

Ten Myths About the Fulbright US Scholar Program



Since the Fulbright-Hays Act was passed in 1946, some 400,000 people have participated in Fulbright programs. MSU is proud of its Fulbright legacy and of the 450+ Scholars from MSU who have been awarded Fulbrights to more than 90 countries. This handout addresses some common misconceptions that might be preventing faculty from looking more closely at applying.

MYTH 1 Fulbrights are only for senior faculty.

There are opportunities for scholars at all levels. Grants vary in their requirements. Some countries require senior scholars, but many seek and accept a range of scholars, including adjunct faculty. There are also Fulbright Scholar awards suitable for college and university administrators and for artists and professionals such as lawyers, journalists, musicians, filmmakers, scientists, and engineers.

MYTH 2 Accepting a Fulbright means leaving your family behind.

Approximately 60% of Fulbright Scholar awards provide support for accompanying dependents. A Fulbright award can provide unparalleled opportunities for the whole family.

MYTH 3 A Fulbright Scholar award provides little benefit to the scholar's home institution.

Fulbright Scholars act as catalysts in internationalizing an entire campus by linking their home institution with the host institution in a long-lasting partnership, attracting foreign students and scholars to their home institution, and inspiring their US students to study abroad. On the individual level, [97%](#) of Visiting and US Scholars found Fulbright professionally transformative.

MYTH 4 Only faculty from large universities are awarded Fulbrights.

Faculty Fulbrighters come from large and small universities, liberal arts and comprehensive colleges and community colleges.

MYTH 5 Fulbrights are only for research.

Most Fulbrights are for combined teaching and research, though dozens of awards are available solely for research or solely for teaching. Award types are easily found in the [Catalog of Awards](#).

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

Most award recipients teach in English in the host country, with some exceptions in Latin America and parts of Africa. Those applying for a research award must possess sufficient foreign language ability to meet the needs of the project.

MYTH 7 Fulbright grants require an invitation from a host institution overseas.

Some countries do require an invitation letter, especially for “All Disciplines” awards. Other countries encourage but do not require a letter of invitation, while others still specifically request that applicants not contact potential host institutions. The preference is clearly spelled out in the award description. The [Fulbright Scholar Directory](#) is a possible resource for learning about prospective affiliates.

MYTH 8 Fulbright awards are all for one academic year.

Awards range from two months to an academic year. A Flex option allowing multiple visits over two years is available in 63 countries and all world areas.

MYTH 9 You have to be on sabbatical to afford a Fulbright Scholar award.

While no one is likely to get rich on a Fulbright, it is possible to live comfortably in the host country using the stipend. Benefits vary by country and type of award; Fulbrights are budgeted to cover travel and living costs in-country for the grantee and their accompanying dependents. Information on stipends and benefits can be found in the [Catalog of Awards](#).

MYTH 10 Applying for a Fulbright is a time-consuming, grueling exercise.

Applicants do need to devote quality time and energy to preparing a successful application, but most grant programs require a similar effort via the online application.

Where Can I Learn More?

- More information, including detailed programmatic FAQs, individual award descriptions, upcoming and recorded information sessions, and an extended timeline can be found on the official Fulbright Scholar Program website at: <https://fulbrightscholars.org/>.
- Further details about the Fulbright programs at MSU, including information for prospective faculty Fulbright applicants, can be found here: <http://isp.msu.edu/fulbright>.