

APPLYING FOR THE FULBRIGHT INFORMATION FOR REED STUDENTS

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ABOUT THE US STUDENT FULBRIGHT

The US Student Fulbright program funds study, research, and teaching abroad for American citizens. The Fulbright program is sponsored by the US Department of State, and administered by the IIE (Institute of International Education).

From the Reed Fellowships & Awards website:

"The US student Fulbright program is designed to give recent graduates with strong academic records opportunities for personal development and international experience. Grantees plan their own programs. Projects may include independent coursework, library or field research, classes in a music conservatory or art school, special projects in the social or life sciences, or a combination. Also included in the competition is the conversational English teaching program, which places graduates in schools in France, Germany, Taiwan, Korea, Luxemburg, and Belgium."

From the Fulbright website:

"The US Student program is designed to:

- * Provide opportunities for personal development and international experience.
- * Allow students to design their own programs, including:
 - o University coursework

- o Library or field research
- o Classes in a music or art school
- o Independent projects in the social or life sciences
- o Assistant in teaching English
- o A combination of these or other projects.

* Provide invaluable opportunities to meet, work, and live with people of the host country, sharing daily experiences.

* Promote cross-cultural interaction and mutual understanding through engagement in the community on a one-to-one basis in an atmosphere of openness, academic integrity, and intellectual freedom.

* Foster appreciation of other's viewpoints and beliefs, the way they do things, and the way they think, through direct interaction with them on an individual basis in the classroom, field, home, and in daily tasks."

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THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND BEFORE YOU APPLY

(1) Only U.S. citizens are eligible.

(2) There are two types of awards:

* The Teaching Fulbright involves a year of teaching English at an institution (typically a high school or college) outside the U.S. Students are assigned to their host institution by their host country. The Teaching Fulbright typically involves self-directed classroom teaching along with an extra-curricular research or service/outreach component.

* The Study/Research Fulbright is a program where students are affiliated for a year with a host institution outside the U.S.—typically a university, museum, lab, library, archive, or non-governmental organization. The study/research program usually involves coursework and typically includes a (partially) supervised research component. (Proposals for independent/unsupervised research projects from recent BAs are rarely if ever considered.) Affiliation with a specific host institution is crucial. Unless your program can be completed at your chosen institution—and unless you can make a compelling case for why you need to be at that particular institution—your application will not be competitive.

(3) You can apply for a student Fulbright any time between your final year at Reed and when you receive a Ph.D. You should strongly consider whether you're interested in the Fulbright as a post-undergraduate experience or as a possible part of your graduate education later on.

(4) The Fulbright is a highly competitive award. Exactly how competitive depends to some degree on your choice of host country and whether you are applying for a Teaching Fulbright or a Study/Research Fulbright. A strong academic record is very important.

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WHO HELPS STUDENTS WITH THE FULBRIGHT AT REED?

Besides your thesis advisor and professors, the following people can help you with your application:

Jo Cannon (Eliot 422, 503-777-7545, jcannon@reed.edu)

Jo is the administrative analyst for the Fellowships & Awards Committee. She can answer logistical questions about application procedures, deadlines, submitting letters of recommendation and other materials, etc.

Paul DeYoung (Eliot 203, 503-777-7290, pdeyoung@reed.edu)

Paul is 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.

Alexei Ditter, Fulbright liaison member of the Fellowships and Awards Committee

A member of the Fellowships & Awards Committee evaluates student applications before they are submitted to the Institute of International Education (IIE). This person's primary job is helping you formulate your CV and project proposal and giving 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 awards and other post-Reed opportunities (contact Ron Albertson, albertsr@reed.edu).

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THE 2008 APPLICATION PROCESS

Things you need to do immediately

(1) Visit the Fulbright website for more information about the program:
<http://us.fulbrightonline.org/home.html>

(2) If you are interested in a Study/Research Fulbright, you should talk to a professor at Reed who specializes in the area you want to study and ask him or her for help in preparing your proposal. Professors are usually the best sources of advice on picking a host country and establishing contact with a host institution in that country.

(3) Contact Jo Cannon, Paul DeYoung, and the Fulbright liaison (yet to be named) to let them know that you are planning to apply.

(4) Research your prospective host country thoroughly! This is extremely important, since eligibility and program requirements can vary from country to country. For example, some countries accept only graduate student applicants, while others accept recent graduates as well. Some conduct phone interviews as part of the application process, while others do not. Also, while most countries require that your application include a support letter from your prospective host institution (see below), some countries do not require a support letter. Links to information about specific countries can be found at:

http://us.fulbrightonline.org/program_regions_world.html

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.)

(5) To see how competitive different host countries are, check out the country-by-country statistics at the address below. Getting a sense of relative competitiveness may help you determine which country to apply for (though your choice of country should be based primarily on the nature of your project).

http://us.fulbrightonline.org/thinking_competition.html

(6) For most countries, you will need to contact somebody at your potential host institution (e.g., a university professor, archivist, curator, or researcher) who would be willing to write a support letter for you. This support letter is not a letter of recommendation. It is simply a written invitation to host you and work with you.

A support letter is not required for the Teaching Fulbright. Some countries do not require a support letter for the Study/Research Fulbright either (see (4) above) but even in such cases, having a support letter will strengthen your application considerably, since it will show that you're serious about working at your host institution.

Your final application packet must include an official hardcopy version of your support letter, if one is required (emails and faxes are not allowed). Because overseas mail can be slow, you will need to arrange to have your letter of support sent as soon as possible so that it will arrive before the external deadline (October 20). If your country requires a support letter and you have not already thought about potential host institutions, it may be too late to secure a support letter for this year, and you should consider applying for the Fulbright next year.

(7) Contact three people to write you letters of recommendation (see below), and get their feedback on your project proposal. Let Jo Cannon know as soon as possible who will be writing letters of recommendation for you.

Things you should do as soon as possible

(8) Begin the application online. Go to <http://us.fulbrightonline.org/applynow.html>, and click on "US Fulbright Application Online". PDFs of instructions and supporting materials can also be downloaded from this webpage.

Be sure to check and see if your country requires a foreign language report. If so, then you will need to arrange to have page 8 of the on-line Fulbright application submitted with the rest of your application (see (13) below).

(9) Make sure that you have lined up three faculty to write letters of recommendation. 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).

Referees who are on campus should send their letters to Jo Cannon via email. Off-campus referees should send their letters in sealed envelopes directly to the address below. All letters must be received by noon on September 25. **NO RECOMMENDERS SHOULD POST THEIR LETTERS ONLINE UNTIL THE FULBRIGHT LIAISON HAS NOTIFIED THEM TO DO SO.**

Jo Cannon
ATTN: Fulbright Application
Reed College
3203 SE Woodstock Blvd
Portland, OR 97202

(10) Go to Jo Cannon's office to look at successful Fulbright proposals from previous years. Seeing how other applicants structured their proposals is an excellent way to get ideas before you start drafting your own.

(11) Email drafts of your CV and proposal to the Fulbright liaison (to be named) and Paul DeYoung for comments. The more complete and polished the draft is before you send it, the better. Also, the sooner you seek feedback before the deadline, the better.

(12) Some tips on writing your CV and proposal are given below. For additional advice, check out the articles in the Fulbright applicant newsletter:

http://us.fulbrightonline.org/thinking_applicant.html

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Reed's application deadline

(13) The deadline for applications is NOON on THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25. The following materials must be submitted to Jo Cannon by this date:

* Pages 1, 1a, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 of the on-line application, downloaded and printed out—These pages must be complete.

* The foreign language report (page 8 of the on-line application), if your host country requires one—This report is submitted to Jo by your foreign language evaluator.

* Three letters of recommendation—If one or more of your letters are coming from off campus, they must be sent in their final form (one copy only). For letters being sent from on campus, via email, near-final drafts are acceptable. (That said, remember that your letters will be reviewed as part of your internal evaluation, so they should be as close to their final form as possible.)

* Transcripts of all college work—Request a copy of your Reed transcript from the registrar's office, to be sent to Jo (the transcript fee will be waived). If you have also completed college-level coursework at another institution, you will have to get that institution to send a copy of your transcript directly to Jo, at the address in (9) above.

Concerning the support letter from your host institution (see (6) above): The official hardcopy version of your support letter is not due until the external deadline (October 20). However, it is strongly recommended that you include this letter with the other materials that you submit on September 25. If the hardcopy of the letter is not available by September 25, please include an email or fax from your host institution if possible.

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The internal evaluation

(14) Reed does not nominate candidates to compete for the Fulbright; anyone who wants to apply for this award may do so. However, all applicants must go through an on-campus evaluation as a first stage in the application process. An evaluation form from the committee, consisting of written comments plus a numerical rating, is included with your application packet.

Reed applicants are evaluated by the members of the Fellowships & Awards Committee. The evaluation is based on the application materials submitted on September 25. In addition, students applying for a Study / Research Fulbright will be interviewed by the committee. These interviews will take place on September 29. Jo Cannon will let you know if and when you will be interviewed.

Interviews with the Fellowships & Awards Committee are relatively informal and generally last about 5-10 minutes. The purpose of the interview is to know you better and provide you with feedback on your proposal. During your interview, the committee members may ask you for additional information about yourself, your host country, and your project, and provide you with advice on how to improve your application materials. The more the committee knows about you and your project, the stronger the evaluation we will be able to write.

Here are some of questions the committee members will be asking themselves during your interview. You should try to anticipate these questions in your application materials.

* Is the applicant qualified? Does s/he have a strong academic record? Does s/he have a suitable educational background for the proposed program?

* Is the proposed program academically valid and feasible? Can it be successfully completed at the host institution in a year's time? Does the applicant make a good case that the Fulbright experience is valuable to his/her future plans?

* Does the applicant have the necessary language qualifications (if any) for his/her chosen host country?

* How familiar is the applicant with the host country? Is s/he enthusiastic about going there?

* Will the applicant make a good impression? Will s/he be a good representative for the United States abroad?

The internal evaluation is very important! A strong recommendation from the Fellowships & Awards Committee is crucial to the success of your application. So make sure that your application is as complete and polished as possible and that you are prepared to discuss your proposal during the interview.

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After the internal evaluation

(15) After the Fellowships & Awards Committee has interviewed and evaluated all the candidates, the final applications, including the revised CV and project proposal, support letter, and final versions of all letters of recommendation, are submitted to the IIE. The external deadline for the Fulbright is OCTOBER 20. Jo Cannon will let you know when and how to submit your application materials.

(16) ROUND 1: The IIE identifies experts on the various countries/regions to evaluate applications and decide which ones to send on to the host countries. Letters will be sent to applicants on January 31, 2008, notifying them if their applications have been forwarded to their prospective host country.

(17) ROUND 2: The Fulbright committee in the host country evaluates the applications and selects the students they wish to host.

(18) ROUND 3: The host country sends its selections back to the IIE Fulbright Committee, who make the final decisions about which awards to grant.

Final selection letters will be sent out between mid-March and late June. Fellowships abroad must begin between July 2009 and March 2010 (actual dates will vary from country to country).

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TIPS ON WRITING THE CV

(1) The CV is not a resumé or curriculum vitae in the traditional sense. Instead, it is a brief narrative about yourself, an intellectual self-portrait. The CV is your opportunity to let the Fulbright committee know who you are and why you're a superior candidate for this award.

(2) There is no standard format that you need to follow in writing your CV. But make sure that you discuss 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.

(3) Use the CV 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 easy-going 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

Don't just say that you have these qualities, though: show that you have them by citing examples from your past experiences.

(4) If, during your time at Reed, you had a period of worse-than-normal academic performance, the CV is your opportunity to address that. This could help offset any concerns that the committee might have based on your transcript. (That said, don't waste valuable space apologizing for past mistakes. Focus on your achievements and aspirations.)

(5) Don't make your essay too personal. That is, don't focus entirely on life experiences to the exclusion of your academic background. What kinds of educational, research, and work experiences have you had that have helped prepared you for a year of teaching and studying abroad?

As they read your CV, 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?

(6) If you have had experiences living or studying abroad, be sure to discuss them.

(7) As with the project proposal, keep your prose lively but simple. Avoid baroque turns of phrase, abstract philosophical musings, and melodramatic statements.

(8) 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.

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TIPS ON WRITING THE PROJECT PROPOSAL (general, with a focus on the Study/Research Fulbright)

(1) Proposals cannot exceed 2 single-spaced pages.

(2) Fulbright study/research programs will typically involve a combination of coursework and a research project. However, it is important to familiarize yourself with the program summary for the country you wish to apply for, since there is some variation here. For instance, some programs place heavy emphasis on coursework, while others prefer candidates who will work more or less independently.

(3) 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? And 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 that you wouldn't otherwise have access to? Try to convince the reader that your program would not only be interesting and fun, but is in fact crucial to your intellectual development.

(4) 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, while being as explicit and accessible as possible. Questions to answer in your opening paragraph:

- * Where do you want to study?
- * Who do you plan to work with?
- * 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. Give information about specific classes you want to take, name the particular people you want to work with, etc. In order for your application to be taken seriously, you will need to demonstrate that you're highly familiar with your host institution, and that you have a compelling reason for wanting to study there.

(5) Don't go into too much detail right at the beginning. Be specific, but be concise. Use the first paragraph to explain what you'd like to do. Then use the remainder of the proposal to explain why and how, providing background and supporting information to bolster your case. Questions which you should address in the body of the proposal include:

- * 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.)?

(6) 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 they are 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.

(7) Remember that the purpose of the Fulbright program is to enrich 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?

(8) Avoid jargon and technical terms as much as possible. Without dumbing it down, make your proposal as accessible as you can.

(9) Avoid colloquialisms, flowery or sensational language, or unusual turns-of-phrase. The goal is not to grab the reader's attention with your verbal cleverness. Be enthusiastic, eloquent, original, and persuasive—but keep your prose streamlined and professional.

(10) 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!)

(11) 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.

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TIPS ON WRITING THE PROJECT PROPOSAL (Teaching Fulbright specifically)

(1) Requirements for 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.
- * 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.

(2) If you have prior teaching experience of any kind, especially language teaching, be sure to discuss this. But note the following:

- * 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.

(3) As with Study / Research Fulbrights, pay close attention to the information provided in the program summary for the country you're applying for, 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.)

Be sure to demonstrate in your proposal that you meet all local program requirements, and that you're familiar with the kind of teaching environment you'd be expected to work in.

(4) Discuss what you would do in the classroom, and give specific examples. Show that you've thought about what makes for effective teaching.

(5) 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 what 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 not expected to be detailed. Nor do you need to identify a host institution at this stage (as you would if you were applying for a Study / Research Fulbright). But you do need to make sure that your chosen project is feasible and suitable to the work situation you'll be in. For example, if you're applying to a country which tends to place teachers in rural schools, you might not want to propose a project that would require access to a major university.

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QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF (AND OTHERS) WHEN REVIEWING YOUR CV 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):

(1) Did my opening paragraph capture your attention?

(2) Did you find my proposal as a whole to be interesting?

(3) Is it clear and well written? Does it look professional? Did you notice any typos or other errors?

(4) 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?

(5) What are some of the most memorable things in my proposal? Does my statement set me apart from other applicants?

(6) Did it seem to answer the question(s) asked?

(7) Can you think of anything relevant that I might have omitted?

(8) Is there anything in the proposal that seems unconvincing or inappropriate?

(9) Is my project description specific enough?

(10) Does it make sense why I want to work in this country? At this institution? Are my reasons persuasive?

(11) Do I show why I'm interested in this particular country and its culture?

Compiled by Matt Pearson

Last updated June 2008.

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