

ESTABLISHING A HOST AFFILIATION

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Fulbright Newsletter

Applicants must carefully read the criteria for host affiliation requirements in the summary for the country to which they are applying. Countries differ in the kinds of host affiliations that are acceptable. Depending upon the country, the host affiliation can be an academic institution, a research institute, a non-profit organization and/or individuals at any one of these or other types of relevant agencies. In some cases, particularly in the arts, the affiliation may be a person such as a writer, musician, or artist or an arts organization or foundation. Applicants should pay special attention to the **requirement** in some countries to attend/affiliate with an academic institution.

Identifying a Potential Host

Some countries will obtain affiliation for the Fulbrighters, while others leave the responsibility for securing host affiliation entirely up to the grantee. Others will work somewhere in between, expecting the grantee to identify a host affiliation and make initial contact, but will then help to formalize the affiliation after the grant is awarded. Make sure you know what is expected of you as an applicant by reviewing the country summary carefully. In countries where it is up to the grantee to find and secure affiliations, IIE **cannot** provide a list of institutions that acted as a host to previous Fulbrighters. Past Fulbrighters have used a number of methods to contact hosts and solicit support for their projects. One main way is to use the contacts and advisers that you already have. Ask if one of your current professors can help to put you into contact with a professor at a university overseas. Here are a couple of additional ways, we recommend finding an affiliation: (1) international students on your campus can be a great resource; (2) contact Visiting Fulbright Professors in the U.S. by visiting (http://www.cies.org/vs_scholars/vs_dir.htm); (3) a search engine (such as Google) can help you find professors with your interests. Do not hesitate to contact professors from other universities both in the U.S. and in your prospective country, especially if your proposal fits to the professor's expertise. Other than that, some committed research and perseverance will aid you in finding a host affiliation. Once you find a possible host, make contact by sending an introductory letter or email. Keep in mind that many schools are closed during the summer months, so you may want to begin early, or heat up your search in the early fall. Remember, however, that IIE does not accept any support materials or letters via email or fax, and that sufficient lead time must be allowed to receive hard copy responses, with original signatures.

Letters of Support

The most competitive candidates will include documentation of contacts with potential host affiliations with the application. This could be of a letter of invitation from the host institution/organization/individual indicating research support or allowing access to facilities to the applicant; or, it could be a letter indicating that the admitting institution provides courses in the applicant's areas of study. IIE refers to these letters synonymously as: letters of support, letters of affiliation, letters of invitation and/or letters of admission. There are no specific requirements for the letter of support from the host institution. Every affiliation relationship will be different depending upon the candidate's project. In general, letters of support on institutional letterhead sent with the application are preferred. The letters should state how the supervisor/host institution will help the applicant to facilitate the project (i.e., what resources will be offered, what kind of supervision will be given, etc.). Some applicants propose to do independent research, so these letters of support are more crucial to establishing the feasibility of a project. Other applicants propose study projects, so letters of support are really a complement to the overall application, but attest to its feasibility. Therefore, you should try to get a letter of support that is as detailed as possible. Ultimately, it is up to your host affiliation as to the level/kind of support that they are willing to offer you. In the U.S., we have become accustomed to rapid response, especially in electronic communication. Many cultures do not have this expectation, and many people do not enjoy the reliable connectivity or easy access to the Internet that we do. Therefore, be advised that you may not receive a response to your inquiries as quickly as you might hope. Applicants are advised to begin their search for an affiliation as early as possible. Letters of support can be submitted to IIE via regular mail after the deadline. However, we cannot guarantee that letters of support submitted separate from the full application will be successfully married up with the application in time for committee review. We will make every effort to do so, but can make no guarantee. Also, IIE cannot confirm receipt of any documents. Please do not call or email us to ask if your letter of support was received. We recommend that you send your materials using a method that will provide return receipt. Please note that **we will not accept** letters of support, recommendations, or foreign language reports sent via email or fax.

Degree Programs

If your plan is to complete a Master's or other degree or to attend a structured degree program, make sure that you apply for admission to the host university by their deadline. Do not wait for the Fulbright decision to come through or you may be too late in gaining admission into your chosen university. If you are applying for admission into a study/Master's program, you do not need to submit the letter of admission with the application. You can submit the acceptance letter whenever you receive it, but an award offer would be contingent upon you receiving placement at a university. However, even if you are applying to do a structured degree program, obtaining a letter of support from a faculty member at the host university will complement your application.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE ON ESTABLISHING AN AFFILIATION

By Minerva Sanchez

"You never forget when you move to another place" is what my mother used to tell me. I find this adage to remain true. As with selecting any place to which relocate, one must learn everything about your new home. I can recall the extensive research I did when I began to decide which school to attend for my undergraduate degree. I analyzed every school appropriate for my major based on its US location, admissions requirements, size (overall student body and class), cost, application deadline, comparison of applications versus acceptance rates, setting (rural or urban), type of institution (public or private), predicted graduation rate versus actual graduation rate, etc. As you might guess, I did not forget the experience of researching where I would be moving when I finally selected my undergraduate university.

Years later, when it came to completing my Fulbright application, I experienced *déjà vu*; only this time it was not quite as overwhelming. With the possibility of undertaking a Fulbright program in one of at least 130 countries, it was inspiring to consider my options! With my enthusiasm under control, I began focusing on where I would see myself living for the next year, and conducting research on my interests.

Based on my experience of selecting which undergraduate university would be best for me, I put my skills to work. For some time, I had been following the accession of ten new countries into the European Union (EU) in May 2004. The European Union (EU) had grown from six countries to fifteen since 1951 and was preparing for its fifth, largest round of expansion with the addition of ten countries from Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. It was argued that the prospect of Poland's membership to the EU would allow the country to play a role of regional leader again by taking important political and economic initiatives. Poland had arguably demonstrated the importance of its strategic geographic location, with the examples of the expedited, democratic changes within Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall and perestroika in Russia. These democratic changes first appeared in Poland and had a domino effect across the rest of the continent.

With my passionate interest in Poland, I began concentrating my efforts on establishing a host affiliation there. Since organized crime is my specific area of interest, I searched which professors throughout Poland had published on this topic. Then, as luck would have it, I met one of the professors who is a guru on organized crime -- particularly drug smuggling -- at my US university during a special guest lecture. I was able to track him down via the Internet, and send him an email about my proposed research. Later, I called him and we had a detailed conversation. After several phone conversations, email and fax exchanges, he sent me a formal letter agreeing to: sponsor my research, provide me with office space, arrange for dorm housing, and attend some classes. I was also able to obtain another letter of support from a Polish National Police officer, who was on leave.