The Fulbright Scholarship

http://www.iie.org/en/Fulbright

Directions for applying

What is a Fulbright scholarship?

- One year spent in one of 140 countries studying/doing research or teaching conversational English while engaging with the local culture.

- Students are eligible upon receipt of the bachelor’s degree but may not have received the doctoral degree.

- The Fulbright is very competitive. The Fulbright website (http://www.iie.org/en/Fulbright) has detailed information on the relative competitiveness of each country.

What are the options?

☐ Teaching English

☐ Study or Research

Who are your campus resources?

☐ Jo Cannon (Dorothy Johansen House, 503 777 7545, jcannon@reed.edu), Fellowships Coordinator. Jo keeps you on task, reads and responds to drafts of essays, ultimately submits your application, and provides hardcopy application to IIE.

☐ Thesis advisor and professors (for letters, advice, etc.)

☐ Paul DeYoung (Eliot 203, 503-777-7290, pdeyoung@reed.edu), Reed’s Fulbright Program Advisor (FPA) and liaison to the Fulbright program. He can give you basic information on program guidelines and offer general advice on selecting a host country and contacting faculty at potential host institutions. Paul can also offer you feedback on drafts of your CV and project proposal—particularly with an eye towards how you present yourself and your project as well as the practical (and political) feasibility of your project.

☐ Kate Bredeson, Assistant Professor of Theatre and Fulbright liaison member of the Fellowships and Awards Committee. She will help you formulate your CV and project proposal and give you feedback on drafts, especially with regard to presentation and academic merits.

☐ The Office of Career Services can also give you general help in applying for other post-Reed opportunities (contact Ron Albertson, albertsr@reed.edu).
What are the steps?

☐ Before you leave for the summer, talk to your adviser about potential projects and determine your competitiveness for this award.

☐ Tell Jo Cannon your intention to apply so that you and she can determine a schedule by which you’ll complete the application.

☐ Decide what you want to do. To do that, think about what YOU want, talk to your faculty, to Paul DeYoung, and to the committee’s Fulbright liaison (Kate Bredeson). Read the Country Summary section for the country to which you are applying and make sure you understand the requirements and preferences for that country. Important information regarding language requirements, affiliation requirements and special considerations is available for each country. If you have questions about specific country requirements that are not answered on the website, consider contacting the Fulbright office in the host country directly. (The program summary page for each country/region includes a website for the local Fulbright office.)

☐ Start the online Fulbright application.

☐ Request letter of affiliation (not required for Teaching English Fulbrights). This support letter is not a letter of recommendation; it is a written invitation that states that the writer (host) knows what you want to do and confirms that resources are available to do it and that s/he is willing to be a mentor.

☐ Contact potential recommenders. Recommenders must see your proposal before writing a letter, but you are advised to “line them up” early. In order to write the strongest possible letter, referees should know you well enough that they can discuss your character and academic background in detail. They should also know as much as possible about your project (and, where necessary, about special requirements or expectations for your host country, such as foreign language proficiency).

☐ Contact foreign language evaluator if your application requires one (not required for Teaching English Fulbrights).

☐ Order transcripts from all postsecondary, credit-granting institutions you’ve attended.

☐ Send your essays to Jo Cannon via email over the summer for feedback.

☐ Submit application by Reed’s internal deadline, noon on September 8.
After you turn in your application (noon on Thursday, September 8), then what?

The Fellowships and Awards Committee evaluates your application in light of the following questions:

- Academic or professional qualifications (especially in relation to proposed project)
- Validity and feasibility of proposed project
- Language qualifications (with special reference to proposed project and to the requirements of the host country)
- Evidence of maturity, motivation, and adaptability to a different cultural environment (personal stability)
- Knowledge of host country
- Evaluation of impression candidate will make abroad as a citizen representing the United States:
  - General comments

In addition, students applying for a Study/Research Fulbright will be interviewed by the committee. These interviews will take place (date to be announced). Jo Cannon will let study/research applicant know when they will be interviewed.

You have time after you turn in your application to make changes and improvements that reflect the advice you get from the committee and anyone else, although the application you turn in by noon on September 8 should be as complete as possible. That is, it should have been extensively reviewed by at least one of your recommenders (and reviewed, though not extensively, by the other recommenders), the Fulbright liaison for the committee, Paul DeYoung, and Jo Cannon.

- Submit final application; work closely with Jo on this.
- The National Screening Committee reviews applications and recommends candidates for further consideration. Applications are reviewed based on country or region by faculty from various disciplines who are knowledgeable about the country/region.
- Teaching Fulbrights are reviewed by foreign language or TOEFL professionals with world/region experience.
- Applicants will be notified on January 31, 2012, if their applications have been forwarded to their respective host country.
- Host country reviews, particularly with regard to placement at foreign universities.
- Final selection is made by the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, taking into account the recommendations of the NSC, availability of funds, approval of the supervising agencies abroad, and other program requirements.
Writing the study/research project proposal:

☐ Proposals cannot exceed 2 single-spaced pages (ETA proposals are one page).

☐ Fulbright study/research programs will typically involve a combination of coursework and a research project, although a program that is entirely study may be approved. You must familiarize yourself with the program summary for the country to which you want to apply, since there is some variation here.

☐ Make sure your proposal has a clear focus or "through-line." The best Fulbright projects act as bridges between your past educational and research experiences and your future goals. How will your program help you build on what you’ve learned at Reed and prepare you for what you want to do next?

☐ Why is it important for you to carry out this program in your host country? What kinds of resources are available at your host institution to which you wouldn’t otherwise have access? Convince the reader that your program is interesting, engaging, and an important step in your intellectual development.

☐ Your opening paragraph must summarize your plans for the year (the who, what, where, when, etc.) in a clear and concise fashion. It should grab the reader’s attention. Questions to answer in your opening paragraph:

☐ Where do you want to study?
☐ With who do you plan to work?
☐ What is the overall theme/focus of your research agenda?
☐ What coursework will you be doing at your host institution?
☐ What are your goals for the year?

☐ The more concrete your answers to these questions, the better: Identify specific classes you want to take, name the people with whom you want to work, etc. Demonstrate that you’re highly familiar with your host institution and that you have a compelling reason for wanting to study there.

☐ Use the remainder of the proposal to explain why and how, providing background and supporting information to bolster your case.

☐ What is exciting, new, or unique about your project?
☐ Why do you want to do it?
☐ How will it contribute to the field and to your intellectual growth?
☐ Why do you need to conduct your research at this particular institution?
☐ What coursework or resources do they offer that aren’t available elsewhere?
☐ Why are you interested in this particular country and its culture?
☐ How will you set about investigating your chosen topic?
☐ What specific kind(s) of work will you be doing during the year (statistical, theoretical, experimental, archival, creative)? What methodologies will you use?
☐ How will you integrate and balance the different aspects of the Fulbright experience (coursework, independent study, research, interaction with colleagues, travel, cultural exchange, etc.)?

☐ Your project statement should contain a clear commitment to and description of how you will engage with the host country community.
If your proposal includes a research project, you should speak to the feasibility of that project. Some feasibility questions that you might need to address, depending on the nature of your research, include:

- Do you have a supervisor for your project? Has the supervisor agreed to work with you?
- Does the supervisor know about your research interests? Is s/he excited about them (or at least willing to help you out)?
- Will you have access to the documents, equipment, facilities, and other resources that you will need to complete your project?
- Can you complete the project in a single year? Include a verbal timeline, discussing when you will complete the different parts of your project.
- How will you gather your data? If your research will involve interviews or questionnaires, or human test subjects, how will you locate participants? Have your research methods been approved by your project supervisor? Are your research methods logistically and culturally appropriate to the country in which you’ll be working?
- Have you received all necessary permissions from local authorities?
- Do you have adequate language skills?
- How will the culture and politics of your host country impact your work?

In short, anticipate any logistical questions the reader might have and address them directly. Talking to a professor who specializes in your area of study—especially if s/he also familiar with the country/region where you want to work—can be very helpful in identifying and addressing potential pitfalls in your project design.

Remember that the purpose of the Fulbright program is to enhance international understanding. While it’s important to make your personal goals clear, avoid focusing too much on “what the Fulbright can do for me.” Remember that you have to bring something to the table as well. How does your project contribute to promoting academic and interpersonal communication across cultures? How will you reach out to your hosts and contribute to their community? Why would you be a good US representative abroad?

Avoid jargon and technical terms as much as possible; make your proposal as accessible as you can.

- Keep your prose streamlined and professional.
- Proofread your proposal and other documents thoroughly. Then have a friend proofread them. (When it comes to typos, punctuation and spacing errors, and other elements of style, the Fulbright committee will be much less forgiving than your Reed professors!)

If you’re not sure how to begin, just start writing down ideas on paper. Compile a list of your goals and objectives and use that to develop a plan for the year. Then put yourself in the reader’s shoes and ask: What aspects of my plan need to be clarified, expanded on, or justified? Share your ideas with your professors and your thesis advisor. Try explaining your project to a friend from a completely different major, and see how much of it they understand.
Writing the teaching Fulbright project proposal:
Requirements for the Teaching Fulbrights are harder to pin down, and project proposals tend to be somewhat formulaic, so yours will need to stand out.

Your proposal should focus on:

☐ Why you’re interested in your chosen program/country.
☐ Your relevant experience, training, and special skills.
☐ What you expect to contribute and what you hope to take away from the experience.

As with the Study/Research Fulbright, it’s important to show how a year abroad is a necessary step in your intellectual development—how it will help you build a bridge between your prior academic experiences and your future educational and career goals.

If you have prior teaching experience of any kind, especially language teaching, be sure to discuss this, but note that some countries give strong preference to candidates with teaching experience, while others do not care very much about teaching experience.

Remember that this is a student teaching fellowship. If you have extensive classroom experience, then you may be overqualified. Consult the Fulbright website for more details if you think this might apply to you.

As with Study/Research Fulbright, pay close attention to the information provided in the program summary for the country to which you’re applying and write your proposal with that information in mind. There’s a lot of variation from country to country. For example, teaching assistants in Asia are usually placed in elementary schools and high schools, and knowledge of the local language is not required. However, teaching assistants in South America usually work in universities or with adult students and must have proficiency in the local language. Demonstrate in your proposal that you meet all local program requirements and that you’re familiar with the kind of teaching environment in which you’d be expected to work.

Discuss what you would do in the classroom and give specific examples. Show that you’ve thought about what makes for effective teaching.

Discuss how you would use your time outside the classroom. Most teaching Fulbright programs expect that grantees will engage in some sort of independent academic, vocational, or community service project. Your statement should briefly describe the kind of project you’d like to engage in and how this will enhance your Fulbright experience. Since applicants don’t know in advance where they will be placed, this part of the proposal is generic. Nor do you need to identify a host institution at this stage (as you would if you were applying for a Study/Research Fulbright). You do need to make sure that your chosen project is feasible and suitable to your work environment. For example, if you are applying to a country that tends to place teachers in rural schools, you would not want to propose a project that would require access to a major university.
Tips on writing the personal statement (previously referred to as the CV, or Curriculum Vitae):

The personal statement is your opportunity to let the Fulbright committee know who you are and why you’re a superior candidate for this award. There is no standard format that you need to follow in writing it, but it should include the following:

☐ Where you’re coming from (your personal and academic background)
☐ Where you’re going to (your educational and career aspirations), and
☐ How your Fulbright year can act as a bridge between the two.

Use it to show what kind of character you have. Demonstrate that you have the traits necessary to excel in the program and be a good ambassador for the US:

☐ Courage and determination
☐ A friendly and easygoing manner
☐ The ability to work without supervision and to take care of yourself in an unfamiliar setting
☐ Resourcefulness and flexibility; the ability to deal gracefully with stressful situations
☐ A strong interest in cross-cultural understanding
☐ A strong interest in collaborating with colleagues in an academic setting
☐ An enthusiasm for your research and for your intellectual development
☐ Emphasize what kinds of educational, research, and work experiences you have had that have helped prepare you for a year of teaching and studying abroad.

Show that you have these qualities by citing examples from your past experiences. DETAILS DETAILS DETAILS! AVOID GENERALITIES! Details make your story interesting and credible.

☐ If you had a period of below-average academic performance, you can address that in your personal statement.

As they read your personal statement, the Fulbright committee will be asking themselves: Why should we spend money to send this person to country X? Is this person intellectually prepared for his/her project? How will his/her participation in the program help us strengthen academic and cultural relations with other countries?

☐ If you have had experiences living or studying abroad, be sure to discuss them.
☐ As with the project proposal, keep your prose lively but simple.
☐ Talk to friends and professors who know you well and ask for suggestions on what kinds of background information to include. We are often unaware of what is most remarkable about us, so it’s always a good idea to get someone else’s opinion.
Questions to ask yourself (and others) when reviewing your personal statement and proposal:

Taken from “How to Write a Winning Personal Statement for Graduate and Professional School”, by Richard J. Selzer, with additions and modifications by Ann Delehanty (September 2002) and Matt Pearson (September 2006):

☐ Did my opening paragraph capture your attention?
☐ Did you find my proposal as a whole to be interesting?
☐ Is it clear and well written? Does it look professional? Did you notice any typos or other errors?
☐ Does the personal statement sound like me? Do you think it’s an honest and forthright presentation of who I really am? Did you gain any insight about me from reading it?
☐ What are some of the most memorable things in my proposal? Does my statement set me apart from other applicants?
☐ Did it seem to answer the question(s) asked?
☐ Can you think of anything relevant that I might have omitted?
☐ Is there anything in the proposal that seems unconvincing or inappropriate?
☐ Is my project description specific enough?
☐ Does it make sense why I want to work in this country? At this institution? Are my reasons persuasive?
☐ Do I show why I’m interested in this particular country and its culture?