



Michigan State University Application Timeline for Fulbright US Student Program Awards

(Fall 2026 Applications for 2027-2028 Grants)

Applications Open: April 1 | MSU Intent to Apply Deadline: July 15
MSU Deadline: September 1 | National Deadline: October 6

“Course” Description

From the Founder

“
Educational exchange can turn nations into people, contributing as no other form of communication can to the humanizing of international relations.

- J. William Fulbright

Welcome to ***Fulbright Applications 101!*** Think of this document as a syllabus, providing an overview of the weeks and months ahead as you work to produce a high-quality, competitive Fulbright application. **Read it carefully and refer to it often.**

In terms of the number of hours you will need to devote to the process, imagine this as a one-credit course running from May to mid-October. I provide “lectures” in the form of videos and “readings” as handouts, tip sheets, and samples from past applicants. Your “homework” is to keep up with internal deadlines and let me know when you have questions.

The Fulbright US Student Program (FUSP) application process is lengthy; applicants are encouraged to engage in reflection and thoughtful conversations with faculty mentors, advisors, colleagues, and peers throughout the process. **It can—and should—take months to compile a competitive application.**

Once the application process begins in earnest, you can expect emails from me about every two weeks from May through July. These emails will contain information about application sections, tips, and upcoming deadlines. **You will have interim deadlines throughout the summer.** In August, you will begin hearing from me more frequently as the campus deadline approaches.

Contact Information

Fulbright Program Advisor: [Joy Campbell](#) | she/her
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216 International Center



Scan to learn why I love my job!

MSU Fulbright Website: <https://www.isp.msu.edu/fulbright>



Scheduling Meetings: **Drop in:** I'm on campus most days; feel free to pop by my office to see if I'm available.
Meetings: Use my [Calendly link](#) to set up an appointment if you want to guarantee the time.

Schedule a meeting!

MSU Fulbright History

- MSU's first student Fulbright grantee went to the Netherlands in 1949; since then, **over 240 Spartans have won Fulbright US Student Program awards** to over 70 countries.
- Over 500 faculty members have received Fulbright Scholar awards**, to dozens of countries.
- MSU has been named a Fulbright Top Producing Institution by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* for student grants in multiple past years (most recently for the 2024-25 academic year), and a Top Producing Institution for scholar (faculty) grants for eleven of the past twelve years (most recently for the 2025-26 academic year).

First Steps

- Fill out MSU's [Fulbright Program Interest Survey](#)** to give the MSU Fulbright Program Advisor (**FPA**) some background information and let her know you want to learn more!
- Familiarize yourself with the [MSU Fulbright website](#) (campus-specific information and resources)
- Explore the [Fulbright US Student Program website](#) (comprehensive information on every aspect of the program, as well as the link to begin an application).
- When you have confirmed your intent to apply, **you will receive a link to MSU's comprehensive Fulbright resources website**, which includes an entire collection of handouts, videos, and samples to help you through the application process.

Purpose of this Timeline

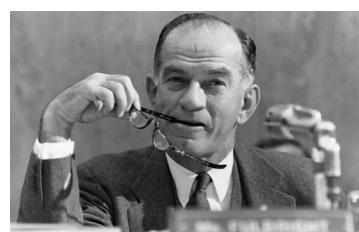
The following pages include a timeline for prospective Fulbright applicants, with interim summer deadlines and goals to keep you on track throughout the lengthy application process. This timeline applies to both the English Teaching Assistant (**ETA**) and Study/Research (**SR**) awards; some deadlines vary for different award types.

If you are beginning the process after some of these dates have passed, don't panic. Use this document to keep yourself organized as you work at a pace that makes sense for you and allows you to meet the MSU and national deadlines. You can jump around in the timeline as well; you do not necessarily have to complete these tasks in the order listed.

That said, if you have not begun to focus diligently on the application process by mid-summer, you are encouraged to wait until next year's competition. Alumni are welcome to work with the FPA for guidance up to five years after graduation. Alumni who matriculate to another institution within five years should work with that institution's FPA.

Pro Tip

The program is named after Senator J. William Fulbright (pictured). He served in Congress from 1943-1974 representing the state of Arkansas.



The program name is not spelled "Fullbright" or "Full Bright."

As Needed Throughout Process

- Contact the FPA with any questions** (see [MSU Fulbright website](#) and the first page of this document for contact information).
- Watch for regular emails from the FPA; emails will include information, tips, and deadlines for each stage of the application process.
- Connect with fellow applicants at MSU and/or nationwide via the FPA, Slack, GroupMe, Reddit, WhatsApp, and social media if desired.
- Check for [upcoming MSU Fulbright workshops](#) or information sessions.
- Visit the [Fulbright US Student Program website](#) regularly for updates and helpful information throughout the process.
- Check for [upcoming Fulbright webinars](#) on pertinent topics (e.g., award types, geographic regions, specific applicant demographics such as first-gen college students, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, veterans).
- Check for [recorded Fulbright webinars](#) you may have missed to see if there are new recordings that would be useful to watch.

Spring Semester

For those who like to plan way ahead, you can use some spare time during spring semester to begin doing some research on Fulbright awards, countries, and application components.

January/February/March/April

- Check the [MSU Fulbright website](#) for any **upcoming information sessions** to get them on your calendar. Usually identical sessions are offered once each in March, April, and May.
- Familiarize yourself with Fulbright basics** by watching the 10-minute [General Overview to the Fulbright US Student Program](#), then the video for whichever type of program you plan to pursue.
- Read [Fulbright's "Getting Started" page](#) to **confirm your eligibility** for the program and learn about different awards.
- Begin reviewing available countries.** Note that countries may vary slightly from year to year, with updates made when the competition opens in early April.
- Explore the Fulbright statistics page** to see data on the past three years of applications and awards. This gives you an idea of how competitive various countries and awards are.
- Research Fulbright Alumni Ambassadors** to see if there are Ambassadors who worked in countries you are interested in or who did projects related to your ideas. Reach out to them for input if you like.

Pro Tip

*Focus on finals—you don't have to start your application right away in April. Some applicants really like to plan ahead, but **you can get through spring semester and still have plenty of time.***



Summer Semester: May

- Attend or watch a recording of the FPA's information session** for this application cycle. (These are offered in March, April, and May; the May version will be recorded and linked on the [MSU Fulbright website](#).)
- Watch FPA video giving a **brief tour of the Fulbright website**.
- Watch FPA video on **tips for selecting your host country and award**.
- Finalize the host country** to which you will apply.
- Finalize the award type** for which you will apply (e.g., ETA, open study/research, any sub-types or named awards).

Pro Tip

*MSU deadlines are designed to keep you on track throughout the summer; that said, life happens! You might have a long-awaited trip, a family reunion, your sister's wedding... **communicate with the FPA** if you're going to miss a deadline and provide a new target date.*

If you decide that you no longer want to apply for a Fulbright, tell me! I promise I won't be mad; I just need to keep my records updated.



No ghosting, please!

What to Expect: Summer Communication

You will receive regular emails from the FPA throughout the summer. They will be sent about every two weeks during May and June, then about weekly as the deadline nears.



If you want to "work ahead" and don't yet have access to a resource mentioned anywhere in this document, just ask the FPA!

All MSU applicants are also given the link to MSU's Fulbright resources website, which includes curated, comprehensive materials to guide you through the application process.

- Watch FPA video with **tips for getting started with your online application**.
- Once you are certain you are going to apply**, [create an account with Fulbright](#) to begin your application.
 - Selecting MSU as your institution links your application to the FPA.
- Begin drafting your "Flexibility and Adaptability" short answer response.**
 - The FPA will provide various guidance documents and samples of responses from past applicants.
 - Feel free to work with Writing Center consultants to brainstorm about and outline your Flexibility and Adaptability response.
- By May 29 (ETA and SR):**
 - Complete **Preliminary Questions screen** in portal
 - Complete **Country & Award selection screen** in portal
 - Complete **Personal Information screen** in portal
 - Complete **Contact Information screen** in portal

Summer Semester: June

- By June 5 (ETA)/June 12 (SR):**
 - Send first draft of “Flexibility and Adaptability” short answer response to FPA.
- Watch FPA video with **tips for completing the Academic Information and Awards & Achievements screens** in portal.
- By June 19 (ETA and SR):**
 - Complete **Academic Information screen** in portal
 - Complete **Awards & Achievements screen** in portal
- For **SR** applicants
 - Watch FPA video **about how to find an affiliate in your host country and obtain a letter of affiliation.**
 - Begin making contacts with potential institutions to provide a letter of affiliation. This process can take several months. Seek input from your faculty advisor and other professors as needed. The [area studies centers at MSU](#) may also be able to provide connections.
- Once you have received feedback from the FPA, **share a draft of your “Flexibility and Adaptability” response with at least one more person** for feedback (e.g., friend, roommate, advisor, professor, Writing Center consultant, Career Services Network advisor)
 - Further refine draft.
 - **Feel free to send a second draft of your “Flexibility and Adaptability” short answer response to the FPA** at any time.
- Begin drafting your Statement of Grant Purpose.**
 - The FPA will provide various guidance documents and samples of Statements of Grant Purpose from past applicants.
 - Watch the [MSU Fulbright website](#) for any upcoming writing sessions or “write-ins.”
 - Feel free to work with Writing Center consultants to brainstorm about and outline your Statement of Grant Purpose.
- By June 26 (ETA)/July 3 (SR):**
 - Send first draft of Statement of Grant Purpose to FPA.

What to Expect: Submitting Drafts

The preferred format for submitting drafts is via email as a Microsoft Word document attachment.

Include your name and the type of draft in the file name (e.g., “Flexibility Adaptability - Hayden Bauer” or “Community Engagement Rowen Singh”).

Do not send PDFs.

If you must use Google Docs instead:

- *Include your name and the type of draft in the file name (as in above examples).*
- *Make sure to give access and editing permissions to joycamp@msu.edu.*
- *Email the FPA to let her know you have shared a document.*



Summer Semester: July

- Watch FPA video about **how to choose and invite recommendation writers**.
 - Identify your three recommenders.
 - Contact them to ask if they are willing to complete an online recommendation form (**ETA**) or upload a written letter of recommendation (**SR**).
- Watch FPA video about **how to determine if you need a self-evaluation or FLE and how to find a foreign language evaluator**.
 - If required for your proposed award, identify an instructor to conduct the evaluation.
- By July 15: Confirm your intent to apply for a Fulbright award this year with the FPA (if not already done).**
- Watch FPA video with **tips for completing the Professional Information screen** in portal.
- Watch FPA video with **tips for completing the Experience Abroad section** in portal.
- By July 17 (ETA and SR):**
 - Complete **Professional Information screen** in portal
 - Complete **Experience Abroad section** in portal
- Request post-secondary transcripts as needed** (ensure spring semester grades are included).
Transcripts may be unofficial versions; if you are named a semifinalist, you may need to provide an official copy at that time. This [handout](#) explains how to obtain MSU transcripts.

Pro Tip

 If a language evaluation is not required, but you have experience with the language of your host country, completing the self-evaluation and a formal language evaluation can **make your application more competitive**.

What to Expect: Feedback

Turnaround time for FPA feedback is usually about a week. If it takes longer, feel free to email a friendly reminder! Sometimes emails get lost or misfiled!

Feedback will be given by using **Track Changes** in Word or **Suggestions** in Google Docs. For Word, the FPA will copy the file and add "jmc" (her initials) to the file name (e.g., "Sage Flores Abstract jmc").

Once you have received feedback, feel free to set up an appointment to talk through any questions!

- Once you have received feedback from the FPA, **share a draft of your Statement of Grant Purpose with at least one more person** for feedback (e.g., friend, roommate, advisor, professor, Writing Center consultant, Career Services Network advisor)
 - Further refine draft.
 - **Feel free to send a second draft of your Statement of Grant Purpose to the FPA** at any time.
- Using resources provided by the FPA and from the Fulbright website, draft the "Community Engagement" portion of the online application.
 - **By July 24 (ETA and SR):** Send draft of "Community Engagement" portion to FPA.

Michigan State University | International Studies & Programs | <http://isp.msu.edu/fulbright>
Fulbright Program Advisor & Scholar Liaison | Joy Campbell | joycamp@msu.edu | 517.884.2167

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Summer into Fall Semester: August

- Send reminders if needed for reference letters and language evaluation (give them the MSU internal deadline of September 1, not the national deadline in October).
- Using resources provided by the FPA and from the Fulbright website, draft the “Impact of Fulbright Award” portion of the online application.
 - **By July 31 (ETA and SR):** Send draft of “Impact of Fulbright Award” portion to FPA.
- For open study/research applicants: Follow up if needed on letter of affiliation.
- Share drafts of your revised “Flexibility and Adaptability” short answer response and Statement of Grant Purpose with at least one more person for feedback and further refine your drafts.
 - Be aware that the Writing Center closes from mid-August to early September for semester break and staff training; Writing Center consultants also partner with the East Lansing Public Library for the [Community Writing Center](#) (CWC). The CWC remains open during the Writing Center’s annual August closure and may be a good alternative for last-minute advice before the MSU Fulbright deadline.
- Using your almost-final statements, resources provided by the FPA, and the Fulbright website, draft the “Abstract/Summary of the Proposal” portion of the online application.
 - The FPA will provide various guidance documents and samples of short answer questions from past applicants.
 - **By August 14 (ETA and SR):** Send draft of “Abstract” portion to FPA.
- Finalize online application.

Fall Semester: September

- September 1: MSU deadline for all applicants, ETA and SR**
 - **Lock your application using the “Ready for Campus Review” section in the online Fulbright application;** this submits it to MSU’s FPA. This will temporarily lock your application and no changes can be made until it is unlocked by the FPA (though recommenders are still able to submit their materials). You are also able to unlock it yourself if necessary (e.g., the unlikely but never impossible “FPA gets hit by a bus” scenario).

What to Expect: Locking on September 1

*You will lock your complete application for campus review through the Fulbright online portal on September 1. This means **all** your statements, the online portions like past travel and jobs, your transcript, and as many of your letters and language evals as possible.*

Why? Because a complete application packet gives your campus readers the fullest possible picture of you as a candidate.



Also, you’ll be busy settling into fall semester!

- Participate in required Campus Committee micro-mentoring conversation (held via Zoom) to receive feedback on complete application.
 - **The campus conversation is a great advantage to you; based on this discussion, the FPA will complete a form called the Campus Committee Evaluation, which is essentially an extra letter of recommendation.**
 - Your application will be unlocked following the discussion so you can make changes.
- Refine short answer responses, Statement of Grant Purpose, and rest of application based on Campus Committee input.
- Gather any necessary final materials for submission.

Fall Semester: October

- October 6: National deadline for all applicants, ETA and SR**
 - Submit your online application well before 5:00pm ET—no late applications are accepted for any reason.
 - We have had applicants try submitting as late as 4:55pm and not make the deadline. This may have been due to server slowdowns or to their computer clock being different from the server clock, but **don't risk it. Submit early!**
- You did it!** Connect with fellow applicants at MSU and/or nationwide via Slack, GroupMe, Reddit, WhatsApp, and social media if desired. This can help you feel like you have some community as you wait for the next steps.

Pro Tip



Be aware that the application portal slows down markedly the last few days as traffic increases—plan ahead!

After the National Deadline

Pro Tip

Settle in for a long wait and try to find Zen in knowing it's out of your hands!



November/December

- Applications are reviewed by National Screening Committees for each world region.

January

- Semifinalists notified (by end of month—the majority usually go out in bulk at the very end of January)** that their applications are moving to the next step; applicants not selected to advance are also notified by the end of January.

February/March

- Semifinalist applications are reviewed by host country Fulbright Commissions and other in-country stakeholders.** Zoom/Skype/phone interviews may be conducted, though this varies widely by country and program. The FPA can let you know past interview trends for your host country, though things can change from year to year.

Late March through May

- Finalists and alternates are notified; notification dates vary widely by country. **Many notifications go out around April 15, but some still come in at the end of April and into May,** with the last few coming through the summer.
- Applicants who were not selected as either finalists or alternates are also notified on a rolling basis by country.
- If finalists (nationwide) decline their awards for some reason, alternates may be notified that funding has become available. This can happen throughout the summer.

August/September/October

- Most grants begin in late summer or early fall, typically corresponding to the host country's academic year. Some grants, especially in the southern hemisphere (where the academic year often starts in their hemisphere's late summer/fall), may begin in January or later.

Deadlines at a Glance for Fall 2026 Applications

- May 29 (ETA and SR):**
 - Complete Preliminary Questions screen
 - Complete Country & Award selection screen
 - Complete Personal Information screen
 - Complete Contact Information screen
- June 5 (ETA)/June 12 (SR):**
 - Send first draft of "Flexibility and Adaptability" response to FPA
- June 19 (ETA and SR):**
 - Complete Academic Information screen
 - Complete Awards & Achievements screen
- June 26 (ETA)/July 3 (SR):**
 - Send first draft of Statement of Grant Purpose to FPA
- July 15 (ETA and SR):**
 - Confirm intent to apply for Fulbright with FPA (if not already done)
- July 17 (ETA and SR):**
 - Complete Professional Information screen
 - Complete Experience Abroad section
- July 24 (ETA and SR):**
 - Send draft "Community Engagement" portion to FPA
- July 31 (ETA and SR):**
 - Send draft "Impact of Fulbright Award" portion to FPA
- August 14 (ETA and SR):**
 - Send draft "Abstract" portion to FPA
- September 1 (ETA and SR):**
 - **MSU deadline to lock complete application for campus review via Fulbright portal**
- October 6 (ETA and SR):**
 - **National Fulbright deadline, submit well before 5:00pm ET**

Pro Tip

Use the Application Checklist on the MSU Fulbright Resources website for easy tracking!



Timeline Doesn't Match Your Plans?

Many MSU students begin looking into Fulbright US Student Program options the spring of their junior year, working on their application throughout the summer, applying at the beginning of their senior year and hoping to travel the fall after graduation.

Other MSU applicants might be in graduate school, hoping to incorporate a Fulbright award as part of their thesis or dissertation research. MSU PhD candidates who are interested in conducting dissertation research abroad are also encouraged to look into the Fulbright-Hays [Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad](#) grant (note: the DDRA program was suspended in March 2025; it is unclear whether it will be revived).

If you don't fit into these parameters, that's OK!

- **If you are a first-year student or sophomore,** you can browse the [MSU Fulbright website](#) and [Fulbright US Student Program website](#) to learn about the program and keep an eye out for MSU information sessions. Students with more lead time can think about activities that might strengthen their applications, like [English tutoring](#) (for English Teaching Assistant awards), leadership positions in a club or job, language courses, education abroad, and volunteer or work experience in your field of study.
- **If you are an MSU alum,** you can work with the FPA and apply through MSU for up to five years after graduation. After five years, you should apply as an At-Large applicant. Note that if you graduated from MSU but are now enrolled in a graduate program at another institution, you should apply via that institution and work with their FPA.

Still Reading?

You're a star! Thanks for sticking with me and learning all you can about MSU's Fulbright application process. As the campus FPA, I will be here for you every step of the way, and I look forward to working with you. You can always find my contact information in all handout footers, my email signature, and on the [MSU Fulbright website](#). To easily schedule a meeting, use the [Calendly link](#) which always appears in my email footer to set up an appointment.

Fulbright awards are extremely competitive. That said, MSU students have a great track record and the process itself is valuable as you approach other applications and interviews in the future.

I will work with you every step of the way to make sure you submit the most competitive application possible. Let's do this!

Pro Tip

This kind of diligence—reading through a long but important document—will serve you well during the application process. You will receive a lot of information from me. Tackle it step by step, and you'll find that the application is quite straightforward.

