

Dear Student,

Congratulations! You are at the beginning of the challenging and transformative process of applying for the Fulbright U.S. Student program.

The Fulbright Program was established by the United States Department of State in 1946 “to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.” Put simply, the grant offers recent graduates from U.S. the opportunity to pursue academic projects of their own design, teach English, or pursue graduate study all over the world. As a future Fulbrighter, you can represent the United States abroad by identifying and pursuing shared goals with global communities, strengthening foreign relations and advancing knowledge.

A Fulbright Award is, therefore, much more than a financial grant. Scholars are expected to serve as ambassadors of the United States and should be prepared to have a transformative cultural and academic experience. The Fulbright Program seeks not simply candidates with intellectual ability, but also those with ambassadorial skills, evidence of cultural sensitivity, a genuine desire to learn about their host country and to share American culture. Candidates should possess wide-ranging interests, leadership potential, and a strong connection to the host country. In other words, this is an opportunity to forge a life-long connection with a professional and intellectual community abroad.

In this booklet, you will find information about crafting a strong Fulbright application. Members of the Undergraduate Research and Fellowships Office are here to support you through every step of the application process. Obviously, our goal is to help you obtain a grant—but just as (perhaps more) importantly, we want to help you use this process to identify your long-term career goals and your vision for the impact you hope to make on the world.

Onward!

Anne Moore, PhD
Director, Undergraduate Research and Fellowships
Northeastern University

Find us online @ undergraduate.Northeastern.edu/research/

OVERVIEW

ELIGIBILITY

In order to apply for a Fulbright, you must:

- Be a U.S. citizen or national at the time of application.
- Hold a bachelor's degree or the equivalent by the beginning date of the grant.
- Have sufficient proficiency in the written and spoken language of the host country to carry out the proposed project/study. Each country indicates its specific linguistic requirements in the Individual Country Summaries on the Fulbright website.

THE AWARDS

The Fulbright offers two main types of awards, the Research/Study Grant, and the English Teaching Assistantship (ETA).

The Study & Research Grants

Academic research grants are available in approximately 160 countries. For the research/study grant, applicants will either design their own projects (these can be creative projects or research endeavors) or do coursework at a foreign university. Scholars, in either case, will typically work with advisors at foreign universities or other cultural institutions. The program requirements vary by country, so it is critical to check a prospective host country's program summary; you will want your application to address the specifications of the host country. These grants can also be centered around the creative arts. Those submitting a Creative and Performing Arts application should submit the supplementary materials listed on the Fulbright website. Study grants allow students to pursue a taught course at a university.

The ETA

An English Teaching Assistantship (ETA) allows grantees to teach or serve as assistants to those teaching English to non-native English-speakers. The age and academic level of students varies widely, from kindergarteners to university students. In some countries, students will be asked to come up with a supplementary project to pursue while they are not teaching – in others, this will be discouraged. Again, program requirements vary by country, so it is critical to check a prospective host country's program summary.

THE APPLICATION

To apply to the Fulbright, you will need to submit a draft of the entire application, including references, to our Northeastern Internal Fellowship Portal, by September 5, 2025. Our internal deadline is earlier than the national deadline so that you can receive feedback from our team and receive Northeastern's official endorsement to apply. After you submit your initial application, it will be reviewed by a campus committee composed of faculty and staff, who will give you critical feedback on your materials. You will meet with a graduate student tutor after your interview who will help you incorporate the feedback you receive from your committee.

To be clear: **if you complete your application materials and fulfill the requirements of the grant, you will be endorsed.** Our goal in the interview is to help make your application as strong as possible, not to “weed out” weak candidates. Typically, these interviews occur in early to mid-September. The committee needs all of your relevant application materials in order to be most helpful to you. While you may continue to work on your application until the bitter end, we ask that students share with us a copy of their final applications by **October 3, 2025**. This will enable your campus committee interviewer to craft the Fulbright Evaluation Form based upon the latest and best version of your materials. You submit your final materials on the official Fulbright site, and we ask that you also share the final version of your materials with us through the Northeastern Internal Fellowship Portal (which we will re-open for your submission).

There is a single application form for all Grants, both Research/Study Grants and Teaching Assistantships, on the Fulbright site. The application becomes available when you register on the Fulbright site. All of your materials, except for your recommendations, must be completed on the Fulbright site electronically for the internal deadline; you will solicit your first round of recommendations through the Northeastern Internal Fellowship Portal (and then references will upload these to the official Fulbright portal closer to the national deadline – this enables you to change any references much more easily). While you will complete the forms through the Fulbright online application, for the internal deadline you will need to submit a single PDF file of your application through Northeastern's Internal Fellowship Portal (<https://northeastern.communityforce.com/>). You will have the opportunity to revise your application based on feedback provided by Undergraduate Research and Fellowships between our internal deadline and the national one. Do NOT hit submit to lock in your materials on the Fulbright site, until you receive instruction from the URF office to do so.

Requirements for the application form differ depending on the kind of grant you are applying for. Read on!

Research/Study grants

- **Project Title** This should be properly capitalized and give people a quick insight into the topic and significance of your proposal. Note: even proposals for graduate funding need a title

- **Abstract** This should give a brief overview of your project or proposed course of study. What do you want to do, in what country, and what is significant about it? It is common to write your abstract last so that it reflects your plans as clearly as possible.
- **Host city/region** Where do you plan to conduct your research?
- **List affiliate/s** Your affiliate is an institution in the host country that will help support you as you conduct your research. You should be in contact with your affiliate early in the application process to ensure that your project is fulfilling the Fulbright aim of “mutual aid.” Affiliate institutions can be universities, government organizations, archives, or other local non-profits in the host country. You are welcome to have multiple affiliations; your primary affiliation should be a university, and you should identify a contact person at that university who will write your affiliation letter.

English Teaching Assistantship

- **Project Title:** Should just read “English Teaching Assistantship”
- **Abstract** Here, you should give an executive summary of your qualifications and motivation for applying for the ETA. Why are you applying to this country? What is your teaching philosophy? What previous experience do you plan to draw on in the classroom?
- **Host city/Region:** Only answer this if instructed to do so in the award description for your host country.

All grants

Short answer questions

These short essays give you a chance to show your experience and personality; given the diplomatic focus of the grant, this is a key element of the application, for both research and ETA applicants.

Flexibility and Adaptability (2000 characters)

- Consider the ways in which you have grown throughout your life that make you the individual you are today.
- How have you demonstrated these qualities in your academic, professional, or personal life?
- Use specific examples from your personal experience

One good way to think about this is to ask yourself “what is a core value I hold that motivates my research/teaching? How have I demonstrated that value in my life?”

Community Engagement (2000 characters)

- How will you integrate within and engage with your host community?
- Consider the ways in which you engage with your U.S. community (through extracurricular activities, hobbies, or volunteering), and how you can engage with these ideas and practices while on grant.

- In what unique ways do you plan to share your culture and values in your host community and learn from others?
- How do your lived experiences prepare you to represent the United States as a cultural ambassador?
- Provide specific examples

This is where you can demonstrate your diplomatic skills and showcase your knowledge of the host community. Volunteering and other public service opportunities are particularly good to focus on here, as they show how you will give back to the host community. Research and study applicants should keep in mind that this host country engagement does not need to be directly related to your topic of study. One thing you're showing here is how you're engaging with people beyond the scope of your specific lab or research placement.

Impact of Fulbright Award (2000 characters)

An objective of the Fulbright Program is to “support activities and projects with broad multiplier effects. As a relatively small number of persons can participate in any of these, it is desirable that they be persons who are or who are likely to be in positions to share their experiences and knowledge with others.”

- Describe your career and/or educational plans after completing a Fulbright grant.
- How will your Fulbright experience help you reach these future goals?
- How will you share your Fulbright experience with your community upon your return from the grant?

Remember: you are not bound to follow through on this plan! In all likelihood, your idea of what you hope to achieve in your career post-Fulbright is still vague. What readers want to see here is not a set-in-stone plan, but evidence that you have a realistic sense of the possibilities that a Fulbright will open up for you. Another good thing to keep in mind here is the Fulbright objective of “mutual understanding.” How will your future career build on the connection with the host country that you hope to establish while on your Fulbright grant?

FOREIGN LANGUAGE EVALUATION

Requirements for languages other than English vary by country but are usually required for countries where English is not an official language, especially for Study/Research grants.

This is distinct from the official recommendations—you do not need to have an existing relationship with your language evaluator (although you may), and your language evaluator is welcome to also write one of your recommendations. Any college-level language instructor in the target language can conduct the evaluation; people usually ask a former language professor.

The language evaluation measures your ability to listen, speak, write, and read and offers levels of none, novice, intermediate, advanced, and superior/distinguished. The structure of the evaluation is up to the evaluator.

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY TRANSCRIPT

An official transcript is not necessary for the first stage of the competition. Upload a copy of your unofficial transcript, which you can get on StudentHub.

If you are selected as a semi-finalist, then you will need to submit an official transcript. These are \$8 through Parchment, and the Undergraduate Research and Fellowships Office will reimburse you for that expense.

LETTER(S) OF AFFILIATION

Letters of affiliation are required for most research and some study grants. Your affiliation letter must be signed and on official letterhead; email correspondence will not suffice. The letter will outline the support the institution will offer you and any expectations they have of you.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fulbright requires three letters of recommendation. For a Research/Study grant, this is a cover form and a traditional letter (signed, on letterhead). For an ETA recommendation, your recommender fills out a form on the Fulbright website. **PLEASE BE SURE TO LET YOUR REFERENCES KNOW WHICH SORT OF REFERENCE THEY SHOULD SUPPLY** and be sure to provide ETA references with an example of the Fulbright recommendation form (which can be found on the Canvas site).

Do NOT request letters online through the official Fulbright Online Application system for our internal deadline. Once you register your referees on the official online application, you will not be able to change your recommenders nor will your referees be able to make any changes to their letters for the national deadlines. To ensure that you receive references of a uniformly high quality, please provide your referees with the Request for a Reference form available on the Fulbright Canvas site. Once you have had your conversation with your reference, you can register them as a reference on our Northeastern University Internal Fulbright Portal.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Applicants in the creative arts are required to submit a portfolio of representative work. This portfolio is central to the evaluation process, so be sure to confer with your mentors when deciding what to include.

After the application has been submitted for internal evaluation and the campus interview, you will be asked to submit your final, revised materials on the official Fulbright website in advance of the national deadline. Candidates are notified of their status after a preliminary national screening in late January. The notice of final selection occurs in late March or April.

THE PROCESS: GETTING STARTED

In this section of the booklet, we will detail how you go about conceiving your project and constructing your application.

The first step in the Fulbright application process is deciding what kind of award you want to apply for and where. You can only apply for one type of grant, to one country, per cycle, so it is critical that you carefully read the Fulbright website and the descriptions of the host countries. These descriptions will tell you how many awards are typically given out, as well as the country's language requirements, the appropriate fields of study, the duration of the grant, and any degree level preferences. For ETAs, you'll learn what type of institution you could work at, preferred previous experiences, where you might be posted, the educational level of your students, and whether or not you will have time for a side project.

When considering what country you wish to apply to, there are a few things you should keep in mind:

- What previous connection do you have with the country? This could be study abroad, language study, volunteering with immigrants from that country, familial connection, personal interest/s, or any combination.
- What future connections do you hope to forge with the host country? Do you want to work in a bilingual environment? Do you plan to work with or advocate for immigrants from this region? Do you want to establish research or business partnerships? Do you hope to pursue graduate study in this country beyond the Fulbright?
- What requirements does the country ask for? The host country description for each country will indicate the required language competency and will tell you if there are any restrictions or preferences on the level of student the country is looking for or specific areas of research/majors they favor.
- Finally, consider how competitive the country is numerically. The best indicator of how competitive your application will be is the fit with the host country, but if there are multiple countries where you can see yourself putting forward a successful proposal, it is more strategic to apply to an undersubscribed country. (Australia vs. Uzbekistan? Consider Uzbekistan if it makes sense for your project).

<https://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/award-search>

The second step is constructing a reasonable project proposal.

For an ETA, you will be asked to write an essay that speaks to why you want to teach in your host country, what your previous experience has been teaching, and what you hope to learn from and share through the experience. In your statement of grant purpose, you should give concrete examples of how you hope to engage students in the classroom, as well as a clear articulation of your teaching philosophy.

For a research grant, your project proposal will outline the who, what, when, where, how and why of your research, detailing with whom you might study or conduct research/do your creative project.

To successfully write a proposal, it is critical that you spend some time identifying your interests, talents, and future plans. Rather than thinking simply about winning any award, consider:

- What do I want to study? And for which course of study am I best prepared?
- Where would this project make the most sense? The best Fulbright projects are site-specific. You want to be able to make an argument that your work is best done in a particular place, with particular people and institutions. You should consider both the connection between your project and the culture of the host country as well as the people in the field with whom you hope to collaborate.
- Once you have settled on a country, reach out to potential affiliates there. Especially if your project is in a STEM field, your affiliate will be your PI, so you should collaborate with them when writing your project proposal.
- What do I want to be doing in five, ten, fifteen or twenty years? What place and program can best help me achieve these long-term goals?
- Finally, what can I reasonably expect to accomplish in a year?

While almost any kind of project can be undertaken in a Fulbright year, it is critical that your project be realistic, meaning in line with your skills and expertise, and in keeping with the resources of your host country and in many cases, university. Oftentimes students will pursue a project that is a continuation or extension of a research or creative project that they have already done. Alternately, some applicants will craft a project that utilizes skills and knowledge from previous research to take an intellectual leap.

The third step is securing three strong recommendations.

Study/Research grant proposals should, ideally, be supported by letters from three full-time faculty members at Northeastern (or another university) or those in positions of authority from a co-op who know you well and can speak specifically about the feasibility of your project and your ability to carry it out.

For the ETA, your references will submit a form that addresses your abilities and potential as a teacher and cross-cultural communicator. When soliciting a recommendation, be sure to provide your referees with Northeastern's Request for Reference form (contact Undergraduate Research and Fellowships at URF@Northeastern.edu if you can't find them on the Canvas site – but look for them there). Be sure to let your recommender know what kind of reference they are supplying (letter or form).

You should also provide your references with:

- Information about the award for which you are applying, and a copy of the form, if you are applying for an ETA.

- An activities list, detailing your academic achievements and honors as well as community service, athletic participation, and employment
- A draft of your application materials if available (this is a great chance both to set yourself an early deadline and to get feedback on your materials!). If you don't have a draft, set a date with your recommender to send them one.
- Reminders of any work you have done with them or anything you would like them to comment on specifically. Put another way: why are you asking them, and what qualities of yours are you hoping they can speak to in their recommendation?
- Relevant deadlines. If you are asking for recommendations for multiple awards (which is totally fine!), it's a nice touch to give them access to a spreadsheet that includes all the deadlines and application submission links.

No matter what, you should arrange to speak with them about your project and your relevant experiences. Be certain to provide information regarding to whom the letter(s) should be addressed (individual or committee, relevant titles, address), specific information about where the letter needs to be sent, and deadlines. Don't write your own recommendation! Once you have had this conversation, you can register your references on Northeastern's Internal Fellowship Portal.

The fourth step, if you are applying for a research or study grant, is procuring a letter of affiliation that testifies to the fact that you will have some form of support for your project in your host country. How do you find this person? In the process of figuring out where you want to go and what you want to do, you likely came across the names of some researchers or experts with whom you would like to work. These are good people to contact. In other cases, a professor with whom you have worked might know of colleagues abroad and can provide some assistance in making a connection. When you've found someone to approach, you can contact them (e-mail is often easiest), describe your project, and politely ask if they might support your Fulbright candidacy. For STEM applicants in particular, you should be sure to ask for their feedback when constructing your application. Overall, it's best practice when choosing an affiliate to ask someone whose goals align with yours. What is the shared problem you hope to solve, and what unique skills can you bring to help solve that problem?

When you have found someone to agree to work with you, however loosely, you will need to ask the person to send you, via e-mail, fax, or post, a signed copy of their endorsement on institutional letterhead.

The fifth step, if you apply to a country where the language is not English, is arranging for a Northeastern professor (ideally) to conduct an interview with you and to prepare the language evaluation. This can be someone who has been your language professor here, or you can ask a faculty member in the appropriate language department to meet with you for this purpose. If there is no one at Northeastern who teaches the language you are hoping to get evaluated, someone from the Undergraduate Research and Fellowships Office can help you identify an evaluator. You can register your language evaluator through the Fulbright web site. Their evaluation will be

included in the application materials you submit for our internal deadline. Be sure to ask early, be polite, and be thankful!

The sixth step is completing the application forms online and submitting your application in time for the internal deadline. While you will complete the forms through the Fulbright online application, for the internal deadline you will need to submit a single PDF file of your application through Northeastern's Internal Fulbright Portal available on our research and fellowships web site. You will register your references on the Internal Fulbright site, not the official Fulbright site. When filling out these forms, be sure to spell out any obscure acronyms and give short descriptions of the activities in which you participated. In order for this part of your application to tell the campus committee about you and to speak to your qualifications, make sure everything is self-explanatory.

The seventh step is participation in a Campus Committee Interview. While we refer to this step as an “interview,” a more accurate word would be “workshop.” Present at the interview will be you, a faculty or staff member from our Fulbright Committee, a member of the URF team, and a graduate writing consultant. We will have reviewed your application beforehand, and will have questions and comments regarding your application, all with the goal of giving you the strongest possible chance at winning the Fulbright. You can expect questions about your preparation for the award, your teaching or research methods, your fit with the host country, and how you will represent the United States abroad. This will be a challenging conversation, but also a supportive one.

The eighth step is revising for the national deadline. The graduate student who was present at your interview will meet with you 1-2 times to help you integrate the feedback you received there. You will then submit your materials on the official Fulbright website the Friday before the national deadline.

FINAL TIPS

As you craft your application, there are a few general tips to keep in mind.

- Start – and finish.
- Talk to your mentors.
- COME TO OUR SUMMER WRITING WORKSHOPS, WITH WRITING.
- Make sure your project meets parameters of the country and what it is seeking. Make sure that you do what they require.
- Language sufficient to undertake the project and to engage with the host community is necessary. If doing interviews, it is good to be fluent.
- Significance, originality and feasibility of the proposal must be appropriately scoped and ambitious for a year and for a Bachelor's degree
- Fulbright seeks original, outside-of-the-typical projects. You don't want your project to get lost in the pile of applications because you are the fifth applicant they've read that day proposing to study ecology in the Galapagos (for instance).
- The Fulbright seeks to represent the diversity of the disciplines, race/ethnicity, and location of projects. Let people know who you are and tailor your project to announce its difference and distinctiveness. It is unclear if evaluators read demographic information, so it is okay to celebrate and elaborate upon this in your essays.
- Make the significance clear to all – you must communicate outside of your own discipline.
- When proposing a project with vulnerable populations -- refugees, children, LGBTQ, victims of intimate partner violence -- the bar is very, very high. You must have the preparation. Some will read this as, "How can such a young woman demonstrate such a level of maturity?" while others will read this as "How can such a young woman expect to carry out this research?" Make certain that your research design, methodology, timelines, and preparations are all very rigorous. If conducting interviews, stage them in the second half, so that you have time to acclimate.
- Host country affiliations are very important. Identify a good institution and the right people and ideally go beyond "use of the library." The letter should be as detailed as possible, so the earlier you can begin your application, the easier it will be to get a good affiliation letter. Work your networks!
- If applying for a master's program, include a letter that indicates you have been in touch and/or correspondence.
- Abstract must be as strong as the proposal!
- Ask for help. Come to the workshops and ask questions. You can use the discussion board – if you have a question, someone else does too. You can write to us at URF@Northeastern.edu.

- Revise and re-draft. Applications that win will often have gone through several drafts. Solicit feedback from faculty you trust and the Undergraduate Research and Fellowships. We're here to help.
- Proofread! Your application should be well polished and professional-looking.
- Enjoy yourself. While applying for these fellowships can be hard work, it will also be a rare opportunity to think about what you value and where you would like to go in your life.