

Fulbright – Choosing a Country

Selection Factors:

- Quality and feasibility of proposal
- Academic/professional record
- Personal qualifications
- Language preparation
- Preference factors established by Fulbright
- Extent that candidate and project will advance Fulbright mission
- Country specific requirements
- Achieving diversity

While the Fulbright National Screen Committee recommends applications, the final decisions are made by the specific country commissions. Therefore, it is important that you choose the right country for your project.

Choosing a Country:

- Picking a country is about fit: where do you see yourself being for 10 months to a year
- Fulbright, at its core, is a cultural exchange program; mutual understanding and engagement are important factors in where you want to go
 - “During their grants, Fulbrighters will meet, work, live with and learn from the people of the host country, sharing daily experiences. The program facilitates cultural exchange through direct interaction on an individual basis in the classroom, field, home, and in routine tasks, allowing the grantee to gain an appreciation of others’ viewpoints and beliefs, the way they do things, and the way they think. Through engagement in the community, the individual will interact with their hosts on a one-to-one basis in an atmosphere of openness, academic integrity, and intellectual freedom, thereby promoting mutual understanding.”¹
- Fit goes beyond the research, study, or ETA you are looking at doing – here is a strong ambassadorial piece to receiving a Fulbright you will be engaging with people on a day to day basis – what are potential interests or communities you hope to engage with?
- Have you taken a course about a specific country region? Learned a particular language? Or read research that is based in a country?
- The Fulbright website has country specific pages to make sure that you also fit what the countries are looking for
 - there are also numerous webinars that might help in focusing in on a region or country
- Many countries have language requirements; what languages do you speak?
- Why do you need to go to this specific country?
 - For research, why do you need to go to a specific country to conduct the research you are proposing? It is important that your research is beneficial to both the U.S. and the specific country you choose.
 - For ETA, consider the length of the grant, the type of work you will be doing, and the location
 - For study, can you meet the country and study requirements and what is unique about the program that you can only get outside of the U.S. (this is especially important for UK programs as they are the most popular)?
- Have you spent over a year in a country outside of a study abroad program? You might want to consider another country for Fulbright as this could affect your application
- Fulbright does not want to see ‘heritage proposals’ where the main impetus to go to a country is to build upon your cultural background

Overall, if your application can be read for another country, then it is not compelling enough. You need to make the strongest argument and justification that your choice of country is the best fit for you, benefits both the U.S. and that country, and will lead to a compelling and feasible proposal.

¹ <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/fulbright-us-student-program>