

## Gilman Essay Guide

The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship (Gilman) Program is a program of the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government. The Gilman Program was created by the U.S. Congress to broaden the outlook and better prepare students to assume significant roles in the increasingly global economy.

The program supports outstanding American undergraduate students with high financial need (Pell Grant recipients) to pursue credit-bearing academic study or internships abroad, during which they gain skills that contribute to career readiness, serve as citizen ambassadors, and support U.S. economic and strategic interests.

Award amounts can be up to \$5,000 (with the opportunity to receive the supplemental Critical Need Language Award of up to \$3,000 and/or the STEM Supplemental Award of up to \$1,000). Financial need is based on the study abroad expenses provided by the applicant's advisor and additional financial aid information submitted through the application. A Gilman scholar's final award amount will be determined by financial need, program length, overall program costs and the strength of the application during the selection panel recommendation process.

Veterans of military service and applicants who have not previously studied abroad are encouraged to apply, and preference is given to them when other factors are equivalent. **The Gilman Program prioritizes representation from all U.S. states and territories and a broad range of overseas destinations, with a preference for countries where it is less common for U.S. students to study abroad.** Students can study abroad or participate in internships abroad in a wide array of countries to build their career-readiness skills which supports U.S. national security and economic prosperity.

## Statement of Purpose Essays

### Short Essay 1: Motivations for Studying or Interning Abroad (*max of 500 words*)

A successful Gilman applicant will describe how a specific program and destination will support the applicant in reaching their academic and/or career goals. A successful applicant will also clearly articulate what they anticipate gaining academically and professionally from their experience abroad and what skills and knowledge they hope to develop.

- Make the case for why a global academic or professional experience would contribute to your future academic and/or career goals.
  - What are the names of the courses you're taking abroad?
  - What themes, topics, or skills are you learning in this course?
  - What career are you interested in pursuing?
- Why did you select your specific program or internship and host country?
  - What interests you about the school/ program that you will attend?
  - What activities will you be able to participate in? (Clubs, excursions, volunteering, etc.
  - Why select this country?
    - Did you do some research on the country? What interests you in the country? Language, culture, career, etc.?
    - Is this a country you have connections with? (Ancestral home, parents home country)

**Short Essay 2: Knowledge and Skill Development through Studying and Interning Abroad (*max of 500 words*)**

A successful Gilman applicant must demonstrate academic preparedness, as well as ability to adapt to and thrive in a different environment and be successful on and benefit from their study or intern abroad program. Academic performance, particularly in the applicant's major, is important, though there is no minimum grade point average required for selection as a Gilman recipient.

- Please describe specific examples in which your knowledge, skills, and/or experiences (academic, professional, extracurricular and/or volunteer activities, etc.) have equipped you to effectively adapt to and succeed in your host country.
  - What are some of the ways you have been successful in your course work?
  - What obstacles have you overcome and what have you learned from those experiences?
  - What skills do you currently have that will help you make connections, build community, and succeed in the classroom while you're abroad?

- What specific knowledge and skills do you hope to develop through your experience abroad?
  - If you are studying a language abroad, how have you prepared yourself beforehand OR how are you preparing to study some basic language skills?

## **Representing America abroad and Hometown Impact Essays**

### **Short Essay 3: Gilman Scholars as Citizen Diplomats (*max of 500 words*)**

Gilman Scholars represent the United States overseas as citizen diplomats and are expected to build meaningful connections in their host communities. While studying or interning abroad, Gilman Scholars will have the opportunity to share what it means to be an American citizen with their host communities, which is particularly relevant as we approach the [250th anniversary](#) of the founding of the United States.

As we approach the 250th anniversary of the United States, Gilman Scholars' roles as citizen diplomats are more important than ever. A successful Gilman applicant will articulate how he or she will engage with their host community and share what it means to be an American.

- Describe your plans and strategies for engaging your host community and showcasing what it means to be an American. Articulate any specific plans that involve showcasing America's 250th anniversary while in your host community.
  - What is being an American?

### **Short Essay 4: Contributions to U.S. Communities and Follow-on Service Project Proposal (*max of 500 words*)**

Upon returning to the United States, Gilman Scholars inspire the next generation of American students to study or intern abroad through the required follow-on service project. The goal of the follow-on service project is for Gilman Scholars to highlight the value of study abroad, promote the Gilman Program, and demonstrate how international experiences contribute to the U.S. prosperity in their home communities and campuses. A successful Gilman applicant will design a follow-on service project proposal that meets these goals.

Gilman Scholars return to their communities across the United States with global networks and foreign language skills that support U.S. prosperity. As part of this effort, Gilman Scholars are expected to complete a Follow-on Service Project, which aims to highlight the critical role of study abroad in enhancing U.S. national competitiveness and security and the benefits of the Gilman Program.

- Upon returning to the United States, Gilman Scholars inspire the next generation of American students to study or intern abroad through the required follow-on service project.
- Demonstrate how international experiences contribute to the U.S. prosperity in their home communities and campuses
- How do you plan to leverage and share the knowledge and skills gained overseas on return to the United States?
- How you will raise awareness of the value of study abroad and highlight support available through the Gilman Program?
- Who is the primary audience for your follow-on service project and why have you selected them?

## **Critical Need language Award Essay**

The U.S. Department of State is dedicated to supporting American students who are studying a critical need language (those deemed important to national security). Applicants are considered for this category if, while abroad, they are taking a course conducted in a critical need language, while studying in a location where the critical need language is predominantly spoken. If they are studying in a country in which the language is not predominantly spoken, it should be clear why their program and location will support their language learning.

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language is not predominantly spoken, it should be clear why their program and location will support their language learning.

A successful applicant should demonstrate a strong motivation to achieve proficiency in the language that extends beyond their study abroad experience and into their future academic and/or career goals.

In **no more than 300 words**, address all the required prompts below:

- What are your motivations for learning and/or improving proficiency in your targeted language for your academic and/or career success?
- Describe your plan to develop your language skills while studying abroad, both inside and outside of the classroom setting.
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### **All Gilman Applicants Must Provide(to Gilman):**

- **Current University Transcript:**  
One copy of your undergraduate transcript (either official or unofficial) from your current college or university. Your current institution transcript must include your name, institution, and your current “in progress” term. Transcripts may be unofficial at the time of application, but if you are selected as a Gilman scholarship recipient you will be asked to provide an official copy. (Note: Unofficial transcripts may be issued from your institution or web-based from your student account, but copy and pasted versions are not acceptable).
- **Transfer University Transcript(s):**  
One copy of your undergraduate transcripts (either official or unofficial) from any previous institution you have attended and listed in your application. If you were not a “degree seeking student” at an institution, it is not required for you to list this institution in your application or to upload this transcript(s). Unofficial transcripts may be issued from your institution or web-based from your student account, but copy and pasted versions are not acceptable.