

Fulbright Grant

Tips on writing the “Personal Statement”

This 1-page narrative is designed to give the reviewers a picture of you as an individual. It is an opportunity to tell the committee more about the trajectory that you have followed and what plans you have for the future. Whereas the *Statement of Grant Purpose* focuses on what you will be doing in the host country, the Personal Statement concentrates on how your background has influenced your development and how that relates to the Fulbright opportunity.

The statement can deal with your personal history, family background, intellectual development, and the educational, professional, or cultural opportunities to which you have or have not been exposed; explain their impact. **Make it personal.** This should not be a reiteration of facts already listed in the Biographical Data sections or an elaboration of the *Statement of Grant Purpose*.

Keep in mind the following while writing your essay:

1. Make sure your personal statement is not a mirror image of your second essay. It should complement your application but should not restate in new ways why you need a Fulbright grant. This essay should show a balance between your interests and your personal growth and development. **Do not repeat information from other parts of the application.**
2. Maintain a theme or connecting concept throughout the essay.
3. Remember that you are applying to be a representative of the U.S. The personal essay gives you a venue to reveal the characteristics that will make you as valuable an asset to our host country as it is to you.
4. Explore connections between your academic life and the rest of your life. Ask yourself questions such as “What matters to me?” “Why does it matter to me?” “Who cares?” and “If they don’t care, why should they care?”
5. Incorporate your personality into your essays.
6. Be honest about your personal growth and development. Try to show your strengths and weaknesses (areas that show you are human).
7. Candidates who may have had a period of poor academic performance may choose to address the reason(s) for this. This may help to offset any doubts that might be raised by a subpar semester or academic year, as reflected on the transcript.

It is a good idea for a number of people to read your essay. The people you choose should be those whose opinions you respect. They should already know what grant you are applying for and what you plan on pursuing. Examples of individuals to ask are advisors, faculty members, classmates, roommates and friends. Remember, always be open to feedback.

Sample essays from successful past grantees from APU can be read in person in Dr. Huang’s office.