



Office of Graduate Fellowships

Fulbright Research/Study Grants FAQ:

Letters of Affiliation

What is a Letter of Affiliation (LoA)?

The Fulbright U.S. Student Program requires applicants for Research/Study grants to obtain a letter of affiliation from an institution in the country to which they are applying. The purpose of this letter is to demonstrate that the student/scholar will be linked to a local institution that will serve as a “home base” in the host country and can provide intellectual (not monetary) support for the applicant’s project. The Fulbright application will accept up to three affiliations, but one is usually sufficient.

What kind of institution can / cannot provide the LoA?

Usually Fulbright scholars establish an affiliation with a university, but in some instances another organization (such as a research institute, research library, or NGO) may also serve as a host country affiliate. The affiliating institution should be:

- Consistent with the guidelines for the country of application. Some countries require specific types of affiliations. Always follow your country’s guidelines.
- Competent to offer intellectual support, supervision, and feedback for the proposed project – in other words, the academic department or organization should be relevant to and / or working in the same field as the proposed project.
- Local to the host country. Organizations staffed or run primarily by foreigners are usually NOT appropriate affiliates. Remember the Fulbright mantra of “mutual cultural understanding”! The affiliation should be a point of contact with the host society. This does not mean you cannot interact with foreign organizations, only that they may not be the best choice to write the LoA.

How can I obtain a LoA?

You must establish contact with an institution in the host country and request a letter. There are several ways to do this:

- Work through your faculty advisors / mentors or through other professional contacts in your field of interest. The Office of Graduate Fellowships and / or the study abroad office can sometimes also help. Ask them to help refer you to contacts they have in the host country.
- If you have contacts in the host country but in another field, ask them for help putting you in touch with people in the desired field.
- Cold Calling: Research appropriate contacts and reach out on your own to ask for a letter.

What should the LoA look like and who writes it?

The letter itself is usually short and to the point. Most do not exceed one page.

- The letter should be written by a faculty member or another individual who is positioned to play a supervisory role for a visiting researcher (such as a department chair.)
- The applicant should ask the affiliate to provide a hard copy (or PDF scan of a hard copy) of a signed, dated letter on letterhead, addressed “To the Fulbright Committee” or “To Whom it may Concern.”
- In some cases, letters in languages other than English may be acceptable. The applicant should check with the Office of Graduate Fellowships for further information.
- See the next page for sample text of letters of affiliation.

Sample Text for Letters of Affiliation

This material is just intended to provide an idea of some of the typical elements of a letter of affiliation. The form of such letters varies widely, and so long as the letter demonstrates willingness and wherewithal to support the scholar's research in the host country, it is almost certainly sufficient. Many institutions have hosted Fulbright students in the past and may have their own template for generating such letters.

Because the circumstances of each project and each affiliation are unique, it is usually preferable for the affiliating institution to compose an original letter without relying on a 'template.' However, if the writer asks for guidance, you may use these pointers to help them understand what is needed.

The letter opens with a straightforward statement of willingness to serve as an affiliate:

This letter is to confirm that I [or Name of Department / Name of Research Institute / Name of Organization] agree to serve as the academic supervisor and point of contact for [Name of Applicant] during his/her planned stay as a Fulbright student researcher at [Name and Location of Institution].

Or:

It is with pleasure that I [or Name of Department / Name of Research Institute / Name of Organization] agree to provide local affiliation and supervision for [Name of Applicant] during his/her proposed stay in [City, Country] as a Fulbright student researcher. I am well positioned to offer guidance to [Applicant] as he/she completes her independent research project on [Topic]. [The writer can then add a comment about what makes him/her suitable for this role.]

After this opening, the writer should indicate their support for the project and express confidence that (a) the applicant is able to carry out the project and (b) the affiliate is able and willing to support the visiting scholar. Some writers will expand somewhat to make specific comments about the importance of the research and the suitability of the affiliating institution.

I also take this opportunity to recommend the project. I express my confidence that the proposed research is both valuable and feasible, and that the Applicant is qualified and motivated to complete the project as planned. The project is especially timely and important because The Applicant's research fits nicely with my/ our current research agenda and available resources, and both I and other faculty members will be able to provide appropriate guidance.

If the institution is able to offer any other forms of support to the applicant, this should also be mentioned. Remember that the institution is not expected or allowed to offer a Fulbright scholar monetary support – that's what the grant is for. Other common forms of support include:

- Library access/privileges, access to research collections.
- Access to computer labs or electronic networks.
- Advice and feedback from faculty.
- Help obtaining required research permissions or access to research collections.
- Work space, or at least a temporary place to sit when the scholar stops in.
- The opportunity to participate in the intellectual life of the department or institution.

The letter can then close with assurances that the institution is happy to play this role and will do what they can do make the scholar's stay productive:

We look forward to having the Applicant affiliated with us as a Fulbright scholar and will do our best to make his/her stay productive and successful.