WRITING A STRONG FULBRIGHT STUDY GRANT REFERENCE

Introduction
Thank you for agreeing to write a Fulbright reference for an LMU student! Fulbright grants for university study and research abroad are among the most prestigious and generous national scholarships available to recent graduates of U.S. universities and colleges. The goal of the Fulbright program is to promote mutual understanding among nations through educational and cultural exchange while serving as a catalyst for long-term leadership development. Complete information is available at http://www.us.fulbrightonline.org/

What to Include in a Fulbright Reference
A strong reference is a critical piece of a successful Fulbright application. The reference should concretely address why the student is a good candidate for a Fulbright scholarship, if you believe this to be the case. It should also specifically support the student’s ability to carry out what is proposed in the Statement of Proposed Study. The student should provide a draft of the Statement when requesting the reference.

In completing the reference, referees should keep in mind that the applicant will be serving as a citizen representing the United States and that personal suitability, as well as academic excellence, is an important criterion to be considered. In particular, please comment on any of the following that apply:

- Feasibility of the applicant's proposed project in terms of resources available overseas.
- Ability of the applicant to carry out the project and in the allotted time.
- Candidate's ability to adapt to a different cultural environment.
- Linguistic preparation for the proposed plan, if applicable.
- In the arts, the candidate's talent and potential for growth.
- Any other factors which you believe may have a bearing on the candidate's experience abroad.

Formal Letter Expected
Fulbright has seen a marked decrease in the quality of references since they moved to an online application process three years ago. They attribute that to the electronic effect—just as e-mail communication is often more informal and error prone than hard-copy letters, so too, are electronic references. However, because the hard-copy of the electronic reference is forwarded to the host country for review, this informality can work to the detriment of the applicant. Fulbright asks that referees approach this letter as a formal, academic reference.

Members of the campus Fulbright committee are happy to proof draft copies of references or to answer questions from faculty referees. Rest assured that this is in no way an attempt to persuade faculty members to inflate a reference for a student; it is simply recognition that we are all human, and that a fresh set of eyes may catch a typo or a grammatical error.

How to Submit a Fulbright Reference
Submitting Online
Reference forms must be completed online. Fulbright applicants register their referees in the
Embark Online Application system. Once registered, the referee/evaluator will receive an e-mail with login and form completion instructions. The referee can then complete the form online and have it submitted with student's online application.

The campus deadline for Fulbright applications is September 15. References are due online by that date.

“Un-submitting” a Reference
While you can “unsubmit” your reference once it has been submitted online, it is a time-consuming process. You are strongly encouraged to carefully proofread/have someone else proofread your letter, and to ask any questions about the letter that you may have, before submitting your reference online.

FULBRIGHT DOES NOT ACCEPT FAXED OR E-MAILED REFERENCES.

Any questions about the Fulbright study grant reference or the campus Fulbright application process can be directed to Dr. Stella Setka, Fellowships Coordinator, at stella.setka@lmu.edu or 310.338.3792.