

# Gilman Scholarship Worksheet

The Gilman Scholarship provides up to \$5,000 in funding (up to \$8,000 for students studying a critical need language) for Pell-eligible students to study or intern abroad.

Recipients are chosen based on the **impact of their program and destination** on their chosen academic and career plans, the **impact they will have on their communities** at home and abroad, **academic preparedness** (no minimum GPA), and their **diversity of background and experience**.

**Use this worksheet to help you plan your essays and think deeply about how you will connect YOU + Program + Goals.**

## General Application Guidance

### Deadlines

- First Thursday in **March**
- First Thursday in **October**
- Deadlines are in the **Pacific Time Zone**. Late submissions are NOT accepted – plus the application portal tends to slow down near the deadline – so make sure to plan ahead.

### Application Advisors

- **Study Abroad Advisor:** Brittany Dhooge
- **Financial Aid Advisor:** Nicole Brennan

### Budget

- **Include:** program cost, tuition (if applicable), housing, application fees, food, plane tickets, books, passport and/or visa costs.
  - Don't drastically underestimate (\$300 flight to Greece) or overestimate (\$5,000 flight to Greece) – you'll have a chance to submit an updated budget if selected.
- **Do not include:** vacation money, new clothes, updated phone for photos, etc.

### Academics

- There is NO minimum GPA requirement to apply for Gilman. However, you should be “academically prepared” to be successful abroad. If you had a few bumps in the road, explain them in your essays and clarify how you are now prepared for the “study” part of study abroad.
- **If you are studying a Critical Need Language** – basically any language that is NOT Spanish, French, or German – **apply for the Critical Need Language Award supplement!** By writing an additional short essay, you will be eligible for up to \$3,000 more in funding (a possible \$8,000 total).

### Program Details

- Confirm that your program location meets Gilman's criteria of a Level 1 or 2 Department of State Travel Advisory Level or is an approved Level 3. You can see a full list of approved locations on the Gilman website.
- There is NO minimum length – however, the program **must** be credit-bearing.
- If you aren't 100% sure when/where you're going, that's okay! You do not have to be accepted into a study abroad program to apply for Gilman. Pick the program you're most interested in and base your application off of that.
- Gilman awards **YOU** (not your program) and is usually flexible if your plans change between the date of award and travel.

- If you're starting early, you may be able to apply for Gilman twice (March and October deadlines). Check the application cycle dates to confirm. You can apply as many times as you want for Gilman, but you can only win once.
- **Please note:** Students applying for the Gilman must also complete the study abroad application process with UMass Boston Office of Global Programs [studyabroad@umb.edu](mailto:studyabroad@umb.edu)

### Essays

- Gilman measures essay length by **character** count, not word count.
- Best practice is to write your essays in your word processor of choice and then copy them to the online portal so you don't time out and lose your work.
- **Leave yourself plenty of time to revise and edit.** Most applicants write several drafts of their essays before submission.

### General Advice

- **Use your resources!** Meet with a Global Ambassador or study abroad advisor, visit the writing center for grammar and style advice, and ask people you trust to see if your essays are reflecting how awesome you are in real life.
- **Use the Gilman website.** In addition to eligibility requirements, the website is full of great resources – Gilman tells you exactly what it is looking for. Pro tip: check out the Advisors section for even more information.
- **Know your audience.** The review panels for Gilman are made up of study abroad professionals and faculty who already believe in the value of studying abroad.
- **The more specific you can be the better.** Don't waste valuable space on vague generalities about the benefits of studying internationally (e.g., "become a more culturally diverse individual" – Why? What will that allow you to do?). Gilman reviewers are interested in YOU and your unique goals and motivations for going where you're going and doing what you're doing.

### Essay #1: Statement of Purpose

The statement of purpose essay should draw a clear line between **You + Program + Goals (academic, personal, professional)**.

#### What are your goals?

- Academic

- Personal

- Professional/Career

**Why did you select your specific program and host country?**

**Program:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Host Country:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Questions to consider:**

- What classes will you take?
- How does the curriculum at your host school reinforce or complement what you are studying at your home university? (E.g., adding study of marine animals to zoology interests; host school is well-known for your major)
- Will you study a language?
- If you're studying a language, is there a host family option or tutoring program that will allow you to practice?
- Is there an internship or extracurricular experience that is unique to this program?
- Do you have a heritage connection to the country you chose?
- Does the structure of your program (e.g., faculty-led, group, semester) provide something unique or important to you?

**How will studying or interning abroad help you achieve your future academic or professional goals?**

**How are you academically prepared to be a successful scholar abroad? If you have faced significant academic difficulties, tell us about those and how you are overcoming them.**

**What examples of knowledge, skills, and experiences will you draw on to meet the challenges of going abroad?**

Reflect on what has been challenging for you and think about how you will meet those challenges.

**Sample Challenges:**

- Never having been abroad before and learning how to cope on your own – developing independence.
- Coping with cultural misunderstandings and/or language barriers
- Coping with family members who do not value going abroad
- Feeling like an outsider
- Being far from your support network of family and friends

## Essay #2: Building Mutual Understanding

The building mutual understanding essay should address how you will interact with your host community abroad. This includes how you will share your culture (cultural ambassadorship), what kinds of activities you'll partake in, and how you plan to build relationships with others.

### Questions to consider:

- What is **your** American culture? How/where did you grow up? What are some of your core values/beliefs? What kinds of foods did you grow up eating or holidays that you celebrated?
- What kinds of activities are you involved with at USC? Is there an opportunity to do that activity abroad?
- Are you interested in trying a new sport or joining a new club? Do some research and see what your program offers.
- How will you make friends abroad, especially local friends?
- Think back to when you first started college – what strategies did you use to get to know others and explore Columbia?
- What do you find interesting about your host culture? How can you learn more about it? What research have you already done?

## Essay #3: Follow-on Service Project Proposal

The follow-on service project is how you will spread the word about the value of studying abroad and raise awareness about Gilman after you return. This project should be realistic and focus on making an impact in the communities you are involved with at home (e.g., clubs, Greek life, high school). You don't have to have every detail planned at this point, but the most compelling proposals include information about your specific audience, an activity or two you plan to do, and organizations you will reach out to for support (bonus points if you've already made a connection!). Also, remember that this is a proposal – your project may change based on what you learn abroad.

Who is your audience?

What groups are you a part of?

What kinds of hobbies/interests can you draw on?

**Questions to consider:**

- What is your project and how will it increase awareness of study abroad and the Gilman Program among your peers in your home or campus community?
- Identify and explain why you chose the specific community you will be reaching.
- How will you integrate the impact of your experience abroad into your project?
- With which campus departments, student organizations, or community organizations will you collaborate?

**Sample project ideas:**

- Volunteer with the Global Programs Office to share your Gilman experience with prospective applicants
- Present on your country of study to local classrooms (HS, K12, or USC) or your favorite club
- Work with a local teacher to connect with a U.S. classroom while abroad, via photos, letters, emails, or Skype sessions, sharing information about their host country, experience abroad and the Gilman Scholarship

**(Optional) Essay #4: Critical Need Language Award (CNLA)**

If you are planning to study a critical need language while abroad (NOT Spanish, German, or French), we **strongly recommend** you apply for the CNLA. Submitting this short essay makes you eligible for up to an additional \$3,000 in funding – who wouldn't want that?

Language: \_\_\_\_\_

Host Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you studying a Critical Need Language in a country where it is predominantly spoken? If not, why not? How will you engage with the language?

Is language study a major component of your coursework while abroad?

Is language proficiency something that is needed or desired in your future career or academic trajectory?

Will you continue to learn and use the language after your study abroad experience? How? Provide details (e.g., DuoLingo, coursework, tutoring).

