



THE FULBRIGHT SCHOLARSHIP • 2027-2028

The Fulbright Essay Companion

A walk-through of both Fulbright essays. The official guide tells you what each one must cover. I show you how to answer it well. You write every word yourself.

Built on the official 2027/2028 essay guidelines from the U.S. Embassy in Port of Spain, with what I learned writing my own winning essays.

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READ THIS BEFORE YOU WRITE A WORD

What each essay needs, and how to approach it

Every word you submit has to be your own. Fulbright disqualifies any application with plagiarism, even one borrowed line. Use the prompts to organise your thinking, then write it in your own voice.

Each essay below follows the official guidelines exactly, the order of the moves, what each one must cover, and the rules. Under each official requirement I've added a note on how to actually land it. Answer the questions in your own words and you'll have a real draft.

THE RULES FOR BOTH ESSAYS

Three lines you never cross

- One page minimum, two pages maximum.
- Do not name any universities or faculty. School preferences go in the application form, not the essay. (I never named a single school in mine.)
- Your own words. Cite anything that isn't yours.

ESSAY 1

Study Objective

What you want to study, and why you're a fit. Build it in five moves.

1

MOVE ONE

OFFICIAL REQUIREMENT

Name your objective, exactly

Be specific about your degree objective, your major field, and your specialised interests within that field.

MY NOTE

Open with the precise thing. "A Master's in X, focused on Y" lands far better than "graduate study in development." Being specific shows you have thought it through.

Ask yourself. What exact degree and field? What narrow slice of it do I care about most?

2

MOVE TWO

OFFICIAL REQUIREMENT

Say why this area

Explain why you are interested in this area of study or research.

MY NOTE

Tie it to something real you've seen or done, not a general passion. The reason should feel earned, like it came from your actual life and work.

Ask yourself. What pulled me here? What experience made this matter to me?

3

MOVE THREE

OFFICIAL REQUIREMENT

Describe the programme you expect

What kind of programme do you expect to undertake? How does it fit your background and your future goals? Theoretical or practical, technical or policy?

MY NOTE

This is where you prove you understand what you're signing up for. Show the programme is the logical next step from where you have been, toward where you are going. Describe the type of programme. Schools never go in the essay.

Ask yourself. What kind of training do I need? How does it connect my past to my plan?

4

MOVE FOUR

OFFICIAL REQUIREMENT

Connect it to T&T

How are your research interests relevant to current trends or challenges in your home country?

MY NOTE

Name a real problem in Trinidad and Tobago, concretely. The committee is funding someone who'll come back and matter here. Make that link impossible to miss.

Ask yourself. What specific challenge at home does my field speak to right now?

5

MOVE FIVE

OFFICIAL REQUIREMENT

Say how you'll use it back home

How will you apply your studies upon returning to your home country?

MY NOTE

Be concrete enough that a reader can picture it. Remember the two-year return is required, so this should read like a real plan, not a vague hope.

Ask yourself. When I'm back, what will I actually do with this degree, and who does it serve?

ESSAY 2

Personal Statement

Who you are and where you're going. A narrative, in four moves.

1

MOVE ONE

OFFICIAL REQUIREMENT

Show who you are

Explain who you are, what is important to you, and what you intend to accomplish in your life.

MY NOTE

Don't open with "I have always been passionate about." Open on a real moment or scene from your life that shows what you value. Let the reader meet you, not your résumé.

Ask yourself. What's one true moment that says who I am? What do I actually care about?

2

MOVE TWO

OFFICIAL REQUIREMENT

Show your qualifications and what shaped you

Demonstrate your unique qualifications for your field. Discuss the experiences, people, and events that inspired you to pursue it.

MY NOTE

Connect the dots between your story and your field. Show the pattern, the choices, work, and people that kept pointing you here. This is the throughline of the whole essay.

Ask yourself. What experiences and people led me to this field? What makes me, specifically, right for it?

3

MOVE THREE

OFFICIAL REQUIREMENT

Show your commitment

Demonstrate your commitment to your field of study.

MY NOTE

Prove you were serious before you applied. What have you already done in this field, with no scholarship attached? Action is more convincing than enthusiasm.

Ask yourself. What have I already done that shows I'm in this for real?

4

MOVE FOUR

OFFICIAL REQUIREMENT

Say what you'll do with it

What kind of contribution do you want to make? What do you intend to do with your degree?

MY NOTE

Close on the contribution. This is where the Personal Statement and the Study Objective shake hands, both point home. End with the difference you intend to make.

Ask yourself. What contribution do I want my life to make? What's the degree in service of?

BEFORE YOU SUBMIT EITHER ESSAY

Three final checks

- Read it out loud. If it doesn't sound like you, rewrite it until it does.
- Check that no schools are named, it's under two pages, and every word is yours.
- Hand it to someone who will be honest with you. Let them tell you what is vague.

The Writing Sample

Required for PhD applicants and some Master's fields. Skip this if your field doesn't ask for it.

Use a piece of work you already have, one that shows how you think. It should sit in your field, ideally in the exact area you're applying for, and run 10 to 20 pages including a cover page and bibliography.

WHAT IT SHOULD SHOW

Pick your strongest work

The sample should be your best work, the kind that makes your application stronger. It needs to read well and show a solid grasp of English, reflect how you analyse and reason, and show you can handle a complex topic.

MY NOTE

Choose the piece you're proudest of, the one where your thinking is sharpest. This is a chance to prove on paper what your essays only describe.

WHAT COUNTS

Published or original, both work

You can use a published work or an original piece. If it's published, you should be the lead author and it should come from a peer-reviewed publication. If it's original, a chapter from a thesis or a senior project paper works well.

CITATION STYLE BY FIELD

Match your discipline

Different fields expect different writing and citation styles. Use the one for yours.

HUMANITIES, LIBERAL &
FINE ARTS

MLA

SOCIAL SCIENCES,
EDUCATION, BIOLOGICAL &
EARTH SCIENCES, BUSINESS,
LINGUISTICS, ANTHROPOLOGY

APA

SCIENCES

CSE (formerly CBE)

EVERYTHING ELSE

Chicago Manual of Style