



Gilman International Scholarship Brainstorming Worksheet

(Must be a Pell Grant recipient.)

The **Statement of Purpose essay** is an important factor in the selection of Gilman Scholarship recipients. We strongly encourage you to read the [Gilman Selection Criteria](#), carefully review your essay, and ask an advisor, faculty member, or others to proofread your essay for spelling, grammar, and content prior to submission.

In your essay, be specific in describing your individual reasons for studying abroad, keeping in mind that this is a scholarship for academic study abroad or credit bearing international internships. Please address **ALL** of the questions below, in no particular order: (max of 7,000 characters)

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

Academic Goals

- What is the name(s) of your course(s) abroad?
- What is your major?
- How does this course(s) relate to your studies at MCC?
- What are you learning in this course? Can you get information from the syllabus or course description? Course competencies are hyperlinked on the program webpage.
- What knowledge are you gaining and how is it important to your major?
- Are you learning something in this course that you would not be able to learn/do here?

Professional Goals

- What is your future goal? For example, if you want to become a doctor, what kind of doctor? What motivated you to do this?
- How is the knowledge and skills you are gaining in this course going to impact your work in the future?
- Why is it important that you take this course through this program. What makes this program/course special?
- Also, is taking this course in another country where you are learning from a different culture going to help you gain skills you need for your work? (think about intercultural communication skills, leadership)

2. Why did you select your specific program and host country?

- Did you do some research on the country? What interests you about the country? This could be language related, cultural related, general interests.
- Is this a country that you have a personal connection with (ancestral home, parents' home country)?
- Does this country have a booming industry in the field you are interested in working in?
- What interests you about the specific school/center/program you will be attending?
- What do you like about your program separate from the courses. For example, see if you can find information on activities / excursions you would be able to participate in.
- Are there opportunities to volunteer or complete an internship? What are the opportunities?
- Does the program offer a homestay?
- Will you be able to meet with locals?
- Will you be studying with local students?
- Who is teaching your course? Are they experts in the field?

3. 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 are some of the ways you have been successful in your course work?

- Do you work and attend school at the same time? How have you been able to still be successful in school?
- Are there any challenges you face in continuing your education that you have fought against?
- If you are studying a language abroad, how have you prepared yourself beforehand OR how are you preparing to study some basic language skills if you're going to a country where you do not speak the language.
- Is this your first college? Are you a transfer student?
- If you have a low GPA, what are you doing now to improve it?

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

- Would you describe yourself as someone who is resilient? Why? Can you give examples?
- How are you preparing yourself to travel to a country you have never been to before? Are you doing research on the country, practicing the language, looking up places you may want to visit?
- What skills do you currently have that will help you make connections, build community, and succeed in the classroom while you're abroad?
- This is also where you can talk about your own background experiences and challenges you/your family have faced and overcome. You can get some ideas for this in the additional considerations section.

5. Additional Considerations – Diversity of Experiences

- What is your race/cultural/ethnic background?
- Did your family immigrate to the U.S.? Were you born in another country?
- If you were born outside of the U.S. and traveled here later in life, what was that experience like? How did you adjust to life in the U.S.? Did you face challenges? Did your family face challenges? Were there difficulties with language and communication?
- If you grew up in an immigrant household, what were some of your experiences? What responsibilities did/do you have? What are some values you hold? Cultural aspects you would like to share?
- Are you a first-generation college student? What struggles did you face as a first-gen student?
- Do you have a disability? A learning disability, physical, sensory or mental illness? What has been challenging in your journey and what are you proud of? How has this experience shaped you?
- Are you part of the LGBTQIA+ community? Have you faced any challenges do to being a part of this community?
- What is the racial representation like in your field? What about gender? Is it equal? Are you part of an underrepresented group in your career field? How does this impact you and how can study abroad help you with this issue? Why is it important to expand representation in this field?
- Are there any specific challenges that you have faced in your life that have motivated and inspired you to keep reaching your goals?
- Do you work to help support your family?
- Are you a veteran?
- Do any of these lived experiences impact your academic and career goals?

BUILDING MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING ESSAY

Gilman Scholars represent the United States as citizen diplomats in their host communities; they reflect a diversity of values, beliefs, and opinions that is fundamental to providing a balanced representation of the United States abroad. Gilman Scholars are expected to contribute to the goal of building mutual understanding by sharing what it means to be an American, learning about the host culture, and building meaningful relationships. (max of 3000 characters)

- 1. As a U.S. citizen, how will you represent and share what it means to be an American during your program? How will you seek opportunities to become more culturally engaged and have meaningful interactions with people and cultures different from your own during your abroad program?**

To answer this, think about the following:

- Are you from an immigrant household? What is your cultural background? How does this influence your perspective as an American Citizen?
- How can you share this experience with others? What about your culture do you want to share and how can you share it?
- How can you learn about the culture of the location you are visiting? How can you learn from the people? What opportunities will you have to do so? For example, if there is a homestay aspect, this is a good walk to talk about building mutual understanding.
- What kind of conversations do you want to have with people from this community/country?

FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT PROPOSAL

Gilman Scholars are expected to complete the **Follow-on Service Project** which is to increase awareness of study abroad and the Gilman Scholarship among their peers in their home or campus communities. (max of 3000 characters)

- In no particular order, describe your Follow-on Service Project in more detail: 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?

Examples: <https://www.gilmanscholarship.org/applicants/essays/#1550605464998-681ffba-590b>

- Also think about what organizations you are a part of outside of the college. Do you volunteer somewhere that you can talk to people about Gilman and studying abroad?
- Or what clubs are you a part of that you can share this information to?
- How specifically do you want to share this information?
- Who are the people you are sharing this information with? Are they first generation students? Are they from immigrant populations? Are they from underrepresented groups? This is important!

CRITICAL NEEDS LANGUAGE ESSAY (Optional, only if studying a foreign language while abroad)

- What are your motivations for improving your language proficiency academically, professionally, and personally?
 - Do you need to learn this language in order to accomplish something for your academic goals? Do you plan to pursue a PhD or Masters in the future where you would like to use this language to conduct research?
 - Do you plan to use this language for work? Where and how? Will it help you build connections or serve a particular community?
 - Do you have connections to this language on a personal level – do you know people who speak this language? Do your family members speak this language?
- How do you intend to improve your language skills while studying abroad? How will you increase your proficiency in the language inside and outside of the classroom setting?
 - What courses are you taking that will help you learn this language abroad?
 - How are you studying the language outside of the classroom (e.g. volunteering, speaking with your host family, conducting research, visiting organizations through the program etc.)?
 - Is there a language mentor pairing through the program?
- How do you intend to use the language after you study abroad, and how will the Critical Need Language Award prepare you for this?
 - How will you continue practicing the language once you return? Are there any language centers you can utilize? Language buddy programs?
 - Do you plan to use this language in your career field? How and why?
 - Can you volunteer somewhere where this language is spoken and connect to a community there?