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Choosing between the ETA or Study/Research Grant?

Each year, the U.S. Student Fulbright Program offers over 2,000 awards to over 140 countries. The Program funds several types of grants, but the two main types are the Study/Research awards and the English Teaching Assistantship (ETA) awards. Candidates may only apply for one type of grant in one country per application cycle. So you need to choose between them. Here is a breakdown to help you decide.

**Study / Research Awards**
Study/Research awards are offered in most Fulbright countries. Students applying for **Study/Research grants** generally design their own projects and work with advisers at foreign universities. Projects typically involve independent research, formal (i.e. classroom) study, directed study, or some combination of all three. Study/Research grants also fund creative/performing arts projects. Also, some Fulbright countries allow for a grantee to earn a graduate degree at a university in that country. Graduate degree Fulbright projects usually don’t require an independent research project proposal.

**English Teaching Awards (ETA)**
ETA Award are offered in about 75 different countries worldwide. Students who receive an ETA grant are placed in a classroom and assist teachers of English to non-native English speakers. ETA recipients also serve as cultural ambassadors. Specific requirements of ETA grants vary by country.

Which to choose?
Students who have a focused interest in a host country that could be pursued through study or directed research should apply for the Study/Research grants. Students who have the appropriate background, academic/professional aspirations and motivation to have an immersive cultural experience while giving something back to the host country should apply for the ETA.

Choosing a Host Country

Choosing a host country for your Fulbright application isn’t always easy. Many candidates are drawn to multiple countries, but there are a few things to keep in mind that will help you choose the best country for your Fulbright adventure.

Applicants should offer compelling reasons in their applications for their choice of host country. Research/Study grant projects should be tightly connected to the host country either through the project topic itself or the resources that will be used (i.e. particular university degree programs, archives, expert mentors, etc.) ETA applicants should offer a convincing reason for their interest to teach English in the specific host country. A "strong desire" to visit
the country or a "passion" for the culture is insufficient. Offering specific examples of what you want to accomplish and what you hope to gain (or offer) through teaching English in that particular country are far more compelling.

Candidates should carefully read the individual Country Summaries for their host countries of interest. Different countries have different preferred candidate profiles, special award opportunities and varying language prerequisites.

**Language Considerations**
Language requirements vary by country, so do note the specific requirements of the proposed host country. Surprisingly, some countries do not require a high level of fluency in the host language as projects can often be completed in English. **How much language proficiency you will need will ultimately depend upon the needs of your particular project.** Nevertheless, developing a hospitality or basic level of language proficiency (which most applicants can obtain between applying and starting a grant) is highly recommended in order to successfully complete your program, and to survive comfortably while overseas.

**Factoring the Odds**
Country/Regional competitiveness (i.e. using the statistics) may play a role in determining the country to which you finally decide to apply, but a good rule of thumb is to choose the country that best suits the nature of your project/ETA goals. Be careful here! The reviewers can tell if you chose a country because it seems “less-competitive” over one that is a better fit with your goals and project plans.

**Study/Research Award Statement of Grant Purpose**

**Planning Worksheets**
The most important component of a Study/Research Fulbright application is the Statement of Grant Purpose (SoP) essay. In these two pages you will outline the Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How of your proposed Fulbright project. Competitive Fulbright projects are detailed, specific, clearly formulated and capable of being completed given the time and resources available. It takes time to develop a clear and feasible project proposal, and candidates who cultivate their ideas throughout multiple essay drafts will find their invested effort well spent.

**Project Planning Worksheets**
Attached are tools to aid you as you develop your project ideas. Please use the relevant project planning worksheet for your specific project goal.
Research Projects
If you are pursuing a research project, you need to develop a strong, feasible and compelling project proposal and demonstrate that your research strategy is viable, including its content, methodology, and time frame. The Fulbright Research Project Planning Worksheet breaks out the various crucial elements that should be included in your essay. It allows you to think about each element separately with the ultimate goal to help you weave them together cohesively in your final essay.

Graduate Degree Program Projects
An SoP for those seeking to apply to complete graduate degrees is more akin to the kind of essay you would write to gain admission into a graduate program – but with a few important “Fulbright extras”. The Fulbright Graduate Degree Proposal Worksheet breaks out the various points that you must address in presenting a compelling case to complete a graduate degree at your chosen university.

Combined Research and Study Projects
Many candidates opt to combine research and study in their project plans. This option adds structure to research projects by granting access to the benefits of university facilities and resources. In these cases, the candidate’s main focus is the research component of the project, but they complement the research by taking courses at a university. These candidates are not matriculating towards graduate degrees, but use the courses to provide valuable historical, contextual and cultural information for their projects. If you are you proposing a combined research and study project then use the Research Project Planning Worksheet, but be sure to describe the courses that you plan to take in the SoP and how they are relevant to your overall project.

Don’t reinvent the wheel
Search for other SoP’s online, or ask your adviser for some samples. Don’t copy, but look for a style that works well for you.

In Summary
Use these worksheets any way that you think will help you as you develop your project. Not every item on the worksheets will be relevant to every study/research project, but generally these are the types of questions that the review committee will seek to understand as they evaluate your project plans.

More information on the Research Statement of Grant Purpose is available at: https://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/application-tips/academic

English Teaching Assistant Statement Essay
The Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship (ETA) is a particular type of grant proposal, requiring applicants to present themselves as someone who is:

1. Enthusiastic about and somewhat experienced in teaching/mentoring;
2. Knowledgeable about the specific country, and in some cases with language skills to match;
3. Able to demonstrate that an ETA experience will be valuable for future career objectives.

ETA Statement of Grant Purpose (SoP)
This one-page document outlines why you are interested in teaching English to non-native speakers as well as why you have chosen to apply to a particular country. You should clearly describe what you will be able to bring to the classroom in the host country, as well as explain any ideas you have on how to reach students coming from a different pedagogical tradition. The proposal should indicate a clear commitment to and description of how you will engage with the host country community, including your plans during non-classroom hours.

Host Country Specifics
Consult the country page for the Fulbright ETA to which you will apply. This is necessary for you to understand the nature of the program and the specific requirements, since the design of ETA program varies from country to country. Also, the age and academic level of the students to be taught varies by country.

Supplementary Projects
Some countries allow for side supplementary research/study projects, while others do not. These side projects should complement your overall ETA experience, but do not necessarily have to be related to education or teaching English. They should not conflict with your ETA duties and should be achievable as designed anywhere in the country where ETA placements exist. Therefore, do not make your projects location-specific within the host country, unless specifically requested to do so in the country summary. ETAs will be placed by the authorities in the host country, so you will not know where you will be based and what particular resources will be available. Best advice - keep your side projects flexible.

ETA Planning Guide
You will find questions on the attached ETA Planning Guide that will help you to thoughtfully and concisely create an outline for your ETA Statement which can be helpful as you draft your essay. Candidates who cultivate their ideas throughout multiple essay drafts will find their invested effort well spent.

More information on the ETA Statement of Grant Purpose is available at: https://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/application-tips/eta

Letters of Recommendation
Letters of recommendation should add value to your application, and so it is important to carefully consider who you should ask to write them. Also, Fulbright rec. letters are unlike those that you might request for job applications or even applications to graduate school. They cannot solely serve as character references. The writers must comment extensively on your ability to carry out your proposed Fulbright activity, and so they must come from individuals who are qualified to do so.
Guidance on Who to Ask
Given that the nature of the Fulbright activity varies from award to award I have broken out further guidance between the two main award categories, Study/Research (Research and Grad Study) and ETA awards. You only need to read the guidance pertaining to the award that you are applying for.

Study/Research Awards (Research focused)
Ask for references from people who have some knowledge of your field of study, project and (if possible) host country. They must be able to speak convincingly about your ability to carry out the proposed project. They should comment specifically on the feasibility of your project in terms of resources available abroad, linguistic preparation to carry out the proposed project, and your ability to adapt to a different cultural environment. They are free to comment on any other factors that they believe may have a bearing on your successful overseas experience. They should also indicate their belief as to the merit or validity of the project itself.
REMEMBER – Provide them with a copy of your Statement of Grant Purpose Essay (even if it is an early draft form.)

Study/Research Awards (Grad Study focused)
Ask for references from people with whom you have taken college courses in fields relevant to your proposed graduate degree. The writers should be able to comment on your ability to pursue graduate work and your proposed degree in particular. They should also comment on the appropriateness of the degree to your long term plans. If you are proposing a research topic for a required thesis or dissertation, they should also comment on the merits of this idea. In addition, they should discuss your ability to meet the mission of the Fulbright program for intellectual engagement through cultural exchange.

It may not be possible to get all of the letters from professors in relevant fields and that is OK as long as there is some correlation, and the professor is still able to comment adequately on your ability to pursue graduate level work. In many cases, it may also be appropriate to ask a current/former supervisor from a job or internship. Graduate degrees that are less academic in nature, and more professional would benefit from a letter from someone working in the field who can comment on your ability to succeed in that career, as well as the suitability of the degree to your long term plans. So you may wish to have a variety of academic and professional references – I can help you determine the right balance if needed. REMEMBER – Provide them with a copy of your Statement of Grant Purpose Essay (even if it is an early draft form.)

More information on Study/Research Letters of Recommendation is available at: https://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/application-tips/academic

ETA Awards
Ask for references from people who can speak to your ability to teach English overseas. The letters can come from anyone who has observed your English communication skills. This can come from tests or papers they you have prepared or from formal presentations, job
assignments, classroom discussion or individual interviews. If you have any experience teaching/tutoring/counseling or working with others or as a peer mentor then letters from whoever supervised you during these activities would make good ETA references. Your ETA references will complete a reference form (rather than prepare a formal letter) that asks for their assessment of your abilities on several different topics. I recommend that you read this and choose individuals who can thoroughly comment on each item. REMEMBER – Provide them with a copy of your Statement of Grant Purpose Essay (even if it is an early draft form.)

More information on ETA Letters of Recommendation is available at: https://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/application-tips/eta

Some Admin Details

☐ Your letters of recommendation MUST be submitted by Harding’s mid-September deadline. REMEMBER – It is also YOUR responsibility to ensure that they are submitted on time. Don’t rely on me to chase your letters for you. You can see in the app. system when they are submitted - send firm, but polite reminders, in a timely manner.

☐ Your letters will be submitted online using Fulbright’s Embark Application system, but you need to input their names and emails into the system so that they are sent full submission instructions. Please input their details into the app. system ASAP, as it is very important to give your writers at least 4 weeks, and more if you are able, to complete and submit their letters.

☐ I have valuable letter writing guidance that I can offer your recommenders, so please send me their names and email addresses once they have agreed to serve as your reference – and by Mid-July if possible. The sooner that you send me this list the better. Strong and thoughtful letters take time to write, so make your letters of recommendation a priority.

Finding Host Institutional Affiliations

Host Institutional Affiliations are an important component of a feasible and competitive Fulbright Study/Research project proposal. Fulbright ETA and Mexico’s Binational Business Internship candidates can ignore this segment as you DO NOT need to find host institution affiliations. For Study/Research grant candidates this email will give guidance on how to go about searching for a suitable host that is a good fit for your project. A later installment of the series will focus on asking for and submitting letters of institutional support with your applications.

Types of Host Institutional Affiliations

For starters, carefully read the criteria for host affiliation requirements in the summary for the country to which you are applying. Country regulations differ in the kinds of host affiliations that are acceptable. Depending upon the country, the host affiliation can be academic institutions, libraries, laboratories, a research institute, a non-profit organization and/or individuals at any one of these or other types of relevant agencies.
Also, the type of host institutional affiliation and whether or not you need a Letter of Host Institutional Support with your application varies between applications for Graduate Degree Programs and Independent Research Projects. So I have broken up the advice below – read only that which pertains to your project type.

**Graduate Degree Study Projects**

If your plan is to complete a Master's or other structured degree program you are NOT required to submit a letter of host Institutional support / proof of admission with the Fulbright application. You can submit the acceptance letter later, but an award offer would be contingent upon you receiving placement at a university. Please be sure that you apply for admission to the host university by their deadline.

HOWEVER, even if you are applying to do a degree program, obtaining a letter of support from a faculty member at the host university will nicely complement your application. I recommend that you reach out to the relevant department or a faculty member to ask if you would be a good fit with the program. If they respond to say yes, then you can ask for a letter of support to include with your application by the deadline. Again, this is not a requirement and candidates can be successful without one, but it doesn’t hurt to try and it demonstrates your motivation if you can get one.

**Independent Research Projects**

If the proposal contains a strong research component, you MUST find a suitable host institutional affiliation that can support the research, provide access to required resources, and/or advise you during the grant period. It is your responsibility to identify, contact, and secure an affiliation from a potential adviser. You will need to submit with your application a Letter of Host Institutional Support written by your main contact at your host affiliation(s).

**Searching for Host Institution Affiliations**

Fulbrighters have used a number of methods to contact potential hosts and solicit support for their projects. One primary method is to use the contacts and advisers that you already have. Ask current or former professors to put you into contact with appropriate people in the host country.

Potential avenues to identify an appropriate affiliation/host country adviser include:

- Faculty at Harding and all other university sources.
- International students.
- Visiting Fulbright Professors in the U.S. or U.S. Fulbright Scholars who had grants to your host country. Directories are available at [https://www.cies.org/fulbright-scholars](https://www.cies.org/fulbright-scholars).
- Internet searches of faculty at potential host institutions with your interests, or organizations in the host country that work with issues related to your topic.
• Authors of articles in academic publications related to the topic of your project.
• Other U.S. academics with expertise in the location/subject matter of the proposed project.
• Contacts from previous experience abroad.
• Educational Advising sections of Embassies or Consulates of your potential host country.

**Sample Initial Host Contact Emails**
*I have attached several sample emails* that you could use to initiate a conversation over email with a potential host. Feel free to use these drafts (amended as appropriate) or a version of your own. You can also run any drafts by me for review before you send them at any time.

It is important to start your search for a host institutional affiliation and initiating a conversation with them about supporting your project as soon as possible. Many overseas universities etc. take long summer vacations and may not even respond to your emails/phone calls until they return in September. So the earlier you start the easier it will be to develop a relationship that could lead to a competitive and feasible Fulbright project proposal.

**More information on the Letters of affiliation is available at:**
https://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/application-tips/academic

**Composing the Personal Statement**
The Personal Statement should be an engaging narrative telling a story about you as an individual. If the Statement of Grant Purpose describes where and what you intend to do and why you are qualified to do it, the Personal Statement is an opportunity to show who you are and what in your life has led you to this decision to apply for a Fulbright. In other words, this should not be a catalogue of your accomplishments, but rather a discerning look at what in your life has motivated you and engaged you and how this has translated into the choice to apply for a Fulbright.

The Personal Statement can deal with your personal history, family background, influences on your intellectual development, overcoming obstacles or adversity, the educational and cultural opportunities (or lack of them) to which you have been exposed, and the ways in which these experiences have affected you. Also, you may include your special interests and abilities, career plans, and life goals, etc. It is a sort of autobiography, and specifically related to you and your aspirations.

Though your examples should still be concrete, you have the room to reveal your personality—indeed many applicants view this as their chance to let the selectors know them as individually as possible, and they often use lightly humorous anecdotes to set themselves apart from other candidates. **Remember, the best personal statements are in fact exactly that: personal.** Do not be afraid to let the reader see how you have felt and thought about your life and how these feelings and thoughts have motivated you. In plain terms, the goal is to write an essay that no other person could have written.
Writing Resources
Attached you will find resources to help you as you draft your personal statements. The first document lists three different draft editing strategies that could help you clarify your message and bring out the most compelling aspects of your background. The 2\textsuperscript{nd} attached document is a copy of the Personal Statement feedback rubric that I will use as I review and critique your drafts. The rubric itself can help you draft your personal statement, as it gives you some insight into how the Fulbright reviewers will also be reading your essays. The 3\textsuperscript{rd} document is a personal statement writing worksheet to help you get started.

Harding’s Writing Center
You are encouraged to use the Writing Center to work with them on your Fulbright essay drafts. They are an invaluable resource that can help you bring life to your personal narrative and project proposals. I encourage each of you to reach out to them as soon as possible to begin crafting your essays.

Let me know if you have any questions. I look forward to receiving copies of your essay drafts as soon as you are ready.

More information on the Study/Research Personal Statement is available at: https://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/application-tips/academic

More information on the ETA Personal Statement is available at: https://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/application-tips/eta

Cultural / Civic Engagement Activities
Cultural exchange is the center piece of the Fulbright Program. No matter how impressive or academically brilliant your Fulbright project may be, if you don’t also showcase your ability so serve as a cultural ambassador your application will fall flat with Fulbright’s selection committees. So after you have designed your project proposals, asked for the all-important letter of affiliation, and thought really hard about how that ETAship will change your life, you need to consider how you will engage with your host community in a meaningful way.

Make it Personally Engaging.
“In a meaningful way” means that it has to make sense for you, and has to be more than just giving lip service to this whole cultural exchange thing. Your cultural engagement activities do not necessarily have to relate to your project proposal or studies. Some projects lend themselves easily to cultural engagement (especially in the arts or public service oriented projects), but others do not. In these cases, I recommend that you explore your own personal interests to find meaningful ways to engage. Do you have hobbies? Are you interested in learning a local cultural custom, or the language? Do you have experience tutoring or volunteering
or coaching a sport, etc. For ETA candidates it is likely that your engagement activities will complement your teaching duties, or be an extension of them (leading an after school program - for example). You are all extremely interesting people, and cultural engagement activities that you talk about with passion, because they relate to you personally, tend to be the most compelling.

**Do your homework.**
If you propose to take a class, or do some sort of community outreach or volunteer activity then make sure that opportunities exist for this in the place where you will be based. ETA candidates have to be more general as you don’t know where you will be placed, but connecting activities with the opportunities that will present themselves through your school are easily enough considered. When choosing a project, be sure to select something for which you are qualified, is appropriate to the age group with which you will be involved and the country you have selected. If, for example, an applicant proposes to lead an English poetry club after school, this would be appropriate for an age group with a higher level of written English ability. In addition, Fulbright might look to see that the applicant had coursework in poetry or literature on their college transcript.

**Where in the App?**
There are two main places in the Fulbright application where you need to address the issue of cultural engagement. The first will appear as a short answer question in the online app, and will show up on the front page of your printed/pdf application. This question allows you to give specific details of your plans.

The 2nd place where you need to address cultural engagement activities is in the Statement of Grant Purpose Essay itself. This is true for all grant categories. Candidates often miss the need to mention cultural engagement in this essay, so don’t make that mistake. Even though your space is limited you still need to say something. You could either mention again what you wrote in the first section (but do not repeat it word for word), or approach it more generally. This is will depend upon the space that you have available.

**Foreign Language Evaluations**
Language requirements vary by country, so before starting the application you should note the specific requirements of the proposed host country. There are two foreign language evaluation forms that candidates can submit: the Self-Evaluation Form, and the official Foreign Language Evaluation Form. However, not every candidate will need to submit these forms. So it is important for you to understand whether or not you need to, and if so, to make the necessary arrangements. Here is guidance to help you consider what you should do.

**Submit or Not?**
Yes Submit - For programs where language skills are Strongly Recommended, you must submit both the Self Evaluation and the official Foreign Language Evaluation Form. Submission of both forms is mandatory, even if you have advanced skills or native-speaker ability.
Yes Submit - For programs where language skills are recommended or not required, if you possess some language skills you should submit both forms. It will be advantageous to have your language ability documented, even though it is not required. Remember, even if a country indicates that English will be sufficient for carrying out the proposed project, for purposes of Community Engagement, at least a basic level of language skill should be obtained prior to leaving the United States for the host country.

Do NOT Submit - If you have little or no knowledge of the language, you may discuss your plans to study the language prior to beginning a grant in your Statement of Grant Purpose. You should not submit a Language Self Evaluation or a Foreign Language Evaluation.

Do NOT Submit - For programs in countries where English is one of the national languages, you do not need to submit any foreign language forms unless a foreign language is required for your project.

Official Foreign Language Evaluation Form
These forms should be completed by professional language teachers following the below guidelines.

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. I recommend contacting Harding’s Modern Foreign Languages Department to ask a professor to complete the evaluation.

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. Some recommendations for finding a native speaker include: host country’s embassy, cultural center, international students/faculty.

In any event, please share with your evaluators the instructions found at https://us.fulbrightonline.org/instructions-for-foreign-language-evaluators

Multiple Languages
Some projects require an applicant to have knowledge of more than one foreign language. In this circumstance, you should submit additional self-evaluations, and also possibly instructor completed evaluations for each relevant language. Do not use the same form for multiple languages.

Not quite where you need to be with your language skills?
The language requirements for many countries state that they must be acquired “by the start of the grant” giving a candidate about a year to get to the required level. Please note that some
countries state that the language requirements must be acquired “by the time of application” so the below advice won’t apply in those cases.

In any event, you must possess the necessary language skills to successfully complete the project you are proposing. If you are applying to do an independent research project, remember that you will have some control over the design of your project and therefore the proficiency level that will be required to complete it successfully.

Candidates who are proposing projects that need a higher proficiency level than where they are at the time of application can certainly still apply for the Fulbright award – provided that you have a feasible plan to obtain the necessary language skills. In the self-evaluation form, or in our SOP essay, you can detail your plans for improving your language skills. You can state that you will take language classes at Harding or another school, or that you will receive tutoring, private practice or even practice by attending cultural events. One other thing - some Fulbright program countries offer language training programs at the start or during the grant, or include some grant funding for taking language classes. Check the country summaries to be sure, and mention this in your app if you intend to take advantage of them.

**Language Form Submission**

The self-evaluation form is part of the online Fulbright application, and so you will complete this yourself before you submit. For the instructor completed foreign language evaluation forms, you will need to first request evaluation form an individual and then go into the Embark application system to provide their name and email address in the same way that you do for your letters of recommendation. The system will then generate a form request to your evaluator who needs to follow the instructions and submit the form by Harding’s Campus Deadline. Attached is a sample instructor language evaluation form if you, or your evaluator, want to see what completing the form involves. It is entirely up to you and your evaluator to determine the method by which they evaluate your skill level for each category on the form.

**Requesting Letters of Affiliation**

Hopefully by now you have a pretty good idea of the resources you need to complete your Fulbright project. And even more hopefully, you are already communicating with suitable a host institutional affiliation(s). If not, please review *Host Institutional Affiliations*, for more information on finding a host.

This section focused more on asking for and receiving that all important Letter of Institutional Support. *Remember – ETA and Mexico Binational Internship candidates DO NOT submit letters of host institutional support.*

**The Ask**

You really need to use your best judgment on how/when you ask for a letter of support. If you are working with a particular individual who will serve as your advisor then it will be very simple. You just need to guide them on the format of the letter and what information it should include. *See below for more information on what should be in the letter.* For those of you who
will be working more independently or pursuing a master’s degree where you won’t have a specific advisor The Ask may be a bit trickier.

Graduate Degree Candidates
Master’s degree study applicants don’t usually need a letter of institutional support in their Fulbright apps. Proof of acceptance can come later, but that doesn’t mean that you couldn’t include a letter of support from a faculty member at your host institution stating that you would be a good fit for the program. If you can get a letter like this definitely include it in your application. But if you can’t, don’t panic, your application will still be very strong, and I can add comments in your campus evaluation about the efforts you made to communicate with your host university. So be sure to keep me updated.

Research Candidates
Independent research candidates MUST HAVE a letter of institutional support. Those with a specific host advisor will get this letter from that person. But without a specific individual advisor the letters may be more general and come from an institution where they just state that you will have access to resources that you need for the project. In this case you want to ask someone to write the letter who has the authority to grant you this access. However you intend to facilitate your project will help you determine who can serve as your host. You can have more than one host institutional affiliation, and you can submit more than one letter of institutional support. When asking for someone to serve as your host, make sure that they understand what that means. It does not mean that they are taking on full responsibility for you and your project. It just means that they are agreeing to offer you whatever support that they can give. What that support is, again, depends upon the needs of your project and the arrangements you make together.

I have attached a document with sample text that you could use as your draft your Ask. Obviously, do whatever you think is best, but I thought these might help you how to frame the question. I am happy to review and provide feedback on any drafts that you write before you send them to your host affiliations.

The Letter
The content of the letter must indicate the author’s willingness to work with the applicant on the proposed project. The letter should also speak to the feasibility of the project being proposed. The letter should be as detailed as is necessary to convey the agreement that you have reached in regards to the support they will offer. I have also attached a draft institutional affiliation letter that you could use if your host asks you for some advice on what to say, but
this is only a suggested format. They are free to say whatever they wish. Again, I can offer feedback on drafts if needed.

**Submission**
The letter itself should come to you. It can be scanned and emailed to you, which you will then upload into the Fulbright app system, or faxed/sent by regular mail and then you scan and upload it. It must be on institutional letterhead and signed by the writer. Emails are not acceptable. Important note: You do not have to have the letter of affiliation by Harding’s campus deadline of mid-September (although if you do have it that would be great), just keep me up to date with your affiliation arrangements. And be prepared to respond to questions about your affiliations in the campus interview. You MUST have the letter by the final October 9th deadline. It is not possible to submit the letter after October 9th.

More information on the Letter of Institutional Support is available at:  
[http://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/application-components/academic](http://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/application-components/academic)

**Transcripts**
All candidates are required to submit electronic copies of academic transcripts from every post-secondary institution from which you received a degree. Additional transcripts should be uploaded for coursework and grades not reflected on degree-granting transcripts. Graduate students must submit copies of their undergraduate transcripts as well as their current graduate transcript. You will obtain a copy of your transcript, scan it, and upload it directly into the Embark application system.

**Transfer Credits**
Some transcripts also report coursework from a different institution. As a general rule, if the course names and grades appear on the transcript that you are uploading/submitting, then it is not necessary for you to also upload/submit a separate transcript for transfer credit.

**Unofficial vs. Official Transcripts**
Fulbright only requires an unofficial copy of your transcript, but in my experience the best version of a transcript is the one that you receive from the Registrar’s Office. It can be issued directly to you. Please DO NOT upload copies of your transcript that you’ve downloaded from Harding FIRST. These look messy and are difficult for the reviewers to read.

Please go to the Registrar’s office and request a printed hard copy from them with your most up to date courses and grades. Scan this version and upload it to your app. If you do not have a scanner, then let me know and I can scan it for you. If you are out of the country and unable to visit the Registrar’s office, you may contact them online and have the transcripts sent directly to me at the address below. I will then scan the transcript and email it to you so that you can upload it into your application. All transcripts must be uploaded in the Embark application system by the mid-September campus deadline.
More information on Transcripts and how to upload them can be found at:
https://us.fulbrightonline.org/transcript-upload-instructions

Tips for the Embark Application Form
All candidates will use the Embark online application form to submit their Fulbright applications. If you have not yet already done so, please register for the online application by going to: https://iie.embark.com/auth/login

If you have registered, but have not yet started filling it out – be warned! This is not a quick application to complete. The essays will be the most important part of your overall application, but the biographical information in the application form itself provides crucial information into your background, intellectual capabilities, personal interests, relevant experience and academic/career trajectory. It is very detailed and involves several short answer responses that need to be well thought out.

General Online App Tips
The system allows you to go in and out of it saving all of your work as you exit. However, it also times out after about 20 minutes and any changes that you made without saving your progress will result in your edits being deleted. I highly recommend that you draft your essays in Word and then copy and paste them into the online application before you submit. That way you don’t run the risk of revisions that you spend hours on being lost because you took a coffee break.

Please be as honest and comprehensive as possible when completing the application form. Remember – you will NOT be submitting a copy of your resume so you need to ensure that all relevant skills, awards and prior experiences are included in the application. If you are unsure if something should be included, then ask me. But I generally recommend the more detailed information the better.

You will find that many of the questions will seem redundant, but they all must be answered. Some questions won’t apply to every candidate, but that does not mean that you should leave them blank. Often times the system won’t allow you to leave a question unanswered so you are always welcome to come to me if you need help with the system.

Technical Assistance
If you run into technical problems with the system, such as problems uploading transcripts or saving data, etc. You can contact Embark technical help at support@embark.com.

The campus deadline is generally mid-September. You must formally SUBMIT the online application by that date. All of your letters of recommendation, transcripts and language evaluation (if relevant) must ALSO be submitted by that date. It is entirely your responsibility to ensure that your supporting documents are submitted by the campus deadline.
**Short Answer Responses on the Application**

The short answers that you must complete in the Embark Application are extremely important to your overall candidacy. They appear on the first page of your application which means that they will be read first by the reviewers and set a tone for your candidacy. So you must carefully construct your responses so that they add value to your application, and not cause confusion or detract.

**Abstract/Summary of Proposal**

This is exactly what it sounds like. In about 4-6 sentences you will provide a brief statement summarizing your grant purpose. If you are proposing to pursue a graduate degree, note the program/university and relevance to your career/education plans. ETA candidates should describe your reasons for applying for the ETA program, why you chose your host country and what you might bring to the program. The statement should be coherent, straightforward and succinct.

**Host Country Engagement**

As mentioned in the section about cultural engagement, you each must have some idea of the activities that you will pursue to engage with your host culture. Some projects lend themselves naturally to engagement, but others do not and you must then describe activities for your spare time. Do not underestimate the importance of this factor in the Fulbright competition. Detail your ideas here, but be sure to also describe them in your Statement of Grant Purpose essay as well. DO NOT write the exact same thing in both places, this will look lazy.

**Plans Upon Return to the US**

This is an important one as the reviewers will use this section to help them determine whether or not your proposal is relevant to your future plans. Would offering you a grant be a good investment in helping you to reach your long term goals, or are you just looking for a fun year abroad? So it is important that you make a case here for how your proposed Fulbright activity is cohesive with your plans upon return to the US. Overseas experiences are highly relevant to the success in many career fields and so every one of you should be able to answer this question convincingly.

**The On-Campus Review Process**

After submission the on-campus review process will begin. The on-campus review process at Harding is opportunity to make your application even stronger. The campus review is essentially an in-person interview (or skype if you are abroad) with a panel of one or two Harding faculty and/or high level administrators and myself. There are not generally more than 3 individuals on the reviewer panel.

The campus interview also provides the opportunity for the committee to prepare your campus evaluation report that will submitted with your Fulbright application. With this in mind, there are two things you can expect to happen at your campus interview.
First, we will start with questions about your motivation to apply for the Fulbright, your project proposal (if appropriate), your preparedness for the Fulbright experience and your plans to engage with the local community. There is no need to do anything special in order to prepare for your campus interview. It will be a fairly informal and friendly interview.

The second portion of the campus interview will be when the panel offers you feedback on your application. This feedback will be offered with the goal in mind to strengthen your application and help you to be a more competitive candidate. Please bring a paper, pen and a printed copy of your essays so that you can take notes. After your campus interview I will un-submit your online Fulbright application so that you will once again have access to it in order to make revisions. It is absolutely imperative that you RESUBMIT your Fulbright application prior to the final October deadline. In fact, I ask that you submit no later than **12noon on the day before the national deadline** and sooner if possible.

**Timing of the Campus Interviews**
The campus interviews will be held the last week in September. Please let me know if you require an interview by Skype (again, this is only available to candidates who will be away during the interview timeframe).

**Finishing Touches & Submission**

**Submitting your Fulbright Application**
Your Fulbright application including ALL letters of recommendation, language evaluations (where necessary), and transcripts **must be submitted through the Embark application system by mid-September.** (Again letters of affiliation, if relevant, only need to be submitted by the final deadline in October) This means that you actually need to click on the submit button.

Don’t worry if you are not yet completely happy with your essays, there will still be ample opportunity for you to make revisions on your essays after this campus deadline, but please try to put your best work forward so that you maximize the benefits of the campus review process.

Remember – it is your responsibility to remind your recommendation letter writers and language evaluators of the deadline and to ensure that they are submitted successfully **ON TIME.** You can see in the app. system when letters are submitted, so politely follow up with those that are still pending. Send them a reminder. **Also, you DO NOT need to wait until your letters are submitted to submit the application yourself.**

**Finishing Touches**
Small details can have an impact on your success in the competition. It is very important that you carefully check your application for typos, misspellings, capitalization errors, grammatical mistakes, etc. **ETA candidates remember- you are applying to teach English. Show them that you can do it - typos in your applications will be detrimental to your candidacy.** You must also ensure that you check that all required fields in the Biographical Data pages of the app are filled in, including the Project Title and Abstract of Proposal sections.
Tips for Effective Proofreading

Proofreading means examining your text carefully to find and correct typographical errors and mistakes in grammar, style, and spelling. Here are some tips.

**Before You Proofread**

- Be sure you've revised the larger aspects of your text. Don't make corrections at the sentence and word level if you still need to work on the focus, organization, and development of the whole paper, of sections, or of paragraphs.
- Set your text aside for a while (15 minutes, a day, a week) between writing and proofing. Some distance from the text will help you see mistakes more easily.
- Eliminate unnecessary words before looking for mistakes.
- Know what to look for. From my comments or those of The Writing Center’s consultants on past drafts, make a list of mistakes you need to watch for.

**When You Proofread**

- Work from a printout, not the computer screen.
- Read out loud. This is especially helpful for spotting run-on sentences, but you'll also hear other problems that you may not see when reading silently.
- Use a blank sheet of paper to cover up the lines below the one you're reading. This technique keeps you from skipping ahead of possible mistakes.
- Use the search function of the computer to find mistakes you're likely to make. Search for "it," for instance, if you confuse "its" and "it's;" for "-ing" if dangling modifiers are a problem; for opening parentheses or quote marks if you tend to leave out the closing ones.
- If you tend to make many mistakes, check separately for each kind of error, moving from the most to the least important, and following whatever technique works best for you to identify that kind of mistake.
  For instance, read through once (backwards, sentence by sentence) to check for fragments; read through again (forward) to be sure subjects and verbs agree, and again (perhaps using a computer search for "this," "it," and "they") to trace pronouns to antecedents.
- End with a spelling check, using a computer spelling checker or reading backwards word by word.
  But remember that a spelling checker won't catch mistakes with homonyms (e.g., "they're," "their," "there") or certain typos (like "he" for "the").
Ask for help
Invite someone else to proofread your text after you have reviewed it. A new set of eyes may immediately spot errors that you’ve overlooked.

Final Submission
It is absolutely imperative that you RE-SUBMIT you Fulbright application prior to the final deadline at 5pm EST. In fact, I ask that you submit no later than 5pm on the previous day and sooner if possible. This will avoid any chance of your application not being submitted successfully. Every year candidates who spent months working on their applications miss the deadline because of technical difficulties close to the closing of the online application system. Literally thousands of candidates will be submitting on the 9th and the system does get overloaded. Don’t let this happen to you! Submit as early as you can. You have been warned.
😊

After October 5, the application can no longer be unsubmitted. Therefore, before you hit that final submit button you MUST let me know that you have completed the application and are ready to submit so that I can go online to review it before you submit. I will do a quick review of your application to ensure that there are no glaring errors. If I catch any, I will be in touch to let you know what needs to be changed.

Letters of Host Affiliation (Non-ETAs only)
REMEMBER – Letters of Affiliation for study/research proposals that are still pending must also be uploaded before you submit your application (you cannot add them after submission). If you don’t receive your letter of affiliation in time, be sure to keep me up to date of your affiliation arrangements so that I can address a missing letter in the campus evaluation.

National Review & Notification Process
Yay! You did it. Congratulations on a successful US Student Fulbright application submission. Regardless of what happens moving forward, you should be proud of this accomplishment.

Now that your application is behind you, I wanted to give you some information on what the review and notification process are like.

US National Review
Within the next few weeks your application will be sent to a Fulbright National Screening Committee (NSC). There are well over 100 different NSCs and they are divided up in a very complex way by things like country, world region or discipline. Each NSC has three members, and each member is a faculty member at a college or university in the United States. The disciplines of each member will vary, except for those NSCs that are discipline specific (i.e. the creative/performing arts, ETAs, etc.)

The NSCs will meet between mid-November to mid-December, and they will be tasked with the job of determining who will be recommended on for consideration by the Fulbright host
country to which you applied. The applications of candidates who are recommended on to the host-country will be sent to the relevant Fulbright administrator in that country in early January.

**Host Country Review**
Once your application is received in the host country, the administrators there will do their own review to determine who will be offered Fulbright awards. In some cases, the in-country review will involve either a telephone or Skype interview. Once we know if you have been recommended or not we will be able to find out if your particular country does interviews. If you are offered an interview then I will help you to prepare for it.

**Notification Process**
Each of you will receive an email sometime in mid to late January notifying you of the status of your application. Candidates who are recommended on to the host country are Semi-finalists in the competition.

After the in-country Fulbright administrators do their review they will inform the Institute of International Education (IIE) of the result and then IIE will notify you of the final decision. This can happen at any time between mid-February to late-May, but generally occurs in March and April.

More information on the timeline can be found at:
http://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/application-timeline

**Result Announcement Alert Email**
Descriptions of the type of status updates are as follows:
Semi-Finalist: This indicates that the applicant will receive further consideration by the host country, the FSB and the Department of State. It is not an award notification. Fulbright’s National Screening Committees recommend about two times the number of grants on offer. See Competition Statistics for an indication of the number of grants to your specific country. For additional information on Semi-Finalist status, please go to: https://us.fulbrightonline.org/information-for-recommended-candidates

Non-Recommended or Non-Selected: Indicates applicant is no longer under consideration. They cannot discuss the reasons why a particular candidate was not recommended. In many cases, candidates were well qualified to receive a grant and no one specific factor, other than the number of apps to their specific country prohibited them from reaching the next stage. They encourage non-recommended candidates to reapply. It is often the case that an additional year of coursework, experience, and/or language study improves your application.

I will receive word of the decision on your application at the same time that you do. So there is no need to forward the email to me, unless you have any questions. I will be here for you no matter what the outcome.