

TEN MYTHS ABOUT THE FULBRIGHT U.S. STUDENT PROGRAM

by IIE Staff

Myth 1 **Only applicants with a 4.0 GPA or in Honors Programs will be considered.**

This is one of the big myths about the Fulbright program. There is no minimum GPA requirement for the Fulbright U.S. Student program. Academic achievement is only one of the factors that contribute to the selection of Fulbright Fellows. The National Screening Committee also looks for project feasibility, the strength of the project statement, affiliation, and community involvement, among other things. Considering Fulbright offers a wide variety of programs from English Teaching to Full Grants, FPAs should recruit students from across various departments and GPAs.

Recommendations for recruiting on campus:

(1) Work with your study abroad office to identify some candidates who have spent a period abroad.

(2) Work with your university's strengths. If you have a strong English or Film department, get the department involved in recruiting candidates.

(3) Contact various student clubs on campus and invite them to attend an information session on campus (e.g., student government, international relations, and multicultural clubs.)

(4) Working with graduate students or alumni is another avenue to explore. Many graduate students and alumni have received Fulbright student grants. Please note that you are free to work with your Alumni who wish to apply for grants. These students can apply through your School or "At-Large." However, if you wish to learn of the outcome of their applications from IIE, they must apply through your campus process.

Myth 2 **Fulbright grants are only for graduate students.**

We welcome applications from graduating seniors, graduate students, doctoral students, and even applicants who have been out of school for several years. In order to have a better understanding of the Fulbright program, we recommend you look at [U.S. Fellows Directory](#). You can search by U.S. institution, Home State, Field of Study, Country Visited, and Year. This directory contains data from 1993 to 2004.

Myth 3 **Fulbright grants are only for academic research.**

One of the fastest growing programs within Fulbright are the opportunities for English Teaching Assistants, which are now available in 21 countries, and which have a primary focus on teaching and cultural interchange. Complete details are contained at [English Teaching Assistant](#).

Fulbright grants are also available for course work at foreign universities, for independent research and for practical training in the creative and performing arts, creative writing and journalism. In certain instances, the awards may support internships, as well.

Myth 4 **Only enrolled students may apply.**

Applicants for Fulbright grants do not need to be enrolled in a university to be eligible. Each year approximately 20% of the Fulbright grants are awarded to "At-Large" candidates. [Click here](#) to read about the difference between At-Large and enrolled applicants. We recommend that applicants contact their alma mater to determine if the Fulbright Program Adviser (FPA) is willing to work with them. If not, the applicant can apply "At-Large."

Myth 5 **Only students from large, prestigious universities are awarded Fulbright grants.**

Fulbright Fellows come from large and small universities, liberal arts institutions, state colleges and universities, school of music and art, and professional schools. Take a look at [U.S. Fellows Directory](#). With almost 1,200 Fulbright grants available, the National Screening Committee strives to achieve the broadest representation of the U.S. academic community, including diverse institutions on all levels, and including broad geographic, ethnic, and field of study diversity.

Myth 6 **You have to speak a foreign language fluently in order to apply.**

Only some Fulbright grants require fluency in a foreign language. In many countries, English is sufficient. In some countries, applicants can propose to make language

English is sufficient. In some countries, applicants can propose to make language study part of their grant experience and for others, the Fulbright Commission will provide language training before the grant begins. Under a new program, to be introduced this year, extensive in-country, pre-grant language training will be offered in certain world areas and for certain languages. Please refer to fulbrightonline.org frequently for updates.

Under the [English Teaching Assistant](#) program, many countries do not require knowledge of the language.

If you are not sure about a particular country, please contact the [Program Managers](#). They would be happy to clarify the language requirement.

Myth 7 Fulbright grants require a host country affiliation / placement.

While an affiliation will considerably strengthen your application, it is not necessary in all instances that affiliation be established at the time of application. Refer to the brochure or website for guidance on requirements.

Types of affiliations vary, and may include universities, laboratories, libraries, non-governmental organizations, and others.

Myth 8 You can only apply once for a Fulbright, even if you are not selected.

If a student applies and is not selected, they are free to reapply the following year. Each competition is separate and distinct. We see many applicants that reapply. They strengthen their application, and they are then successful.

Myth 9 Applying for a Fulbright grant is a time-consuming, grueling exercise.

We won't lie. Students will have to devote some quality time and energy to preparing a successful application. There are many helpful hints on the website and in the brochure as well as in the application instructions and we urge students to consult these. It is also recommended that they view some of the videos on the website to hear about the Fulbright experience from program alumni.

Myth 10 There's nowhere to go for help with the application.

As mentioned above there are many sources of information within the brochure, website and application. However, the [Program managers](#) in the U.S. Student Programs Division welcome your questions and will provide as much assistance as possible. While they cannot critique projects, they are available to give insight into what may make an application more competitive. Note also, that many Fulbright Commissions have placed their contact information within their Individual Country Summaries. If this is the case, feel free to make use of their information and guidance, as well.

Since we also have open information sessions to provide guidance and to answer student questions, every month from May through October, we urge you to bring these to your student's attention. We also invite you to participate in one of the Workshops for Fulbright Program Advisers where, not only do you receive instruction from us in the Fulbright process, but where you can also network with your fellow FPAs regarding campus procedures and advising, as well as recruitment techniques.