ESTABLISHING A HOST AFFILIATION  
by Jermaine Jones, Program Manager, Africa and the Middle East

Applicants must carefully read the criteria for host affiliation requirements in the summary of the country to which they are applying. Countries differ in the kinds of host affiliations that are acceptable. Depending upon the country, the host affiliation can be an academic institution, a research institute, a non-profit organization and/or individuals at any one of these or other types of relevant agencies. In some cases, particularly in the arts, the affiliation may be a person such as a writer, musician, or artist or an arts organization or foundation. Applicants should pay special attention to the requirement in some countries to attend/affiliate with an academic institution.

Identifying a Potential Host

Some countries will obtain affiliation for the Fulbrighters, while others leave the responsibility for securing host affiliation entirely up to the grantee. Others will work somewhere in between, expecting the grantee to identify a host affiliation and make initial contact, but will then help to formalize the affiliation after the grant is awarded. Make sure you know what is expected of you as an applicant by carefully reviewing the country summary.

In countries where it is up to the grantee to find and secure affiliations, IIE cannot provide a list of institutions that acted as a host to previous Fulbrighters. Past Fulbrighters have used a number of methods to contact hosts and solicit support for their projects. One main way is to use the contacts and advisers that you already have. Ask if one of your current professors can help to put you in contact with a professor at a university overseas. Here are a couple of additional ways, we recommend for finding an affiliation: (1) international students on your campus can be a great resource; (2) contact Visiting Fulbright Professors in the U.S. by visiting http://www.cies.org/vs_scholars/vs_dir.htm); (3) a search engine, such as Google, can help you find professors with your interests. Do not hesitate to contact professors from other universities both in the U.S. and in your prospective host country, especially if your proposal fits with the professor's expertise. Some committed research and perseverance will also aid you in finding a host affiliation. Once you find a possible host, make contact by sending an introductory letter or email. Keep in mind that many schools are closed during the summer months, so you may want to begin early, or plan an intensified search in the early fall. Remember, however, that IIE does not accept any support materials or letters via email or fax, and sufficient lead time must be allowed to receive hard copy responses with original signatures.

Letters of Affiliation

The most competitive candidates will include contact documentation with potential host affiliations in their applications. This could be a letter of invitation from the host institution/organization/individual indicating research support or allowing applicants to have access to facilities; or, it could be a letter indicating that the admitting institution provides courses in the applicant's areas of study. IIE refers to these letters synonymously as: letters of support, letters of affiliation, letters of invitation and/or letters of admission.

There are no specific requirements for the letter of support from the host institution. Every affiliation relationship will be different depending upon the candidate's project. In general, letters of support on institutional letterhead sent with the application are preferred. The letters should state how the supervisor/host institution will help the applicant to facilitate the project (i.e., what resources will be offered, what kind of supervision will be given, etc.). Some applicants propose to do independent research, so these letters of support are more crucial to establishing the feasibility of a project. Other applicants propose study projects, so letters of support are really a complement to the overall application. Therefore, you should try to get a letter of affiliation that is as detailed as possible. Ultimately, it is up to your host affiliation as to the level/kind of support that they are willing to offer you.

Please be aware that many people do not enjoy the reliable connectivity or easy access to the Internet that we have in the United States, and therefore you may not receive a response to your inquiries as quickly as you might hope. Again, applicants are advised to begin their search for an affiliation as early as possible.

Although it is strongly preferred that affiliation letters be included as part of the hard copy application, they may also be submitted to IIE via regular mail after the deadline. However, we cannot guarantee that letters of support submitted separate from the full application will be successfully married with the application in time for committee review. Also, IIE cannot confirm receipt of any documents. Please do not call or email to ask if your letter of support was received. We recommend that you send your materials using a method that will provide return receipt.

Please note that we will not accept letters of support, recommendations, or foreign language reports sent via email or fax.

Degree Programs

If your plan is to complete a Master's or other degree or to attend a structured degree program, make sure you apply for admission to the host university by their deadline. Do not wait for the Fulbright decision to come through, or you may be too late in gaining admission into your chosen university.
If you are applying for admission to a study/Master's program, you do not need to submit the letter of admission with the application; you can submit the letter once you've received it. However, an offer for a Fulbright grant would be contingent upon receipt of placement at a university. If you are applying to undertake a structured degree program, obtaining a letter of support from a faculty member at the host university will undoubtedly strengthen your application.