

U. S. SCHOLAR PEER REVIEW - IEA

INSTRUCTIONS AND POLICY: 2021-2022 APPLICATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for serving as a Peer Reviewer for the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program. Each peer reviewer serves on a Peer Review Committee and evaluates applications submitted to the U.S. component of the Fulbright Scholar Program.

Reviewers are typically Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program IEA alumni with experience in the relevant country and represent the diversity of the program, including a wide range of disciplines, expertise, and institutional affiliations.

As a reviewer for the International Education Administrator (IEA) seminar, you are asked to examine and evaluate each applicant's suitability for the program, their personal qualities, as well as the potential impact the candidate's participation may have.

Reviewers carefully evaluate applications and submit their comments and ratings electronically through the program's online review system. (All reviewers review all applications assigned to the committee.)

The committee subsequently meets virtually via videoconference, hosted by the Institute of International Education/Council for International Exchange of Scholars' (IIE/CIES). Committees discuss the individual evaluations and reach consensus on which applications to recommend for the next round of review.

Before you start the review process

Before you get started, carefully review the guidelines and review criteria outlined in this document. Every application should be reviewed against these criteria.

Please note there are no quotas for how many candidates you can recommend, and you are not evaluating applicants against each other, rather against the review criteria.

Review deadline

Please refer to guidance for your specific committee regarding the date by which you must submit your final ratings and comments online.

Reviewers are encouraged to begin their review early to allow for sufficient time to read and evaluate the applications.

Who will see your evaluation? How will your evaluation be used?

Your evaluative comments and ratings serve to inform the peer review process and guide the outcome of the meeting discussion. Your comments and the criterion ratings can only be accessed by you and Fulbright program staff at IIE/CIES. These are for your reference during the meeting.

Your overall rating of each applicant will be viewable by your peers in the peer review meeting, and these ratings will serve as a starting point for the meeting discussion.

They may also help IIE/CIES to provide the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Embassy and/or Fulbright Commission with an overview of the panel and the competition. Your ratings and comments will not be shared with any other entities, including applicants.

What happens after the Peer Review Committee meeting?

Following the peer review committee meeting, IIE/CIES staff sends the panel of recommended candidates to the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, the U.S. embassy or Fulbright Commission in the host country, and the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs for further consideration.

The information IIE/CIES transmits includes a summary of the review criteria, data on the pool of applications and recommended candidates for the country/program, including the candidates' overall rating and review criteria ratings agreed upon during the discussion, and justifications for candidates who have had previous Fulbright Scholar awards.

The U.S. embassy or Fulbright Commission subsequently convenes an in-country review and proposes candidates for funding to the U.S. Department of State.

About the final selection of grantees

The Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board (FFSB) was established by Congress to supervise the Fulbright Program and to officially select students, scholars, teachers, trainees, and other persons to participate in the program. Appointed by the President of the United States, the 12-member FFSB meets quarterly. The FFSB establishes worldwide policies and procedures for the Program. The FFSB makes the final selection of candidates, and the U.S. Department of State confirms the availability of funding.

IEA AWARD INFORMATION

Expectations and requirements of awards

The expectations and requirements of each IEA award are provided in the [Catalog of Awards](#) for the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program. When reviewing applications for relevant requirements, you should refer to the award description in the Catalog. The seminars vary in their qualifications, and therefore the types of applicants they attract. The focus of peer review is on the applicant's training, background, and experience, as well as the merit of the candidate's proposed participation and expected outcomes. Should the applicant be recommended for further consideration, the U.S. embassy or Fulbright

Commission is well-positioned to assess the fit of the applicant and their proposed project with the country's needs and priorities.

IEA GRANT ACTIVITY

The IEA Seminar enables U.S. international education professionals and senior higher education officials to connect with societal, cultural and higher education systems of other countries, learn about the host country's education system, and establish networks of colleagues from the U.S. and the host country.

IEA APPLICATION

A complete application

The following materials comprise a complete application (in the order of appearance in the application):

- Application form
- Short essays (these replaced the statement of intent)
- Curriculum vita/resume
- Institutional Statement
- Letters of reference (two are required)

IEA REVIEW CRITERIA

As you read through applications and prepare to complete your comments online for each applicant, evaluate each applicant's qualifications as they relate to the IEA seminar, as well as the quality and cogency of the application. Please do not compare applications against each other; instead, compare each to the review criteria.

Committee members should consider only the review criteria listed below.

The criteria are not ranked; consider all of them equally.

For all applicants, look for:

- Applicant possesses the background and experience necessary to effectively participate in this seminar, as appropriate for their career path and stage, and focused on their broader capacity to succeed in the cultural context;
- Applicant demonstrates why participation in this location is needed, how their professional responsibilities relate to the seminar, their experience with the host country, and expertise they can share with peers in the host country;
- Applicant demonstrates how they will share what they learned from the seminar, how their participation would contribute to their institution's international education goals; and the potential for outcomes to be broad and sustainable, as well as the commitment of their home institution to international education activities and programs;
- Applicant's participation exhibits potential for impact on their career and professional development;
- Applicant displays ability to be adaptable, culturally sensitive, collegial, and can serve as a cultural ambassador for the U.S. This should be addressed in the short essay question; evidence may also be found in the letters of reference.

Previous overseas experience and prior Fulbright awards

One of the objectives of the Fulbright Program is to provide an educational exchange experience to those not previously afforded such an opportunity.

Substantial recent experience abroad is defined as “study, teaching, research, or employment for a period aggregating more than an academic year (nine months) during the past five years.”

Prior Fulbright awards Reviewers should keep in mind that the policies of the FFSSB state that, “as a general matter, *preference* for Fulbright Scholar opportunities will be given to candidates who have not previously received a Fulbright Scholar grant,” or have not had substantial recent experience abroad.

Applicants are required to address their prior Fulbright Scholar award(s) in the application, providing compelling justification to be awarded the proposed award.

Applicants with a prior Fulbright Scholar award are eligible to be recommended for another, provided the following are met:

- **Waiting Period** As of the 2018-19 application cycle, a two-year waiting period between awards was implemented. This waiting period is applicable at the time of application. This means those with prior awards are eligible to apply two years after they completed their previous award. Applicants with prior awards are expected to make a strong justification in their application for an additional Fulbright award.
- **Lifetime Limits** As of the 2014-15 application cycle, lifetime limits on Fulbright Scholar Program awards were lifted.

Veterans

Candidates who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States will be given preference, provided their qualifications are approximately equivalent to those of other candidates.

EVALUATING AND RATING APPLICATIONS

As a peer reviewer, you are granted access to the online application and review system (Slate), where the applications and associated review forms are located. (Separate instructions will be provided for using Slate.)

After reviewing each application, please provide supporting comments and ratings on the following areas. (The online system has prompts to guide this evaluation.)

- Applicant background and experience;
- Professional relevance
- Potential for impact, outcomes, and benefits;
- Personal qualities.
- For applicants who received Fulbright award(s) previously, their justification for another award.

Comments may be in cohesive paragraphs or bullet-point format, and do not need to be formal. Comments for one application should not refer to other applications.

Ratings: To help capture the strengths (and weaknesses) of an application, you enter a rating for each criterion using the following scale: exceeds all aspects of criterion; meets all aspects of criterion; meets some, but lacks some aspects of criterion; does not meet criterion.

Finally, you assign an overall rating of Highly Recommended, Recommended, or Not Recommended.

Recusals: If you cannot review an application due to a conflict of interest (see the Peer Review Committee Policies section of this document for more information), select “Recuse Myself” for your rating and include an explanation in the comments field. You should not use this rating for any other purpose.

What not to consider

- Host country interest in the applicant (project)
- Information about the applicant not presented in the application (do not search for information about the applicant online).

Guide to the overall ratings

The following definitions may be used in determining an overall rating for each application. There is no limit in the number of applications assigned a rating by each reviewer, nor by a single committee. (It is possible that a committee recommends all of their applications.)

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Application exceeds review criteria for all (or nearly all) of the following:

- Applicant’s background, accomplishments, and experience uniquely qualify them for the seminar, which is appropriate for their career stage and path, and administrative load. Applicant clearly demonstrates their capacity to succeed in the cultural context.
- Short essays are well-written, and clearly address the prompts provided. Plans and expectations are appropriate, feasible, and sustainable, and applicant addresses potential issues that may arise.
- Applicant’s participation in the seminar is likely to have broad, sustainable impact at their home institution and community; their institution has demonstrated commitment to international education activities and programs, further extending the outcomes and benefits.
- Applicant demonstrates cultural humility and willingness to engage with and learn from others; shows evidence of cultural adaptability and sensitivity, collegiality, and passion for the field.
- For applicants with prior Fulbright grant(s) and/or substantial experience abroad, there is a compelling rationale justifying the need for additional Fulbright.

RECOMMENDED

Application meets review criteria. The application may have some weaknesses, but strengths compensate sufficiently. Note: You may recommend a candidate with reservations but should explain your concerns in your comments.

- Applicant’s background, accomplishments, and experience qualify them for the seminar, which is appropriate for their career stage and path. Applicant appears to possess the capacity to succeed in the cultural context.
- Short essays adequately address the prompts provided; they included reasonable plans for how they will share what they learn from the seminar; they have reasonable plans and expectations for how their participation will contribute to their institution’s international education goals.
- Applicant’s participation in the seminar is likely to have an impact at their home institution and community; their institution may be committed to international education activities and programs, which may extend the outcomes and benefits.
- Applicant shows evidence of cultural adaptability and sensitivity, and collegiality.
- For applicants with prior Fulbright grant(s) and/or substantial experience abroad, they provide a rationale justifying the need for additional Fulbright.

NOT RECOMMENDED

Application does not meet criteria for some or all the following:

- Applicant is not sufficiently qualified for the seminar. Applicant's background, accomplishments, and experience are not sufficient. Applicant appears to possess the capacity to succeed in the cultural context.
- Short essays do not adequately address the prompts provided; plans and expectations are not realistic and/or are not sufficiently explained.
- Applicant's participation in the seminar is unlikely to be impactful, significant, or sustainable at their home institution and community; their institution has not demonstrated commitment to international education activities and programs; participation may only benefit the applicant.
- Application does not demonstrate applicant's cultural adaptability, sensitivity, or collegiality.
- For applicants with prior Fulbright grant(s) and/or substantial experience abroad, lack of rationale justifying need for additional Fulbright.

Rating applications with prior Fulbright Scholar award(s)

You may recommend an applicant with substantial recent experience abroad and/or a previous Fulbright Scholar award. (Other kinds of Fulbright grants including Student, Specialist, and Fulbright-Hays, are not counted in this.)

Having a previous Fulbright Scholar award (or awards) should not be the single reason to not recommend an application. However, it may be the difference between a Highly Recommended and Recommended rating.

During the meeting: If the committee recommends the application for an additional Fulbright award, the committee will be asked to identify justification(s) for the recommendation. The meeting facilitator will display the following list. Ideally, multiple justifications will be selected, and they will have been addressed clearly by the applicant. If the committee cannot find evidence of any rationale supporting another award, the application should be rated Not Recommended.

- Applicant's experience
 1. The prior award experience better prepares applicant
 2. The applicant possesses unique expertise that will be an asset to this Fulbright
 3. The applicant's experience is a strong fit for an additional Fulbright award
- Connection to the host country and/or host institution
 4. The applicant demonstrated a well-founded need to be in the host country and/or work with the host institution
- Evidence of impact
 5. The prior success of the previous award is likely to be repeated
 6. The project will have different outcomes from the previous Fulbright award
 7. The project will extend the applicant's experience to a new location
 8. There is a strong likelihood of long-term institutional linkages between the home and host institutions
- Applicant's personal qualities
 9. The applicant displays the ability to serve as a cultural ambassador/is culturally sensitive
 10. The applicant's previous experience indicates that the applicant will be flexible and adaptable in-country
- For Teaching/Research/Professional Projects:
 11. The project proposed is highly relevant and important to the host country/institution

12. The applicant proposed a topic that is understudied, and the additional Fulbright award would be a benefit to this important topic
13. The applicant is proposing a continuation of the prior project, which will maximize the impact on the host community and/or the research topic

PEER REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting goals and roles

The peer review committee meeting will give you, as committee members, the opportunity to discuss the applications together in a virtual setting. The goal is to come to consensus on which applications to recommend for further consideration by the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board (FFSB) and the in-country Fulbright Commission, based on award criteria and program policies.

Each meeting will be facilitated by IIE/CIES Fulbright Program staff. Their goal will be to keep the discussion on topic, constructive, and moving forward; to ensure each committee member has the opportunity to share thoughts about each applicant; and to address any questions on criteria, policies, procedures, application materials, and awards. The meeting facilitator will be introduced to you closer to the meeting date.

Meeting preparation

On the day before the meeting, IIE/CIES will prepare a committee scoring grid with all reviewers' overall ratings for the applications as well as a copy of your comments and ratings for each. IIE will then provide you with both prior to your meeting. (Late submissions of ratings and comments will delay this for the entire committee.)

You will not be able to view each other's comments. IIE/CIES will be able to display the applications via the videoconference platform in the meeting.

Meeting day

The scoring grid will be used to help organize the discussion, serving as a starting point.

To collect more data capturing how well each application met the review criteria, and to share more information with U.S. Embassies and Fulbright Commissions on the recommended applicants, we will record ratings on the individual review criteria in addition to the overall rating. The same scale used in initially evaluating applications will be used: exceeds all aspects of criterion; meets all aspects of criterion; meets some, but lacks some aspects of criterion; does not meet criterion.

Meeting expectations

IIE/CIES is committed to providing a safe and welcoming space for the review and discussion of applications. Peer reviewers, observers, and IIE/CIES staff are expected to treat each other and the applications with respect and consideration.

IIE/CIES recognizes that peer review meetings previously held in person require some adaptation to be held virtually.

As such, everyone is asked to adhere to the following protocols for virtual meetings: be present; minimize distractions (i.e., minimize alerts for emails and texts, close email and other computer applications); and be prepared for video participation. We ask that everyone be available for the duration of the meeting time and not schedule other meetings at the same time. We will be sensitive to each other's situations, and we will take breaks during the meeting.

For the meeting discussion, everyone is asked to be patient; listen actively; communicate openly and respectfully; handle disagreement constructively; recognize diversity, including of opinions and experiences; be flexible and collaborative; and not to engage in harassment.

It is our collective responsibility to ensure we create and maintain a safe, thoughtful, productive, and welcoming environment.

PEER REVIEW COMMITTEE POLICIES

Policy statement on conflict of Interest

It is the policy of the Fulbright Program to avoid any conflict of interest, or the appearance of conflict of interest, that may be related to membership on review committees organized by IIE/CIES. The following guidelines were established by IIE/CIES to limit, under certain circumstances, participation of reviewers in the evaluation of applications. These guidelines ensure that no applicant will gain or appear to gain an advantage resulting from a reviewer's service on a peer review committee.

Conflict of interest

Reviewers will recuse themselves from evaluation and final recommendation of applicants for whom they have ever written letters of reference for a Fulbright or other closely related award.

Reviewers will recuse themselves from evaluation and final recommendation of applications submitted by an immediate family member or partner.

Potential conflict of interest

A potential conflict of interest is when an applicant is a person with whom the reviewer has some significant personal or professional relationship (members of the same department, co-authors, research collaborators, relative, etc.) which could bias his/her judgment of the applicant or the application. You should determine whether such relationships involve a conflict of interest.

If you have determined you have a conflict of interest with the applicant, you should recuse yourself from the evaluation of the applicant in the review system, and you should select "Recuse Myself" in the rating section for the applicant.

If you are not sure, contact PeerReview@iie.org for guidance.

Eligibility/conflict of interest

- Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program peer reviewers may not write a letter of recommendation for an applicant being reviewed by the committee on which they serve until the academic year following the completion of service or resignation from the committee.
- Fulbright U.S. Scholar peer reviewers may not apply for a Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program award until one year after the completion of their service on the committee. For example, if a member reviews applications for awards in the 2021-22 application cycle, they could apply the following year, for an award in the 2022-23 application cycle.
- Fulbright U.S. Scholar peer reviewers may not serve on multiple review committees for the U.S. Scholar Program in the same year. (Peer reviewers may serve on U.S. Student National Screening Committees in the same year.)
- Members of the CIES Advisory Board may not submit an application for a Fulbright award until one year after the expiration of their service on the board.

Confidentiality of application materials

Application materials should be treated in a confidential manner. Reviewers are asked to strictly observe the confidential nature of committee deliberations, decisions, ratings and comments on specific individuals.

The nominations in the online review system and related attachments contain sensitive, confidential information and are provided solely for evaluating applicants for awards in the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program. Reviewers should not duplicate, use, or disclose these materials, in whole or in part, except to the extent necessary to evaluate the nominee.

Reviewers are prohibited from sharing the following with anyone outside the review process, while reviewing the applications and afterward:

- The applications and associated materials;
- The number and quality of applications;
- The meeting discussion, individual comments on applications, nor the outcome of the review.

Reviewers may consult colleagues on issues raised by an application but should never identify the applicant; comments from someone other than the reviewer are allowed, but should be acknowledged in the reviewer's evaluative remarks.

When considering candidates, reviewers should base their evaluation solely on the information provided in the applications. To prevent any applicant from gaining or appearing to gain an advantage in the review process, applicants are asked to not direct reviewers to materials outside their application package, and reviewers should not consult the internet or any other outside resource for supplemental applicant information.

Provisions of The Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as Amended

- Applicants shall be considered without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex or age.
- Although the physical and mental health of candidates must be adequate to allow them to fulfill the terms of their award, no qualified disabled candidate will be subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability.
- Preference shall be given to those who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States.
- Due consideration shall be given to applicants from all geographical areas of the United States.

Commitment to diversity

Guided by the statement on diversity issued by the U.S. Department of State, IIE/CIES strives to ensure that the Fulbright Scholar Program reflects the diversity of the United States.

Reviewers should note that the U.S. Department of State and IIE/CIES encourage participation in the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program by qualified individuals and institutions that are generally considered under-represented, such as small liberal arts colleges, community colleges, minority-serving institutions, women, racial and ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities.

STAGES OF REVIEW IN THE UNITED STATES AND ABROAD

1. Preliminary Review

Following the application deadline, IIE/CIES completes a technical review of applications for eligibility and completeness.

2. Peer Review

Reviewers evaluate applications based on established review criteria and recommend candidates for further consideration.

After this stage, all applicants are notified by IIE of their review status (*recommended or not recommended*).

Recommended applications are then sent forward for review abroad and to the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board (FFSB).

3. Review in Host Country/Countries

Review of recommended Fulbright candidates by Fulbright bi-national Commissions or the public affairs section of U.S. embassies abroad, together with prospective host institutions, for final consideration.

4. Selection

Review and official selection of recommended candidates for Fulbright awards by the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board and the U.S. Department of State.

Applicants selected for awards receive a letter from the FFSB chair as official notice of selection for a U.S. Fulbright Scholar award. Alternates and applicants not selected for awards will receive a letter regarding their status from IIE/CIES.

FULBRIGHT PEER REVIEW COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Peer review committees consist of groups of IEA Seminar alumni with relevant country experience who evaluate applications and recommend candidates for further consideration to binational Fulbright Commissions and U.S. diplomatic posts in more than 150 countries.

Appointment

Prospective peer reviewers are identified based on recommendations from Fulbright Commissions and U.S. embassies, current and past peer reviewers, IIE staff, and individual self-nomination. Academic discipline, regional expertise, demographics, and institutional balance are taken into consideration in determining the final composition of the review committees.

Term

Committee membership is typically three years but is contingent upon each committee's needs and reviewer availability each year. Serving in consecutive years is not required.

Each year, IIE/CIES conducts a needs-analysis to assess the overall pool of applications in relation to available awards. IIE/CIES also helps to ensure that committee membership broadly represents a given year's applicant pool. In certain circumstances, a member's term may be extended for an additional year.

BACKGROUND ON THE FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR PROGRAM

Established under legislation introduced by then Senator Fulbright of Arkansas in 1946, the Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program of the U.S. government and is designed to "increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries." With this goal as a starting point, the Fulbright Program has provided more than 380,000 participants—chosen for their leadership potential—with the opportunity to observe each other's political, economic, educational and cultural institutions, to exchange ideas, and to embark on joint ventures of importance to the general welfare of the world.

The Fulbright Program awards approximately 8,000 new awards each year and currently operates in more than 150 countries worldwide. All Fulbright Scholars are selected through merit-based open competition on the basis of academic and professional excellence, leadership potential, and an ability to share ideas with people in diverse cultures.

The U.S. component of the Fulbright Scholar Program is comprised of two to 12-month awards for teaching and/or research; specialized programs involving collaborative work across designated world regions; and several short-term seminars for education administrators. Together, the programs enable over 800 college and university faculty, administrators, professionals, and independent scholars from the United States to teach, research, or offer consulting expertise abroad.

Administration

The Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board (FFSB)

The FFSB was established by Congress to supervise the Fulbright Program and to officially select students, scholars, teachers, trainees, and other persons to participate in the program. Appointed by the President of the United States, the 12-member Board meets quarterly. The Board formulates policy for the administration of the program, establishes criteria for the selection of candidates, and gives final approval for candidates nominated for awards.

United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)

ECA directs the administration of the Fulbright Program under policy guidelines established by the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board and sets the Department's Fulbright funding and program priorities. ECA collaborates with the binational commissions and foundations in 49 countries, United States embassies in approximately 100 other countries, and a number of cooperating agencies in the United States in the administration of the Program.

The Institute of International Education/Council for International Exchange of Scholars (IIE/CIES) administers the Fulbright Scholar Program for faculty and professionals through a cooperative agreement with ECA. IIE/CIES assembles panels to conduct the merit review of candidates for Fulbright Scholar awards. IIE manages a wide variety of educational and cultural exchanges including the Fulbright Student Program, as well as training and technical assistance programs.

Fulbright Commissions, Foundations and U.S. Embassies abroad establish the numbers and categories of Fulbright awards to be offered each year, supervise scholar competitions locally, and serve as the primary point of contact for selected participants while on grant. The slate of U.S. candidates recommended by peer review committees is forwarded to U.S. Embassies and Fulbright Commissions for their recommendations.

Funding

The primary source of funding for the Fulbright Program is an annual appropriation made by the U.S. Congress to the United States Department of State. Participating governments and host institutions in many countries and in the United States also contribute financially through cost sharing, as well as by indirect support such as salary supplements, tuition waivers, university housing, and other benefits.