

Application Timeline for IIE Fulbright Student Program Awards

(Fall 2024 Applications for 2025-2026 Grants)

“Course” Description

Welcome to *Fulbright Applications 101*. Think of this document like a syllabus, providing an overview of the weeks and months ahead as you work to produce a high-quality, competitive Fulbright application. **In terms of the number of hours you will need to devote to the process, imagine this as a one-credit course running from May to mid-October.**

The Fulbright US Student Program application process is lengthy; applicants are encouraged to engage in reflection and thoughtful conversations with faculty mentors, advisors, colleagues, and peers throughout the process. **It can (and should) take months to compile a solid, competitive application.**

From the Founder

“*Educational exchange can turn nations into people, contributing as no other form of communication can to the humanizing of international relations.*”

- J. William Fulbright

Contact Information

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MSU Fulbright Website: <https://www.isp.msu.edu/fulbright>

Scheduling Meetings: In-person drop-in hours: I’m on campus most days; come see me!
Meetings: Use my [Calendly link](#) to set up an appointment

MSU Fulbright History

- ❑ MSU’s first student Fulbright grantee went to the Netherlands in 1949; since then, over 225 Spartans have won Fulbright US Student Program awards to over 70 countries.
- ❑ MSU has been named a Fulbright Top Producing Institution by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* for student grants in multiple past years, and a Top Producing Institution for scholar (faculty) grants every year for the last ten years.

First Steps

- Fill out MSU's [Fulbright Program Interest Survey](#) to give the MSU Fulbright Program Advisor (FPA) some background information and let her know you want to learning more!
- Learn about the [history of the Fulbright program](#).
- Familiarize yourself with the [MSU Fulbright website](#) (campus-specific information and resources) and [IIE Fulbright US Student Program website](#) (comprehensive information on every aspect of the program, as well as the link to begin an application).

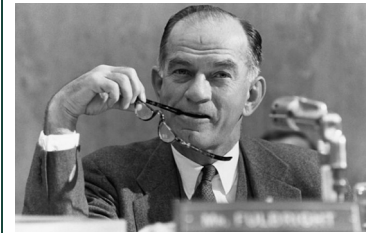
Purpose of Timeline

Following is a timeline for prospective Fulbright applicants, with interim summer deadlines and goals throughout the application process. This timeline applies to both the English Teaching Assistant (ETA) and Study/Research (SR) awards; some deadlines vary for different award types. **If you are beginning the process after some of these dates have passed, don't panic.** Use the list to keep yourself organized as you work at a pace that makes sense for you and allows you to meet the MSU and national deadlines. You can jump around in the timeline as well; you do not necessarily have to complete these tasks in the order listed.

That said, **if you have not begun to focus diligently on the application process by mid-summer, you are encouraged to wait until next year's competition.** Alumni are welcome to work with the FPA for guidance up to five years after graduation.

Pro Tip

The program is named after Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas:



It's not "Fullbright" or "Full Bright."

Monthly or As Needed Throughout Process

- Check for [upcoming MSU Fulbright workshops](#) or information sessions.
- Visit the [IIE Fulbright US Student Program website](#) regularly for updates and helpful information throughout the process.
- Check for [upcoming IIE webinars](#) on pertinent topics (e.g., award types, geographic regions, specific applicant demographics such as first-gen college students, LGBTQ+, veterans).
- Check for [recorded IIE webinars](#) you may have missed to see if there are new recordings that would be useful to watch.
- Watch for regular emails from the FPA; emails will include information, tips, and deadlines for each stage of the application process.
- Connect with fellow applicants at MSU and/or nationwide via Slack, GroupMe, Reddit, WhatsApp, and social media if desired.
- Contact MSU FPA with any questions (see [MSU Fulbright website](#) for contact information).

Spring Semester

January/February/March

- Check the [MSU Fulbright website](#) for any upcoming information sessions to get them on your calendar.
- Familiarize yourself with Fulbright basics by watching the 10-minute [General Overview to the Fulbright US Student Program](#), then the video for whichever program you plan to pursue (Open Study/Research, Arts Study/Research, or English Teaching Assistant).
- Read [IIE's "Getting Started" page](#) to confirm your eligibility for the program and learn about the different award types.
- Begin reviewing [available countries](#). Note that country offerings may vary slightly from awards posted when the competition opens in late March/early April.
- Explore the [IIE statistics page](#) to see data on the past three years of applications and awards. This gives you an idea of how competitive various countries and awards are.

April

- When the new competition opens, [create an account with IIE](#) to begin your application (selecting MSU as your institution links your application to the FPA on campus).
- Research [Fulbright Alumni Ambassadors](#) to see if there are Ambassadors who worked in countries you are interested in or who did projects related to your ideas. Reach out to them for input if you like.

Pro Tip

*Focus on finals—you don't have to start your application right away in April. Some applicants really like to plan, but **you can get through spring semester and still have plenty of time.***



Summer Semester through National Deadline

May

- If you haven't done so already, [create an account with IIE](#) to begin your application (selecting MSU as your institution links your application to the FPA on campus).
- Finalize the host country to which you will apply.
- Finalize the award type for which you will apply (e.g., ETA, open study/research, any sub-types or named awards).
- Begin drafting your Personal Statement.
 - Watch the [MSU Fulbright website](#) for any upcoming writing sessions or "write-ins." There will be opportunities to work with Writing Center consultants to brainstorm about and outline your Personal Statement.
 - The FPA will provide various guidance documents and samples of Personal Statements from past applicants. If you want to begin and haven't received these materials yet, contact the FPA.

- Identify your three references; contact them to ask if they are willing to provide a written letter of recommendation.
 - Communicate with references to let them know when you plan to share your draft statements. They can refer to these in writing their letters, so their recommendations align with your project. You should also direct them to the appropriate link for instructions:
 - [Instructions for English Teaching Assistant \(ETA\) Recommendation Writers](#)
 - [Instructions for Study/Research Recommendation Writers](#)
 - Think about people who can address not only your academic background but also your experiences outside of academia. If two references are academic, try to include a third who knows you from a job, volunteer position, or other setting.
 - Ask when they will be available to complete the reference and use the online application system to invite them at that time, so it is easy for them to find the unique link to your application.
- If required for your proposed host country, identify an instructor to conduct a language evaluation. As with your other references, ask when they will be available to do the evaluation and use the online system to invite them at that time, so it is easy for them to find the link to your evaluation.
 - [Instructions for Fulbright Foreign Language Evaluators](#)
 - [Sample Foreign Language Evaluation Form](#)
 - **If a language evaluation is not required, but you have experience with the language of your host country, completing the self-evaluation and a formal language evaluation can make your application more competitive.**
 - It is best to ask for an evaluation from an instructor who has had you as a language student; if you need help finding an evaluator, contact the FPA.
- For open study/research applicants: begin making contacts with potential institutions to provide a letter of affiliation. This process can take several months. Seek input from your faculty advisor and other professors as needed. The [area studies centers at MSU](#) may also be able to provide connections.

June

- Finish drafting your Personal Statement.
 - **June 7 (ETA)/June 14 (SR)**: MSU deadline to send draft of Personal Statement to FPA (send via email as a Microsoft Word document). Turnaround time for FPA feedback is usually about a week.
- Watch the [MSU Fulbright website](#) for any upcoming writing sessions or “write-ins.” There will be opportunities to work with Writing Center consultants to brainstorm about and refine your writing process now that you are working on drafts.
- Begin drafting your Statement of Grant Purpose.
 - The FPA will provide various guidance documents and samples of Statements of Grant Purpose from past applicants. If you want to begin and haven’t received these materials yet, contact the FPA.
- Share a draft of your Personal Statement with at least one person for feedback (e.g., faculty advisor, professor, Writing Center consultant, Career Services Network advisor), refine draft.

- ❑ Finish drafting your Statement of Grant Purpose.
 - **June 28 (ETA)/July 5 (SR):** MSU deadline to send draft of Statement of Grant Purpose to FPA (send via email as a Microsoft Word document). Turnaround time for FPA feedback is usually about a week.

July

- ❑ Request post-secondary transcripts as needed (ensure spring semester grades are included). Transcripts may be unofficial versions; if you are named a semifinalist, you may need to provide an official copy at that time. This [handout](#) explains how to obtain MSU transcripts.
- ❑ Share a draft of your Statement of Grant Purpose with at least one person for feedback, refine draft.
- ❑ Send reminders if needed for reference letters and language evaluation (give them the MSU internal deadline of September 1, not the national deadline in October).
- ❑ Share a draft of your revised Personal Statement with at least one more person for feedback (e.g., faculty advisor, professor, Writing Center consultant, Career Services Network advisor), further refine draft.
- ❑ Draft the “Host Country Engagement” portion of the online application.
 - The FPA will provide guidance documents and samples of short answer questions from past applicants. If you want to begin and haven’t received these materials yet, contact the FPA.
 - **July 19 (ETA and SR):** MSU deadline to send draft of “Host Country Engagement” portion to FPA (send via email as a Microsoft Word document).
- ❑ Draft the “Plans Upon Return to the US” portion of the online application.
 - The FPA will provide guidance documents and samples of short answer questions from past applicants. If you want to begin and haven’t received these materials yet, contact the FPA.
 - **August 2 (ETA and SR):** MSU deadline to send draft of “Plans Upon Return to the US” portion to FPA (send via email as a Microsoft Word document).
- ❑ For open study/research applicants: Follow up if needed on letter of affiliation.

Pro Tip

MSU deadlines are designed to keep you on track throughout the summer; that said, life happens! You might have a trip, a family reunion, your sister’s wedding... communicate with the FPA if you’re going to miss a deadline and provide a new target date.



No ghosting, please!

August

- ❑ Share a draft of your revised Statement of Grant Purpose with at least one more person for feedback, further refine draft.
 - Be aware that the Writing Center closes from mid-August to early September for semester break and staff training; Writing Center consultants also partner with the East Lansing Public Library for the [Community Writing Center](#) (CWC). The CWC remains open during the Writing Center’s annual August closure and may be a good alternative for last-minute advice before the MSU Fulbright deadline.

- ❑ Using your almost-final statements, draft the “Abstract/Summary of the Proposal” portion of the online application.
 - The FPA will provide various guidance documents and samples of short answer questions from past applicants. If you want to begin and haven’t received these materials yet, contact the FPA.
 - **August 16 (ETA and SR):** MSU deadline to send draft of “Abstract” portion to FPA (send via email as a Microsoft Word document)
- ❑ Finalize online application.
- ❑ Send final reminders if needed for reference letters and language evaluation (remind them of the MSU internal deadline, September 1).

September

- ❑ **September 1: MSU deadline for all applicants, ETA and SR**
 - **Lock your application using the “Ready for Campus Review” section in the online IIE application;** this submits it to MSU’s FPA. This will temporarily lock your application and no changes can be made until it is unlocked by the FPA (though recommenders **are** still able to submit their materials). You are also able to unlock it yourself if necessary (e.g., the “FPA gets hit by a bus” scenario”).
- ❑ Participate in required Campus Committee conversation (likely held via Zoom) to receive feedback on application.
 - Application will be unlocked back to you following the discussion so you can make changes.
- ❑ Refine statements and rest of application based on Campus Committee input.
- ❑ Gather any necessary final materials for submission.

October

- ❑ **October 8: National deadline**
 - **Submit online application to IIE well before 5:00pm ET—no late applications are accepted for any reason.**
 - We have had applicants try submitting as late as 4:58pm and not make the deadline. This may have been due to server slowdowns or to their computer clock being different from the server clock, but **don’t risk it. Submit early!**
 - Be aware that the application portal slows down markedly the last few days as traffic increases—plan ahead.

Pro Tip

You will lock your complete application for campus review through the IIE online portal on September 1. This means all your statements, the online portions like past travel and jobs, your transcript, and as many of your letters and language evals as possible.



Why? Because a complete application packet gives your campus readers the fullest possible picture of you as a candidate.

Also, you’ll be busy settling into fall semester!

After the National Deadline

November/December

- ❑ Applications are reviewed by National Screening Committees for each world region.

January

- ❑ **Semifinalists notified (by end of month, usually in last few days of January)** that their applications are moving to the next step; applicants not selected to advance also notified.

February/March

- ❑ Semifinalist applications are reviewed by host country Fulbright Commissions and other in-country stakeholders. Zoom/Skype/phone interviews may be conducted, though this varies widely by country and program. The FPA can let you know past interview trends for your host country, though things can change from year to year.

Late March through May

- ❑ Finalists and alternates are notified; notification dates vary widely by country. **Many notifications go out around April 15, but some still come in at the end of April and into May**, with the last few coming through the summer.
- ❑ Applicants who were not selected as either finalists or alternates are also notified on a rolling basis by country.
- ❑ If finalists (nationwide) decline their awards for some reason, alternates may be notified that funding has become available. This can happen throughout the summer.

August/September/October

- ❑ Most grants begin in late summer or early fall, typically corresponding to the host country's academic year. Some grants, especially in the southern hemisphere (where the academic year often starts in their late summer/fall), may begin in January or later.

Pro Tip

Settle in for a long wait and find Zen in knowing it's out of your hands!



Deadlines at a Glance for 2024

- ❑ **June 7 (ETA)/June 14 (SR)**: send draft Personal Statement to FPA
- ❑ **June 28 (ETA)/July 5 (SR)**: send draft Statement of Grant Purpose to FPA
- ❑ **July 19 (ETA and SR)**: send draft "Host Country Engagement" portion to FPA
- ❑ **August 2 (ETA and SR)**: send draft "Plans Upon Return" portion to FPA
- ❑ **August 16 (ETA and SR)**: send draft "Abstract" portion to FPA
- ❑ **September 1 (ETA and SR)**: **MSU deadline to lock complete application for campus review via IIE online portal**
- ❑ **October 8 (ETA and SR)**: National deadline

Timeline Doesn't Match Your Plans?

Many MSU students begin looking into IIE Fulbright options the spring of their junior year, applying at the beginning of their senior year and hoping to travel the fall after graduation.

Other MSU applicants might be in graduate school, hoping to incorporate a Fulbright award as part of their thesis or dissertation research. MSU PhD candidates who are interested in conducting dissertation research abroad are also encouraged to look into the Fulbright-Hays [Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad](#) grant.

If you don't fit into these parameters, that's OK!

- **If you are a first-year student or sophomore**, you can browse the [MSU Fulbright website](#) and [IIE Fulbright US Student Program website](#) to learn about the program and keep an eye out for MSU information sessions. Students with more lead time can think about activities that might strengthen their applications, like [English tutoring](#) (for English Teaching Assistant awards), leadership positions in a club or job, language courses, education abroad, and volunteer or work experience in your field of study.
- **If you are an MSU alumnus/a**, you can work with the FPA for guidance up to five years after graduation. After five years, you should apply as an At-Large applicant. Note that if you graduated from MSU but are now enrolled in a graduate program at another institution, you should apply via that institution.

Still Reading?

You're a star! Thanks for sticking with me and learning all you can about MSU's Fulbright application process. As the campus FPA, I will be here for you every step of the way, and I look forward to working with you. You can always find my contact information in all handout footers, my email signature, and on the [MSU Fulbright website](#). To easily schedule a meeting, use the [Calendly link](#) which always appears in my email footer to set up an appointment.

Fulbright awards are extremely competitive. That said, MSU students have a great track record and the process itself is valuable as you approach other applications and interviews in the future.

I will work with you every step of the way to make sure you submit the most competitive application possible. Let's do this!

Pro Tip

*This kind of diligence—reading through a long but important document—will serve you well during the application process. You will receive **a lot of** information from me. Tackle it step by step, and you'll find that the application is quite straightforward.*

