

## TIPS FOR GETTING GREAT FULBRIGHT LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

- 1. Read the instructions**
  - a. Read the instructions regarding references on the Fulbright website at <http://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants/application-tips>. Please read these pages fully, including BOTH the “Instructions for Applicants” sections and the “Instructions for Referees” sections, and all sample forms.
- 2. Brainstorm who to ask**
  - a. Based on having read those instructions thoroughly, brainstorm as many potential references as possible. What makes each potential person a good choice? How well do they know you? What can they say about you and your specific project?
  - b. If you are applying for an English Teaching Assistantship, read the sample ETA Reference Form 9B. Who can best answer the specific questions on the form?
- 3. Choose 3**
  - a. Choose 3 recommenders to contact, but have others in mind just in case. Fulbright requires 3 recommendations; no more, no less.
- 4. Contact them & discuss**
  - a. Contact your 3 recommenders and discuss your plans and Fulbright application with them. They may have some helpful ideas/feedback for you.
- 5. Ask them for a strong letter**
  - a. Ask them if they can write you a strong recommendation for your application by the internal UW deadline.
  - b. Give them the option to say no if they are unsure or don't really have time. If they say no, thank them and move on to your other options.
- 6. If they say yes, help them out! Provide them with:**
  - The attached instruction & tips sheet
  - Your resume
  - Your transcripts
  - A draft of your Statement of Grant Purpose
  - A draft of your Personal Statement
  - An overview of the Fulbright U.S. Student Program and the country summary for the country you are applying to
  - A sample of any work you might have done for their class (final paper, etc.), if applicable
  - Notes, or have a conversation, about any particular points you want the recommender to highlight or focus on in his/her letter
  - Specific instructions for submitting their letter online and the deadline
- 7. Register them online**
  - a. Register them in your online Fulbright application, Step F. Only this registration will give the recommenders access to submit their letters online, as Fulbright requires.
- 8. Remind them of our internal UW deadline of Sept. 10, 2014, 9:00am.**

## **FULBRIGHT RECOMMENDATIONS – REFEREE INSTRUCTIONS for UW APPLICANTS**

Dear Fulbright Reference Writer,

Thank you for supporting UW students and alumni applying for the Fulbright U.S. Student Program. As with any scholarship program, Fulbright selection committees give great weight to recommendation letters. An exceptional reference from you will make a huge impact. Conversely, a weak or negative reference from you will likely prevent an applicant from being seriously considered for selection. As UW's Fulbright Program Advisers, we want to provide you with a bit of information about the Fulbright recommendation process to ensure you have all the information you need when you decide whether to write for a particular applicant, and as you sit down to write.

*The UW internal deadline for completed applications is 9:00am, Tuesday, September 10, 2014.*

### **APPLICANTS SHOULD PROVIDE YOU WITH DETAILED INFORMATION:**

Applicants have been instructed to provide you with ample information about the Fulbright U.S. Student Program, the country they are applying to go to, the project they are proposing to carry out, and themselves as students and applicants. If your applicant has not done so, please prompt them.

Fulbright program information and detailed instructions for references are available at <http://us.fulbrightonline.org/instructions-for-reference-writers> for research/study applicants and at <http://us.fulbrightonline.org/instructions-for-eta-reference-writers> for English Teaching Assistantship applicants.

### **WHEN DECIDING WHETHER TO AGREE TO WRITE A RECOMMENDATION:**

Most applicants will work very hard over several months to formulate and draft their proposals, so any support or assistance they can get from a range of people is helpful. In addition to agreeing to write a recommendation for the applicant, if you have expertise related to the applicant's project or country of application, please feel free to share any feedback or ideas you may have directly with the applicant.

Conversely, if you truly feel you cannot support the student by writing them a strong, positive letter of recommendation, please decline the applicant's request. Whether they choose to ask someone else, or not to apply at all, your honesty in this step will save them much headache and wasted effort.

### **WHAT TO COVER IN YOUR RECOMMENDATION LETTER: For research or study applicants**

In completing the reference, please keep in mind that, if selected, 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 are appropriate for you and your applicant:

- 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.
- Validity of the candidate's proposed project.
- Linguistic preparation for the proposed plan.
- Candidate's motivation and ability to adapt to a different cultural environment.
- 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 overseas.

Please be sure to include specific examples and details to illuminate the characteristics and abilities you describe. Please also be sure to include enough information about yourself and your relationship to the applicant to provide context for your comments.

Although you will be submitting your letter electronically, please use letterhead and include your signature on your letter.

**WHAT TO COVER IN YOUR RECOMMENDATION LETTER: For English Teaching Assistantship (ETA) applicants:**

Rather than a traditional letter of recommendation, references for ETA applicants are asked to complete Form 9B: ETA Reference Form, responding to specific questions. A SAMPLE of that form is available at

[http://us.fulbrightonline.org/uploads/files/application\\_samples/Form9B ETA Reference Form-Sample.pdf](http://us.fulbrightonline.org/uploads/files/application_samples/Form9B ETA Reference Form-Sample.pdf)

In formulating responses to the questions on the form, consider the following general characteristics of U.S. Student Fulbright ETA Programs. Generally, ETA grantees:

- Are placed in elementary or secondary schools or universities outside of capital cities, depending on the country. Please consult the individual country entry at [Country Summary](#) for a description of the program in this applicant's chosen country.
- Are assigned various activities designed to improve host country students' abilities in spoken and written English and knowledge of the United States. As such, both clear and precise diction and demonstrated grammar skills should be a factor in evaluation.
- Are fully integrated into the host community, increasing their own language skills and knowledge of the host country.
- May pursue individual study/research or engage in community activities, in addition to ETA responsibilities.
- Have some background or training in education and/or teaching/tutoring.

Even though space on the form is severely limited, please be sure to include specific examples and details to illuminate the characteristics and abilities you describe.

This online form will cut your responses off if they are too long. So please also be sure to review the pdf version of your completed form before submission to ensure it is appropriately completed.

### **SUBMITTING YOUR REFERENCE ONLINE:**

Once the applicant has registered you as a recommender, an email will be generated and sent to you from the Embark Online Recommendation system with the student's name in the subject line. If you do not receive this email, please let the applicant know or email Tech Support directly: [support@embark.com](mailto:support@embark.com) and tell them the name and email address of the applicant and your name and email address. Any technical problems or questions can also be sent to [support@embark.com](mailto:support@embark.com).

- A. Detailed instructions for submitting a reference for a **research or study applicant** through the online submission system are at <http://us.fulbrightonline.org/instructions-for-reference-writers>
- B. Detailed instructions for submitting a reference form for an **ETA applicant** through the online submission system are at <http://us.fulbrightonline.org/instructions-for-eta-reference-writers>

*Once you submit the reference, you will not have access to edit or change it. Only references submitted via the Embark Fulbright Online Application System will be accepted.*

### **THE SELECTION PROCESS: WHO WILL READ YOUR RECOMMENDATION**

There are three stages in the Fulbright selection process: UW, national, and international. Your recommendation will be read at each stage.

- The UW interview committee is composed of UW faculty and staff who evaluate and score applications, but do not make selection decisions; all applicants move on to the national competition.
- The National Selection Committees are composed of faculty from across the US, are organized by country of application (not academic field, except for creative and performing arts fields) and make the first selection decisions.
- The final selection decisions are made within the country to which the student is applying. The composition of those in-country committees varies widely among countries, but could include faculty members, Fulbright Commission representatives, and in some cases, government officials. Again, these are not field-specific committees.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us, based on the status of your applicant:

- **For undergraduate/alumni applicants** – Robin Chang, [robinc@uw.edu](mailto:robinc@uw.edu), 206-543-2603
- **For graduate/professional/alumni applicants** – Marilyn Gray, [megray@uw.edu](mailto:megray@uw.edu), 206-543-7152
- **For Bothell students/alumni applicants** – Natalia Dyba, [NDyba@uwb.edu](mailto:NDyba@uwb.edu), 425-352-3261

Below, please find an example of a poorly written letter of recommendation, which is based loosely on actual letters of recommendation we've seen. By lacking any specific examples or details, this type of letter is so generic it could be applied to almost anyone and does the applicant more harm than good in the eyes of a selection committee. Please also note that additional information on writing strong letters of recommendation is available on the UW Office of Merit Scholarships, Fellowships & Awards website at: <http://expd.washington.edu/scholarships/faculty-and-staff/writing-letters-of-recommendation.html>.

Sincerely,

Robin Chang, Marilyn Gray, and Natalia Dyba  
UW Fulbright Program Advisers

### **EXAMPLE OF A POORLY WRITTEN LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION**

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of Jane Doe's Fulbright application. Jane was a student in my Fall quarter 2008 "Personal Statement Writing" course (Spec Topics 401). This course is designed to provide students in the early stages of their careers with best practices, writing strategies and methods for developing the personal insights necessary for a good personal statement.

The material and requirements of the course are challenging. Jane was a leader in her class. Her assignments were well conceived, well-written, and always turned in on time. She earned a 3.8 in the course, a very high mark.

I highly recommend Jane for the Fulbright program. She is a wonderful student, very engaged, and extremely intelligent. Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions.

Sincerely,  
John Dough