



Tips and Information for the [Gilman Scholarship](#)

I. Background Information

Purpose

The U.S. Department of State's goal for the Gilman Program is to broaden the student population that studies and interns abroad by supporting undergraduates who might otherwise not participate due to financial constraints, including but not limited to:

- Students with high financial need
- Students studying in non-traditional countries, especially those outside of Western Europe, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand
- Students from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- Students from a diverse range of institutions including four-year, public, private, community colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges, Hispanic Serving Institutions and other Minority Serving Institutions.
- Students with disabilities

Application of Funds

The costs that can be supported include program tuition, room and board, books, local transportation, insurance and international airfare.

Scholarship Awards

- Over 2,300 scholarships of up to \$5,000 each
- Average award is approximately \$4,000
- Critical Language enhancements of up to \$3,000 above the base Gilman award
- Career-Oriented Internship Awards of \$5,000 (automatically considered)

Eligibility for Gilman

- The applicant must be a U.S. citizen who is enrolled in a degree program and receiving a Federal Pell Grant or provide proof that he/she will be receiving a Pell Grant at the time of application and/or during the term of his/her study abroad program or internship.
- The applicant is studying or interning abroad (i.e., in an international program) for at least three weeks (21 days) in one country and no more than one academic year. Programs going to more than one country are eligible if the student will be *in any one country* for at least three consecutive weeks.

- The applicant is studying or interning abroad in any country **not** on the U.S. Department of State's current [Travel Warning list](#). (Note: 'Alert' countries are not excluded.)

Who Gets It

- ~30% of applicants receive a Gilman
- First-generation students – definitely mention it!
- Underrepresented fields of study, especially sciences and engineering
- Underrepresented populations (defined in many ways)
- Awards are strongly targeted to countries outside of Western Europe, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (though a few applicants will get awards for those destinations)

Critical Need Languages

Students who receive the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship are also eligible to receive a Critical Need Language Award of up to \$3,000 above and beyond the base Gilman award. Applicants who are studying a critical need language while abroad, in a country in which the language is predominantly spoken, will automatically be considered for the Critical Need Language Award. It is competitive yet attainable; usually there are less than 10 students that receive it in the summer. The language list (**as of July 2017**) is:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| • Arabic (all dialects) | • Indonesian | • Russian |
| • Azerbaijani | • Japanese | • Swahili |
| • Bangla | • Korean | • Turkish |
| • Chinese (all dialects) | • Persian | • Urdu |
| • Hindi | • Punjabi | |

Follow-on Service Project for Recipients

All recipients are required to carry out a Follow-on Service Project that promotes international education and the Gilman Scholarship Program at the student's home institution or in their home community. The Follow-on Service Project Proposal, Statement of Purpose essay, and the applicant's academic progress are criteria that are closely considered during the selection process.

Application Components

- Online application, which includes uploading official transcripts
- Online certifications from the applicant's study abroad and financial aid advisor

Transcripts

- Official at current institution; unofficial at previous degree-seeking institutions
- Compress and resize well ahead of time!

II. Application and Essay Tips

Application Tips

- Proofread! Because this is competitive, a few careless mistakes could cost you \$5000!
- Your essay should be composed in paragraph format and well-polished.
- Maximum 7,000 characters (*including spaces*) per each essay.
- Do not format (*i.e. bold, underline, italics*) your essays in the word-processing program because your formatting will not be retained upon transferring.

Statement of Purpose Content

1. Why do you wish to study or intern abroad and what factors led you to this decision? What do you hope to gain from your experience abroad? What impact will your choice of country have on your experience abroad? What initially inspired you to want to study abroad in this particular country or learn this language?
2. Describe your study or intern abroad program. What factors led you to select this program and length of study?
3. How will this study or intern abroad program and the coursework you take abroad impact your academic and future professional goals?
4. Are there any distinctive components to this program, beyond coursework, that will affect your overall learning experience abroad (*i.e. home-stays, internships, field research, volunteer activities, extra-curricular activities, etc.*)?
5. What challenges, if any, did you face in your decision to study or intern abroad? How did you meet these challenges and what impact do you foresee that they will have on your experience abroad? These could include, but are not limited to: being a parent, being a non-traditional student, having a learning or physical disability, being in a field of study in which it is difficult to incorporate study abroad, etc.

Follow-on Service Project Proposal Content

1. Be creative!! They see lots of proposals to participate in the next study abroad fair on campus, or to speak to a few local high school classes. Think about what you could do that would be unique. If it can be “organic” to your life, it’s often ideal. For example, utilize your existing networks, memberships, hobbies, etc.
2. Briefly outline your proposed project to promote the Gilman Scholarship and international education. How will this project impact your home university or home community? What are your project goals?
3. What is your target population and how will your project affect this group?
4. How will you integrate the impact of your experiences abroad into your project?
5. What, if any, campus departments, student organizations, and/or community organizations will you collaborate with, in promoting the Gilman Scholarship and international education? Have you already made contact with these groups?
6. Upon completion of your project you will be required to submit a two-page final report summarizing your experience abroad and the impact of your Follow-on project.

Other Tips

1. **Panelists only have the information that you tell them**, so don't leave them guessing, especially as it relates to how you meet the diversity criteria. Mention anything about yourself that explains your diversity profile. Some of the less commonly mentioned examples include: working-class background, from a single-parent or other nontraditional family, adoptee or have adopted siblings, former foster child, mixed-race family, religious minority, nontraditional student (undergraduate older than 24, married, or a parent), veteran, etc.
2. **Use the questions as a *guide* to outline your essay.** Once you have answered the questions, create an outline that moves logically from one idea to the next. Make sure you address each of the prompts.
3. **Be creative.** Remember that this is a competitive scholarship program and the selection panelist's only chance to get to know you is through your essay. The essays are your chance to tell the selection panelist about yourself and your decision to study abroad. It is important to develop an original and creative Follow-on Service Project. The most competitive applications are those that have creative and original essays.
4. **Let the reader know who you are.** The scholarship committee will be reading many statements. You need to convince them your chosen study abroad program is a good fit for *your* experience/study abroad/major/career goals. You can do this by weaving '*YOU*' throughout the statement.
5. **Think about your audience.** Typically, the reviewers are researchers, professors, and/or regional experts. Use a formal, culturally sensitive tone.
6. **Use an active voice.** Instead of writing about what you might do, write about what you *will* do.
7. **Showcase your knowledge.** Show the reader what you know about the program and how it relates to your goals.
8. **Personalize.** Instead of talking generally about the classes that are offered to students, let the reader know specifically what *you* will be taking and what *you* are excited about. When describing the program, you need to put yourself into the program. If you have participated in relevant academic, cultural, or linguistic events or programs that demonstrate your commitment to your major, language of study, or career path, find a way to include this in one of your statements.
9. **Include plans for further language study (if relevant).** Be sure to talk about your plans to continue your language study/development upon your return from study abroad.
10. **Proofread carefully for spelling and grammar.** Take advantage of campus resources, professors, family and friends when editing your essays. Check for flow, readability, and correct spelling.
11. **Plan to write multiple drafts.** To be successful, you will need to plan on writing and editing multiple drafts.

III. Resources

1. Use **the CICE staff as a resource!** We have worked with many students who have received the Gilman, and we are happy to review your Gilman essay drafts and provide feedback. You can set up an appointment to meet with us for advising and/or to have your essay drafts reviewed.
2. **Use the Writing Center on campus for essay review!** You can find additional information at <https://gustavus.edu/writingcenter/>.
3. **Webinars.** Webinars for applicants (and other informational events) are posted in the Gilman website: <https://www.gilmanscholarship.org/news-events/events/>.
4. **Applicant videos.** Gilman has a number of videos, ranging from instructional ones (how to upload the transcript) to others that feature past awardees. Visit: <https://www.gilmanscholarship.org/resources/videos/>.
5. **Social media.** Gilman is on all of these social media: Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Instagram, Pinterest, and YouTube. To follow, visit the main page (<https://www.gilmanscholarship.org/>), and scroll to the bottom for the icons.

IV. FAQs

Are U.S. permanent residents, DACAmented students, undocumented students, or international students also eligible to apply?

- Unfortunately, no. Eligibility is restricted through federal legislation to U.S. citizens only.

Can I wait until graduate school and seek a Gilman for studying abroad then?

- No. The Gilman program is for undergraduate students seeking their first degree only.

What if I do not receive the Pell Grant but receive other need-based financial aid? May I still apply for the Gilman?

- No. The Gilman is only open to students who receive the federal Pell Grant. However, you qualify if you received the Pell at the time of application **or** will receive it at the time of the study abroad program. You do not have to have received it at both of those times.

Would receiving a Gilman harm my chances of later receiving another federal award for study abroad, such as a Boren/NSEP or Fulbright Scholarship?

- No, not at all. If anything, receipt of one federally funded award often improves your chances in subsequent competitions; at worst, it has no negative effect.

Can I receive the Gilman if I participate in a non Gustavus-sponsored program?

- Maybe. You may apply for the Gilman in order to participate in a non-sponsored program. **YOU** will need to complete the Petition to Study Away at a Non-Gustavus-Sponsored Program, and it must be approved by your academic advisor and the director of the CICE, which will then make your chosen program Gustavus-sponsored for you, specifically. Talk with the appropriate regional program coordinator at CICE. Approval should be fully secured before the Gilman application deadline.