representative of the United States and be sure that the time spent abroad will be well utilized."*



-Kate Ashmore, ETA to Germany

# WRITING TIPS

*"The essay portion was difficult because it was so personal. It took me over a year to write those two pages because I drafted and scrapped it many times. I made everyone read it - do not be afraid to share your writing. The more eyes, the better."*

-Natalie Kass, ETA to Macau

*"Write many drafts, walk away from it for a few days, and then read it with fresh eyes."*

-Trina Halfhide, Research Grant to Norway

*"Proposing a very specific project and explaining the value of the professors and other resources in the department I was applying to made my essays strong."*

-Roberto Roldan, Study Grant to the United Kingdom



# THINGS TO AVOID:

- There are a lot of words and phrases that get over-used in essays like this, including "passion," "comfort zone," "once-in-a-lifetime," etc. Try to avoid these. Show your reader what you mean with detailed examples instead of telling them with a vague over-used statement.
- Using quotes or talking about your idols is generally not a good idea. It can come across as clichéd, and doesn't really tell them anything original about you or your goals.
- Childhood epiphanies generally come across as naïve or not genuine. To say that you have "dreamed of studying in London since you were a child" is the kind of phrase that readers would consider far-fetched.
- Humor can be risky. Your reader may not understand your sense of humor. Statements said in sarcasm or as a joke could be taken seriously or your joke could just fall flat.
- Using punctuation or vocabulary to try to make something seem more academic usually goes wrong. Obviously, an essay like this should be full of rich vocabulary and diverse word choice, but if it is over-complicated or doesn't sound genuine to your voice, it will hurt your essay. Likewise, using a lot of semicolons, hyphens, etc. to make sentences more complex usually backfires.
- Opening with a clichés like "Hello, my name is" or "The prompt has asked me to address" can make you seem unoriginal and boring.
- This essay is not a place for a "sob story." The Fulbright Program does provide financial support, but your academic and professional development is the focus. You should not be arguing financial need or other personal motivations like being close to a significant other.

# The 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

## Who should be your recommenders?

Recommendations (references) should be from faculty with whom you have worked, had a class, or conducted research. At least two of your letters or ETA reference forms should be from professors in your major or field. The third can also come from a professor or a community member. These recommenders should know you well and be able to speak to your strengths. The USF Fulbright Program Advisor will work with you on which faculty will be the best fit to serve as your recommenders.

## What should be included?

Study and research grant applicants will need three letters of recommendations. English Teaching Assistant applicants will have their three recommenders fill out a form provided by Fulbright.

You will want to give your recommender the right tools for writing a strong reference. Discuss the Fulbright Program and your interest in it with them. Make sure they understand the expectations and timeline for the application process. You will want to provide them with your application materials to give them context. This will include your resume, your application essays, and a list of key points you may want them to include. Your academic references should always get a final copy of your statement of grant purpose, so that they can talk about your ability to carry out your proposal. It is a good idea to meet with your recommenders, especially if it has been a while since you have worked with them. You can catch them up on your current activities and refresh their memory of your strengths as an applicant.

## When should you ask for recommendations?

You can start talking with your potential recommenders as early as possible. Give them ample time to draft their responses and check-in with you. The recommenders will submit their letters or forms for the campus deadline in August. *After the internal review process*, you will be directed to register your references in the online portal, and your recommenders will upload/submit their letters or ETA reference forms to your online Fulbright application.



*"These professionals, who are invested in your growth and development, will be glad to help."*


-Jenna Dionisio, ETA to Malaysia

*"When selecting your recommenders, choose people who know you well and can speak to your skills relevant to the grant needs. I applied to be an ETA in Germany, so my recommenders were two German professors, one of whom I had studied abroad with, and my supervisor for whom I taught a German language workshop. Together, they could speak to my language, travel, and teaching experience."*

-Kate Ashmore, ETA to Germany

*"Reach out to the professors you've worked with most closely for recommendations. Their letters will be better written and more compelling if they can speak about you on a more personal level."*

-Roberto Roldan, Study Grant to the United Kingdom

 **ASK FOR YOUR REFERENCES  
WELL IN ADVANCE."**

-Rose Bishop, ETA to Kazakhstan

# THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS AND THE CAMPUS DEADLINE

Working with the Office of National Scholarships (ONS) offers you the best resources for completing your Fulbright application. Your Fulbright Program Advisor (FPA) will assist you through the entire process, including setting deadlines and offering you feedback.

All of your application materials will be due in August to the FPA to be reviewed by a campus panel of USF faculty and staff. This allows you to get feedback on your application as a whole from unbiased reviewers. You will use this feedback to revise your materials before the Fulbright national deadline in October.

Completed Application Materials to be submitted for the Campus Deadline and Faculty Review:

- Application Form
- Statement of Grant Purpose
- Personal Statement
- Three Letters of Recommendation or ETA Reference Forms
- Letter of Affiliation (if applying for a research or study grant)
- Foreign Language Evaluation (if applying to a country with a language requirement)
- Transcripts from all universities attended (including USF)

ONS Team (Left to right: Lauren Bartshe, Lauren Chambers (USF FPA), Lauren Roberts, Hiwot Zewdie, and Sayandeb Basu)



*"Take USF ONS's advice to heart. They were an incredibly helpful resource when I was applying for the Fulbright."*

-Jenna Dionisio, ETA to Malaysia

*"ONS was my first resource and helped me with deciding which grant and country to apply for. They were also one of my greatest resources to help me with writing the essays. ONS kept me accountable and on a time schedule, which was hugely helpful in completing the application without losing my mind."*

-Kate Ashmore, ETA to Germany

*"I come from a low-income family and my parents don't know much about higher education or grant opportunities, which meant I really had to use every resource available at USF. The Office of National Scholarships was an invaluable resource for me."*

-Rose Bishop, ETA to Kazakhstan

*"My best advice is to utilize the expertise of the Office of National Scholarships as much as possible. Applying for Fulbright is a lot of paperwork along with constantly tweaking and rewriting grant applications. It can be very confusing and overwhelming, but I received a lot of great support and advice from ONS."*

-Roberto Roldan, Study Grant to the United Kingdom

# COMMON CONCERNS

We asked our Fulbright recipients what some of their biggest fears were during the application process and how they dealt with the stress. It's important to know that you are not alone. Here's what they said:

- Overwhelming amount of work/burnout
- Deciding between multiple opportunities
- Traveling somewhere unfamiliar
- Being far from friends and family
- Not being a good writer
- Doing poorly in the interview
- Organizing the recommendations/references
- Not being competitive for Fulbright or graduate school

# HOW THEY OVERCAME THESE CONCERNS

- Supportive friends and family
  - Walks and exercise
- Asking for help and using campus resources
  - Hard work and preparation
  - Self-care and spirituality
    - Taking breaks



## **We also asked our Fulbright recipients if the application process was valuable, regardless of the outcome of their award.**

*"Absolutely. It was great to take stock of what I had done, what I wanted to accomplish, and to reflect upon how I had grown over the years."*

-Zak Boggs, Study Grant to the United Kingdom at the University of Leicester

*"It was all worth it. Framing a project and building connections with possible partner institutions is invaluable, especially for students considering graduate school."*

-Paola Gonzalez, Research Grant to Brazil

*"YES, whole-heartedly and without reservation. It would have still been worth it even if I had not been selected. I valued pushing myself beyond what I thought possible because finishing the process was an accomplishment in itself and elicited a feeling of pride."*

-Jenna Dionisio, ETA to Malaysia



## **IT WAS 100% WORTH IT.**

*It made me more resilient and proved that I was capable of tackling such a daunting process."*

-Aroushad Tahsini, Study Grant to Spain

# NOTES

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# NOTES

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## FULBRIGHT STATEMENT OF GRANT PURPOSE WORKSHEET - GRADUATE STUDY

Country:

Title of Graduate Program and University:

Affiliation Name and Title:

What kind of graduate program are you applying for? What is exciting or unique about this graduate program?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Who do you propose to study under or with? Why?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What contribution will undertaking and receiving this graduate degree make to the Fulbright objective of promoting cross-cultural interaction and mutual understanding?

- 1.
- 2.

What kinds of courses or modules will you take? What kind of research do you anticipate participating in (if applicable to your master's program)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Where do you propose to undertake this graduate study? Why is it important to go abroad, to this particular country, for the graduate study?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why do you want to do it? What is important or significant about the impact of this graduate study? For yourself, for your host country?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How will this graduate study help to further your academic or professional development?

- 1.
- 2.

How will you meaningfully engage with your host country community (outside of your graduate study activities)?

- 1.
- 2.



## FULBRIGHT STATEMENT OF GRANT PURPOSE WORKSHEET - RESEARCH PROJECT

Country:

Research Project Title:

Affiliation Name, Title and Organization:

What do you propose to do? What is exciting, new or unique about your research project?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

With whom do you propose to work?

- 1.
- 2.

What contribution will the research project make to the Fulbright objective of promoting cross-cultural interaction and mutual understanding?

- 1.
- 2.

What is your methodology and goals of this research project?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

When will you carry out your research project?

- 1.

Where do you propose to conduct this research project? Why is it important to go abroad, to this particular country, to carry out this research project?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why do you want to do it? What is important or significant about the research project? For yourself, for your host country?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

How will your research project help further your academic or professional development?

- 1.
- 2.

How will you meaningfully engage with your host country community (outside of your research activities)?

- 1.
- 2.

## FULBRIGHT STATEMENT OF GRANT PURPOSE WORKSHEET - ENGLISH TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP (ETA)

Country:

Teaching placement type:

-Why are you applying to this specific country?

-What are the needs for English language learning in the country you are applying to?

-What specific qualifications, training or experiences do you have to prepare you to serve as an ETA?

-Why is teaching English important as an ambassadorial initiative?

-What does the ETA experience mean to you and your professional and personal goals?

-What method(s) do you plan to use to teach English in the country you are applying to?

-What specific ideas do you have for engaging with students and helping them learn English?

-How will you meaningfully engage in your host community (outside of your teaching activities)?

## FULBRIGHT PERSONAL STATEMENT WORKSHEET

Think of your life as a story. The personal statement addresses your personal history, family background, influences on your intellectual development, the educational and cultural opportunities (or lack of them) to which you have been exposed, and the ways in which these experiences have affected you.

-In brief, write a list of events that you think are relevant to your Fulbright application. Pay special attention to any events on the list which could have been a catalyst that set you on your current educational journey.

-What are your special interests and abilities, career plans, and life goals?

-Think of how Fulbright fits into that journey. What will you achieve through a Fulbright, and how does this impact you, your host country, and the United States?

-Think about a moment of choice or insight, a time in your life when you saw or were shown the reason for doing all of the hard work you have done up to the writing of this personal statement. Think of this as an "Ah Ha" moment; writing about this shows your readers that you have actually thought about why you want to be what you are telling them you want to be, and have undergone some additional moments of clarity, which cemented your resolve. **List those moments here:**

DON'T FORGET!

-Why do you need to undertake your proposed "project" (graduate study, research, or English teaching) specifically in your chosen country?

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