

## FULBRIGHT GUIDE FOR RECOMMENDERS

Thank you for writing a letter of recommendation on behalf of a Stanford student applying for a Fulbright Scholarship. Recommendation letters are an important aspect of the selection process and your assistance is much appreciated.

**Fulbright recommendation letters MUST BE SUBMITTED ONLINE.** For the online submission you will receive an email with a username and password (once the applicant provides your email address in the application system). You will then be prompted to fill in a cover sheet with your name and information and then upload your letter. Please contact Diane Murk, Stanford U.S. Student Fulbright Program Advisor, at (650) 723-0856 or [dmurk@stanford.edu](mailto:dmurk@stanford.edu) if you have any difficulty using the online system.

Since 2010, the U.S. Student Fulbright Program no longer requires hard copy submissions of application materials, including recommendation letters. **It is not necessary to submit a hard copy letter to the ORC.** For the campus evaluation process, the ORC will print recommendation letters from the online system. It is imperative that recommendation letters are submitted online by the campus deadline.

### **FULBRIGHT CAMPUS DEADLINE – Tuesday, September 22, 2015**

Letters can be addressed to **Fulbright Screening Committee**. For electronic submission the ORC recommends using a soft copy template of your department letterhead and including a signature image in the appropriate area. Alternatively, you could print on letterhead, sign, and scan the letter for the online upload.

### **TIPS FOR WRITING A FULBRIGHT RECOMMENDATION**

The following criteria is from Joe Schall's *Writing Recommendation Letters: A Faculty Handbook*:  
<https://www.e-education.psu.edu/writingrecommendationlettersonline/node/138>

The criteria you should address in a Fulbright Scholarship recommendation letter include:

- The Student's strong level of knowledge and potential for growth in the chosen field.
- The Student's ability to carry out research and think and write analytically.
- The Student's emotional stability, maturity, motivation, and seriousness of purpose.
- The Student's appropriate linguistic preparation (if you have first hand knowledge) and ability to adapt to a different cultural environment.
- Why a proposed project is feasible and has merit.
- The Student's likelihood of making a favorable impression as a United States citizen abroad.

From our experience, the best Fulbright recommendation letters detail the student's background in connection with the proposed project, and are written in a tone that is energetic and genuine. Among the recommendation letters from previous years, one successful letter complimented a student's ability as a designated discussion leader to keep up with current events in the Middle East and to motivate his classmates in an 8:00 a.m. class. Another letter offered the relevant aside that the Federal Aviation Administration had shown interest in a student's research, while another letter took a moment to comment on the kind of vision that a student's specific study plan had in relation to the agriculture and

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economy of the host country. Such personal, considered, emphatic testimonies reflect familiarity with and abundant confidence in the student.

Weak Fulbright recommendation letters tend to be generic and make no attempt to match a student's abilities and character with the proposed study plan or research project. It is vital that a letter of support offers some detail that fits only that individual being recommended, and that the recommender comments specifically on the student's plan of study or research.

Finally, despite the application's request that you comment in such areas as a student's linguistic ability and the resources available abroad, you should not feel compelled to reach beyond your experience in any of your comments. For instance, you may know nothing about the student's linguistic ability or the availability of resources in the host country. In this case, trust that the student's application as a whole will serve the committee's needs.

If the student you are writing for is applying for an English Teaching Assistantship grant, you will be asked to submit a recommendation form with responses to several short answer questions. The form functions as the recommendation. Please do not submit a letter in addition to the short answers, as it will not be read or considered at any point in the selection process

Fulbright applications are read by three separate audiences. First, an application is reviewed by a panel of Stanford faculty and staff, through a paper-screening and an interview with the applicant. All applications are evaluated and forwarded on to the national competition. The Fulbright National Screening Committee is composed of university faculty or professionals with expertise in the country, world region, and/or field of study. Approximately half of Stanford applicants are "recommended" at the national level and continue in the competition. Final decisions are made by the host country's Fulbright commission.

If you have ANY problems or questions at any time in this process, please contact Diane Murk, Manager, Overseas Resource Center at [dmurk@stanford.edu](mailto:dmurk@stanford.edu) or (650) 723-0856.