

Fulbright Application Procedure NEC Fall 2006

The Fulbright is a highly competitive federally-sponsored program that sends US citizens abroad for study for an academic year. NEC has sent many excellent musicians abroad through the Fulbright program. The process of applying for the Fulbright is demanding. In order to apply for the Fulbright through NEC, you'll need to follow the procedures below. Beware: the Fulbright deadlines are strict: unless you have everything in by the deadline indicated, your application will not be considered.

Fulbright applications are available online at www.fulbrightonline.org. Fulbright applications are due in the early fall the year before you actually go to study abroad. The planning for the application should occur in the spring and summer before applying. Fulbright applications are first carefully screened at NEC before being sent to the Fulbright office in NY for evaluation.

Preparation: Spring and Summer before applying

1. Choose a focus to your study abroad: a country and specific teacher, school where you plan to study. For ideas and help with this, visit the Career Services Center and get the Opportunities Abroad handout (many grants are listed in addition to the Fulbright). Make an appointment with Angela Beeching to discuss how to write your essays. See the reverse for ideas.
2. Study the Fulbright application online at <http://www.fulbrightonline.org>.
3. You will need to get a letter of recommendation from the teacher with whom you plan to study. Write to the teacher with whom you'd like to study. Send a demo CD, or better yet, see if this teacher tours in the US or teaches master classes or summer festivals where you could audition for them.
4. Check on language requirements for the specific country you're interested; these are listed on the Fulbright website. You may need to take language classes and/or hire a tutor in order to pass the language requirement.
5. Make a demonstration CD according to the guidelines in the Fulbright website. The recording needs to include verbal introductions of the works and needs to be labeled exactly as specified. It is crucial that your performance be the best it can be and that the quality of the recording of the highest quality possible. Choose your repertoire carefully; make sure your best samples are first. For advice on where and how to record your demo, including equipment rental suggestions, visit the NEC audio dept.

Deadlines: *A word about the deadlines: THEY ARE FIRM* late materials will NOT be processed.

6. **By Sept. 15:** Initial appointment with Angela Beeching in the Career Services Center to discuss your theses and outlines for the two essays. Prepare these in advance and bring these to the appointment. Read carefully what is being asked for in each essay (and read the tips on reverse). Questions? Angela is at (617) 585-1117 and abeeching@newenglandconservatory.edu.
7. **By Sept. 22:** first draft appointment with Angela Beeching. She will read and critique your first draft of your 2 Fulbright application essays: the statement of proposed study or research and the curriculum vitae. You will be asked to make edits to improve your chances of being selected. To submit your application to the Dean office, you will need to have completed this appointment by Sept. 22. (Always edit your draft online as part of the application to be sure that the text fits in the space allotted.)
8. **By Sept. 29:** Meeting with Thomas Handel, Dean of Students, to discuss second draft of essays and application.
9. **By Oct. 6:** the complete application is due online with hard copies sent to the Dean's Office: including language reports, letters of recommendations and CDs.
10. **Week of Oct. 9:** Interview with the NEC Selection Committee. The Committee particularly values candidates who show familiarity with the culture and history of the country in which they wish to study. You will need to be prepared to discuss in detail your proposed project and reasons for choosing that country.
11. **October 16:** Final applications and Committee recommendations mailed to the Fulbright Program in New York.

Preparation: Researching Your Options

If you are thinking about studying abroad, the first thing is to determine which country(s), schools, and teacher(s) to consider. Ask NEC faculty (not just your own studio instructor!) and your fellow students for teacher recommendations. Maybe they've heard about someone, or studied with this person at a festival or in a master class.

The Career Services Center has directories of schools abroad as well as some international music school catalogs. If you only know the performer and are not sure if they teach, you can look them up in Musical America (the international music business directory) at the Career Center, to get contact information.

Once you have a list of possible teachers, write to them, (email, fax, or phone) to say you are potentially interested in studying with them and would like to audition by CD demo or in person. You may need help translating the letter; ask the liberal arts faculty or an international student for assistance. The Career Services Center staff can help in drafting initial letters (before translation) to these teachers, finding addresses of schools, and can also give feedback on your grant application.

Before considering a year of study with a teacher you do not know, you may want to arrange to travel to the country between semesters, or on vacation and have several lessons with any prospective teachers. You want to find a good match. Once a teacher has expressed interest in taking you as a student, you can ask for a letter of recommendation from that teacher to help you in applying for any grants or scholarships.

The Fulbright application is a lot of work and is very competitive. So it's worth your while to apply for other grants as well (you can easily revise your application materials for other grant applications). The more you apply to, the more chances you have to win a grant. There are several grant programs that cover study in many countries: Fulbright, Rotary, (both are for study in all fields in nearly any country in the world), and the Frank Huntington Beebe grant for music study in Europe. Otherwise, there are grants for study in specific countries, such as the Harriet Hale Wooley, which is just for music and art studies in Paris. For more, see the "Opportunities Abroad" handout available at the Career Services Center.

How to Write a Winning Study Abroad Grant Proposal

Most grant applications require a proposal statement, an essay describing what you plan to do for your study abroad year and sometimes, in addition, a personal statement (for Fulbright, the Curriculum Vitae). A convincing grant application is essentially a compelling argument or case as to *why* the funder should specifically fund *your* project. The most successful grant proposal essays are the ones that detail a concrete, detailed plan, including answering the following:

For your statement of proposed study or research include:

- What specifically do you plan to do during the year? (give concrete details for the entire year's work, it's NOT enough to simply write you want to study with person X)
- With whom will you study. Explain why; what is unique to studying with this teacher?
- With which Institution(s) will you be affiliated? Explain
- What specific repertoire do you plan to study, perform or research?
- What are your goals for the time spent abroad (give a certain number of concerts? Learn certain repertoire? Explain)
- Why are you qualified to do this project? (explain your background & how this grant will benefit your career)
- What is your track record so far? (funders like to bet on a winner)
- What do you plan to accomplish through the project?
- How will this year of study impact your future career?
- How has your background prepared you to make the most out of this proposed year of study?
- Why you will make a good ambassador of the US in the host country.
- How you will make the most of the host country's rich cultural life and how this will benefit you.
- *Wherever possible, be sure to make note of why this project can only be accomplished successfully in the host country.*

For your Curriculum Vitae you should:

- Describe your background, musical and otherwise, so that it again demonstrates that you are at the right point in your career from this grant
- Use one or two autobiographical anecdotes to detail experience(s) that helped form your character. Perhaps key decision points in your life in regards to your focus in music or your education. This will help the committee understand who you are as a person and as a musician
- Describe what you find compelling/fascinating about the country, and the music you will study.
- Explain your specific and concrete career goals (as you imagine now) and how this grant will help get you there.