

Fulbright Foreign Student Program FAQ

Eligibility

Q: Is there an age limit for participation?

A: No. There is no specific age limit for participation in the program. However, most successful candidates are at an early or mid-point in their careers.

Q: I'm not a citizen of Uzbekistan but am a permanent resident. May I apply?

A: Yes, if you are a permanent resident qualified to hold a valid passport issued by Uzbekistan, you are eligible to apply.

Q: I am currently studying or working outside of Uzbekistan. Am I eligible?

A: No. If you are a permanent resident of another country, or currently working or studying in another country, you are not eligible for participation in the program. You must reside in the country throughout the application and selection process.

Q: I will not get my bachelor's degree until after the Fulbright application deadline. Can I still apply?

A: No. No, you can't. Applicants must have completed undergraduate education and hold a bachelor's degree. In your application, you must submit your transcripts and a copy of your official diploma.

Q: I am a citizen of Uzbekistan but graduated from a university outside of Uzbekistan. Am I eligible?

A: Yes. As long as you received the equivalent of a four-year undergraduate degree from an accredited university, you are eligible.

Q: I am currently enrolled in a master's degree program and would not have completed by the application deadline. Am I still eligible to apply for the Fulbright Program?

A: Yes, but final transcripts should be received in the year of application.

Q: I already have a master's degree; can I get another one through this program?

A: Yes. Graduate students holding a Master's degree or Diploma of Specialist are eligible to apply.

Q: Can I apply for a PhD program?

A: No. Unfortunately, there is no U.S. government-funded exchange program for doctoral students from Uzbekistan, but you can get scholarships for PhD programs directly from U.S. graduate schools. If you need more information about these opportunities, contact the EducationUSA Center by calling (+998 78) 140 2447 or via e-mail: Tashkent-Advising@state.gov.

Q: Can I apply for two different fields or degrees simultaneously?

A: No. You must decide which field or degree you are applying for prior to your application. It will not be possible to make any changes later.

Q: What if my undergraduate degree is unrelated to what I want to study in graduate school?

A: In the United States, in general, your undergraduate major does not need to be in the same field as what you plan to study in graduate school. For more information on U.S. higher education, please contact the EducationUSA Center.

Q: Is there a list of eligible fields of study for the program?

A: Applicants can apply to all fields of study except the medical sciences (medical graduates may seek a Master's Degree in Chemistry, Biology, Public Health or Hospital Administration). Please note that applications in the following disciplines are preferred:

Accounting/Finance, Agriculture, Architecture, Biology, Biomedical Engineering, Business, Chemistry, Computer Science, Crop Sciences, Economics, Education, Engineering, Environmental Sciences, Information Sciences/Systems, International Relations, Labor/Industrial Relations, Language Teaching, Law, Library Science, Mathematics, Physics, Political Science, Public Administration, Public Health, Transportation

Q: I have studied in the U.S. before. Can I apply?

A: Yes. However, strong preference will be given to applicants who do not have recent and/or extensive experience in the U.S. If you do have significant experience in the U.S., please explain

in your application how further experience in the U.S. will fulfill the Fulbright mission and not be a duplication of prior visit.

Q: Is there a minimum GPA for applicants?

A: No. Applicants will be evaluated based on the merits of their entire application, including their GPA, essays, work experience (if any), references, and test scores.

Q: Are there any requirements attached to the Fulbright grant?

A: Yes. All Fulbright grantees are subject to a two-year home country residency requirement, which means that you will need to return to Uzbekistan for a minimum of two years on completion of your program in the United States. Thus, persons desiring permanent residence in the U.S. are not eligible for the program.

Completing application

Q: When should I apply?

A: You should apply in the application cycle in the year prior to when you will start your program in the U.S. For example, for the program beginning in August-September 2023, you should be ready to apply by the application deadline of 2022.

Start planning well in advance. One to two years ahead is not too early. Applications for Fulbright Programs run on a similar timeline to applications for graduate study at U.S. universities.

Q: How do I apply?

A: You must apply through the online application available here: <https://apply.iie.org/ffsp2023/>

Q: Are there any special instructions for completing the online application? Where can I find them?

A: Yes, there are Uzbekistan-specific instructions, which you must follow carefully to ensure you complete the application correctly. Make sure that all elements of your application – including references – are typed. Read the questions carefully and fill in the form according to the application instructions. Not every section may apply to you. If it does not apply then write “Not Applicable” or ‘N/A’ so that we know you have not overlooked it. Instructions for completing application are available here: <https://uz.usembassy.gov/education-culture/exchange-programs/fulbright-foreign-student-program/>.

Q: Can I send my application or additional documents by regular mail or email?

A: No. You must apply through the online system only.

Q: Do I have to provide copies of both diploma and academic transcript?

A: Yes. When applying, you have to provide scanned copies of your diploma and transcripts, as well as a translation if necessary. You are expected to submit your diploma, transcripts and translation in a single file. Please note that only nominated candidates will be requested to submit 'official' copies of diplomas and academic transcripts, accompanied by certified English translations.

Q: Do I need to send my lyceum/college transcripts?

A: No, only academic transcripts from all post-secondary schools attended.

Q: Do I have to provide a writing sample, for instance, a copy of my published article or my thesis?

A: No. You should not submit any writing samples unless you are specifically asked to.

Q: Which additional documents could I provide? For instance, certificates, letters of appreciation etc.

A: Please, do not provide any additional documents unless you are asked to. You could indicate your achievements in the CV form or in your personal essay, without providing additional documents.

Q: I do not have much work experience in my chosen field. Will my application be at a disadvantage?

A: Work experience in the field you wish to pursue is an indication of your commitment to that field and is considered additional preparation for graduate work. Work experience can often make up for any academic experience you may lack. While it is not a mandatory requirement, a lack of relevant work experience may diminish your chances to earn the scholarship.

Q: Does the program require applicants to submit contracts of employment and certificates of extra-curricular activities?

A: No. Contracts of employment and certificates of all kinds are not required. You just need to list your work history and extra-curricular activities in your CV.

Q: What does the selection committee want to see in my Research/Study Objectives and Personal Statement?

A: The Research/Study Objectives and Personal Statement are your opportunity to explain to the selection committee why you want to go to the U.S. If your statements are unclear and/or vague, it is unlikely that you will be offered an interview.

- Explain why a course in the U.S. is an advantage over doing a similar course in Uzbekistan.
- Explain how a year or more in the U.S. fits in with your long-term career goals.
- Include other reasons for wanting to spend time in the U.S.
- Explain the wider significance and impact of your work or program of study.

Q: How many reference letters should I submit?

A: Three (3) recommendation letters. If you submit less than three, your application will be considered incomplete. Please do not submit more than the required three.

Q: Who could write a reference letter for me?

A: Where possible, one reference should come from a supervisor of your academic work, and another should come from a supervisor of your non-academic work (e.g. employment, extracurricular activities or volunteering).

Q: What do you want to see in my references?

A: You should ask people who know you very well, and preferably those who can comment on your academic ability as well as your leadership, character and interests. Draw your referees' attention to the guidelines at the top of the form. We also recommend that your referees read your Statement of Purpose. The selection committee wants evidence that you have attained a high academic standard and, where applicable, evidence of excellence in the workplace is also useful.

Q: Is there any specific form for reference letters? How can the reference letters be submitted?

A: Recommendation letters can be submitted in two ways. Highly preferred option is registering your recommenders in the online application. Once you register your recommenders, they will receive an automatic email with instructions on completing the online recommendation form. You can track the status of recommendations, send reminders, and add/delete recommenders through this system before and after submission of your application.

If the above option is not available, your recommenders can download the *Letter of Reference Form* from here: <https://uz.usembassy.gov/education-culture/exchange-programs/fulbright-foreign-student-program/> When completed, you should upload them in the *Additional Documentation* section of the online application.

Q: Should my recommenders put a stamp on their letters?

A: No. Stamps on the letters of recommendation are not required.

Q: What if my recommenders miss the application deadline?

A: Your three references must be submitted by the application deadline or your application will be deemed incomplete and will not be considered. Make sure to contact your referees early and make them aware of the deadline with plenty of time to submit.

Q: The application instructs applicants to name universities of their choice. Will the program administrators honor my choice?

A: Your stated preferences will be taken into account, but it is not always possible to or appropriate to submit the application to a grantee's preferred university. If selected as a finalist and there is no match between you and your choice, the program will find other universities where you have a better chance of gaining admission.

Q: I applied on time, but my supporting documents are late and will be submitted after the closing date. Will they still be accepted?

A: No. Application deadlines are strictly adhered to and no late applications or supporting documents will be accepted after the closing date.

Q: Is the application deadline ever extended?

A: Application deadlines cannot be extended for individual applicants or to accommodate personal circumstances.

Selection process

Q: I submitted my application and supporting materials on time. When will I hear from you?

A: You will be informed (via email) within approximately 30 days of the closing date.

Q: What does the selection process look like?

A: After the application deadline, all submitted online applications undergo a technical review. Applications that pass the technical review will then be reviewed by an independent reading panel that will evaluate and score each application based on a set of standard criteria. Applicants with the highest scores will then be invited to a virtual interview or in-person interview held at the Embassy. Nominations will be made from the top candidates, after the interviews.

Q: How many interview slots are there?

A: It depends on the number of qualified applicants. In general, we usually interview approximately 10 to 20 applicants each year.

Q: Who is on the selection panel?

A: The selection committee is composed of American experts and Uzbekistani alumni of a U.S. Government-funded exchange program in a variety of fields of study.

Q: According to which criteria does the selection committee make its decision?

A: Nominees will be selected based on the following primary criteria:

- sufficiently high level of English to undertake full-time graduate level study in the U.S.
- evidence of ambition, high motivation, serious commitment and leadership potential
- study in fields tied to future career goals that will significantly benefit Uzbekistan
- outstanding academic records
- satisfactory TOEFL and GRE/GMAT test scores
- demonstrable ambassadorial skills with evidence of cultural sensitivity and a genuine desire to learn more about the United States and share with American citizens aspects of Uzbekistan culture
- experience and interest in extracurricular and community activities, and
- a desire to further the Fulbright Program and give back to your home country upon returning.

Q: I am graduating this year and have no work experience. Will my application be considered?

A: No, you must have at least two years of professional experience in order to be eligible to apply to the program.

Q: Will I have to get admission to a university on my own?

A: No, the Institute for International Education (IIE) will find an appropriate placement for you. They will apply to the universities that their experienced placement professionals think best matches your profile and suits your program needs.

Q: How many scholarships will be awarded to Uzbekistan citizens each year? How big is the competition?

A: In recent years, Uzbekistan has been allocated 2-4 grants; this can vary from year to year, depending on U.S. Government budget allocations. On average, there are 130-150 applicants annually.

Q: What is the general timeline of the program?

A: The timeline of the program is usually as follows:

Application: March-June

Application review: June-July

Interviews: July-August

Test taking: August - September

Nomination by the Embassy due by: October 1

Announcement of results: April - June

Standardized tests

Q: Do I need to take any tests at the time of application to the program?

A: No. Test scores are NOT required at this point, but if you have recently taken TOEFL/IELTS, GRE/ GMAT, please upload scanned copies of test score reports. Only nominated candidates will be requested to take one or more of these standardized tests.

Q: Which standardized tests will I be required to take? Do I have to pay for any of these tests?

A: As a general rule, you will be required to sit for the official TOEFL iBT (Test of English as a Foreign Language, Internet-based) and the Graduate Records Examination (GRE) exams. The GRE is required by U.S. graduate schools and/or departments for candidates in most fields other than Law. The GRE is used by universities to get a sense of a test taker's academic potential and to determine his or her performance in analyzing and evaluating data. The GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) is required for certain courses of study in the field of finance and economics. Please note that there are many exceptions, and you may want to consult with EducationUSA adviser for more information on graduate admissions programs and exams.

The Fulbright Program will provide you with test vouchers for these exams, as well as transportation to and from the test site, if you are from outside of Tashkent.

Q: Where can I prepare for the tests?

A: For TOEFL, a wealth of practice material is available at <http://www.ets.org/toefl/>. Many GRE practice materials can be downloaded for free at <http://www.ets.org/gre/>.

Q: When should I start preparing for the tests?

A: It is recommended that all applicants begin to familiarize themselves with the required tests at least three four months before taking them. Since candidates will be selected by August, we urge you to begin review and practice of the tests as soon as you apply.

Q: I have graduated from a local branch of an international/foreign institution, and all of the subjects taught were in English. Will I be exempted from the language exams?

A: No. If nominated, you must take TOEFL iBT. This language proficiency test is required to gain admission to a U.S. university for international students from all non-English speaking countries.

Q: Can I submit an IELTS score instead of taking TOEFL iBT?

A: No, an IELTS or any other standardized test of English language score may be accepted at the application phase, but if nominated, you will be required to take TOEFL iBT to prove that you have a sufficiently high level of English to undertake full-time graduate level study in the U.S.

Q: What is a minimum TOEFL and GRE scores I must achieve?

A: Candidates should try to obtain TOEFL scores that are in the 80s and higher (for candidates in Law, Public Administration, Journalism, Education, etc. - where strong written and spoken English skills are critical for successful study/research - scores should be 100 or more). On the

GRE you should try to score 155 on Verbal and Quantitative sections. You can also consult the EducationUSA Center or access websites of U.S. universities to learn more about the requirements of various academic programs.

Q. Will my score on the TOEFL/GRE/GMAT affect my placement at a university?

A: Yes. Each university in the U.S. has different admissions criteria, but low test scores may make your application less competitive. Therefore, the Fulbright Program encourages finalists to prepare carefully for these exams.

About the award

Q: What happens after I am chosen as a nominee?

A: Your application will be sent to the Institute of International Education (IIE) in the United States. Final grantee selection is contingent upon the J. William Fulbright Scholarship Board's (FSB) approval, available funding, and successful academic placement by the IIE.

Q: Can you please give more information about the placement process?

A: The Institute of International Education (IIE) placement department for the Foreign Graduate Student Program works with practically all U.S. universities. We ask you to take into consideration that, despite your wish to study at a specific university in the USA, the placement of nominated candidates requires that finalists also pass the selection requirements of the universities they are placed at. At each university the requirements to enter, the lowest passing scores for tests and the requirements to additional materials, may vary. The application of each competition finalist is sent to approximately 4 universities where there is a program fitting the needs of the candidate. The placement department at the IIE chooses the programs, having carefully analyzed the application and essays of each candidate. Upon receiving the responses from potential universities, the Fulbright Program and IIE make the final decision.

Q: Will I need to submit any additional documents if I become a finalist?

A: Yes, finalists will be required to submit a completed Medical History and Examination Form, as well as other documents as requested by the Fulbright office.

Q: Can I defer my Fulbright grant to the following academic year?

A: No. You can decline the grant and re-apply next year.

Q: If I decline a Fulbright grant and re-apply, will my application be given preference?

A: No, your application will not be given preferential treatment.

Q: What does the Fulbright Foreign Student Program provide?

A: The grant provides J-1 visa support, tuition and fees, a living allowance, round-trip travel and health insurance.

Q: How are Fulbright Funding Packages determined?

A: The living stipends are determined by the U.S. Department of State and vary from location to location depending on the local cost of living.

Q: Can I take my dependents?

A: Yes, you can. However, you will need to demonstrate financial ability to support them, since the Foreign Fulbright Student program does not provide for dependents. You will be responsible for providing travel, adequate insurance, and other support for them. Fulbright Foreign Student Program grantees go to the U.S. alone, initially. Once they are settled in their program in the U.S., usually after the first semester, grantees are joined by their dependents.

Q: Does the Fulbright Program provide any orientation for grantees before leaving for the U.S.?

A: Yes. The Program will organize a pre-departure orientation (PDO) in Tashkent for all grantees before they leave.

Q: How long does it take to complete the program after receiving the grant?

A: Usually, master's programs in the United States can be completed in 2 years or less. The grant is first awarded for one academic year and will be renewed for the second year of study based on the academic standing of the grantee. In order for your grant to be renewed, you must demonstrate that you have made satisfactory academic progress in your authorized study program and have maintained full-time study status. A grant for LL.M. study is 1 academic year in length and is not renewable. Candidates appointed to certain types of Fulbright grants may be required to arrive during the summer for an introductory course or intensive English program prior to the academic year.

Q: Where can I find out more about the Fulbright Program?

A: You can refer to the Global Fulbright Program Policies at: <http://eca.state.gov/fulbright/about-fulbright>