

**Reapplying for Fulbright Awards:  
Information for 2019-20 and 2020-21  
US Student Program Applicants**

This information is based on a webinar hosted by the National Association of Fellowship Advisors, presented by Lora Seery and Sarah Deschenes of the Institute of International Education (IIE) on June 4, 2020. The webinar recording is available here:

<https://nationalassociationoffellowshi.app.box.com/s/rffdi6h7ldv31mm8h3ieorhqvpen16gu>

**Background:** In March 2020, after the Department of State issued a Global Level 4 Health Advisory, all Fulbrighters were repatriated and the Fulbright US Student Program was suspended. Grantees for 2019-20 were given alumni status, but IIE recognizes that for many, especially those who had just begun their projects in the spring, this was disruptive. Similarly, finalists and alternates for 2020-21 Fulbrights will not be able to begin their grants until January 1, 2021 at the earliest (depending on global and country-specific travel advisory levels).

**IIE is encouraging interested applicants (whether prior semi-finalists, finalists, or alternates) to reapply for the 2021-22 cycle.** Normally there is a strong preference for those who have not previously held a Fulbright grant, but this competitive disadvantage is being waived for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 cohorts.

**Please Note**

- 2019-20 and 2020-21 grantees are NOT given preference in the selection process. This is a new application cycle, with a different applicant pool, and there is no guarantee that the results will be the same as in previous application cycles.
- Applicants must continue to meet all the eligibility requirements for IIE and the host country (e.g., no PhD by application date, language requirements).

**FAQs**

- **Can I apply to a new country or choose a different project type?**
  - Yes. This is a new competition cycle.
- **I was a 2019-20 grantee. If my grant was disrupted due to COVID-19, would I still be able to receive a 2021-22 grant?**
  - Yes. Please check with the Fulbright Program Advisor about how to fill out the “Awards and Achievements” section of the application section, as IIE has special instructions for this area.
- **I am a 2020-21 grantee. If I am eventually able to travel for a few months in 2021 would I still be able to receive a 2021-22 grant?**
  - Yes. Please check with the Fulbright Program Advisor about how to fill out the “Awards and Achievements” section of the application section, as IIE has special instructions for

this area. You will not have to withdraw your 2021-22 application if you travel on a 2020-21 grant.

- **I am a 2020-21 grantee. If I were to receive a 2021-22 grant, could I accept back-to-back awards?**
  - Most likely, provided grant timelines and visa requirements allow. Each country will be making this determination. Conceivably, someone could arrive in-country in January 2021 if the advisory level allows, and learn they are a semi-finalist for the next year in the same country (or a new one).
- **I am a 2020-21 grantee. Is it a good strategy to decline this year's grant and apply for 2021-22, since there's no way of knowing if a given country will award back-to-back grants?**
  - This is risky. IIE recommends that you NOT withdraw. Withdrawal is only advisable if you ONLY want a full year grant, but even if this is the case, research grantees may be able to continue over the summer in some countries.
- **Can I simply resubmit my last application for the new competition?**
  - No. That said, IIE is not under any illusions that students are submitting completely new applications. Your prior application can be a great starting point, but you do need to thoroughly revise it and obtain updated letters and language evaluations.
  - When revising your application, consider the following:
    - In what ways are you an even stronger candidate now than when you initially applied one or two years ago? Have you done more language study, expanded your research portfolio, taken new coursework that improves your understanding of topics related to your project, or gotten published?
    - How has the pandemic allowed you to demonstrate maturity, flexibility, and adaptability, which are all desired Fulbright characteristics?
    - Your recommenders can be the same people, or you can ask new ones (tip: if you completed some of a 2019-20 Fulbright and have a host country contact, that could add an interesting dimension). If you have the same writers, they should add information new since their last letter in terms of coursework, research, personal growth, flexibility throughout the pandemic, etc.
    - If you are applying as a contingency in case the 2020-21 program is suspended and you never make it out of the country, and you know you will withdraw if you do begin your current grant in early 2021, the application can focus on 2021-22 as a stand-alone grant year.
    - If you are planning to remain in consideration for a 2021-22 award *while participating* in the 2020-21 cycle, your application will have to address how your proposed grant activity will benefit from the experience of the 2020-21 year *and* how the activity will need to be altered should the 2020-21 program not run. Address this duality in your Statement of Grant Purpose – what happens if you go in early 2021, and what happens if you do not?