

risd/careers/ Fulbright U.S. Student Program

Getting Started with RISD

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WHAT IS THE FULBRIGHT U.S. STUDENT PROGRAM?

The Fulbright U.S. Student Program offer an opportunity of 6-12 months of research, study, and or creative arts exploration in over 140 countries to passionate and accomplished graduating undergraduates, graduate students, and young professionals from all disciplines and backgrounds.

Fulbright expands perspectives through academic, professional, and creative advancement and cross-cultural dialogue, and creates connections in a complex and changing world. The Fulbright mission is to foster mutual understanding between the United States and other countries, advance knowledge across communities, and improve lives around the world. It was created by U.S. Congress in 1946 to promote “international good will through the exchange of students in the fields of education, culture, and science.”

It is sponsored the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and administered in cooperation with binational commissions and foundations, and U.S. embassies. Both the needs and priorities of the host country AND of the U.S. should be considered when crafting your application.

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

THE FULBRIGHT WEBSITE – IMPORTANT PAGES

You will need to review the Fulbright website and refer to it often. Be sure you are on the Fulbright U.S. Student Program website (not the Fulbright Scholars website or a host country Fulbright website).

Start here: <https://us.fulbrightonline.org>

These are some of the most important pages to get you started:

- **Specific Country Information & Requirements:** <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/countries>
- **Application Components:** <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/application-components>
- **Portfolio:** <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/required-supplementary-materials-for-arts-applicants>
- **Competition & Selection:** <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/about/competition-selection>
- **Statistics by Country:** <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/statistics>
- **Applicant Information Sessions:** <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/information-sessions>
- **Fulbright Contacts:** <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/contact-us>

WHO CAN APPLY FOR A U.S. STUDENT FULBRIGHT GRANT THROUGH RISD?

Enrolled Seniors, Fifth Years, and Graduate Students, and recent alumni up to three years after graduation may apply through RISD. Students may begin the application process in their Junior year but cannot submit an application until the fall of their Senior year or Fifth Year. Applicants must have a bachelor degree before the start of the grant and must be a U.S. citizen.

- **ENROLLED:** Enrolled students should apply through their institution and must meet all required RISD deadlines.
- **AFFILIATED:** Recent alumni (up to three years after graduation) are eligible to apply through RISD if they meet all required internal deadlines; however, our services may be impacted by capacity.
- **AT-LARGE:** Alumni who do not meet RISD’s required deadlines and/or who wish to not affiliate with RISD, may apply “at-large.” Depending on time and resources available, a RISD Careers Advisor may

review one draft of your application statements and provide feedback. Fulbright welcomes at-large applicants. In fact, some schools do not have a Fulbright Program Advisor and most do not offer the extensive Fulbright services we do. Most schools only serve graduating students or perhaps alumni one year out.

Do enrolled undergraduates or enrolled graduates or alumni applicants have an advantage?

The Fulbright Study/Research grant does not have categories by degree level. Fulbright looks for a diverse group of awardees in terms of program of study, type of project, and degree level. While most countries prefer a representation from all degree levels, some do have restrictions, which are indicated in their country page. Graduating seniors are not measured against more advanced students and need not demonstrate a project as thoroughly developed as graduate students.

All applicants, but especially, bachelor's level applicants, should be careful to not present yourself as the expert, which you are most likely not. You are there to study and learn from the country and community. Reasonable and humble goals will be better received over grandiose, pie in the sky ambition. Bachelor's level applicants should have detailed letters of affiliation, strong support, and clear structure. For all applicants, the expectation of faculty engagement must be reasonable. Faculty support is often not the same as at your home institution.

Arts candidates for the U.S. Student Program should have relatively limited professional experience in the fields (typically 7 years or less) in which they are applying. Artists with more experience should consider applying for the Fulbright Scholar Program. <https://cies.org/>

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE?

Developing a compelling Fulbright application takes time, energy, and commitment. You aren't working on a Fulbright application every day or even every week; but it is a long process as you build your research, project design, and portfolio, and, you wait for feedback, news from potential affiliations, and news from Fulbright. **Once you start the application process the grant is a good year or so away!**

Check for exact dates and follow the **RISD Fulbright Checklist & Deadlines**, which is updated every April for the new application cycle and found here: <https://careercenter.risd.edu/fulbright>

To briefly outline the timeline...

- You will start working on your Fulbright ideas and research in the winter or spring – maybe even earlier.
- Things will intensify during the summer as you pull all the pieces together into an application package.
- You will submit early fall.
- Then the FOLLOWING winter, you will find out if you are Semi-Finalist and if your application is moving to the host country for review.
- A few months later, in the spring, you will be notified of Fulbright's decision.
- Grants begin late summer or fall – a year after you submitted. Or even the winter of the NEXT year for some countries.

MEETING RISD DEADLINES & KICK-START

Because RISD is responsible for arranging for your Fulbright interview and evaluation, **applicants applying through RISD must meet RISD's internal deadlines.** Developing a Fulbright proposal is not something you can do at the last minute. It often takes applicants 1-2 years to develop a strong proposal. In addition, obtaining support from faculty and developing affiliate relationships during the summer can be very challenging. Consider that many countries have a culture of long holidays in the summer and holiday means a real break. You may find that affiliate

contacts are not available particularly mid-July to early September. Be sure to review the RISD Checklist & Deadlines carefully. **Print the first page and put it on your fridge!** <https://careercenter.risd.edu/fulbright>

We STRONGLY encourage you to send documents before the deadlines when possible. This will provide you with earlier reviews meaning more time to re-draft, incorporate feedback, fine-tune, and move on your next draft or the next application component. Keep in mind that when a large number of applicants send materials right on the deadline, it can take 2-3 weeks for you to receive a review and response. In order to support RISD applicants effectively, efficiently, and fairly we need to stick to internal deadlines. If you cannot meet RISD's internal deadlines and you are welcome to apply at-large.

Important notes:

- RISD Careers helps facilitate an intense application process. But this is your application. Not only your ideas, your work, and your words, but also your process. Our deadlines and support is in place to keep all our applicants on track; it is up to you to develop an application approach that works for you. For most this includes setting additional internal deadlines and sticking to them. Keep in mind that part of a Fulbright experience is working through the application and making it your own.
- RISD Careers focuses our draft review help May to mid-August BEFORE your interview. After your interview, we will be available for advising only. The FPA will continue providing guidance via email and advising appointments. We are happy to look at application sections with you but we won't be providing in-depth reviews like we do in the summer. This is because we want to be fair to all applicants and because this is your application, your project, your ideas, your process.

KICK-START!

While the first hard RISD deadline isn't until mid-May, the Kick-start Meeting, don't wait until May to pull your ideas together. If you intend to apply through RISD, meet with a RISD Career Advisor early on to review the Fulbright process, gain advice and insights, and brainstorm ideas. You should have an initial meeting(s) winter/early spring of the year you intend to apply. This can be an open conversation about your ideas, questions, and curiosity. This will get the ball rolling.

<https://careercenter.risd.edu/meet-us>

To meet the Kick-start meeting milestone, you should be familiar with the Fulbright program and process, and be at a stage in which you can talk in-depth about your proposal and address the following questions:

- What country are you applying to AND why? What is unique about this country to advance your line of inquiry?
- Are there specific country requirements/preferences and how do you intend to address them? (language, affiliation, fields of study, project type) Review and reference the country page: <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/countries>
- What are your project ideas/grant activities ideas? What is your unique, narrowed-in angle that will make you stand out and make a case for feasibility?
- Are you applying in the creative arts or academics? If arts, how are your activities, learning, engagement, lens, and outcomes a creative arts project versus focused on academic research or study?
- What are your affiliate ideas and nature of relationship/support needed and/or graduate program of study AND why?
- Why you? How are you prepared and what is the artistic area of growth?

The Fulbright can provide you with an amazing experience but it is not a last-minute grant. It's a process that takes time, energy, and resourcefulness. A process that you will learn from no matter where your initial inquiry and research takes you

WORKING WITH RISD'S FULBRIGHT PROGRAM ADVISOR & GETTING HELP

RISD believes the Fulbright mission aligns well with RISD student and alumni interests, values, and talents. RISD is committed to supporting this intensive grant with extensive services. If you apply through RISD, the RISD Fulbright Program Advisor (FPA) will support you through all steps of the Fulbright application process – from developing your project idea to advice on proposal structure. I'm RISD's FPA – My name is Lisa Cramer and I work in the RISD Career Center. I am here to assist you in creating an effective, competitive proposal. Advising can be done in person, via Zoom, and/or email. Appointments can be made at: <https://careercenter.risd.edu/meet-us>

The application process is demanding. It requires the coordination of many components, time for reflection, and careful refinement. It will require numerous drafts of your statements. Applicants revise their statements anywhere from 7-15 times.

To make this process as smooth as possible and to support all applicants effectively, efficiently, and fairly, here are a few things that will help us work together:

- You are at the beginning stage and excited about this opportunity but don't know where to start? Review the RISD Career Center Fulbright site, the RISD Fulbright site, the U.S. Fulbright Student Program site, and attend a RISD Fulbright Information Session. Then make an appointment with a RISD Career Center Advisor. We are happy to help you narrow your ideas and consider your country choices.
- You have started the process but feel stuck, have run into an obstacle, have questions that are building, or you want to talk about an idea? Make an appointment with me.
- You have a specific question or have an update for me? Send me an email.
- You want me to review something BEFORE a scheduled meeting? Send it to me at least 3-4 work days in advance and I will try to schedule time to review before we meet.
- You have made progress on a draft and would like a review? Send me your document ideally as a word.doc; other text formats are fine but please do not send as a PDF as I will have to convert to Word and then often must clean up formatting that didn't transfer.

Here are a few things to know about how we will review your statements:

- The schedule on the RISD Checklist & Deadlines incorporates reviews by the FPA or a RISD Career Advisor. To make this possible, we also have to carefully follow the RISD Checklist & Deadlines. As time permits, we will review additional drafts but we will make sure all timely applicants receive a review as scheduled first.
- We will set specific time aside to review your drafts and will do our best to get back to every applicant within two weeks. However, RISD students can be a bit on the last minute side. If we receive everyone's drafts on the date due, we will not be able to review and respond to everyone within two weeks. In these cases, we will prioritize based on date and time received. Whenever possible, we will let you know when we plan to review your statement. Consider that if you send your drafts early, they will be reviewed earlier giving you more time to revise.
- We are not the expert in your discipline or in the 140+ countries. It is up to you to research and understand the context, know the facts, and navigate the country/culture nuances. You tell us! We are not your professor; we are your teammate. We ask questions to get you thinking and considering various audiences.
- When reviewing your statements, we add comments and suggestions into the body of your statements highlighted in blue and then return them to you for your consideration. You are responsible for reviewing and understanding the suggestions, and deciding which changes to make. YOUR voice and passion for the project must be evident.
- Because we are reviewing statements from many applicants at various stages, we don't have time to carefully edit our reviews. Our human brains work faster than our hands sometimes ;) If something is unclear, please ask for clarification. If something is troubling you, please let us know. It could be a misunderstanding.
- We do not professionally proofread your draft statements. We will fix typos and grammar errors we catch, and offer style suggestions for clearer sentence structure and order where we can; but we are advisors not

editors. You most definitely do not have to accept all our suggestions. Our primary review purpose is to make sure you are addressing all Fulbright Key Content (see below) for a solid proposal.

Remember I am only one voice, only one opinion. **Be sure to seek support and advice from others.** At the same time, consider the feedback you receive carefully. Everyone who looks at your proposal will see different things, and have different perspectives and advice. Consider suggestions thoughtfully, but this is your application, this is your project, these are your ideas. Be true to yourself, your style, and your project.

- Consult with **professors** in your department and/or in other disciplines related to your project (Liberal Arts professors, for example) to develop your idea. Their knowledge of your studio discipline and topics will help expand and deepen your research and project development.
- Access **Fleet Library's collections** at RISD (both online and print) to develop your research topic. Email or meet with a Research Librarian to expand on your findings, identify critical sources, and/or build research skills.
- Meet with the RISD **Center for Arts & Language** staff at various stages of your proposal writing process - early brainstorming, outlining, drafting, revising. Writing is as much a tool for figuring things out in process as it is a final product of persuasion.
- Meet with **RISD Global** to determine any RISD connections in your country choice and to help you develop your affiliate.
- Enlist other reviewers such as a mentor, a peer, family members, or a Fulbright recipient who you trust to offer honest, constructive feedback but will not steer you away from your purpose or the Fulbright mission.

This is YOUR grant. YOU are responsible for your proposal, the process, and the words.

Do consider that heavily edited, overly polished proposals may raise red flags with Fulbright reviewers.

As per Fulbright's Application Instructions: "All materials must be your own work. It is unacceptable to misrepresent accomplishments, to borrow from the works of others without proper acknowledgment, or to submit as one's own material that has been written, re-written or heavily edited by others. Breaches of these protocols may result in rejection of the application."

Fulbright is not looking for perfect writing. They want to hear from you -- from an emerging artist open to learning and exploring. This is a challenging application but it is part of Fulbright to work through the development process, even the writing, as your authentic self. In addition, if you do become a Fulbright Semi-Finalist and are invited for an interview with host country experts, you will need to answer questions that show you are passionately invested in your project, your ideas, and country engagement. It is to your benefit to write your proposal yourself, as you.

If you use AI, only use it as a tool -- maybe to get an idea or get you unstuck. Read what it generates and consider carefully what you like and what you don't like. THEN set it aside and rewrite it in your own words from your experience and perspective, and with your curiosity and passion.

FULBRIGHT PROGRAM OPTIONS

STUDY/RESEARCH

Arts or Academic: Applicants may apply under the Academic OR the Creative and Performing Arts track. Which track depends on the nature of your project and how you frame it. Many artists have academic exploration angles. Various contextual, historical, sociological, cultural learning is part of their work and interests. Your ideas for a Fulbright proposal might be both artistic and academic. That's great! But you will have to make the case for your project being Fulbright Arts OR Fulbright Academic.

Think of it like this:

*Paintbrush in hand = Arts

*Looking at manuscripts of how a painting technique evolved = Academic

- **Arts:** Fulbright welcomes artists from all disciplines. They believe artists embrace cultural engagement, are fantastic ambassadors. Most RISD applicants apply under the Arts. Not only is this the obvious fit for RISD students and alumni, but this route allows you to submit a portfolio. Your work can make a strong case and help support your project ideas.
 - If you are proposing to practice and produce art as a key component of the project, this is Fulbright Arts.
 - If your development as an artist is key, this is Fulbright Arts.
 - If you are engaging and learning from creatives, this is Fulbright Arts.
 - If you have an artistic question that will be answered by the host country, this is Fulbright Arts. --If your artistic question will help deepen and strength your practice, this is Fulbright Arts.

Your artistic practice should be key to the work you will be doing overseas. Your project should have a clear, specific focus on your growth as an artist/designer. How will you “improve your craft”? You should be participating as an artist/designing and taking your work to a new level rather than only being inspired or influenced by the host country. How or why being immersed in the host country community will impact your artistic work should be clear. You should affiliate with an appropriate institution related to the artistic discipline you are applying under. Arts applicants can propose research too but that research should be through the lens of the arts - practicing, learning, observing, applying, making, and interacting.

Arts applicants can propose:

- An independent project which will advance their artistic abilities.
 - Enrollment in a degree-granting program in a practicing or performing arts field. Note: if the graduate program requires a portfolio for admission, then you should definitely apply under the arts.
 - Taking courses to improve their craft as a non-degree seeking student while conducting an independent project.
- **Academic:** If your project leans on the “study of” side and it is not about making or furthering your artistic practice, this is Fulbright Academic. If you are looking at but not engaging artistic work as it relates to your art practice, then this is Fulbright Academic.

You are welcome to apply under the Fulbright Academic track. However, do keep in mind that you need the proper academic credentials and you will be competing with applicants with degrees in academic fields who have conducted serious academic research. Once you move to the academic world your work will be required to meet academic research standards.

Also, if you apply under Academics, you cannot submit a portfolio. Note: if you applying for graduate study and the graduate program does NOT require a portfolio for admission, then you should apply under the Academic track.

Study / Research Open Independent, Graduate Enrollment, or Open Hybrid: Each country has outlined requirement and/or preferences for the type of Study/Research grants projects they are interested in. There are basically three broad types with lots of gray area in between.

- Open study/research Independent is the traditional Fulbright award in which you design a project from beginning to end that allows you to work with people of the host country to mutually advance in your field of interest.
- Graduate enrollment is an option in a number of countries. In this case the program, activities, and outcomes are set – its graduate study. However, you still make a case for... why Fulbright? What is the meaningful cross-cultural exchange? Why this country? How is this something you can't do in the U.S.? You have to make a strong case for this isn't just being about funding for graduate study and that your exploration goes beyond the institution of graduate study. And, for most countries, you also have to apply

and be accepted to the university program – usually through the school’s separate process. You also may or may not have to pay tuition.

- Open study/research Hybrid are what most RISD Fulbrighters do. Most have some connection to a university, academy, or institution in which there is some structured class or workshop learning. Perhaps as a visiting scholar or more loosely associated. Plus, there is some sort of independent mission / burning learning question exploration. Usually, to do this effectively, RISD applicants have secondary affiliates which get them out in the community exploring, practicing, and applying their skills and learning.

ENGLISH TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

The English Teaching Assistant (ETA) Program places recent college graduates and young professionals as English teaching assistants in primary/secondary schools, or universities overseas who will work to improve foreign students’ English language abilities and knowledge of the U.S. while also having the opportunity to increase your language skills and knowledge of the host country. Some countries have structured teaching programs but many countries allow time for country engagement, extracurricular activities, and even project research alongside the teaching commitment. Usually applicants do not have a choice in the school placement within the country so any research project or activities of interest proposed must be flexible geographically. Review the country summary page carefully. Strong English skills are required and other language requirements as per country apply. Showing your interest in the host country language is important. While learning a new language should not be your primary purpose or distract from your work, incorporating ways to learn or practice the language to enhance your experience may be a good idea.

The ETA Program is a great route to a cross-cultural/international experience and springboard to the next step in your path. The ETA program may also be a good option for BFA/BA applicants in countries where higher level degree students are preferred for the Study/Research grant. However, your experience, preparedness, and interest in teaching English to non-native speakers must be strong and clear. Teaching should be the focus of your purpose statement, and you must clearly describe what you will be able to bring to the classroom in the host country and explain any ideas you have on how to reach students coming from a different pedagogical tradition. It is also important to articulate how a year of teaching English to non-native speakers will impact your career and educational trajectory.

WOULD YOU MAKE A STRONG FULBRIGHT CANDIDATE?

First, are you eligible?

- Applicants must be U.S. citizens at the time of application.
- Applicants must hold a bachelor’s degree or the equivalent by the beginning date of the grant. Preference is given to applicants who have received most of their undergraduate education in the United States.
- Applicants must have sufficient language proficiency of the host country to carry out the proposed project. Some countries require intermediate or advanced language skills. No matter the requirement, it is recommended that applicants have at least a hospitality level knowledge of the language before commencing the grant.
- Having a solid academic and/or professional record is a factor, however, there is no minimum GPA (a B average is good rule of thumb).
- Candidates who have not resided or studied in the country to which they are applying for more than six months, not counting undergraduate study abroad, are preferred. Applicants who have had extensive previous foreign experience in the host country and/or have had the opportunity for considerable time abroad are eligible but may be at a competitive disadvantage.
- Candidates proposing a project in a country of their heritage are more than welcome. You should make it clear though that you haven’t spent extensive time in the country (or perhaps that it was a long time ago) and that this isn’t an opportunity to visit family. Keep in mind that Fulbright is interested in supporting NEW cultural experiences. If you have a strong connection and family ties to a country, maybe consider another country for a Fulbright experience.

- Confirm that you meet any special country requirements by carefully reviewing the host country page at: <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/countries>

Then ask yourself...

- Are you prepared to spend your time and energy on a Fulbright application? Selected candidates are generally those who begin the application process early and are disciplined. As with any grant, and especially the Fulbright, successful proposals are well-researched and well-thought-out.
- Why do you want to research or study internationally? You need to explain the importance and relevance of your project in relation to the host country. Why do you need to conduct your study/research there? Why this country? Why this affiliation? Why you?
- What do you have to offer? You will learn and gain a lot, no doubt but what do you have to offer? What can you bring to the table? What is the exchange element?
- Are you interested in the host country beyond your project and how will you immerse yourself in the culture? Remember that this is a cultural exchange program and you will be a cultural ambassador. It is important that your enthusiasm for the country and interest in engaging with the people is authentic.
- Are you ready for this experience and can you prove it? Fulbright is looking for mature students with the ability to carry out independent projects. You should be prepared artistically, academically, and linguistically. Fulbright is looking for flexible, adaptable, open-minded students who are looking to learn from and make contributions to the host country. And remember, show – through examples and experiences – don't tell.

WHAT MAKES A COMPETITIVE PROPOSAL?

Developing a competitive proposal is not a science and there isn't a formula. It is a very human, unique process. There is no one way, no one answer. All pieces of the application are important. Fulbright reviewers spend hours carefully reviewing every component of your application. In general, the selection is a balance between an applicant's talent, project creativity/ uniqueness, feasibility, and an investment in cultural exchange.

What will make your proposal stand out?

- **Cultural Exchange:** Fulbright is at its core a cultural exchange program. Your project is a means for you to engage in a meaningful way. Fulbright is interested in knowing how – outside of the academic world or outside of your field – you will engage in the community. They want to know that you are interested in the host country people and culture. They appreciate well-rounded candidates with various skills and interests who will engage in a variety of ways.
- **Impact:** Develop a project that is not only about you and your work. There needs to be an exchange element. The impact doesn't have to be grandiose; you don't have to save the world. But what can you give back? How might you make a difference? What might the impact be on the community and/or your affiliate? How will you share and participate but not impose? Many RISD applicants are interested in having a positive impact on community, but don't try to be the hero and don't make big country generalizations.
- **Connections:** Show clear connections between your project, portfolio, background, and host country interest. It is okay if your path has not been a straight line or even if you are crossing disciplines. But don't make reviewers read between the lines. Make the connections for them. Why does this make sense for you? For your project topic? In this country? With this affiliate? Why is this proposed project the perfect fit for you now? Everything in the application should support your Purpose Statement. Avoid repeating across components but rather offer a cohesive narrative.
- **Relevance:** So what? Why is this compelling? Why is this important? To you? The host country? Your affiliate? The community? Society at large? Competitive projects are contemporary, timely, and reflect what is going on in the world. In addition, you want to maximize your limited space and not be repetitive across components. Everything should be included for a reason. Every word counts. Ask yourself why am I telling them this? What is the connection to my proposal?

- **Feasibility:** Propose a project that is focused and clear, activities that are reasonable, and goals that are attainable. Focus on a single topic. You have only one or two pages to make it clear that you have the skills, time, and resources to undertake this project. Demonstrate your language skills and/or that you understand the importance of language in strengthening relationships and enhancing your experience. Address how any space, facilities, equipment, and material needs will be met.
- **Innovative:** Consider not only new, unique, or under developed/exposed areas of research in your field but also consider projects outside of conventional cities and countries. Fulbright strives for diversity across fields of study, institutions, and locations. Check out the Fulbright applicant/award statistics and consider Fulbright's undersubscribed host country programs. <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/statistics>
- **Sensitivity, genuineness, and humility:** Highlight your interpersonal and intercultural communication skills. Fulbright is not specifically funding for a study or research project objectives or outcomes. They are funding the exchange and diplomacy. This is primarily about your being a citizen ambassador. Your genuine interest in the country should be apparent and honest curiosity about the country will benefit you. If you are approaching a controversial issue in the host country, you need to show, not only that you have done your research and have the background and experience to take this on, but that you will do so with sensitivity and without judgment. And, do consider the priorities of the current governments of both the host country and the U.S.
- **Potential:** Show that you have something to learn in your chosen grant field of study. This is a learning opportunity. They are not looking for you to be already accomplished; they want to see room for growth and the potential to make new discoveries. Where will the Fulbright take you?
- **Passion:** Explain your motivations. Tell them how you got to this point of applying for a Fulbright. Show them how excited and motivated you are to make this happen and why.

HOW TO GET STARTED

The idea and the passion for a study/research topic has to come from YOU.

Consider...

- What are you aching to learn more about?
- What questions are on your mind?
- What do you want to explore?
- What could you offer?

Then begin research on possible project ideas, on countries, and on expert individuals and organizations in your field of interest. Brainstorm your ideas with a professor, a mentor, a grant recipient peer, a RISD Career Advisor, the RISD Center for Arts & Language, and/or with me. Head to the RISD Fleet Library (in-person or online) to access the collections to develop your research topic or talk a Research Librarian.

Use the Purpose Statement Key Content (see below) to help you narrow and focus your ideas and your writing.

Something will hit you. Either the country you are interested in will lead you to your project idea, which will lead you to your affiliate; or your project idea will lead you to an expert, which will lead you to your affiliate and then your country choice; or an expert you are interested in will lead you to your project idea and then to the country.

Look to the following for inspiration:

- **The RISD Fulbright Site:** <http://www.risdfulbright.com/>
- **The RISD Recipients & Summaries:** <https://careercenter.risd.edu/fulbright>
- **The Fulbright Community:** <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/alumni/state-alumni>

And.....START EARLY!!!! It takes many of our applicants 1-2 years to develop a strong proposal.

HOST COUNTRY AFFILIATION (Study/Research Applicants Only)

Affiliate Search – Open Study Research Independent or Hybrid

In most cases, the applicant is responsible for identifying and arranging their own host country affiliations and for providing documentation of the affiliation in the application. Types of affiliations vary, but may include universities, research organizations, think tanks, libraries, laboratories, non-profits, NGOs, museums, and galleries. Generally for-profit business affiliations are not acceptable. Individual artist/designer affiliations may be acceptable as a second or third affiliate. Also, considering the host country engagement and cross-cultural nature of Fulbright, affiliation with an American University or American International University or a University not of the host country AND/OR having an American affiliate contact would be hard to justify.

Affiliation requirements are country-specific; check the host country's affiliation requirement for details. Unless it says that the country will arrange the affiliation and they do not want you to submit a letter, we strongly recommend that you include proof of an affiliation, even if it says it is not required or it is only encouraged. Having proof of affiliation is crucial and will make your application competitive. Some applicants make arrangements to have more than one affiliation (if acceptable to host country) to enhance their experience and/or to secure appropriate support for their project (the application allows three letters).

Search Ideas:

- **RISD faculty members and staff** are excellent resources to help you find experts or appropriate institutions that are doing work in your field internationally, and perhaps they will be willing to introduce you.
- **RISD Global**, the hub for global discourse at RISD, may be able to help you determine RISD connections in your country choice and possible affiliate options. <https://global.risd.edu/>
- Some countries have very active **Fulbright Commissions**. You may be able to reach out to a Fulbright Commissioner directly via email and ask for assistance with your affiliate development and/or specific questions. A Commissioner will not provide feedback on your project ideas or proposal but they may answer questions about appropriate affiliations and lead you in the right direction. Their expectation is that the affiliation and project development is the applicant's responsibility. Review the Fulbright country page for your country and see if there is a link to their Fulbright site. <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/countries>
- **RISD Fulbrighters** are often happy to share their insights. Reach out to RISD Fulbrighter from your discipline or host country of interest. You will find a list of recipients on this page: <https://careercenter.risd.edu/fulbright> Google them! And, you can read more about some of our RISD Fulbrighters' experiences at: <http://www.risdfulbright.com/>
- Other Fulbright Students, even if they are not in your discipline, may be of help. Check **the Fulbright U.S. Student Grantee Directory**. Maybe they can provide some insights even if they are not in your discipline. <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/alumni/grantee-directory>
- The **Fulbright Scholar Program Directory** may be a source to find connections. Different from the Fulbright U.S. Student Program, the Scholar program is an exchange program for faculty and advanced professionals. By searching this Directory you may find Scholar grantees who might help with host country affiliate information and maybe even with introductions. <https://cies.org/fulbright-scholar-directory>
- Research **host country university programs** and read about faculty and graduates' work and interests. Reach out to them directly to learn more. Often a course description, an article, research paper, or exhibition will provide a lead.
- Consider reaching out to a **non-academic department** at a host country university to make initial connections - someone in admissions, international admissions, international student services, perhaps even someone in a student club. Maybe at the school you are interested in the culture is to start with an administration office. Maybe you can get a conversation started on a peer-to-peer level and then they can connect you with the right people to talk to.
- Research and reach out to **artist professionals, studios, collectives, and/or residencies** in the host country. They may not qualify as a primary affiliate but they may be able to connect you to others at

universities or organizations. And, maybe they could be a secondary affiliate or someone you'd like to meet in country. They may provide a new angle to your project.

- Consider the contextual aspects of your project and reach out to **museums, community groups, cultural and/or organizations** for leads.
- Talk to anyone and everyone! Let **colleagues, friends, and family** know about your project ideas. You never know who might have a connection of know of someone who knows someone who has a connection. Sometimes the search starts by reaching out as a friend across the seas.

Affiliate Search – Graduate Enrollment

If you are seeking a graduate degree and applying a graduate program, your affiliate will obviously be the institution of graduate study. You will likely not have an admission decision when you submit to Fulbright in the early fall. You will likely have not even applied yet. Fulbright understands and does not expect you to have an offer letter. They will conduct their review, you will apply to the school, and in the Spring you hope both results are positive. But you could receive one and not the other.

For most countries you should only include an affiliation letter for graduate enrollment proposals if it enhances your application. (However, some do ask that you include a letter from the school stating that the program is offered and you are eligible to apply.) This is not required but is there a faculty person with similar interests with whom you have been in touch? Are they willing to write a letter, not guaranteeing admission, but perhaps outlining their interest in your application and ideas?

Affiliate Development

Remember that you should keep your initial communication short and concise. You want to capture their interest and not overwhelm them. You can offer to provide more details if they feel this might be a good fit. In your initial email, be sure to include “Fulbright” in your first sentence and even in the subject line, explain your project briefly, and ask if the person can be of help or could refer you to someone else who might. If you are flexible with your project, you may want to reach out early on and ask for advice. The affiliate may help guide your project development. If you know what you want to do and want more control over your project, you may want to wait until you have a well-constructed draft that includes proposed activities and goals. At some point, you will be asked to send a summary or outline, your resume, and likely images of your work. Some affiliates may ask to see your final draft before they will write the letter.

Don't forget about the old school device... the telephone! Email works as a great introduction but applicants often find they make most progress by picking up the phone and having a real conversation.

Be sure to make it clear in your outreach that you are applying to the Fulbright **U.S. Student Program** rather than the Fulbright Scholar program, which is for expert faculty and advanced professionals and usually includes a teaching component. People often get these two programs confused. You want your potential affiliate to understand that through the Fulbright U.S. Student Program you are not seeking payment and you will be engaging as an emerging artist – learning, growing, participating, and exchanging - rather than the expert.

Affiliation Timing

Start early! Obtaining an affiliation letter can be a time-consuming process. Establishing an affiliation requires research, prep work, and usually quite a bit of email communication back and forth. Keep in mind that many countries, particularly European countries, go on holiday in the summer. And holiday means holiday, a real break. Applicants often find they have trouble securing an affiliate in the summer.

By the end of June, you should be in communication with your affiliates and working with them to determine the specific nature of your relationship – activities, coursework, access to facilities and equipment, networking support, and/or collaboration. Having affiliation information is important in order for you to advance your project and proposal writing. In addition, because the feasibility and nature of the project rests on the affiliation, if the affiliation is not secured before the mid-August RISD lock application deadline, RISD may determine to not conduct the interview.

As your affiliate relationship conversations develop, you will need to let them know that you need a letter affirming their support by the mid-August deadline. You may want to provide them with a template for this letter. Securing the letter is not only a Fulbright requirement but the letter ensures this is real. A Professor, who you are in contact with, might be interested and enthusiastic, but they likely have to get administrative or academic approval. There may be others that need to sign off. And, you may have to explain and/or negotiate expectations, purpose, and maybe the difference between the Fulbright Student and Scholar program, often a point of confusion. We have had a few applicants over the years assume everything is in place through verbal and email conversations, but at the last minute find out the Provost or equivalent won't sign the letter.

Affiliation Letters

While extensive affiliation letters are not necessary, outlining important details will make your application more competitive. Keep in mind that the letter is a welcoming gesture rather than a recommendation letter. The role of the affiliate is to provide ongoing and substantive oversight and support to the applicant's project. The affiliation letter should:

- 1) Confirm that the host affiliate will be available during the grant year to mentor the applicant and/or supervise the applicant's work on the proposed project.
- 2) Indicate the host affiliate's understanding of your project, and speak to the feasibility and validity of what you are proposing.
- 3) Show enthusiasm for your work and willingness to work with you on the intended project.
- 4) Indicate how the applicant will be involved in the institution's activities and make note of what they believe you will bring to their work and/or the community.
- 5) Outline what, if required for your project, any equipment, facilities, materials, class/workshop fees, and/or exhibition cost that the affiliate will cover or help you secure.
- 6) Indicate any additional resources or contacts that they can provide to support your work.
- 7) Confirm, if applicable, that courses proposed are held in English and/or host country language courses and support is available.

Letters of affiliation should be scanned versions of the original hard-copy. The letter must be on institutional letterhead and with a hand-written signature. Copies of email correspondence will not be accepted. Letters written in a foreign language must be translated into English, and both the original letters and the English-language translations must be uploaded into the application. Since affiliation letters are not confidential, you will upload the letter yourself into the online application system. Before making a final decision on a Fulbright Semi-Finalist application, the Fulbright review committee will most likely contact affiliates to ensure that support and resources are in place.

PURPOSE STATEMENT – Key Content

This is the heart of your application and where most of your time will be spent. All other application components should support this statement. It needs to be clear, concise, and compelling. As you develop your Purpose Statement, make sure why this country is so important to you and how you will engage with the community really shines.

The Purpose Statement should include ALL the **Fulbright Key Content** below. Use these bullets as headers and respond to each to get started. This is in a sense a way for you to interview yourself. The process will help you develop your project, your writing, and ensure you are developing a compelling Fulbright proposal.

- Consider your audience carefully - reviewers in your field of study, host country experts, government officials in the U.S. and the host country, and the overarching Fulbright board. A variety of people from a variety of backgrounds must understand and connect to your project. **Write for the well-educated person and don't rely on exclusive art/design jargon.**

- **Double check your ending!** Do not wait until the final paragraphs to tell your readers the good stuff. If you see important goal or impact statements at the end, move them up to the first paragraphs.
- Know that while you have to develop **a single, compelling project** that you can explain in a short space, your experience will be broader and deeper than you can imagine, and will go in directions you didn't expect!
- **If you are applying for graduate enrollment**, there will be some differences in the key content as the program, activities, and outcomes are set – its graduate study. You will need to make your case why graduate study AND why Fulbright. It is important that you make a case for how your exploration goes beyond the institution of graduate study. What is the meaningful cross-cultural exchange? Why this country? Why is this graduate program in this specific country unique and the ideal step in your path?

FULBRIGHT OPEN STUDY/RESEARCH - KEY CONTENT – 6,000 Characters with spaces

HOOK / ENTICING INTRODUCTION: A passionate/catchy opening (part or all of the introduction paragraph) to get the reader excited about or intrigued by your topic. Consider starting with a statement, question, story, or visual to draw in your reader. Give the readers a sense of what it is you want to learn and explore. An indirect or direct hit on why this country can be helpful.

WHAT / OVERVIEW: Within the first or second paragraph, provide a 2-3 sentence overview telling the reader what you are going to do. “I propose to X in order to X by doing X at X.” You'll spend later paragraphs explaining the details more fully but this brief what, who, where why statement acts as an index to the rest of your proposal. AND, outline your learning questions and goals for your grant year. Don't wait until the end! What are the questions you want to investigate? Fulbright loves learning questions. “Good research starts with a good question.”

WHY: What is the purpose of your project? Think of the Why section like a funnel. Start with the big picture and then narrow in – from the broader context to country to affiliate to you....

--Why / Context: Provide needed background context and scale to inform the reader. Describe the problem or issue historically and/or currently, and who or what it affects. Include research that supports your statement to show your investment in the topic. Why is this important / relevant – to the environment, to humans, to a community, to your field? What do you know now AND what do you want to explore and learn?

--Why This Country: Identify and defend/explain the location of the project. Why this country? Why is this the perfect place for you to explore your topic? Why this institutional affiliate or advisor? What are they doing in terms of research or in addressing the above problem/issue outlined? This should be straightforward but also bubble up throughout your statements and application essays.

--Who influences you?: Connecting to other artists, designers, and/or researchers can help explain your work and ideas. Acknowledging contemporary artists/designers from the host country not only shows you've done your research but also helps make the why this country connection.

--Why You / Your Experience: What skills/experience do you have to make this possible and make your project a success? In this statement, due to space limits, consider only including skills and experiences directly needed to carry out specific activities proposed. Use the Flexibility & Adaptability Essay to address your readiness for an international experience and cross-cultural communication skills. Use the Language Self-Evaluation to expand on language skills that you need and have, and your learning plans. In addition, use the Arts Experience Summary Essay to address why you.

HOW / PLAN: What exactly will you do and how? What is the nature of the project and what form will it take - formal study (what courses?), study with an expert, independent research, and/or studio or field work? With whom? For whom? Explain how your intended goals outlined above will be realized. Keep your learning questions in mind as this develops – how are the activities you are proposing directly helping you find the answers to the questions on your mind?

--Art/design: Be sure to make it clear how the proposed activities will support you in “improving your craft.” Remember: practicing and producing art should be a key component. Arts applicants can propose research too,

but that research should be through the lens of the arts - practicing, learning, observing, applying, making, and interacting.

--Affiliates and others: How will your affiliates support you – mentorship, supervision, facilities access, resources, networking?

--Exchange Element: What is the exchange element? What might you give back? Consider why did your affiliates agree to work with you? What were they excited about that you could do and share? In addition to being a cultural ambassador and providing a new perspective, is there something specific that you can point to help or advance their work?

--When / Timeline: Outline a chronological breakdown of your plan. This timeline will likely be incorporated into the above how/plan (or it could be a separate paragraph). The time qualifiers can be open estimates such as “in the first two months” or “in the first third of the grant.” While it is hard to be specific when the grant is so far away and there are so many unknowns, the timeline helps prove feasibility. This is where your reviewers can see your project happening.

--Space: The how/plan section is extremely important for reviewers to understand feasibility and support. It should be a large part of your Purpose Statement – usually about half.

SO WHAT / RESULTS OR OUTCOME: What do you see happening at the end of your grant year? How will your work, research, study culminate? Consider skills gained, work to be produced, and how it is shared - exhibition, events, artist talks, and collaborative projects. Be specific as possible but show openness and flexibility. Outcomes here should reflect your goals outlined in the first paragraphs. No new grant year goals should come up at the end. Consider the exchange element. How will your work contribute to your affiliates or host country communities? How might you include your affiliates in the celebration of your accomplishments at the end of the grant year?

IMPACT: While you also have the Impact Essay to address this, and you don’t want to repeat, you may want to conclude with a broader impact statement. What is the bigger picture significance of this experience? How might your work advance your field of study? Consider that Fulbright is interesting in how artistic communities can connect, and share ideas and best practices. What might be your role in creating cross-cultural lines of communication for artists? Long term goals that may become possible because of this grant might work well here as you conclude.

Country Engagement: How will you engage in the host country affiliate organization, community, and culture? Engagement through your project will likely come up in the above How / Plan and you will have the opportunity to address this in the Community Engagement Essay but as cross-cultural interaction is the core of Fulbright be sure there are elements of engagement in this statement too.

ESSAYS – SHORT ANSWERS: Fulfilling the Fulbright Mission

There are three Essays that are extremely important as they help inform the reviewers and provide background and context. While the Purpose Statement is the heart of what you propose to do, think of the Essays as a place to make the case for why you. It is ideal to develop your Essays along with your Purpose Statement because they should work together to support your project and tell your story.

Flexibility & Adaptability – 2,000 Characters WITH Spaces

Please explain how you will adapt to working and living in a new environment in the host country.

*Consider the ways in which you have grown throughout your life that make you the individual you are today.

*How have you demonstrated these qualities in your academic, professional, or personal life?

*Use specific examples from your personal experiences.

Community Engagement – 2,000 Characters WITH Spaces

How will you integrate within and engage with your host community?

- *Consider the ways in which you engage with your U.S. community (through extracurricular activities, hobbies, or volunteering), and how you can engage with these ideas and practices while on grant.
- *In what unique ways do you plan to share your culture and values in your host community and learn from others?
- *How do your lived experiences prepare you to represent the United States as a cultural ambassador?
- *Provide specific examples.

Impact of Fulbright Award – 1,000 Characters WITH Spaces

An objective of the Fulbright Program is to: “support activities and projects with broad multiplier effects. As a relatively small number of persons can participate in any of these, it is desirable that they be persons who are or who are likely to be in positions to share their experiences and knowledge with others.” Describe your career and/or educational plans after completing a Fulbright grant.

- *How will your Fulbright experience help you reach these future goals?
- *How will you share your Fulbright experience with your community upon your return from the grant?

PORTFOLIO (Study/Research Creative & Performing Arts Only)

Your Portfolio is a critical component of the application. In fact, applications in the arts category are reviewed by the Fulbright U.S. Screening Committee by discipline, which means art and design experts will be reviewing your proposal and often look at your Portfolio first. As per the Fulbright website: **“Arts applicants should understand that they will be evaluated first and foremost on their technical and artistic skills within their artistic disciplines.”**

Review the requirements and uploading instructions carefully and early on in the process in case you need to consider new works or new documentation of your work.

<https://us.fulbrightonline.org/required-supplementary-materials-for-arts-applicants>

Portfolio Tips:

- Host country reviewers may not be artists or designers. Consider how your work might be reviewed to an untrained eye and consider that your images also act as a cultural ambassador – what will the host country think of your work?
- Solicit critiques from a professor or professional artists in terms of how your images demonstrate your artistic skills.
- Make the connection to your grant project. This may not be the time to submit a gallery-ready portfolio but rather focus on the fit with your project. Your images should support your proposal and vice versa. Consider this statement by Fulbright reviewers “Strong work is important. However, not-so-strong work may be overcome by a project that shows trajectory and demonstrates strong execution of the project.”
- Take advantage of any opportunity to explain your work – in the portfolio narrative and image descriptions.
- Curate the order thoughtfully.
- Consider the inclusion of image details – 1-2 detail or installation shots are fine but don’t keep showing the same image.
- Consider showing your work in its environment – on the wall, in the room, in a gallery or installation space. Not for each piece but maybe 1-2 at the end of your portfolio. This view provides reviewers perspective and gives them insight into the broader intentions of the artist and of the work.
- Consider 1-2 images that show process and/or collaboration especially if that is important to your work and/or is an aspect of your proposed Fulbright project.
- Consider single image versus collage. There needs to be reason for more than one view of an image, otherwise it seems like “sneaking” in additional pieces to gain an advantage. There can be a few collage images where it makes sense but too many is overwhelming and diminishes the look of the whole piece as a single image. Reviewers may be more open to a few collages if applying under Design, and Architecture is the obvious exception as you submit an architecture portfolio.
- Present your work in a professional manner with high-quality images.

- Pay attention to the required size, number, and resolution.
- Title the images clearly, appropriately, and consistently.
- Make sure images work across platforms – Mac/Windows.

Portfolio narrative responses are also required. Do consider this additional narrative as an important place to talk about your work. Develop your narrative in a word/text document so you can edit and revise as needed.

- **ARTS EXPERIENCE SUMMARY:** Prepare a summary of your practical study, training, and experience specific to the proposed project.
- **PORTFOLIO DESCRIPTION:** Describe your portfolio as a whole. “How you selected the piece(s) submitted; relevance to your proposed project; time frame, location, or other descriptive details; developmental trajectory vs single series; or other information that will tell reviewers what they are looking at/listening to and why. “ You may describe collaborative efforts here or in the Image Description.
- **IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS:** In addition to fields for image title, size, and medium you have the opportunity to include a short narrative description. USE this space! Especially your non-art reviewers will want to know what is going on - how? why? what were you thinking? Be sure to include year/dates of execution, method of production, and/or specific role played. Anything submitted that is not entirely your own work must be clearly identified.

Your Portfolio will not be the focus of your RISD Interview (see below) as your Purpose Statement is the heart of your proposal. However, you will receive feedback on your Portfolio to ensure you are meeting the Fulbright requirements, the order is appropriate, the identification is clear, and the overall content is a strong fit for your proposal.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

Review the host countries language requirements early on in the process. This may even be a factor that helps you narrow your country choices. Some countries do not have a language requirement but encourage language study, some require a certain amount of study and level of ability before the grant commences, and some require that the language requirement is met AT the time of application. The closer you are to meeting this requirement the more competitive your application will be. Language skills are a factor in the decision as feasibility of the project is paramount. 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.

In cases where an applicant does not have the skills at the time of application, they must outline how they will gain those skills before and during their experience. Not having the language skills, may result in a less competitive application, however, if the reviewers love the proposal, they may be willing to be flexible on language skills at the time of application (unless it is required). If the applicant is selected as a Finalist, they may be required to prove they have done what they proposed in terms of language study and can meet the requirement before the grant begins. The Finalist may be required to submit a professional language evaluation showing they meet the requirement before the grant will be awarded.

There are two language forms as part of the application process. If language skills are Recommended or Not Required, the forms are not required but it would be advantageous and is highly recommend that you submit both forms. At the very least, considering submitting the Language Self-Evaluation (LSE) form so you can show your interest in host country language learning. For programs where language skills are Required, both forms must be submitted.

Foreign Language Evaluation (FLE) Evaluation Form:

The Foreign Language Evaluation (FLE) should be completed by a professional language teacher, preferably a university professor. Determine who your evaluator will be and walk them through the process. You can find the instructions for evaluators at: <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/instructions-for-foreign-language-evaluators>

The FLE, if applicable, should be completed as soon as possible. If you have the FLE early, you may be able to find out how you rate and have the opportunity to “test” again. Although the FLE form is submitted online and you do not have access to it, an evaluator will likely provide you the results and feedback.

Language Self-Evaluation (LSE) Form:

- Talk about what you have done in terms of language study so far and what you plan to do to bring your language skills up before the grant would commence. This could range from intensive coursework to learning basic greetings and travel language to enhance your experience, result in a richer experience, and/or support your research.
- Talk about what you might do during your grant year to help you better engage in the community. While this is not a language study program grant, you may propose to take a course or engage in conversation classes or clubs.
- You can talk about what level of language skills you believe you will need to be successful or you can mention that you have confirmed with your affiliate that you will be able to communicate in English.
- You can talk about your abilities in other languages, how you learn languages, or how you communicate when you don’t know the language.

RECOMMENDATIONS

You will need three recommendations to complete the Fulbright application. Without THREE recommendations you will not be able to successfully submit your application. Manage this process carefully as after all your hard work on your proposal, it would be incredibly unfortunate if this ended up being an application barrier.

Get recommenders on board early in your process so they can hold time on their calendars for this work. Recommendations letters take a few hours to write. It is hard for busy people to find that chunk of time without quite a bit of notice. Your recommenders will appreciate having time to prepare their letter.

Recommendation Tips:

- 3 recommendations are required.
- Not all 3 of your recommenders have to be academic or from RISD. Consider a balance.
- Ideally, choose recommenders who will speak to different skills, experiences, and interests in order to maximize your story. You wouldn't want 3 recommenders all saying the same thing.
- The recommenders should be the three individuals who can best speak to your ability to carry out the project proposed.
- They should speak to any or all of the following:
 - Your ability to carry out the project being proposed, including your intellectual and professional preparation
 - Your ability to adapt to the host country and to engage with the community there
 - Your ability to represent the U.S. abroad and be a cultural ambassador
 - The impact the Fulbright grant would have on you academically, professionally, and/or personally
- Provide recommenders with a draft or sections of your proposal so they can write a well-informed letter but please do not wait until your proposal is final. Let them know that when your proposal is final you will most definitely send them a copy and that you will keep them informed of your progress.
- Letters of support should be on letterhead, meaning a document with a formalized header and contact information of their organization or company, or, for individuals, it could be on their personal stationary. Letters of support that are not on letterhead or missing signatures is not a good reflection on the recommender or their institution in the international community.
- Ensure ALL 3 recommendation have uploaded their letter into the online application well in advance of the deadline.

- Know that once a recommender uploads their letter or form there is no way for you (or me) to delete it. The only way to delete a recommendation letter is for the recommender to contact Fulbright technical support for the online application.

TRANSCRIPTS

Request and/or gather transcripts from all schools you have attended well in advance. This process can take time and you do not want to be worrying about this near the deadline. While Fulbright does not require “official” transcripts (official transcript means: it did not pass through your hands; it is watermarked, in sealed envelope, etc.; it was sent directly from the Registrar’s Office to the organization) at this point in the application process, you do need **a copy of your transcripts from a Registrar’s Office.**

The RISD transcripts that you can access in Workday will NOT work for your Fulbright application as they do not contain enough information (this version does not include the school name). Not including an appropriate transcript is one of the top reasons an application is rejected and not even reviewed by Fulbright.

You will need to order transcripts from the Registrar’s Office at RISD and any other schools you have attended, have it sent to yourself, and upload it into the online application. Make sure it is neat and legible, and right side up, portrait. It can be portrait or landscape but make sure it is not sideways. This can take some time as transcripts often have backgrounds that are not easily scanned. This can take some time as transcripts often have backgrounds that are not easily scanned.

THE ONLINE APPLICATION – Fields, Lists, Questions

The online application is really long! In addition to the Essays noted above, there are various field and lists to complete, and questions to respond to. **It is extremely important that you start your Fulbright Online Application early** so you can familiarize yourself with the process, the format, the required fields, and the many additional questions.

This is an application “package” and all components should be thoughtful, not rushed or last minute. **Fulbright reviewers read and consider everything in your application.** You want to have strong, neat, consistent application package from beginning to end - in both content and in formatting.

This is your opportunity to show that you are well-rounded individual. Your extra-curricular activities, awards, internships, and employment are important to your application and can help make your case that you will be an excellent U.S. cultural ambassador in various ways and in various communities. Be sure to emphasize your activities and skills OUTSIDE your area of study, and your “soft” skills like communication, leadership, adaptability, and maturity.

July to mid-August is the time for developing ALL your application materials. Not only the Purpose Statement and the three major Essays, but all the application fields and your portfolio. Prepare your responses off-line as you will most likely revise them a few times. **Review and carefully double check, triple check, EACH section of the application and EVERY uploaded document.** We strongly recommend you have someone on board to help proof all the components of your application.

RISD APPLICATION PACKAGE REVIEW AND INTERVIEW

Applicants applying through RISD have the opportunity to receive a full application package review, a portfolio review, and an interview with a committee of RISD faculty and staff who are familiar with Fulbright's mission and process and/or have experience in international exploration.

Application And Portfolio Review Purpose:

This is the dress rehearsal! I will conduct a comprehensive review of your application package from end-to-end and provide feedback in writing. I will also arrange for a review of your portfolio and provide that feedback in writing.

Interview Purpose:

The purpose of the interview is to confirm you are the person behind the application, and to determine if the applicant is prepared to carry out their proposed project and thrive in the host country. The interview purpose is not for proposal guidance, critique, or editing. Interviewers evaluate based on the application packages submitted and the applicant's articulation of their ideas and interests during the interview. Also, the purpose is not to make decisions. RISD is not a gatekeeper. Interviewers may offer recommendations, resources, and advice to improve your experience if you receive the grant.

Interviewers will have these questions on their mind:

- Is the project and ideas yours - your passion, your voice, your work? (Not heavily edited or guided by others.
- Is why this particular country clear, strong, and compelling?
- Are you prepared for the activities proposed but there is also exciting room for growth in the grant field of study?
- Do you have a feasible, thoughtful, realistic project and the support you need to be successful?
- Do you have a plan but are flexible and open?
- Are you prepared for a new cultural experience and navigating the unfamiliar?
- Are you excited to engage in the community beyond their project interests and have ideas on how they might do this?

Process:

- RISD applicants will LOCK their application for the mid-August RISD deadline. You want your application package for the application LOCK RISD reviews and interview to be strong and complete so interviewers to reflect your final work, not a draft. After the interview, you will be fine-tuning only, and this final stage is up to you.
- We will provide a comprehensive review of your application package, a portfolio review, and arrange for a campus interview. You will review the application review and portfolio review in writing within 2-3 weeks, before the interview period.
- The interview is approximately 20-30 minutes via Zoom and consists of questions from and conversations with the Committee. You will be interviewed by 2-3 RISD faculty or professional staff members who may not represent the discipline of your proposal project. We reach out to a broad range of faculty and staff to join the RISD Interview Committee based on their experience, interest in, or commitment to cross cultural engagement, and/or their understanding of the impact of the Fulbright mission. Faculty and staff self-select their participation on the Committee based on their time and availability. The start of the semester is an incredibly busy time and we don't have the ability to curate the interviews to match your projects or discipline. Coordinating the interviews is tricky – simultaneously faculty and staff are signing up to interview and you are signing up to be interviewed, plus I'm very busy at this critical stage. So... interviews come together based on date/time and availability of all involved. Our RISD interviews actually reflect Fulbright reviews, particularly at the host country review stage, where your application will be reviewed by a well-educated, varied audience, likely not in your discipline. We are grateful for the time, energy, and unique perspectives of our interviewers.

SUBMITTING

After your RISD interview....

- You will determine what fine-tuning/minor changes you want to make to your application. This stage is up to you. It is very important that at this stage you make limited, select, thoughtful changes as re-developing your proposal at this point is not a good idea. Do not turn to professionals or AI. We have found that this waters down your proposal as you lose your unique touches and voice. Fulbright wants to hear from you.
- I will be available for advising only, providing guidance via email and advising appointments. I'm happy to look at application sections with you but I won't be providing in-depth reviews like we do in the summer. This is because we want to be fair to all applicants and because this is your application, your project, your ideas, your process.

Then you submit...

- Final application should be submitted a week before the national deadline.
- This early submission is strongly recommended as we have found, through years of experience, that an earlier deadline is critical in ensuring successful submission. Fulbright will not accept late applications for any reason. Submitting early allows you to mitigate various unforeseen problems.

NOTIFICATION

You will be notified by the end of January/early February if you are a Semi-Finalist and your proposal has been recommended for host country consideration. The final decisions will be announced sometime between March and June.

Don't forget to thank your recommenders and affiliates. Let them know when your application was submitted and keep them updated along the way.

No matter the result, the Fulbright application process is an experience in itself! You will learn valuable grant writing skills and how to articulate your ideas, expand your project development skills, develop connections overseas, and re-consider your work and your path in new ways.