

De-Mystifying Fulbright English Teaching Assistantships (ETA)

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The Fulbright program has offered opportunities for U.S. students to serve as English teachers and teaching assistants at schools, colleges and universities abroad for many years. In recent years, countries offering ETA programs have grown from a handful to 23 in the 2007-08 competition. Since you may only apply to one country and one program, it is important to select carefully, based on your educational and career goals, academic background and preparation, language proficiency, and geographic interests.

For example, ETAs in Asia are placed primarily in elementary and secondary schools and knowledge of the host country language at the time of application is not required. However, ETAs in South America will be working with university and adult students and must have proficiency in the host country language. On the other hand, the programs and prerequisites in Europe vary widely.

Applicants are advised to read carefully the Participating Country Summary to understand the nature of each program and specific requirements. You should make certain that your Statement of Proposed Study very clearly states why you have chosen a particular program and country, your experience, training and skills, and what you expect to contribute to and take away from an ETA experience.

Most ETA programs expect that grantees will engage in an independent academic, vocational, or community service project. You should briefly describe what you would like to do in the Statement of Proposed Study. Since applicants will not know exactly where they will be located, this statement is not expected to be detailed, nor should you attempt to forge an affiliation at this stage. You simply need to indicate the activities that you intend to pursue outside of the ETA responsibilities and why you have chosen this/these activities for the country to which you are applying.

Finally, a few tips for choosing a country and preparing your Statement:

- **Beware of the competition statistics.** Most ETA programs are only a year or two old and, therefore, may not have received applications or much publicity in the previous year. In addition, the number of applications for ETA programs has doubled in the last two years, a reflection of the growth in the number of countries participating. Given this, you can not reliably predict the number of applications for this competition based on last year's numbers.
- **Project proposal.** If you have a very specific proposal for study or research, you may wish to consider the full grant option, since in the ETA program you will not be able to choose where you will be placed. Furthermore, successful ETA's are those who value the experience of working in an educational environment first and foremost.
- **Prior experience or training in teaching.** This may be required or strongly preferred in some countries and not particularly relevant in others. Read the

Participating Country Summary and speak to an IIE Program Manager when in doubt.

- **Extensive experience or training in teaching.** Remember, this is a Student Fellowship. Persons with university-level teaching experience or more than four years of teaching in schools and persons who have completed a master's degree in TESOL or a related field may be overqualified for this program. If you fit into one of these categories and have specific reasons why you feel you would benefit from a Student ETA Fellowship, then be sure to express this clearly in your Statement. Contact an IIE Program Manager if you have questions.