

SHOULD I APPLY?

This handout is the first of three handouts that are important in the application process for the **Fulbright Scholarships**. The three handouts are:

1. **Should I Apply?**
2. Developing a Strong Application – Guide for the Stanford Fulbright Applicant
3. The Process of Applying for the Fulbright at Stanford

Contents:

- ORC Scholarship Interest Form
- Steps in the application process:
 - I. Gathering information
 - II. Making an informed decision: Should I apply?
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THE ORC SCHOLARSHIP INTEREST FORM

The Scholarship Interest Form is a simple online form available on the ORC website. **You should submit an interest form as soon as you start thinking about applying.** Filling out an interest form is not a commitment to apply, but it will automatically sign you up for a mailing list so that you can begin receiving updates and advice on awards. Don't worry if you are not quite sure about your project (or even country of interest), just fill out as much information as you can. Should you decide you are not going to apply, just let us know. The form is accessible at http://web.stanford.edu/dept/center/orc/forms/overseas_scholarship_interest2015.fb

STEPS IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS

I. Gathering Information

The following is a list of preliminary steps to take if you are interested in applying:

Attend a Fulbright Information Session: We hold a series of information sessions for all interested students throughout winter and spring quarters. At these sessions, we will give an overview of preparing and applying for the Fulbright Scholarship.

Browse the Official Fulbright Website <http://us.fulbrightonline.org/home.html>: Start to familiarize yourself with the application process. It is extremely important to read the “**country summary**” of any country you are thinking of applying to. Different countries have slightly different requirements, and you should be aware of these requirements and preferences well before you begin working on your application.

Make an individual appointment with an ORC advisor: This is your opportunity to ask more in-depth questions regarding the Fulbright application process.

Attend an ORC Application Workshop: Workshops are aimed at students who have decided to apply. These sessions will detail all the components of the application, especially focusing on the essays.

Read Successful Fulbright Proposals: At the ORC, there is an essay collection containing Fulbright project proposals and personal statements written by Stanford Fulbright Scholars. These essays will give you an idea of

the range of successful applications submitted in recent years. They are organized by country, field of study or by degree level.

Consult your professors and advisors about your plans for graduate study: Get them acquainted with your ideas and plans.

II. Making an Informed Decision: Should I Apply?

Now that you have gathered all the appropriate information, researched the possibilities of study and research overseas and consulted with advisors, YOU have a decision to make as to whether or not you will apply. A good starting point might be to ask yourself (and be honest!) the following questions:

Will I be on campus during the spring or summer to prepare my application?

If you will not be here during the spring or summer, you must seriously consider what steps you will need to take before you leave campus at the end of winter or spring quarter. Please be aware that many former applicants have found it difficult to consult with advisors, professors, and potential recommenders long distance. You should take care of many details before you leave campus. If you are interested in applying and will be away from campus during the spring or summer, please contact the ORC.

Will I be away from campus during the fall for campus interviews and deadlines?

Many former applicants who were away from campus during the fall have had difficulties putting together competitive applications; from submitting application materials on time, to soliciting recommendations from faculty. Keep in mind that no matter how much work is done during the spring and summer, there are always last minute details to complete around the time of the campus deadline and interviews. If you will be away from campus during the fall quarter, PLEASE stay in close touch with the ORC.

If you are overseas or otherwise away from campus during the fall campus interviews, the ORC Fulbright Team will try to set up a Skype video interview or send your application to the Fulbright Campus Screening Committee for a review and evaluation.

Do I find it difficult to meet deadlines or complete applications on time?

During the scholarship process, there will be numerous deadlines that need to be met—campus deadlines, national deadlines—where no exceptions will be made. Applications which look rushed, unpolished, and are incomplete will be a waste of time for you, your recommenders, and the selection committees.

Do I have the time and energy to commit to this process?

Participating in the Fulbright competition demands considerable time and energy. Most people who have participated in the process through its final stages have compared it to five units of coursework. For those applicants who plan ahead, the deadline in the first days of Fall Quarter won't be quite as daunting!

Do I know what I want to study overseas and why?

A vital part of any application is the enthusiasm for, and understanding of, a period of study or research overseas. This is true whether you are applying as a graduating senior or as an advanced graduate student. The

core of a Fulbright application is the argument that you make for the importance of your academic study or research overseas or teaching English abroad. While it is true that the Fulbright does consider other aspects of an application, these cannot take priority over academic goals.

Is my academic record strong enough?

The Fulbright Awards are academically competitive although there is no minimum grade point requirement. Note that it is unusual for recipients to have below a 3.5 GPA.

Do I come across as someone who is interested in things outside of the academic area?

The Fulbright does look for evidence of non-academic interests and pursuits. Your extracurricular involvement and achievements can be in any area (e.g., volunteer activities, student organizations, work, sports), but they should be meaningful aspects of your life and that which you are comfortable writing and talking about.

Do I know enough faculty members or advisors well enough to ask for the number of references (and advice on essays and programs of study) required?

The Fulbright requires three academic references and, where appropriate, a language evaluation. These references should be from those who have known you in an academic setting and can also comment on your other characteristics.

From our experience that students who are successful in these competitions receive very detailed references from faculty, supervisors, advisors, etc. References should provide the selection committee with an in-depth evaluation of a student based on a close and often long term relationship. References from faculty who have taught you in one large class often do not convey the kind of information a selection committee needs.

Can I make meaningful contacts overseas?

It is extremely important that you have at least one contact overseas, usually at a university. The Fulbright committees needs to feel confident that you will have the support and guidance necessary to carry out your proposed project in your host country.

III. Getting started on your application

If you have asked yourself the above questions, you are now ready to make your final decision as to whether or not you will apply. If you are ready to begin the application process, please read on:

Developing a Strong Application - Guide for Stanford Applicants: This handout provides detailed instructions and advice on the application.

The Process of Applying: The Campus and National Deadlines: This will explain when the deadlines are and what has to be submitted.

QUESTIONS?

- Try the Fulbright website: <http://us.fulbrightonline.org/>
- For more specific questions contact a Stanford ORC advisor at Bechtel International Center.