Fulbright Foreign Student Program
Recruitment and Selection Guide

This guide provides an overview of the Fulbright Foreign Student Program for U.S. embassies and consulates (Posts) and Amideast field office staff. It details recruitment and selection activities, as well as the next steps after nomination such as testing and the university placement process. If you have any questions about these activities, please reach out to Amideast/HQ.

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Timeline

To ensure U.S. university application deadlines and SEVIS requirements are met, it is recommended to announce the Fulbright competition **well over a year in advance** of when participants would begin their programs.

Amideast requests that all initial nominee lists be submitted to Amideast/HQ by September 1 of each year. **All nominee lists should be officially submitted via the Transmittal function in Slate by October 1 of each year.** This provides sufficient time to review applications for technical eligibility and fields of study prior to beginning university placement and application submission. University deadlines for fall admissions may begin as early as October.

To meet these deadlines, Amideast and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) advise Posts and field offices to **announce the Fulbright Foreign Student Program competition in February** and recommend the following timeline of activities:

Months	Post/Field Office Activity
October-November *Planning*	• Develop outreach and promotion plan. • Determine Fulbright application open and close (deadline) dates. Field office sets dates in consultation with Post. • Develop video content and other specific materials. • Submit materials to Amideast/HQ for review and approval by HQ and ECA.
December-January *Planning and Promotion*	• Configure Slate with application open and close dates and other country-specific information. • Begin initial promotional and outreach activities. • Field office shares recruitment materials with Post (including social media toolkits, press release, flyers, etc.). • Identify a group of in-country program alums to assist in program promotion and information sessions, making sure not to use the same alums who were used in recent cycles.
February-April *Promotion*	• Announce application through press releases, flyers, brochures, emails, and advertisements in newspapers and social media, along with other media with proven success in the country. • Share announcements, application guidelines, eligibility requirements and a link to the Fulbright online application on Post's website and/or Amideast's website. • Distribute posters or flyers to universities, government agencies, or other institutions that attract a large group of students and target group audiences. • Conduct outreach visits to universities, vetted language centers, educational organizations, other higher education facilities, and trade or discipline-specific organizations (like professional syndicates and chambers of commerce).

	• Hold public information sessions for interested applicants. • Use toolkits and other materials developed by Amideast/HQ.

May-June
Application Review Panel
	• Screen applications for minimum eligibility requirements to ensure technical eligibility to receive a Fulbright award.
	• Identify applicants for interview based on their technical eligibility and compatibility with Fulbright goals and objectives by using clear scoring criteria.
	• Recruit panel members who will review applications and interview applicants.
	  o The nomination panel may include U.S. citizen Post staff (PAO, CAO, etc.), Fulbright alums, and prominent members of the host-country community (e.g., academics or established professionals).
	  o Panels can range in size; typically, 3-5 members.

June-July *Interviews*	• Update interview scoring rubric, if needed, in coordination with Post, Amideast/HQ, and ECA. • Interview applicants and select nominees. o Nomination of applicants should be based on transparent, pre-determined criteria that are consistent with the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board policies (Chapter 500) and ECA's priorities.
August-September *Nominee Selection*	• Submit nominee list to Amideast/HQ by the first week of September. • Submit the official nominee list via the Transmittal function in Slate by the first week of October so that Amideast/HQ and ECA can conduct a second review round of technical eligibility and field of study review. o Post (not the Amideast field office) submits the nomination panel for ECA review. • Once the panel is approved by the FFSB, notify applicants of their status in writing (not nominated, nominated); field offices should consult with Post. Some Posts prefer to issue these notifications, and others do not. • Collect signed *New Nominee Memo* and *Accommodations Request Form* from nominees.
October-November *Placement*	• Host the post-nomination orientation to review Fulbright policies and the placement process in coordination with the respective Amideast/HQ program team. • Help nominees schedule necessary standardized admission tests (e.g., TOEFL, GRE, GMAT, etc.).
December-March *Placement*	• Inform Amideast/HQ and Post about any relevant changes or developments that could affect placement (withdrawals, etc.).

April-May *Finalization*	• After award finalization by ECA, assist Amideast/HQ, if needed, in collecting signed participant Terms of Appointment.
May-June *Pre-Departure Arrangements*	• Conduct pre-departure orientations for finalized nominees in coordination with Amideast/HQ and relevant Post staff. • Arrange finalized nominee travel to U.S. and provide travel details to Amideast/HQ. • Issue travel allowances to finalized nominees. • Assist finalized nominees with visa applications.
July-September	• Participants begin their programs at their U.S. host institutions; for participants in a Pre-Academic Program, they may arrive as early as July.

Recruitment

Planning

October-November

A comprehensive recruitment plan should be submitted to Amideast/HQ **by the end of October**. Amideast/HQ will review the plan and forward it to ECA for approval. The *Advisor Resources* page on the Amideast website contains templates and other recruitment resources that have been approved by ECA.

Depending on country-specific eligibility criteria, the recruitment plan should be designed to target young professionals, artists, and/or undergraduate students who have the appropriate academic and professional backgrounds to undertake graduate studies or research in the United States.

Outreach materials should highlight that the Fulbright Program seeks qualified applicants. It should also be stressed that there is **no minimum TOEFL requirement** to apply to the Fulbright Program and that applicants with otherwise outstanding qualifications who have English language deficiencies may be eligible for Long-Term English (LTE) programs.

The online application, Slate, allows you to customize the application open and application close dates for your country. You should **indicate both these dates** clearly in your recruitment plan. Field offices and Posts are discouraged from opening the application before the global program launch date, which is generally February 1st of each year.

Application deadlines in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region typically range from the end of April to the end of June. Although deadlines vary by country, it is important that selection is completed, and the list of nominees submitted to Amideast/HQ no later than the first week of September. The official nominee list should be submitted by Post via the Transmittal function in Slate by the first week of October. Setting an earlier application deadline will allow for more time to screen applicants, arrange interviews, select nominees, assemble their completed files, and ensure that the nominees can register for fall test dates as early as possible.

Preparation

December-January

Upon ECA approval of your recruitment plan, you can begin preliminary outreach activities and prepare for a formal kick-off when the online application opens.

Amideast/HQ will share a social media toolkit for each country that includes quotes from participants and alums as well as photos. Your toolkit will be approved by ECA before it is sent to you. You must utilize this toolkit and other material provided by HQ for program promotion.

Implementation

February-April

Once the online Fulbright application is open for your country, you can post the application link in announcements and begin focused recruitment activities. Typically, the application link becomes available in December.

You are encouraged to pursue all means of publicity and outreach including, but not limited to:

- The U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. Consulate's website.
- Newspaper advertisements and/or press releases.
- Social media outlets such as Facebook, X (*formerly Twitter*), Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, blog posts, and SMS ads.
- Public information sessions.
- University outreach visits.
- Email announcements to relevant ministry, non-profit, academic, and community contacts.
- Posters/flyers.
- EducationUSA offices and fairs, English language centers, education-focused non-profits, think tanks, etc.
- Fulbright alum networks.

Selection

May-July

Selection Priorities

English Proficiency

English proficiency should not be an eliminating factor for applicants who demonstrate academic excellence, leadership potential, a commitment to cross-cultural exchange and possess all the other qualities of a strong Fulbright applicant.

Principal nominees whose educational background may not have prepared them with the English skills necessary for admission to U.S. graduate programs may be eligible, with ECA approval, to participate in a Long-Term English (LTE) program prior to their award start date. We encourage you to interview and consider competitive applicants who possess high qualifications but may have limited English skills.

Screening Guidance

Amideast/HQ recommends a multi-stage selection process which includes the following elements:

1. Technical eligibility review.
2. Application review panel.

3. Personal interviews.

Technical Eligibility Review

Applicants are first screened by Post (in countries with no Amideast field office) and field office staff to ensure that they meet the minimum eligibility requirements.

Criteria	Information
Application Deadline	An applicant must have submitted a complete online Fulbright application and supporting documents by the application deadline.
Citizenship and Residency	An applicant must be **both** a citizen and resident of the country of nomination and be able to hold a passport from the country. U.S. citizens and permanent residents are not eligible, including dual citizens of the United States and the country of nomination.
Bachelor's Degree	An applicant must have earned a bachelor's degree by the time they begin their U.S. academic program. However, most U.S. universities will require confirmation of degree conferral at the time of application submission or before making admission decisions, making it less likely for someone who has not yet earned their bachelor's degree to receive admission.
English Proficiency	An applicant must have demonstrated English ability (if available at the time of application, such as previous official TOEFL or IELTS scores or other assessments). Applicants with weak English language skills may be eligible for LTE.
U.S. Experience	Preference will be given to applicants who have not had extensive recent experience in the United States. An applicant who has resided in the United States for five or more consecutive years in the six-year period preceding the date of application is ineligible for an award. Applicants already in the United States are ineligible for an award.
U.S. Government Employees	The following persons are ineligible for awards during and for a period ending one year following the termination of such employment or association: 1. Employees of U.S. missions abroad who work for the U.S. Department of State or the U.S. Agency for International Development. This provision includes all employees, paid or unpaid (including part-time or temporary employees, consultants, externs, fellows, and contract employees). 2. Board members or staff of a Fulbright Commission. 3. Officers of an organization that is responsible for nominating or selecting individuals for participation in any exchange program of ECA.

	4. Immediate family members of individuals described in points 1-3.
Medical Studies	Applicants who wish to pursue studies as medical students are not eligible. Applicants with medical degrees may receive awards for advanced academic study, but not for internships or residencies. Awards shall not authorize activity for which a license to practice medicine or nursing is required.
Previous Fulbright Award	Generally, preference will be given to applicants who have not previously received a Fulbright Foreign Student Program award offer.
Other Criteria	Other country-specific criteria (e.g., GPA requirements, desired fields, work experience, etc.) may be used in evaluating an application with prior approval from Post.

Application Review Panel

Copies of applications with objective scoring criteria are distributed to each member of the application review panel for individual review and scoring. For example, if the scoring is based on a 1 to 5 scale (1 being poor and 5 being superior) then applicants who attain at least an average of 4 would be invited to interview.

Objective review of applications by the review panel should consider the following factors:

- **Academic excellence** as demonstrated by academic records and recommendations. Transcripts that show failed classes or poor grades should serve as evidence of an absence or lack of academic excellence.
- Relevance of academic or professional background to proposed **field of study**. This should not exclude applicants changing career focus (e.g., engineering to business).
    - Applications should reflect enduring concerns, emphasize basic subjects, demonstrate sound methodology, and avoid politicization of scholarly inquiry.
- Applicants should be **adaptable** and responsible citizens who can contribute to a full and fair picture of the culture and civilization of their countries.
    - They should also show the flexibility needed to adjust successfully to life in the United States.
- Evidence of **leadership** or potential for leadership.
- Quality of written application and application essays and the absence of plagiarism.
- The use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools is strongly discouraged, as content generated using these tools is often vague and duplicative and results in poor application scores.
- Compatibility of academic and professional objectives with the Fulbright Program, including demonstrated **intent to return to nomination country** and use knowledge and skills acquired through the Fulbright Program for the benefit of the applicant's home community.

Principal nominees whose educational background may not have prepared them with the English skills necessary for admission to U.S. graduate programs may be eligible, with ECA approval, for a LTE program prior to their U.S. academic program starts. Therefore, English proficiency should **not** be an eliminating factor for applicants who demonstrate academic excellence, leadership potential, a commitment to cross-cultural exchange and possess all the other qualities of a strong Fulbright participant.

LTE placement **does not** guarantee admission to a U.S. academic institution or a Fulbright award offer. LTE participants who fail to meet progress thresholds will be dismissed from further consideration and will return home either during the LTE program or upon completing it, depending on when it is determined that they failed to show sufficient improvement.

Interviews

Applicants whose applications are ranked highly are then invited for an interview:

- The panel should be **binational** and should balance U.S. and host country representation. It is also recommended to include a non-academic panelist.
- The interview panel typically includes a representative from Post, faculty from a local university, a Fulbright alum, and Amideast field office staff. Panels can range in size; 3-5 members are generally sufficient.
- At least one member of the panel should have a strong understanding of the U.S. higher education system. This may or may not be the representative from Post.

In preparation for the interview, Posts and/or field offices should do the following:

- Distribute copies of the applicants, as well as selection criteria, expectations, and instructions to the panelists.
- Share interview event details, including dates, times, location, and other helpful information.

The interview panelists should assess the applicants by asking a set of pre-determined questions and ranking the responses on a scale of 1 to 5. The interview score is then considered in addition to the application review scores.

To ensure fairness, each applicant should be asked the same set of questions with the opportunity for follow-up questions, if time permits. It is expected that the interviews remain **consistent and transparent** throughout the entire selection process. Interviews should last approximately 15 to 30 minutes.

Interview criteria may include:

- Ability to articulate reasons for pursuing chosen field of study or research in the United States and what prepares the applicant to pursue that field.
- Recognition of the benefit of field of study or research to their home community.
- Potential for being a successful cultural ambassador in the U.S. for their country.
- Interest in and commitment to cross-cultural exchange.
- Evidence of adaptability and leadership potential.
- Ability to clearly articulate clear post-Fulbright academic and professional goals, including the commitment to return home and apply the knowledge and skills gained.

Criteria	Sample Questions
Intended Field of Study	1. Why do you wish to pursue this degree/graduate study/research in this field and why do you think it especially important to do so in the United States? 2. What are your career goals and how will study/research in the U.S. help you achieve them? 3. What distinguishes you from other applicants?

Previous Experience	1. What professional experience do you have that prepares you for graduate study/research in your field? 2. Tell us about any experience you have had working or conducting research in English.
Adaptability	1. Tell us about a situation in which you had to adapt to a new environment or unfamiliar situation (for example, overseas study or a new academic or work situation). Explain how you handled it. 2. What do you think will be the most difficult aspect of adjusting to life in the United States? 3. The Fulbright Program is an exchange program that values geographic and institutional variety when placing nominees at U.S. institutions. How do you feel about the possibility of studying in "small town America" as opposed to a major city?
Commitment to Return Home	1. Upon completion of your Fulbright Program, how do you plan to implement what you have learned? 2. How would you share the academic and cultural knowledge that you gained in the United States in your home country? 3. How would others in your field/home community benefit from this?
Commitment to Cultural Exchange	1. How will you be an ambassador for your country while in the United States? 2. How would you share your culture and traditions with your classmates and in your U.S. campus and host community? 3. What would you share about your country? 4. How will you share your U.S. experience with your home community?
Leadership	1. Explain a situation where you have served as a leader. Explain in detail your role and how individuals responded to your leadership. 2. What sort of leader would a team say that you are? 3. Tell us about a situation where you have mentored or coached someone to help achieve a goal. 4. Provide an example of how you plan to use your leadership skills to contribute to your U.S. or home community as a Fulbrighter.

Original transcripts and diplomas must be presented to Post or field office staff for verification on the day of the interview. This eliminates the need for bringing applicants back later specifically to verify transcripts. Amideast/HQ will not start the university application process before Post or field office staff have confirmed in writing that they have checked and verified the authenticity of all diplomas and transcripts.

Final selection is made by averaging the panelist's application and interview scores. Once the selection scoring is complete and the panel has agreed on the final list of nominees, the list should be transmitted by Post to Amideast and ECA through Slate.

Nomination

Being nominated for the Fulbright Program **does not guarantee** that a nominee will receive admission to a university or a Fulbright award offer. At this stage of the review and selection process, applicants are considered **nominees** and not participants.

A Fulbright award may be offered to a nominee if the following conditions have been met:

- Approval by the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board (FFSB), a twelve-member board appointed by the President of the United States that approves award recipients.
- Unconditional admission or admission with a reasonable condition to an academic program at an accredited U.S. college or university received through the Fulbright placement process or receipt of an invitation to be affiliated with an academic institution that aligns with a visiting researcher's research objectives (*for non-degree seeking nominees, including joint supervision*).
- Satisfactory medical clearance based on a medical examination.
- Ability to successfully receive a J-1 visa in a timely manner.
- Ability to travel to the U.S. to begin the academic or research program on time.
- Availability of funds.

Notifications

August-September

Once ECA and Amideast/HQ receive the nominee panels, they will conduct a high-level review of nominees for issues that may affect the nomination or placement of nominees. Following this review, and if no changes are recommended to the nominee panel, ECA will release the panel for review and official approval by the FFSB. Final approval by the FFSB is required for a nominee to be eligible for a Fulbright award.

After the panel is approved, Post and/or the field office should notify applicants in writing of their status (nominated, not nominated). **Notifications must not include the ranking or the principal/alternate status of a nominee.** As part of notifications, nominees should complete and sign a *New Nominee Memo* and *Accommodations Request Form* (optional), available on *Advisor Resources*. Post or the field office must collect the signed forms and send them to HQ.

Nominees should also be invited to a post-nomination orientation (PNO), which covers nomination and placement processes and policies, as well as answer any nominee questions. It is a critical first step toward ensuring that nominees have realistic expectations about the nomination process and the likelihood of receiving an award offer.

Topics covered in the PNO include:

- Overview of the Fulbright Program.
- Nomination overview and timeline.
- Placement process and university applications for degree-seeking nominees, and/or an overview of letters of invitation for non-degree seeking nominees.
- Other preparations, including travel documents, medical examinations, and J-1 visas.
- Award benefits.

The PNO is the first opportunity for nominees to come together as a cohort and establish relationships that will give them support throughout the placement process. For this reason, there should be consistent guidance from Posts, field offices, and Amideast/HQ because nominees will communicate and compare notes throughout the process.

Testing

October-November

Some applicants may already have taken the TOEFL and the GRE (or GMAT) at their own expense prior to applying for the Fulbright Program. If these scores are acceptable and will be unexpired at the time of admission to a U.S. academic institution, they can be used during the placement process.

Amideast/HQ will provide one pre-paid voucher for the TOEFL and GRE/GMAT based on field office or Post estimates. Vouchers are provided for applicants who have advanced to nominee status. Applicants who choose to take a test prior to nomination will not be reimbursed. Vouchers will be provided for nominees who need to test or for those that need to replace outdated or poor scores. Test scores that will be older than a specific date will not be accepted by U.S. academic institutions for admission purposes. For the TOEFL and IELTS tests, the scores may not be more than two years old. For the GRE and GMAT, the scores may not be more than five years old.

While GRE and GMAT vouchers can be used internationally, TOEFL vouchers are country-specific. Field contacts must ensure that the country where a nominee will take the TOEFL is noted to Amideast/HQ staff when requesting vouchers if the testing will take place in a third country. Once the nomination process is completed, the vouchers are distributed to nominees so they can register for the required test(s).

It is recommended that nominees register directly for their tests through the ETS or GMAT online registration portals. They may also register through their local Amideast office. Many Amideast offices serve as test centers that provide registration forms as well as administer standardized tests, including the TOEFL, GRE, and GMAT.

Nominees must indicate the Amideast/HQ institutional codes on the test registration forms and/or on the day of the test. It is important that nominees use the Amideast/HQ code as opposed to an Amideast field office code. If the code is included on the registration form, Amideast/HQ will receive official score reports when the test scores become available that will be used for placement and admission. When Amideast/HQ does not receive the scores in a timely manner, the delay affects the placement process and will result in missed application deadlines. If nominees have difficulties selecting Amideast/HQ using the codes, they should use the lookup tool to search for Amideast/HQ. Please remind nominees that Amideast headquarters are in the District of Columbia and not Washington state. **Test takers for the TOEFL or GRE must also enter Amideast's Agent Code (USA1001101) on their online registration form.**

TOEFL

All degree-seeking nominees must take the TOEFL if they do not have a valid score. Amideast can begin placement with an outdated TOEFL score while waiting for a valid TOEFL score report. TOEFL ITP score reports **are not accepted** for university applications or admission. A valid TOEFL score is required for a university application to be considered complete by the application deadline. **The institutional code for sending TOEFL scores to Amideast/HQ is 5027.**

Most universities require a minimum TOEFL iBT score of 80 or higher. Increasingly, some institutions or graduate programs are requiring scores as high as 100 for consideration of an application for graduate study. All nominees should be advised throughout the placement process that a TOEFL score lower than 80 will affect successful placement. For principal nominees with less-competitive scores, ECA may approve participation in a LTE program prior to the award. Participation in LTE increases, but does not guarantee, a nominee's prospects and positive admissions decisions for universities with late or flexible admission deadline.

IELTS

IELTS is another English proficiency exam, and most universities will accept an IELTS score in lieu of a TOEFL score. Most universities require a minimum IELTS score of 6.5 or greater and different sub-scores depending on the field of study. Amideast does not provide vouchers for the IELTS. Score reports must be sent from the British Council to Amideast/HQ directly. If an academic institution requires an original test score report, the nominee should contact their test center for information on how to send a score report directly to the requesting institution.

GRE

The GRE is required for admission into most graduate programs, except for those that require the GMAT. Minimum score requirements for degree programs vary greatly and are taken into consideration when discussing university placement options with nominees. A competitive application will typically include a score of 150 or greater on the verbal and quantitative sections in conjunction with 4.0 or greater on the writing section. Specific verbal, quantitative, and writing scores may be required by individual academic programs.

Although the GRE is not necessarily the best indicator of how well a nominee will perform in a degree program, particularly when English is not the nominee's native language, it remains an important criterion for gaining admission. Nominees should practice and prepare to take the GRE. Nominees should not take a GRE Subject Test unless Amideast/HQ informs the nominee that a Subject Test is required. Typically, non-degree nominees do not need to take the GRE. **The Amideast/HQ institutional code for the GRE is 5027** and the **department code is 0102.**

GMAT

The GMAT is generally required for admission into most accredited MBA and other business and finance programs in the U.S. and the score is a critical part of the application. Some business programs will not consider an application without GMAT results. The minimum score for admission at most MBA programs is 550, and many MBA programs require a minimum score of 600 or higher. Please request GMAT voucher numbers from Amideast/HQ and include the corresponding list of nominees who will take the test. Amideast/HQ will then provide the voucher number assigned to each nominee. **On the day of the test, nominees must select "Amideast - DC - Amideast DC" from the dropdown list of score recipients for Amideast/HQ to receive their GMAT score report.**

Placement

October-March

After nominations are confirmed, Amideast/HQ will work with degree-seeking nominees to submit their applications to academic programs at U.S. colleges and universities. Once Amideast/HQ has received a complete file, the program team will begin researching appropriate academic placements.

A complete file typically includes the following documents:

- Completed Fulbright application, including a personal statement and study/research objective essays.
- All post-secondary school transcripts and diplomas for degrees earned, and professional certifications relevant to the field of study being pursued.
- TOEFL, IELTS, or other English proficiency test score report.
- GRE or GMAT score report.
- Resume or C.V.
- Three letters of recommendation.

If any documents are missing, Amideast/HQ will follow up with the nominee, Post, or the field office regarding submission. For some fields of study, nominees must submit additional documentation, such as writing samples for some humanities programs or a portfolio for architecture and fine arts programs. Additionally, an increasing number of institutions require a personal interview as part of their admissions process. This will be coordinated by Amideast/HQ with support from the field as requested.

A *Nominee Suggestion Form* allows nominees to provide at least four and up to eight placement suggestions, which may be taken into consideration when determining the final university placement options. The form helps set realistic expectations by requiring nominees to research appropriate placement options and compare their own credentials with admission requirements. This activity reduces the chance that a nominee will blindly list only universities that they know or have heard of without regard to whether these are appropriate placement choices or not.

Generally, Amideast/HQ will help nominees apply to four universities. This may be lower or higher for some nominees depending on their qualifications and the availability of suitable academic programs. Paying particular attention to the research or study objectives and personal statements, Amideast/HQ will evaluate all components of a nominee's file to evaluate their academic background and work experience as they relate to the chosen field of study.

There are several factors that determine the university placement options and whether a nominee will receive a Fulbright award offer, including:

- Academic appropriateness
- Geographic and institutional variety
- Program cost
- Nominee preference

The cost of each nominee's academic program and overall projected award costs (not only tuition) directly impact the funding available for other nominees. As such, Amideast/HQ places great emphasis on maximizing program funds by selecting universities that offer, or are at least willing to consider, some kind of financial assistance or cost-share such as tuition waivers, scholarships, or assistantships. This is not available at all universities and is limited for some fields of study. **An important element in obtaining cost-share on behalf of nominees is the timely receipt of nominee files from the field because many universities have earlier application deadlines to be considered for financial aid.** Another important factor is applicant competitiveness (academics, test score, clearly defined study or research objectives, etc.).

Amideast/HQ will seek placements at a variety of small, medium, and large schools; public and private schools; urban, suburban, and rural schools; and other schools across the United States, in order to ensure the Program conveys a balanced view of American life, where program offerings and admission requirements match nominee credentials and academic interests.

As university placements are finalized, Amideast/HQ will provide application due dates, requirements, and online application instructions to nominees. Amideast/HQ will initiate the online application for each university application and generate a username and password. The nominee will be responsible for completing the online application by submitting information such as education and work history, additional essays, additional personal information, etc. by a specified deadline that is earlier than the university deadline.

Once each online application is completed, Amideast will review the application for completeness, pay the application fee, attach additional items required by the application and provided by the nominee after reviewing these for accuracy, completeness, and compliance with application instructions, and then submit the application. **Nominees should not pay the online application fee.** Amideast/HQ will not reimburse application fees paid by nominees.

Finalization

April-June

Amideast/HQ will track applications as they are submitted and will follow-up with university admissions contacts. Amideast/HQ will prepare comparative budget estimates for programs where a nominee was admitted and make placement recommendations to ECA who will determine final placement. Once awards are confirmed, the field office should inform Post of the new awards (*if applicable*) and give Post the opportunity to send award offer notifications to finalized nominees, depending on Post's preference.

As placements are finalized, Amideast/HQ will:

- Coordinate finalized nominee assignments to Pre-Academic or Gateway Orientation programs.
- Update pre-departure orientation (PDO) materials on the Advisor Resources page for the field to use.
- Forward Fulbright Terms of Appointment to finalized nominees to sign.
- Assist finalized nominees in making temporary housing arrangements, if requested.

Pre-Departure Arrangements

June-July

Pre-Departure Orientation

The PDO provides finalized nominees with the opportunity to learn more about their Fulbright award and take the first step to adjusting to academic and cultural life in the United States.

Topics covered in the PDO include:

- Overview of the Fulbright Program.
- Terms and conditions of the Fulbright award, including program dates, financial provisions, and maintaining J-1 visa status.
- Reporting requirements and program policies.
- Housing options, scams, and best practices.
- General guidance on budgeting and costs in the United States.
- Health and well-being, including ASPE health benefits, personal safety, and U.S. laws.
- Cultural norms in the U.S.
- The Fulbright experience, campus engagement, and the Fulbright community.

Along with the PDO presentation, participants will receive access to the Amideast *Participant Resources* page, which includes a link to the *Participant Handbook*. This handbook is a comprehensive overview of the Fulbright Program and award, including policies, procedures, and best practices for a successful experience.

Other Arrangements

In coordination with Amideast/HQ and relevant Post staff, the field office will arrange participant travel to the United States and provide final travel details to Amideast/HQ. The field will also issue travel allowances and coordinate with Post for scheduling J-1 visa interviews.

Other Helpful Information

Social Media

Fulbright participants and alums are encouraged to send Amideast/HQ stories and photos about their Fulbright experience and accomplishments to share via social media on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter) and blog. Starting at the PDO and throughout their program in the United States, participants will be made aware of the importance of the promotional impact of their contributions won recruitment and to show the program's positive impact.

Participants are not required to share stories but are encouraged to share their experiences to the extent they are comfortable. A participant's photos, videos, and stories will only be shared on Fulbright social media if the participant has given explicit consent by signing a release form. This form is sent to participants as soon after they arrive in the United States. To ensure participant safety and privacy, ECA requires the omission of the participant's last name in social media posts, even if they have signed the release form.

Alumni Opportunities

After Fulbright participants return home, Amideast field office and/or Post staff are encouraged to reach out to alums to continue their Fulbright journey by participating in program recruitment presentations, speaking at PNO or PDO sessions, participating in selection panels, attending special events, organizing Fulbright alums associations, and applying for Fulbright alum opportunities.

Amideast field offices are also an important resource in maintaining updated Fulbright alum contact information. This information should regularly be provided to Amideast/HQ for input into Amideast/HQ's alum database. Field offices also must provide updated alum contact information to Posts as requested.

The Amideast Fulbright Alumni website is an important resource that outlines the variety of alum opportunities available. With funding from ECA, Amideast/HQ administers alum awards. ECA also offers many online resources for Fulbright alums. Additionally, the International Exchange Alumni is the official website for more than 1,000,000 alums of exchange programs sponsored by ECA.

Advisor Resources

The Amideast Fulbright website includes an *Advisor Resources* page that is a resource for field office staff and partners to use for advising throughout the recruitment and placement process. Fulbright advisors have access to guidance and recruitment documents, as well as to other ECA-approved outreach materials.