

Improving Your Fulbright Application

Remember that your project proposal statement and personal statement work together to answer the questions “What now?” and “Why now?”: what is your proposed project, and why is now the perfect time in your professional career to undertake it? For the Fulbright (and other international opportunities), you must also demonstrate the absolute need to undertake your project abroad. Below are more specific questions that can help guide your essays.

Project Proposal:

Where exactly will you be carrying out your work? In what archives, lab, etc.? What resources (physical or human) will you need to access, and how will you gain access to them? How will you make the necessary contacts, etc.? What part does your affiliation play in your plan?

How will you carry out your work? What will your methods be? Quantitative/qualitative/ textual analysis/comparative etc.?

What is your project timeline? Do you have a contingency plan or an appropriate way to address unknowns?

What are your language qualifications, precisely? What courses, examinations, certificates, etc. do you have in the target language?

What are your qualifications? What coursework or previous research has prepared you to undertake this current project?

Is this absolutely the most logical step in your project? Can you go no further without this study? Will there be any result to this project - an article, thesis, dissertation, exhibit, book, etc.?

What is the broader impact of this project? What is your intervention in your field, for example, and who else might be interested in or affected by the outcome? What will scholars be able to understand better once it's published, etc.? How might it change our understanding of (fill in the blank)?

How will the culture and politics of the host country impact your research and its outcome?

Personal statement:

What experiences have you had that led you to this particular project?

What draws you to this particular culture, and to other cultures in general?

In what kinds of situations have you demonstrated flexibility and adaptability?

How can you become involved in the local community in a way that relates to your own personal interests?

How does this project fit in with your personal trajectory (from student to faculty member, for example)?

Keep in mind that your essays should be precise and concise. You need to efficiently establish context for your project and demonstrate its significance. Each paragraph in your essay should have an obvious purpose and convey focus. You should exhibit a clear understanding of the relevance of your project, the logistics of your research plan, and the aims of the Fulbright program.