



Fulbright U.S. Student Program Application Tips & Guidelines

Statement of Grant Purpose

The Statement of Grant Purpose outlines the **Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How** of what you propose for your Fulbright year. It is required for all Fulbright grant types with slight variation in format. The two big award categories are: **Study/Research** and **English Teaching Assistant (ETA)** program.

Study/Research Statement of Grant Purpose [2 pages]

Format: Study/Research, Statement of Grant Purpose

- **Maximum two single-spaced pages** (longer submissions will not be reviewed by a committee)
- Use 1-inch margins and Times New Roman 12-point font
- Do not include bibliographies, publications, citations, etc., except what fits within the page limit
- At the top left of each page, include:
 - Line 1: Statement of Grant Purpose
 - Line 2: Your Name, Country of Application, and Field of Study
 - Line 3: Project Title as it appears in the Bibliographical Data section of application
- Second page of the Statement, enter the same information or just Grant Purpose, Page

Important Ideas to Keep in Mind

- Develop a strong, feasible, compelling project. Be clear and concise; avoid discipline-specific jargon.
- Familiarize yourself with the program summary for the host country to verify type of grant you can propose.
- For some countries, applicant may propose to complete a graduate degree program. In this case, applicants should focus on demonstrating reasons for pursuing the proposed program at a particular institution in the host country.
- Study or research proposals should indicate a clear commitment to the host country community and a description of how you will engage with it.

For *research*, address the following points in the Grant Purpose:

- With whom do you propose to work? What do you propose to do? Why do you want to undertake this project? What are your qualifications for carrying out the project?
- What is innovative about your research? What is significant about the project?
- What are your specific research goals and methodologies?
- What contribution will the project make toward the Fulbright goal of promoting cultural exchange and mutual understanding? How will it further your academic or professional development?
- When will you carry out the project? Include rough timeline. Where? Why this location?
- How will you engage with the host country community? Give specific ideas for civic engagement.



For graduate study, address the following points in the Grant Purpose:

- 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? Demonstrate commitment to the community via 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?

English Teaching Assistant (ETA) Statement of Grant Purpose [1 page]

Format: ETA, Statement of Grant Purpose

- **Maximum one single-spaced page** (longer submissions will not be reviewed by a committee)
- Use 1-inch margins and Times New Roman 12-point font
- At the top left of each page, include:
 - Line 1: Statement of Grant Purpose
 - Line 2: Your Name, Country of Application, and English Teaching Assistant Program

Important Ideas to Keep in Mind

- Why you are interested in teaching English to non-native speakers as well as why you have chosen to apply to a particular country.
- Describe what you will be able to bring to the classroom in the host country and any ideas on how to reach students coming from a different pedagogical tradition.
- Show an awareness of the education system in the host country.
- Do NOT make your Grant Purpose location-specific within the host country, unless specifically requested to do so in the country summary.
- Indicate a clear commitment to and description of how you will engage with the host country community.
- Selection criteria emphasizes leadership experience, intercultural adaptability and professional maturity, among other qualifications.

For ETA, address the following points in the Grant Purpose:

- Why do you wish to undertake an ETA opportunity? Why this host country?
- What do you bring to the classroom that will enrich the learning experience of English language learners overseas? What specific ideas do you have for engaging with students?
- What specific qualifications, training, or experiences do you have to prepare you?
- How do you expect to benefit from the assignment?
- What plans do you have for civic engagement outside of the classroom?

Visit the Fulbright U.S. Student Program website for more [Application Tips](#).



Personal Statement – All Grant Types

The Fulbright U.S. Student Program personal statement:

- Is a **one-page narrative designed to give reviewers a picture of you** as an individual; more information on your trajectory, future plans, and how your background has influenced your development and how it relates to Fulbright.
- Can deal with personal history, family, intellectual development, and education, professional, or cultural opportunities to which you have or have not been exposed; and their impact.
- Should not reiterate facts from Biographical Data section or just elaborate on Grant Purpose.

Format: Personal Statement, All Grant Types

- **Maximum one single-spaced page** (longer submissions will not be reviewed by a committee)
- Use 1-inch margins and Times New Roman 12-point font
- At the top left of each page, include:
 - Line 1: Personal Statement
 - Line 2: Your Name, Country of Application, and Field of Study OR English Teaching Assistant Program

Important Ideas to Keep in Mind

“Why you?” – Grant Purpose is what you propose to do, Personal Statement is why. How have your motivations, interests, ambitions, and personal trajectory led you to apply?

Show, don’t tell – Showcase characteristics you wish to highlight using examples. Go beyond “interest” or “fascination” and show efforts you have already made to pursue a topic of interest.

The only space to get to know you on a deeper level – Applicants are not interviewed at the national level. Reviewers use the essay to assess character, motivation, attitude, and outlooks.

Be authentic! There’s no one way to write a personal statement – As many tips as there are, remember to stay true to your own voice.

Brainstorming

Research the host country – Why are you genuinely interested in the host country? How do you foresee interacting with local populations, way of life, culture, etc.? What is it about your experiences that illustrate the many reasons your work must take place in this country specifically?

Get deep – Avoid talking about surface culture (i.e. food, traditional holidays, etc.). Share how you would engage in deep culture (social norms, family structure, etc.). Learn about Edward T. Hall’s **Cultural Iceberg Theory**: <http://bit.ly/2cD00ns>

Draft initial content for both essays and divide later – Sometimes, applicants can get caught up mentally categorizing content for each statement. Craft an initial draft then use criteria to parse out. Ultimately, your Personal Statement should complement the Statement of Grant Purpose without duplicating information.



Writing Techniques

Open with an engaging hook – Strive for a fresh, narrative quality that sounds like you. Use a powerful anecdote or vivid memory related to your passion or research topic. Avoid overgeneralized statements (e.g. “Cultural diversity is important in a globalized society.”).

Stay on-message, be concise, omit non-relevant details – You only have one page. Avoid repeating details found in other parts of the application unless weaving an accomplishment into a larger narrative.

Highlight most salient aspects of your personal identity or identities – What has shaped you? Family background, immigration experiences, heritage, multiculturalism, race, gender, sexual orientation, political beliefs, ability, etc. that relate back to Grant Purpose and motivations to apply.

Avoid listing out accomplishments – This is not a resume. Follow guidelines but avoid doing so formulaically. Select accomplishments that fit theme(s) conveyed in your Personal Statement.

Identify “A-ha” moments – Illustrate life events that sparked personal transformation, challenged your way of thinking, or pushed you to develop emotionally, intellectually and socially. How have these experiences propelled you to take action steps towards positive change?

Develop a chronological or thematic structure – Chart your personal growth over time with an overall theme that complements your Grant Purpose. For example, an ETA Personal Statement could include experiences related back to education and a passion for community engagement.

Avoid clichés, stereotypes, platitudes, and overly sentimental language – Share service-oriented anecdotes without conveying “savior vs. victim” sentiment, i.e. “I felt joy and gratitude seeing smiles on faces of impoverished children.” Fulbright looks for candidates who can learn from different cultures and populations. Focus on concrete, substantive experiences you have had facilitating cultural exchange.

Getting Feedback

Engage a competent and trustworthy proofreader – After many drafts, it is nearly impossible to proofread your own work. Consult with others for both content-related feedback and grammatical errors.

Request feedback on your drafts from a variety of people – Ask mentors, professors, colleagues, supervisors, and Writing Center consultants. Prepare to receive different (possibly conflicting) advice. Collect as much feedback as possible, synthesize the information, and tailor it to fit your narrative.

Plan accordingly. Give reviewers plenty of notice – Notify reviewers ahead of time and expect turnaround time. Respect the time of faculty members and advisors, because they may not be able to respond right away. These may be the same people from whom you request letters of recommendation.

Be patient – With high-stakes application essays, expect to work through 10-12 drafts before submitting! The writing process takes a lot of thinking and critiquing to ensure your work is top quality.

Works Cited & Additional Resources

OWU Writing Center on Fulbright Personal Statements: <http://tiny.cc/bf33qy>

Tips for Fulbright Essays via hope.edu: <http://tiny.cc/ih33qy>

Personal Statement Best Practices authored by USC Writing Program Instructors *Tamara Luqué Black, Elizabeth Durst, Mandy Hobmeier, and Amy Meyerson*

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