



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

Format

- **Maximum 6,000 characters, including spaces and punctuation** (If you're working offline, that's just under two pages of text). **The application system will not allow more than 6,000 characters to be entered in the text field.**
- Do not include links to websites or external files/materials.
- Do not include bibliographies, publications, citations, etc.
- Do not include personal information, such as email addresses or phone numbers

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 the type of grant you can propose.
- For some countries, applicants 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 a 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 extracurricular activities.
- 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

Format

- **Maximum 3,000 characters, including spaces and punctuation** (If you're working offline that's about one page of text) **The application system will not allow more than 3,000 characters to be entered in the text field.**
- Do not include links to websites or external files/materials
- Do not include personal information, such as email addresses or phone numbers

Important Ideas to Keep in Mind

- Convey 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.
- Remember that selection criteria emphasize leadership experience, intercultural adaptability and professional maturity, among other qualifications.

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

- What specific qualifications, training, or experience will you bring to the classroom and your role as an English Teaching Assistant?
- What specific ideas do you have for engaging with students in your chosen host country and helping them learn English?
- What attributes do you possess that will assist you in the challenge of living and working in a new cultural environment? How have you demonstrated these qualities in your academic and work life? Use specific examples.

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

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 have limited space. 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 to your motivations to apply.

Avoid listing out accomplishments – This is not a resume. Follow guidelines but avoid doing so formulaically. Select accomplishments that fit the overarching theme(s) you hope to convey in your application.

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?

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 the faces of impoverished children.” Fulbright favors 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 [USC Writing Center](#) consultants. Prepare to receive varied and 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

Application Tips & Guidelines authored by USC Writing Program Instructors *Tamara Black, Elizabeth Durst, Mandy Hobmeier, and Amy Meyerson*
[Tips for Fulbright Essays via hope.edu](#)

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