

## **Fulbright-Hays FY 2015 Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowships**

**IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING APPLYING FOR THIS AWARD PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION CAREFULLY BEFORE PROCEEDING**

**Application Deadline for GMU Students: April 22, 2015**

**<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/iegpsddrap/applicant.html>**

**The Fulbright-Hays DDRA Fellowship Program provides grants to doctoral candidates to engage in full-time overseas dissertation research for 6-12 months on topics/projects in modern foreign languages and area studies.**

This program is open to **U.S. Citizens AND permanent residents** in **any field of study** who will be advanced to doctoral candidacy (passed comprehensive exams and doctoral dissertation proposal formally approved) by the inception of the grant. The applicant need not be advanced to candidacy at the time of application.

**Eligible research proposals must focus on one or more of the following geographic areas:**

- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Asia (East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands)
- Middle East / Near East / North Africa
- Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia
- Western Hemisphere (EXCLUDING the U.S. and its territories)

**Research in Western Europe is NOT supported.**

Comparative projects involving an eligible region are possible (for example, a comparative project involving Brazil and Portugal, or a comparative project involving Japan and the U.S.), but only the portion of the research conducted in the eligible country/region will be eligible to receive funding under this program.

This program is intended to support candidates who are planning a career in teaching and academic research.

**To summarize - a student is eligible to apply for a fellowship if he or she:**

- Is a citizen, national or permanent resident of the United States;
- Is a graduate student at an institution of higher education in the United States who, by the time the fellowship begins, will have advanced to candidacy (ABD) in a doctoral program;
- Is planning to conduct research for 6-12 (continuous) months in an eligible world region. Research trips of less than 6 months are not supported.
- Is pursuing a program of graduate study and research in any field that contributes to the development of modern foreign languages and areas studies in the United States.
- Is planning a teaching / academic career in the United States upon graduation; and
- Possesses adequate skills in the language(s) necessary to carry out the dissertation project.

**Please Note:** The fundamental goal of this program is to foster the career development of individuals who will be specialist experts in less commonly studied regions and languages, and who will share their expertise through research, teaching, and long-term engagement with the country, region, and language that constitute their area of focus. Reviewers typically expect to see that the candidate has already invested substantially in language training and scholarship focused on the country in which they hope to conduct dissertation research.

## **Competitive Preference Priorities**

Within the parameters described above, preference will be given to the following types of projects. [Note: This information is updated every year – please consult the most recent Federal Register Notice for this program.]

1. Research projects focusing on one or more of the following geographic areas: **Sub-Saharan Africa** (Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Réunion, Rwanda, São Tomé & Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe); **Southeast Asia** (Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam); and **South Asia** (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka).
2. Research projects focusing on any of the 78 priority languages selected from the U.S. Department of Education's list of Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs), as follows: Akan (Twi-Fante), Albanian, Amharic, Arabic (all dialects), Armenian, Azeri (Azerbaijani), Balochi, Bamanakan (Bamana, Bambara, Mandikan, Mandingo, Maninka, Dyula), Belarusian, Bengali (Bangla), Berber (all languages), Bosnian, Bulgarian, Burmese, Cebuano (Visayan), Chechen, Chinese (Cantonese), Chinese (Gan), Chinese (Mandarin), Chinese (Min), Chinese (Wu), Croatian, Dari, Dinka, Georgian, Gujarati, Hausa, Hebrew (Modern), Hindi, Igbo, Indonesian, Japanese, Javanese, Kannada, Kashmiri, Kazakh, Khmer (Cambodian), Kirghiz, Korean, Kurdish (Kurmanji), Kurdish (Sorani), Lao, Malay (Bahasa Melayu or Malaysian), Malayalam, Marathi, Mongolian, Nepali, Oromo, Panjabi, Pashto, Persian (Farsi), Polish, Portuguese (all varieties), Quechua, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Sinhala (Sinhalese), Somali, Swahili, Tagalog, Tajik, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tibetan, Tigrigna, Turkish, Turkmen, Ukrainian, Urdu, Uyghur/Uigur, Uzbek, Vietnamese, Wolof, Xhosa, Yoruba, and Zulu.
3. Research projects in the field of economics, engineering, international development, global education, mathematics, political science, public health, science, or technology proposed by an applicant who will use advanced language proficiency in one of the 78 LCTLs listed in Competitive Preference Priority 2 of this notice in his or her research.

## **How Applications are Evaluated and What the “Competitive Preference” Means:**

Fulbright-Hays DDRA applications are read by 2-3 reviewers who score the application by awarding points for various aspects of the project (intellectual merit, feasibility, qualifications/preparedness of the applicant, language skills, degree to which the project is a good “fit” for the priorities of the DDRA program, letters of reference, etc.) The total point score of an application is the most important factor in determining which proposals will receive serious consideration for funding. Reviewers also offer brief narrative comments on the application and meet to discuss the applications as part of the review process.

“Competitive preference” means that projects meeting the “preference priorities” described above will be given extra points during the review process. For priority #1 (country), 3 extra points are awarded; for priority #2 (language), 2 points, and for priority #3 (field of study), 5 points. Partial points are not awarded. Your proposal either meets the criteria or does not, and points are awarded (or not) accordingly. Points are awarded only once – you cannot earn additional points by proposing research in more than one eligible country and/or language. The maximum number of competitive preference points you can be awarded is ten.

Please note that the Fulbright-Hays program seeks to promote foreign language *acquisition and improvement* in less-commonly studied languages. For this reason, reviewers usually do not award points under priority #2 to individuals that speak the language in question natively. Heritage speakers may receive points if they have formally studied the language to improve their academic and professional competency.

The Fulbright-Hays program will NOT fund the use of translators or interpreters. Researchers who do not have sufficient competency in the local language to conduct independent research are not viable candidates for this award.

### Examples of Competitive Preference Priorities

1. A proposal in the field of Economics based in China using Mandarin Chinese (non-native speaker) would receive 7 extra points: 2 points for priority #2 (language) and 5 points for priority #3 (field of study). No points are awarded for priority #1 because China is not listed as a competitive preference country. (If the researcher is a native speaker of Mandarin who will rely on his or her native language ability, only 5 points would be awarded since language points are not normally granted to native speakers.)
2. A proposal in the field of Engineering based in India and using Gujarati would receive 10 extra points because it hits all three preferences. However, if the researcher happens to be a native speaker of Gujarati who has not studied the language formally, they would receive only 8 points, since language points are not usually awarded to native speakers.
3. A proposal in the field of History based in Turkey using Turkish and Kurdish (non-native speaker) will receive 2 extra points (for priority #2 only.)
4. A proposal in the field of Art History based in Ecuador using Spanish (non-native speaker) will receive zero extra points, since it does not hit any of the competitive preference priorities. If the researcher is using both Spanish and Quechua, however, he or she could earn 2 points since Quechua is listed as a priority language.

### What if I Don't Meet Any of the Competitive Preference Priorities?

Students often wonder if it is worth applying in a situation where they do not meet all (or any) of the competitive preference priorities. The answer is usually YES. While meeting one of more of the competitive preferences provides a boost to your application, far more important is the reviewers' overall assessment of the intellectual quality, feasibility, and relevance of your project.

Each year projects are funded that do not meet the preference priorities. On the flip side, a project that meets all the priorities will not be funded if it is judged to have other weaknesses.

Regardless of whether or not it meets any of the stated competitive preference priorities, a viable application must demonstrate the following strengths:

- **A well-developed project**, including a detailed plan for what the researcher intends to do during the time in the field and how it relates to the dissertation project as a whole. The proposal should require 6-12 months of field work in the proposed country (or countries) -- i.e. it is not something that could also be done remotely, or something that could be completed in a much shorter trip. The proposal should demonstrate that the researcher has laid the groundwork for the project both in terms of his/her familiarity with the field and in terms of having established the necessary contacts in the host country.
- **A researcher who is well qualified and well prepared** to carry out the proposed research. The researcher should show strong evidence that their language skills are (or will be by the start of the grant) sufficient to carry out the proposed research. The researcher should have the necessary contacts and support in the host country, and should have a plan in place to secure any required visas, research permits, or IRB approvals prior to departure. The applicant must demonstrate that they will be able to "hit the ground running." Prior experience in the country / region is a plus.
- **A project that is feasible** – meaning realistically do-able given the topic, the timeline, the researcher's qualifications, and the facts on the ground in the host country. Sometimes an outstanding project proposal from a well-qualified researcher may be judged non-feasible due to the security situation in the country or the political sensitivities of the topic. Applicants at risk for this kind of concern must address it in their proposal.
- **Evidence that you are receiving good mentoring** and sound guidance on your dissertation project, including from your dissertation advisor and at least one mentor who is familiar with the country/region of interest. This should come through in your letters of reference as well as in your own proposal.

**How to Apply:**

Students must apply for this award via the Office of Graduate Fellowships; it is not possible for a student to apply independent of the university. If you intend to apply, please contact the Director of Graduate Fellowships, Dr. Kay Agoston ([kagoston@gmu.edu](mailto:kagoston@gmu.edu), 703-993-3131) as soon as possible in order to gain access to the Department of Education G5 grant application system and instructions for setting up your DDRA application in that system.

**Please note:**

- The deadline listed on the Fulbright-Hays DDRA program web site is an institutional submission deadline and individual applicants will be required to submit their application materials to the university several days in advance of this deadline. This year the deadline for Mason students to submit ALL application materials (including letters of reference) is April 22, 2015. This is earlier than the institutional deadline of April 28 listed on the program web site.
- In recent years this competition has been run on a very short timeline – meaning the time from the announcement of the program to the submission deadline is only a few weeks. Because the preparation of a competitive application package typically requires more time than this, interested candidates are strongly encouraged to contact Dr. Agoston to discuss their interest and receive detailed instructions on the Fulbright-Hays DDRA proposal: [kagoston@gmu.edu](mailto:kagoston@gmu.edu) or 703-993-3131

More information about this program can be obtained at the Department of Education web site:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/iegpsddrap/index.html> or by reviewing the Federal Register entry for the 2015 competition: <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/02/27/2015-04137/applications-for-new-awards-fulbright-hays-doctoral-dissertation-research-abroad-fellowship-program>