

THE NORTHWESTERN FULBRIGHT COMPANION



OFFICE OF FELLOWSHIPS

1940 Sheridan Rd.

Evanston IL 60208-4044

847.491.2617

www.northwestern.edu/fellowships



👉 **CAMPUS DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 3RD, 2024** 👈

The NU Fulbright Process

If you are in the class of '25, or a graduate student, you must apply through the Office of Fellowships and adhere to the procedures outlined in this document. We invite alumni and Class of '24 to follow the same procedure, which ensures a careful review of your materials by the NU Fulbright Committee.



CRITICAL RESOURCES



PRIMARY CONTACT – STUDY/RESEARCH PROJECTS

Dr. Stephen Hill – Sr. Assoc. Director, Office of Fellowships –
s-hill@northwestern.edu

PRIMARY CONTACT – ETA

Amy Kehoe – Associate Director, Office of Fellowships – amy.kehoe@northwestern.edu

FULBRIGHT FACULTY ADVISER (FFA)

A member of the NU Fulbright Committee will serve as your Fulbright Faculty Adviser. We will match you with an FFA when you register your intention to apply with the Office of Fellowships.

US.FULBRIGHTONLINE.ORG

➔ Getting Started

Read the Fulbright website (us.fulbrightonline.org). All Fulbright grants fund a nine/ten-month stay in another country, but the permutations of the Fulbright’s possibilities and requirements are many. The “About” area of the Fulbright website will acquaint you with important details.

- **PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES.** You may apply to one country only. The country summaries on the Fulbright website describe the types of grants available to each country, the requirements for language proficiency (which vary by country), and any encouraged or discouraged fields of study. Many country summaries offer special instructions for applicants in the creative and performing arts. If a country description expresses a preference for graduate students, graduating seniors may still apply, but should propose independent research rather than university study. You also may browse past project titles and descriptions (“Grantee Directory” under “Alumni” on the Fulbright homepage).

? “I’ve heard it’s a disadvantage if you’ve already been to the country.”

If you have spent fewer than six months in country, you are at no disadvantage. Study Abroad is “off the clock.” Students who have studied abroad or conducted a summer research project in the country have a leg up. They have developed a network of contacts; are informed about the region; have strong language skills; and have demonstrated their adaptability to local culture.

- **TYPES OF AWARDS.** This section of the Fulbright website describes the array of programs that fall under the Fulbright umbrella, including English Teaching Assistantships (in select countries) and the Critical Language Enhancement Awards, which enable grantees to undertake intensive study of certain languages they plan to use in their research.

- **STATISTICS.** (footer of Fulbright homepage) Here you can see how many students applied to each of the Fulbright countries in the three most recent competition cycles, and grants awarded.

Plan relevant courses. If you still have time before graduation, enroll in language classes that will enable you to meet your chosen country’s requirements. If you need additional preparation for the project you envision (e.g. research methods, regional history), seek out relevant offerings or arrange an independent study. Do not neglect summer courses and educational opportunities. Coursework germane to your project and host country will strengthen your application.

? “What if I’m away in Spring or Summer ’24?”

Don’t panic. Make an appointment at the Office of Fellowships to discuss your plans before you leave then stay in contact with us while you’re away. Many students successfully apply from afar. Between email and Zoom, you can remain in close contact.

Attend a Fulbright Application Workshop at the Office of Fellowships during Spring Quarter. These workshops introduce you to the application, offer strategies for writing effective essays, and answer your questions. After you have attended an orientation workshop, submit a **Registration Form** to declare your intention to apply. Once the Office of Fellowships has received your registration, we will match you with an FFA and facilitate access to the NU Fulbright Canvas site.

➔ Formulating Your Project

Review exemplary project proposals. The Office of Fellowships maintains a collection of past NU Fulbright winners' proposals. See these samples on our site under "Use our Services".

Research your host country. Fulbright proposals must offer a clear and compelling argument that your project requires you to spend nine/ten months in the host country. To this end, you should identify country-specific sites and resources without which your project cannot succeed.

Identify a contact in the host country and secure a letter of affiliation. Fulbright requires that your application include a letter of support from someone in the host country — often a university professor, but sometimes a government official or NGO director. *It can be extremely challenging to secure a letter of affiliation; start your search early!* (See inset box for tips.)

Focus your ideas. A strong proposal makes clear that the applicant has come close to exhausting the possibilities for pursuing her topic on campus — that a year in the host country is the logical next step. Seek out and converse with faculty members with expertise relevant to your project; research extensively in our library.

? "I know I need a letter of affiliation from my host country, but where do I even start?"

Finding a country contact can sometimes seem like a wild goose chase, but with a little tenacity, applicants almost always succeed in securing a letter of affiliation. A few strategies:

- **Ask NU faculty** who do research in the country; they may be able to put you in touch with colleagues or acquaintances.
- **Search the web.** Read faculty bios on the websites of universities in the country.
- **Activate the domino effect:** each time you speak with someone, either in the U.S. or in your host country, ask if they can put you in touch with two other people who might know about your area of study.

➔ Gathering Materials

A complete application includes important supplemental documentation. You should make arrangements ***before you leave campus for the summer*** to secure the following items. Gather and upload all materials by ***Sept. 3rd, 2024 @ 12:00 noon***.

Letter of Affiliation from Host Country. Once you have identified an appropriate contact, you need to request a letter of affiliation. Good letters of affiliation communicate three pieces of information: 1. The writer knows you, the applicant; 2. The writer believes that your project is significant and feasible; and 3. The writer will offer concrete assistance relevant to your project. Provide your contact with a draft of your proposal or a detailed abstract. The letter, though it need not be lengthy, should detail your contact's willingness to offer material assistance relevant to your project — occasional advising, access to archives or records, and the like.

The letter must ***exist as an original document on institutional letterhead and bear a signature***. Your affiliate may transmit the letter electronically. Printouts of e-mails or texts are *not* acceptable as a Letter of Affiliation. Remember that the mail may be slow, and your contact may be traveling over the summer. ***Request this letter as early as you can!***

Three Letters of Reference. Normally at least two of these letters should come from NU professors. Personal or character references are not appropriate; all three letters must speak to the particulars of your project and your abilities. For that reason, it is crucial that you *meet with each of your recommenders* to discuss your plans (after all, they are likely to be good sources of guidance on refining your project and identifying an affiliate) and provide them with a *draft of your proposal*. Contact them early; many professors will be away over the summer.

As a courtesy to your professors, provide lucid instructions on the process. **NB – letter format differs for Full Projects and ETA.** In the online application, you will register your recommenders and their email addresses. They will receive an email with instructions to upload their letter to the online application system.

Transcripts. You will need transcripts for all post-secondary work, *including study abroad*. Be sure to request non-NU transcripts early; registrars at your past institutions may not respond quickly. Request NU transcripts that reflect your Spring Quarter grades *and* Fall Quarter courses.

Language Evaluation. Unless your host country's language is English, you will need to have your language proficiency evaluated. **If English is technically acceptable in your country**, but most people speak a non-English language, you should develop a plan to acquire “hospitality knowledge” of the local language. Some research projects require knowledge of two languages; you must be evaluated in both.

For all languages taught at NU, your evaluation must be completed by a member of our faculty. For other languages, a non-NU affiliate qualified to make the evaluation is acceptable (excluding family members).

Contact the relevant department office to inquire how that department conducts language evaluations for Fulbright. Some departments have standing committees for evaluation that meet only during the academic year. We strongly recommend that you plan your language evaluation *before the end of spring quarter*. Remember that language faculty may not be accessible over the summer or in the final weeks before the campus deadline. If you expect your language proficiency to improve considerably during Summer '24, talk to the Office of Fellowships in September about ways to arrange for an update to your language evaluation.

Like your recommenders, your language evaluator(s) must enter their evaluation online.

? **“Whom should I ask to write my recommendations?”**

Strong recommendations come from figures who can attest not simply to your overall talent, but also to your preparedness to undertake the specific project you propose. For that reason, good recommenders include people who have

- taught you in a **course** that covered your host country or research topic
- supervised **research** that involved methods akin to those you will use
- can testify to **other skills or expertise** that you will draw on in your project

➔ **Writing Your Application**

The application's central components are the *project proposal* and *personal statement*, but it also solicits several equally important short answers and additional information. Strong answers to “Abstract/Summary of Proposal” and “Plans upon return to the US” will help your selector see you as well organized and in command of where a Fulbright year may take you. The selectors **will** study you as an investment ... what can you promise as return on their investment?

Statement of Proposed Study or Research. The proposal is the centerpiece of the application; in it, you must persuade your audience of the significance of your project, the feasibility of your plan to complete it, and its connection to your preparation and your future goals. **Expect to write many drafts** before you have sufficiently refined your ideas; expect to spend the biggest chunk of your time working on the first paragraph, which should offer a cogent snapshot of the central problematic in your project — **what, when, where, why, and how**. The proposal should run up to two single-spaced pages, a *little* less is OK.

Personal Statement. The Fulbright Personal Statement is *not* a résumé. It is a one-page (single-spaced) narrative autobiography; your intellectual autobiography. Since the national Fulbright selectors will not interview you, this essay introduces you to them personally. It also should capture your motivation for pursuing your proposed project and indicate the ways in which the project may contribute to your future goals. Selectors don't fund great research; they fund great researchers.

☞ *Examine sample Fulbright essays on the Office of Fellowships site* ☞

➔ Reaching the Finish Line

Campus Deadline. All materials, including transcripts and letters of recommendation, must be ready and uploaded by **September 3rd, 2024 @ 12:00 noon**. The Office provides timely, detailed instructions to guide you through the process. **Note:** If you will not have Internet access in late September and early October, please notify us in advance.

Application Review. Although there is no national interview for the Fulbright, IIE requires that all colleges and universities speak with their institution's applicants. Our application review meetings will take place in mid-September and will be conducted by members of the NU Fulbright Committee and other faculty members.

➔ DÉNOUEMENT

Applications are first reviewed by panels in the U.S., which make the first and biggest cut. By the end of January 2025, you will be notified whether or not you are a "semi-finalist." If you are not named "semi-finalist", your Fulbright application has not been successful. "Semi-finalist" applications are sent to host countries for final approval. Winners will be announced throughout the springtime, typically between March and May 2025.

REMEMBER YOUR MANY SOURCES OF GUIDANCE

- Each summer several IIE GUIDANCE SESSIONS FOR STUDENTS take place in New York and are video-conferenced to Chicago, Denver, Houston, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. Dates and times will be posted on the Fulbright website.
- The IIE PROGRAM MANAGERS for each region of the world will answer student questions. Find their contact information on the Fulbright website: <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/contact-us>
- The Fulbright website includes a PLETHORA OF MULTIMEDIA STUFF. Offerings range from testimonials about the Fulbright life from the field to application workshops run by Fulbright staff. <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/information-sessions>
- When you first contact your FFA in the spring, inquire as to his or her summer availability. FFAs generously will work with you even in July and August. They appreciate knowing when you will need their assistance.
- Call the OFFICE OF FELLOWSHIPS or e-mail fellowships@northwestern.edu.

The Northwestern University Fulbright Application Calendar

MARCH 31	COMPETITION OPENS! Online application becomes available to applicants
APRIL 11 UNTIL MAY 31	MAY APPLICATION WORKSHOPS [STUDY/RESEARCH PROJECTS ONLY] Mandatory workshop for potential applicants Office of Fellowships assigns applicants to FFA and enrolls applicants on Canvas site
APRIL 30 UNTIL SEPT. 3	ADVISING PERIOD Applicants work with FFA to refine ideas and polish essays Applicants also rely upon their recommenders and faculty mentors, IIE program managers, Office of Fellowships staff, and overseas contacts
SEPT. 3RD @ 12:00 NOON	CAMPUS DEADLINE All applicants submit complete application to Office of Fellowships
SEPT. 16 -- 20	APPLICATION REVIEW PERIOD Each applicant participates in a three-person application review panel
LATE SEPTEMBER	INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP & FINAL REVISIONS Follow-up consultations with Office of Fellowships staff, Revise and polish application materials
BEFORE NATIONAL DEADLINE	ALMOST TO THE FINISH LINE! Pursue with vigor missing elements of your application!
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8TH, 2024	NATIONAL DEADLINE!! CONGRATULATIONS!



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