



Gilman Scholarship

Application Tips

- **Your essays are the most important part of your application.** Students who meet the award criteria, but write poor essays rarely receive an award.
- **Write cohesive essays.** Your essays should address all the questions outlined in the prompt, but they should not be written in a Q&A format or bullet point list. The questions do not need to be addressed in order. They simply need to be answered somewhere in your complete essay. You can highlight the sections of your essay that address each question to assure you've answered everything.
- **Be memorable.** Your selection committee will consist of two individuals who will each read approximately 70 essays. Applicants with essays that stand out have a greater chance of receiving an award.
- **Start strong.** Start your essays with a creative and attention-grabbing introduction to pull the reader into your application. Consider starting your Statement of Purpose with a story.
- **Be unique.** What can you say in your essays that no one else can?
- **Carefully craft, revise and proofread your essays.** Essays that are hastily written or sloppily constructed are easy to spot and rarely successful. Consider this: the average award is about \$4,000. If you spend 20 hours on your two essays and receive a \$4,000 award, you have earned \$200 an hour.

Statement of Purpose

- **Clearly outline how studying abroad connects to your academic progress and career aspirations.** What have you done to prepare academically for this program? What are the benefits of adding a study abroad experience to your resume? What are your plans post-graduation?
- **Clearly state why you picked your program and destination.** How did your academic, career and personal goals influence your study abroad program selection?
- **Talk about your background.** What obstacles have you overcome to study abroad and/or go to college? What unique experiences and perspectives will you bring to your group of study abroad students and the locals you meet abroad? What elements of US culture can you share through your unique life experiences? The Gilman Scholarship wants you to be a good representation of the program, how will you do that?
- **Research your program and destination.** Learn some unique information about how your study abroad program and location will connect to your personal identities. Diversity Abroad is a great resource for exploring how your identities may influence your study abroad experience (<https://www.diversityabroad.com/articles/travel-guide>).

Follow-on Service Project

- **Identify a population of students who would benefit from learning about study abroad and the Gilman Scholarship.** These students could be in your hometown, high school, college, Etown community, etc. This could include clubs, sports teams, etc.
- **Select a method of reaching that population.** This could be an event, a presentation, a new media platform, an artistic expression, collaboration with the Study Abroad Office, etc. Visit the Gilman Scholarship website for sample project ideas. Your project should be unique to you and your targeted population.
- **Be thorough when defining your Follow-on Service Project.** Mention the specifics about how you will carry out your project, why you choose the target population, why you choose this approach and who will help you execute the project. You need to show that your project is feasible and that you plan complete the project, regardless of if you receive this award or not.

Critical Need Language (Optional)

- **Show a strong motivation to achieve proficiency.** You do not need prior experience with a critical need language to apply for this additional award, but you do need to show that you are committed to studying and using the language beyond your study abroad program.
- **Connect language usage with your future goals.** You need to demonstrate that you have plans to continue studying and using the language, personally and professionally.

DO NOT...

- **Fixate on financial struggles.** To be eligible for this award, students must be a Federal Pell Grant recipient. Therefore, all applicants have a similar amount of financial need, so it is not necessary to provide too much context.
- **Mention you picked the country because they speak English.** While this might be one of your deciding factors, it's not worth mentioning here. It doesn't show how your study abroad experience will be impactful to you.
- **Reiterate your study abroad program's marketing materials.** It is helpful to mention some context about your study abroad program, but only as it connects to you and your goals. The reviewer does not need to know all the details about the program; they need to know about how it connects to you: personally, academically and professionally.
- **Be Repetitive.** You only have so many words in your essays to tell the reviewers about your interests in studying abroad, do not waste the space by repeating the same information. You do not need to fill the essays character capacity. It is better to be brief and concise, than long and wordy.

Edits & Feedback

Optional, but highly recommended - Submit your essay drafts to the Study Abroad Office (studyabroad@etown.edu) for editing and feedback. You may also submit your drafts to the Director of Prestigious Scholarships, Jean-Paul Benowitz (benowitzj@etown.edu), Etown's Writing Wing (learningzone@etown.edu), and/or other trusted writing advisors. Please allow time for several rounds of edits before the application deadline.