

Fulbright ETA Application - Guidelines



Fulbright English Teaching Assistantships (ETAs) Application Components

Note that applicants should bear in mind the following:

- Fulbright was founded in 1946 in an effort to **increase mutual understanding** between the people of the United States and those of other nations
- Fulbright is **administered** in the US by the IIE (Institute for International Education) and abroad by various embassies.
- Applicants should be aware that, as ETAs, they will, in part, be serving as **informal ambassadors** to the US. This is a program for cultural exchange through education.
- Fulbright **ETAs are about teaching**, in all its glorious forms. Bear this fact in mind as you work on your application.
- **Diversity and “heritage candidates”** (first generation candidates) are both welcomed and encouraged.
- Your application will be read by **two sets of judges**: one in the US and one in your host country. Be sure that you study the nature of your host country, especially its educational system, before you write your application.
- All applicants must provide Prof. Bell with a **completed Fulbright Pre-Application form** and supplementary documents by the Pre-Application deadline.
- Applicants must also adhere to the **deadlines provided by Prof. Bell**, which are different from Fulbright’s deadlines. See the “Timeline” on the MMC External Student Scholarships website for specific information on application deadlines.

First, open an application portal on the **Okta / Fulbright Online Application website**. This is where you will enter data, upload documents, and register your reference writers and foreign language evaluator.

The following items comprise the components of the ETA application:

Biographical Data: The first pages of the application ask for all of your basic personal information, such as your name, contact information, birth date, etc. They also ask for the details of your academic background, occupational experience, extracurricular activities, publications, and previous foreign experience. You should take care to accurately complete all of the required fields in this section. This is a formal grant application and you are advised to follow the English language rules on capitalization and punctuation.

Your application consists primarily of two essays, each of one page. These essays are your opportunity to state who you are and what you want to do. Since you will not have any interviews after the campus level, you should put as much time and energy into these essays as possible. Writing these essays can be a difficult, interesting, and revealing experience. Your final essays should produce a picture of you as a person, a student, a potential scholarship winner, and (looking into the future) as a former ETA. Needless to say, this is difficult to do in a few pages. The following pages provide advice on elements that, combined with your research, thoughts, and personality, may produce compelling essays. They also warn you away from some of the mistakes students make in writing the essays.

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Think carefully about the approach you should take to each essay—the Statement of Grant Purpose vs. the Personal Statement—because each will serve a different purpose in your application. Each essay should make a statement about your academic life and plans, as well as your personal goals and beliefs. Each Statement, regardless of how you combine the following components, should grab the interest of the reader and make him or her want to meet you (even if there's not necessarily an interview process). Be simple and direct, and do your best to strike that difficult balance between modesty and persuasiveness.

Statement of Grant Purpose: This document outlines why chose your host country and what you will do in the classroom.

First, carefully read the specific details about your host country. Study its traditions, cultures, geography, politics, etc. Become an expert on it. Study its educational systems in the countryside and city. As you will probably not know where you will be placed until you arrive, you should be prepared for all experiences. You may teach elementary school children or high school Seniors.

Here are some questions / issues to consider (in no particular order of importance):

1. **Why?** Why are you applying to your host country? Clearly articulate your reasons. Make a “country-specific” case. Have you visited it previously? Do you have family there? Was your grandmother born there? Have you studied the country in a course at MMC? Did an internship bring you into contact with the country?
2. **What will you do?** What *specific* skills (“transferable skills”) do you bring to the classroom for engaging students and helping them to learn English? How are you prepared for the position of ETA? Describe specific situations—challenges and successes—in which you *taught* someone something; what did you learn from these experiences? Frame experiences (peer leader, camp counselor, writing tutor, etc.) with regard to teaching.
3. **No prior teaching experience?** If you have no prior experience teaching, think about the skills and qualities a great teacher has. Describe them. How do you have them? Creativity, organization, determination, patience, flexibility, intellectual curiosity, maturity, ability to multitask, sensitivity, sense of humor, etc.
4. **Ideas:** You will, of course, want to show that you will follow the curriculum established for you but you should also indicate that you have fresh idea for teaching English. What are they? Maybe you want to teach English through dance or music, or through art and theatre. Think about how you have learned in various academic and creative situations. What worked for you? Who were your more effective teachers? How did they function in the classroom? Do you favor one-on-one mentoring or group workshops? What about conversation clubs?
5. **Pedagogy:** How will you reach students coming from different pedagogical traditions? In this regard, you should demonstrate your creativity, adaptability, and flexibility. Discuss the different age groups you have already taught.
6. **Community Engagement:** Generally, ETAs work between 25-35 hours per week. That leaves between 5-15 hours of free time. Fulbright wants you to spend this time teaching. How will you engage with your host community? How will you continue to share your English teaching skills with people outside of your classroom? Think about your specific abilities and how they accord with local traditions, such as local dance and theatrical traditions. If you are coming from a business background (for example), could you use your background to teach English to business leaders in your community? How do these ideas reflect *you*? Make sure your ideas are compelling but feasible. For ideas, look at the Fulbright Student Program Blog.

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Personal Statement: The Personal Statement is your "intellectual biography." It is your opportunity to introduce yourself to the adjudication committees. Let your personality come through on paper. Give the reviewers a picture of you as an individual. Whereas the Statement of Grant Purpose focuses on what you will be doing in the host country if offered a grant, the Personal Statement concentrates on how your background has influenced your development and how it inspired you to apply for an ETA position.

The statement can deal with your personal history, family background, intellectual and creative development, and the educational, professional, or cultural opportunities to which you have been exposed; explain their impact. The Personal Statement should not be a reiteration of facts already listed in the Biographical Data sections or an elaboration of the Statement of Grant Purpose.

The following are some good guidelines for this essay.

1. **Justification:** Why do you want to undertake the ETA opportunity? Why do you want to teach? Why do you love teaching? Align your personality with the ETA program.
2. **Before / During / After:** Tell a story: what did you do before your Senior year that inspired you to apply for the ETA position? How will you thrive as an ETA? How do you expect to benefit from the assignment after you return to the US? How is the ETA experience an ideal stepping stone to your future career? The ETA should not be seen as a "gap year" project. It is not "time off" between college and something else. If you are not planning a career in teaching, show how you will use skills gained as an ETA in your career. For example, an Emergency Medicine doctor might need to treat foreign-language speakers in crisis situations. The ETA could provide ideal training for this kind of situation.
3. **Why are you an ideal representative of the U.S.?** One of the important aspects of a Fulbright ETA is being an "ambassador" for the U.S. What does being an "ambassador" mean to you? How will you fulfill this role? How will you make friends abroad? Discuss your curiosity about people, your adaptability, your courage, etc.
4. **Growth and development.** What factors or experiences influenced your personal growth? What has made you who you are? Paint a true picture of your development. Show your adaptability and maturity. Discuss challenges you have faced and overcome, such as being the first person in your family to graduate from college. How have you dealt successfully with these problems? Perhaps discuss one key experience that has been greatly important to you, or an issue that troubles you or restores you. Don't be afraid to show some weaknesses. Finally, make these experiences interesting to your reader.
5. **Language skills:** What language skills do you have already? How have you acquired them? If you have no background in the language of your host country, then show that you are willing to become conversant in the language before your term as an ETA begins (note that you have nearly one year from the time of the application deadline to the start date of your tenure as an ETA). Explain how you will maintain your language skills upon your return to the US: Duolingo, Rosetta Stone, reading newspapers and blogs in the language, watching films, joining conversation circles, listening to radio shows, regular conversations with friends and family members who are native speakers, etc. Fulbright wants to know you will maintain their investment in your abilities.
6. **Clunky grades.** If there are clunky grades on your transcript, briefly explain them. Don't gloss over uncomfortable parts of your application.

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TIPS

1. **Do not make your Statement of Grant Purpose location-specific** within the host country, unless specifically requested to do so in the country summary. ETAs will be placed by the Fulbright Commission or the U.S. embassy in the host country, so nothing addressed in the Statement of Grant Purpose should be location-specific since you will not know where you will be based and what particular resources will be available. You can hint at where you might like to teach but don't insist. Remain open and flexible.
2. **Always show, rather than tell, what you will do;** always show, rather than tell, your readers about your qualifications. Do not simply state; instead, explain and describe.
3. **Do not repeat information** from other parts of the application. You must have new, exciting information in each section of your application.
4. **Maintain some sort or theme** or connecting concept throughout the essay.
5. **Do the "cut-and-paste" check.** If your Statement of Grant Purpose could apply to *any country*, you have a problem. Again, you must make a strong "country-specific" rationale for your candidacy. If your Personal Statement could apply to *any candidate*, you have a problem.
6. **Proofread your essays multiple times!** Essays with typographical or grammatical errors may be summarily dismissed. These errors show you did not care enough about your work, which speaks volumes about your candidacy.

Adhere to the proper format for both essays:

- One single-spaced page each. Longer statements will not be presented to the screening committee.
- Use 1-inch margins and Times New Roman 12-point font.
- At the top of each page include:
 - On line 1: Personal Statement or Statement of Grant Purpose
 - On line 2: Your Name, Country of Application, and English Teaching Assistant Program

Three short essays:

- Don't rush these essays; they are almost as important as the SGP and PS.
- Do not repeat information from the SGP or PS here.
- Send these essays to Prof. Bell for her review.

#1: Abstract of the SGP: eliminate redundancies; be succinct.

#2: Community engagement: describe in a nutshell what you will do.

#3: Future plans upon return to the U.S.: how does the ETA fit into your personal and professional career trajectories?

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Common Mistakes in writing the SGP and PS

1. **Writing generalizations**, which fail to illuminate the hallmarks of *your candidacy*. Instead, be specific. Instead, give examples.
2. **Turning the essay into an extended (or an exaggerated) version of a résumé**. Applicants often ask how they should incorporate activities into their essay when they have already listed them separately on the application. The most effective solution is to incorporate only those activities or interests that are extremely important to you. Leave less important things to other portions of your application. For example, if you were Editor-in-Chief of *The Monitor*, it would be logical to incorporate this fact into the essay as one of your major achievements, contributions, or passions. However, if you participated in CAB on a less-than-regular basis, then this perhaps could be left out. You should be sure to show how those activities you do include tie into the "big picture" of yourself.
3. **Exaggerating your history or experiences**. Do not believe that all applicants expand on the truth and that if they do, you may as well expand, too. The folks who will adjudicate your candidacy will spot these falsehoods right away. Be clear and honest.
4. **Being overly clever in writing the essays**. Interviewers have read quite literally hundreds of essays and they find overly clever essays annoying. This reaction can do nothing but harm the future of your application. Be honest with your comments in your essays. Be amusingly clever and witty only if this is your characteristic style of writing, but do not try to pull the wool over your reader's eyes. It is substance, not style, that is important.
5. **Suggesting a future with no evidence of preparation**. If you write that you wish to be a journalist but have never been involved with any newspaper, or if you write that you are concerned about the environment but have taken no science courses, the screening committees may conclude that you have little intention of truly pursuing the goals you suggest. Whatever future plans you write about, try to make sure that you have had some experience with the issues involved, at an academic, extracurricular, or personal level.

Get feedback from other readers. Find a group of people you respect and from people who have lived in your host country. First, explain each essay's prompt. However, do not feel as though you need to take every piece of advice given to you. Each time you show your drafts to someone, s/he will suggest changes and you will have to weigh their suggestions against others. It is up to you to decide when you think your essays are ready for submission, but it is important to listen to faculty, staff, and peers as you craft your essays.

Foreign Language Forms: Language requirements vary by country, so before starting the application you should note the specific requirements of the proposed host country.

For programs where language skills are required, you must submit both a Language Self-Evaluation and a Foreign Language Evaluation Form, which is completed by a professional language teacher. Submission of both forms is mandatory, even if you have advanced skills or native-speaker ability. Failure to submit the forms may affect your eligibility.

For programs where language skills are recommended but are not required, if you possess some language skills, you should submit both a Language Self-Evaluation and a Foreign Language Evaluation Form, which is completed by a professional language teacher. It will be advantageous to have your language ability documented, even though it is not required.

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For Commonly Taught Languages: The Foreign Language Evaluation should be completed by a professional language teacher, preferably a university professor. The language evaluator cannot be related to the applicant.

For Less-Commonly Taught Languages: If a professional language teacher is not readily available, a college-educated native-speaker of the language can be used. The language evaluator cannot be related to the applicant.

Provide your language evaluator with the [Instructions for Foreign Language Evaluators](#). You can print these out and discuss them with the person completing the form. An email address can only be used for one type of online recommendation—that is, either a recommendation or a Foreign Language Evaluation. If you wish to have the same person complete both a recommendation and a Foreign Language Evaluation, the person must use two different email addresses. You will register the person once for the recommendation and once for the Foreign Language Evaluation.

References: You must submit three (3) references as part of the application. Referees will be provided an electronic form that they will use to respond to a series of short-answer questions regarding items such as your communication skills, interest in teaching, and ability to work in unstructured environments. They do not submit their own narrative letters.

Referees should be the three academics (Ph.D. preferred) who can best speak to your ability to teach English in a classroom abroad based on your intellectual and professional preparation. After you have honed your SGP and PS, provide copies to your Referees.

- Give Referees at least 3-4 weeks to complete the recommendation forms.
- Provide your recommenders with [Instructions for ETA Recommendation Writers](#).
- All recommendation forms must be completed in English.
- After the recommendation is submitted, it cannot be edited. However, if there is a significant error and the recommender agrees to submit a revised recommendation, the following process must be followed:
 - The recommender sends an email from the registered email account to Okta Support to request that the recommendation be un-submitted (from the login page of the Okta Online Recommendation System, the same used to submit the recommendation/evaluation).
 - The email to Okta support must include the applicant's full name and country of application.
 - The recommender will need to allow at least 48 hours for the request to be implemented.
 - Once the recommendation is un-submitted, the recommender can edit the recommendation and resubmit.
- All recommendations must be submitted by the application deadline.

Note: Applicants and Fulbright Program Advisers cannot request that a recommendation be un-submitted.

Applicants can follow the status of the recommendation (not initiated, in progress, submitted) from the Recommendation/Evaluation page of the application. Additional details on the online submission of recommendations are available in the Okta application system.

Transcripts: The Fulbright Program requires a complete academic record of your higher education. You must provide one unofficial academic transcript for each undergraduate and graduate institution from which you received a degree. Transcripts must also be submitted from other institutions where you studied and received credit for coursework.

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- Failure to submit required transcripts will result in your being declared ineligible.
- Additional transcripts should be uploaded for coursework and grades not reflected on degree-granting transcripts.
- Graduate-level students who do not include undergraduate transcripts will be considered ineligible.
- Candidates recommended for final consideration will be required to submit official copies of all college transcripts in January.
- Consult the [Transcript and Upload Instructions](#) page for more detailed information.

Factors in ETA Selection

- The student's English language proficiency, as demonstrated in the quality of her writing, school work, and work in English classes
- Leadership, maturity, flexibility, etc.
- Prior teaching experience
- Academic or professional record
- Language preparation
- Community engagement project
- Requirements of the host country

Questions? Contact Prof. Bell at abell@mmm.edu; x676.