



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, it's important to 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
- underrepresented field of study (usually STEM majors – Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)
- have served in the Armed Forces of the U.S.

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!!

PROGRAM AND COUNTRY DETAILS | IMPACT OF YOUR STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM

A successful applicant will demonstrate a coherent link between their proposed program abroad activities and their future and/or career plans, as well as their personal development goals.

Some Key Points to Keep in Mind...

- Why do you wish to study abroad and what factors led you to this decision?
- What do you hope to gain from and what do you anticipate will be the impact of this experience? (*avoid use of typical clichés such as “learn and experience other cultures” or “meet new people” which any student could state*).
- What factors led you to select your country of choice? What impact will the choice of country have on your experience abroad? What initially inspired you to want to study abroad in this particular country or to learn a foreign language?
- Describe your study abroad program. What factors led you to select your program and length of study? How long is your program and how many credits will you be taking? How is your study abroad program and the coursework you take going to impact your academic and future professional goals?
- Describe any distinctive components to this program, beyond coursework, that will impact your overall learning experience (e.g. home-stays, extra-curricular activities, etc.).
- What challenges, if any, did you face in your decision to study abroad? How did you meet these challenges and what impact do you foresee them having on your experience abroad? These could include, but are not limited to, being a parent, being a non-traditional student, having a learning disability, or being in a field of study for which it is difficult to incorporate study abroad, etc.

SUBMISSION

- Allow plenty of time to write your essay before the Gilman deadline so that you can have several people read, help edit, and proofread your essay.
- Make sure your spelling (e.g. abroad not *aboard*) and punctuation are correct. Very important!
- There is no need to format (i.e. bold, underline, italics) your essays because the word processor formatting will not be retained upon transferring to the online application.
- The Writing Center is a great resource to polish your diamond in the rough essay! Allow *plenty* of lead time! Visit www.mesacc.edu/departments/english/writing-center to set up an appointment.
- **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!