



The Gilman application includes three essays. These essays will weigh heavily into whether a student will or will not be awarded the Gilman Scholarship. In other words, these essays are your interview and your one and only chance to explain to Gilman why it is important that they help fund your international experience. However, please keep in mind that the Gilman Scholarship is an academic scholarship. Thus, Gilman primarily wants to know about academic and career related matters.

ESSAY #1: Statement of Purpose

The Statement of Purpose Essay is your chance to explain to Gilman how your study abroad program and host country will impact your academic major completion and your future career goals. It is important to be as detailed as possible because the people who will review your essay will not be from Texas, may not be familiar with Texas A&M, and most likely will not know anything about your major, minor, or education abroad program. Gilman is interested in personal development and hardships as it helps them to get to know you as a person, but these topics should not dominate your essays.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- **Be Specific.** The more details you can provide the better. It shows that you have put some thought and effort into the matter. Also, do not assume that Gilman knows the structure of every university's major or available study abroad program.
- **Focus on Academic and Career Benefits.** Many students will spend several paragraphs discussing why they always wanted to go abroad, but only a few sentences on academic and future career benefits.
- **If on a short-term trip, explain why you chose this length of trip.** In an ideal world, Gilman would like for all students to study abroad for as long as possible. The shorter the timeframe you are going abroad, the more explaining you have to do. Since study abroad in general caters to liberal arts and business majors, these students have to explain why they can't go for a semester or an academic year and still complete major coursework. If your parents won't let you go abroad for a semester or year, then say so. If you have commitments on campus such as Corps participation which would affect climbing the leadership rankings, then let the panelists know. If you can't afford to go for a longer period of time, then state it.
- **If going to a traditional study abroad location (i.e., Western Europe), explain why you chose this over a non-traditional location (i.e., Latin America or Africa).** Can your classes be taken somewhere else? If so, then you need to explain why you chose to go to a certain location and not to non-traditional location. For example, are you taking Spanish classes in Spain? Then you need to justify why those Spanish classes couldn't be taken in Latin America or what was so unique about Spain and your program set up that you just had to go there. Taking a business class in Europe? Explain why you didn't choose to go to Asia where the markets are trending towards. Does your department limit your selection? Then you need to mention that you are open to going to another location, but your department doesn't offer programs there. This topic carries a lot of weight when applications are being ranked.

ESSAY #2: Community Impact – Building Mutual Understanding

The Community Impact: Building Mutual Understanding Essay requires you to answer how you will be a U.S. citizen diplomat as a Gilman Scholar while abroad. As a U.S. citizen abroad, you are considered a representative of the U.S. throughout your travels, and you need to be able to speak to this. The expectation is you will seek opportunities to become more culturally engaged and have meaningful interactions with people from different cultures on your abroad program.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- **Understand your identity as a U.S. Citizen abroad.** It's important to understand how your host country views the U.S. and Americans prior to studying abroad. You need to be able to articulate how you will engage as a U.S. citizen diplomat while abroad.
- **Explore your understanding of the local culture(s).** How will you engage with locals while abroad? Do you have plans to join local groups over a shared interest? Will you engage in community service, service-learning, or local meetups?
- **Engaging in meaningful experiences.** How do you plan to take your learning beyond the classroom and into your host city/country? More importantly, how do the activities you're choosing to engage in enhance your interactions and understanding of the local culture? How will you bring this impact you as a lifelong learner and global citizen?

ESSAY #3: Community Impact – Follow-on Service Project Proposal

This third essay asks you to evaluate how you will continue to represent the Gilman program upon your return to the U.S. using what you've learned abroad. You will be required to design a follow-on service project to implement your idea back on-campus or your local community. This project is meant to encourage others to also seek out experiences abroad while promoting the Gilman Scholarship.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- **Be realistic with your proposal.** Some students propose projects that would be difficult to complete within six months of program conclusion or even at all. Gilman likes to see projects that can actually be accomplished. Think about what you are realistically able to do with the resources you have available.
- **Show that you have a plan.** Many students propose projects only to return and find out that it is not possible for them to do it. In the proposals, students should discuss the steps they have already taken to make sure they can complete the project. Mapping out your plan shows that you have put thought and effort into your proposal.
- **Identify stakeholders.** There are many organizations and departments on campus (Education Abroad included!) that are already involved in international and cultural development. Identify who you can partner with and how you can help either enhance current practices or bring in your own to further support objectives already in place.

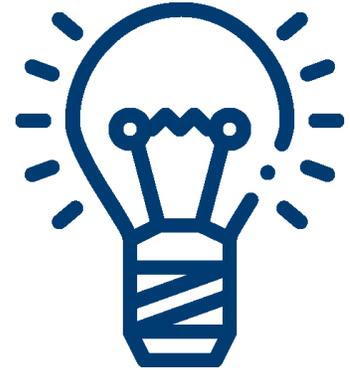
Online Resources from Gilman



- Applicant FAQ's: <https://www.gilmanscholarship.org/applicants/applicants-faq-2/>
- Essays and Application Tips: <https://www.gilmanscholarship.org/applicants/tips/>
- "Ask Me Anything!" Videos: <https://www.gilmanscholarship.org/resources/videos/>
- Gilman Podcast: <https://www.gilmanscholarship.org/a-gilman-podcast/>

Advice from your Texas A&M Gilman Advisors

- **Make It Simple or Make It Innovative.** Projects can be as simple or as complex as you want it to be. Certainly, projects that think outside the box will stand out more. However, they can be as simple as giving a presentation to a class.
- **Discuss Your Project with Education Abroad.** Many students want to help out with a fair or class presentation. However, there is a limited need for student assistance in this area. We often have to turn students away for these services.
- **Areas Where Education Abroad Needs Your Help.** The most helpful projects for Education Abroad have been those can be used year after year to bring the study abroad experience to life. Most students prior to studying abroad say they wish that they could have known what the student experience would have been like or looks like. Yet most students fail to provide the resources to assist Education Abroad in doing so. Helpful projects are:
 - **Writing articles and/or blogging:** These can be either for our newsletter to be shared with the Texas A&M University community, or for our student blog.
 - **Providing quality photos and/or videos:** This helps prospective students get a clearer idea of what they can expect from their experience abroad.
 - **Updating/Creating Pre-Departure Handbooks:** Resources to prepare students prior to departure on their programs are incredibly important. You can support others by helping create handbooks and get them started on the right track.
 - **Committing to volunteering and supporting Education Abroad programming:** Education Abroad has regular programming throughout each semester/year and we are always looking for student support!



Helpful Contacts

Application

gilmanscholarship.org

Gilman Ambassador

Daniela Castro, danielac@mail.smu.edu

Education Abroad (Contact your Ed Abroad Advisor)

abroad.tamu.edu

LAUNCH

launch.tamu.edu



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Education Abroad

 Gilman Scholarship