Middlebury’s Fulbright Essay Guidance

Before sending your materials to fellowships@middlebury.edu for feedback, please review the items below and check your draft against this list AND the application components section at https://us.fulbrightonline.org/

1. Go through every paragraph, note the main point(s) of those paragraphs and look carefully at what’s there, not there, repeated, and how things are ordered. Check this against the notes below for each essay. Seriously! You need to make sure that the content needed in the essays is indeed there.

2. Be concise in your phrasing and only include information that is relevant for this grant. Avoid vague statements. Avoid discipline-specific jargon (you’re writing for an educated audience, but not necessarily in your field). Use examples to illustrate what you want to convey. Avoid repeating information provided in other sections, though it’s fine to elaborate in the essays on specific items that are important. Avoid making general statements (e.g. I love learning languages! I love learning about new cultures! Okay, maybe that’s a bit exaggerated, but effect intentional.)

3. Review the country information for your grant type. If there are any specific instructions about what info to include in the Statement of Grant Purpose and where to include it, make sure you do so!

4. For the Statement of Grant Purpose (SGP) for Study/Research Grants:
   - What exactly do you propose to do? This should be clearly stated in the first or, at the latest, the second paragraph. What is important, significant, or innovative about the project? What are the specific research goals and methodologies? You need to get very specific.
   - With whom do you propose to work and how will this person(s) and affiliation be of help to you?
   - When will you carry out the project? Include a rough timeline of your research activities.
   - Where do you propose to conduct your work, and why was this location chosen?
   - What are your qualifications for carrying out this project? Draw from your professional and student academic experiences.
   - How will your project help further your academic or professional development?
   - What is your plan for host community engagement outside of your research project or study? If you don’t have room here, you may include in the Personal Statement (PS). Yes, you discuss in the short answer section, but should also be woven into an essay.
   - Note if your project will need a Middlebury IRB review (generally human subjects).

5. For the Statement of Grant Purpose (SGP) for Study Grants:
   - What exactly do you propose to do? This should be clearly stated in the first or, at the latest, the second paragraph. What is important or significant about this degree program and its faculty? You need to get specific. Do not paraphrase website copy.
   - Why do you want to pursue the proposed program in this particular country? What are your reasons for selecting a particular institution? What about the region? Why is that of interest?
   - Do you have the requisite academic background for the proposed program (coursework and GPA)?
• How will you gain a better understanding of the people and cultures of this country? Demonstrate your commitment through volunteer and extra-curricular plans.

• Do you have sufficient language skills to successfully complete the program?

• What are your qualifications for carrying out this project? Draw from your professional and student academic experiences.

• How will your project help further your academic or professional development?

• What is your plan for host community engagement outside of your research project or study? If you don’t have room here, you may include in the Personal Statement.

6. For the Statement of Grant Purpose (SGP) for ETA Grants:
   • Why do you want to teach English and why in this country? You need to be specific and include this information in the opening paragraph(s). Even if you have not spent time in this country, you should have done enough research on it to explain why you want to teach in this country specifically. If the reader can easily substitute the name of your country for another, this is not a compelling case.
   • What teaching (or teaching like) experiences prepare you for this role? Be specific about the kinds of responsibilities you have had, the age groups you have worked with, etc. Your experience with and ideas about teaching need to be a significant part of the SGP.
   • What ideas do you bring with you for the classroom? Draw from your own interests, teaching or teaching-related experiences, and language-learning experiences.
   • How will you engage with your host community outside of the ETA and your work with your school? If you do not have room here, you may include this in your personal statement.
   • How will your project help further your academic or professional development?

7. For the Personal Statement (PS): this is more open. Some tips and things to ponder:
   • Use this essay to talk about the development of your mind, your interests, your ambitions, and your priorities. And don’t get overly focused on your frame; instead focus on the content you need to convey.
   • Think about people, books, experiences, and ideas that have shaped your interests, especially as they are related to your proposal.
   • Think about your own experiences working in related fields and cross-cultural experiences in particular—exploring your motivation to work in these areas could be fruitful.
   • How will you engage with the host country? Give specific ideas for civic engagement—these should be consistent with your short answer on this topic in the application. These should be outside of or in addition to your research project.

8. If you’ve actually done ALL these things, proofed for grammatical, word choice, and spelling issues, you should share your draft with other readers—including the fellowship advisor—for feedback.