

Gilman Scholarship

Statement of Purpose Essay Tips

The Gilman *Statement of Purpose* essay is your chance to personalize your application and make the judges want to meet you! The essay is limited to 7,000 characters (including spaces) which is about 1 ½ pages, single-spaced. Visit www.gilmanscholarship.org for details and applicant resources to help you along the way!

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The program seeks participation by the broadest group of American undergraduate students with financial need who will benefit from the knowledge and skills they acquire when studying abroad. Within your essay, refer to any of your affiliations with the underrepresented study abroad populations listed below (e.g. include that you are a *community college* student and/or that you are the first person in your family to graduate from college).

- first-generation college student
- racial/ethnic minority student
- community college student
- student with disabilities
- STEM majors – Science, Technology, Engineering, Math
- Having served in the Armed Forces of the U.S.

IMPACT OF YOUR STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM

Hook your reader with an interesting angle to tell your story! Develop a clean, well-paced, strong sense of narrative. Consider beginning with an anecdote that illustrates what is unusual or meaningful about you. Remember, the people reading your essay don't know anything about you!!

It is important to address the impact that your study abroad program will have on your academic, professional, and personal goals. You should also address the impact that receiving the Gilman Scholarship would have on your achievement of these goals. *Some Key Points to Keep in Mind...*

- Why did you select your specific program and host country?
- What knowledge, skills, and experiences will you draw on to meet these challenges?
- What aspects of studying abroad do you expect to be the most challenging for you?
- How will studying abroad help you achieve your future academic or professional goals?

TIPS FOR WRITING COMPETITIVE ESSAYS

- **Be creative!** Remember that this is a competitive scholarship program and the selection panelists' only chance to get to know you is through your essay. The essay is your chance to tell the selection panelists about yourself and your decision to study abroad.
- **Have your essay proofread** by multiple people! Allow plenty of time to write, edit, and proof your essay before the Gilman deadline.
- **Work with the Writing Center** to *polish* your diamond in the rough essay! Schedule an appointment *early* in the process! Visit www.mesacc.edu/departments/english/writing-center to set up an appointment.
- **Check for proper spelling (e.g. abroad not aboard), punctuation, and grammar.** Before submitting your application, be sure to double check your essay. Did you spell the scholarship name or names of cities correctly? Be sure you have proper punctuation and do not type your essay in all lower case or all upper case letters. Most importantly, check for correct grammar with the support of a proofreader.

DEADLINES

- **Early Summer Deadline:** 1st Tuesday of October. **Summer Deadline:** 1st Tuesday of March. You can redo your essay and resubmit during the next cycle if you are not selected the first time around!
- Try to submit your application at least one week prior to the deadline date, so that in case of technical difficulties, you don't miss the deadline. **Note:** The deadline for submission is 11:59 pm **Central** Standard Time, NOT Mountain Standard Time! No late applications are accepted!!