



Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship

Program Overview

The U.S. Department of State's Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship is a grant program that enables students of limited financial means to study or intern abroad, thereby gaining skills critical to our national security and economic prosperity. The Institute of International Education has administered the program since its inception in 2001.

Why Gilman?

A Gilman Scholarship enables American students to gain proficiency in diverse languages and cultures, skills that are critically important to their academic and career development.

The Gilman Scholarship Program broadens the student population that studies and interns abroad by supporting undergraduates who might not otherwise participate due to financial constraints. The program aims to encourage students to study and intern in a diverse array of countries and world regions. The program also encourages students to study languages, especially critical need languages (those deemed important to national security). Veterans of military service are encouraged to apply, and preference is given to veterans when other factors are equivalent. By supporting undergraduate students who have high financial need, the program has been successful in supporting students who have been historically underrepresented in education abroad, including but not limited to first-generation college students, students in STEM fields, ethnic minority students, students with disabilities, students attending HBCUs or other minority-serving institutions, students attending community colleges, and students coming from U.S. states with less study abroad participation.

Congressman Benjamin A. Gilman

This is a congressionally funded program of the [Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs](#) at the [U.S. Department of State](#) and named after the late congressman Benjamin A. Gilman from New York. With his support, the program was established by the International Academic Opportunity Act of 2000. Shortly thereafter in 2002, Congressman Gilman retired after serving in the House of Representatives for 30 years and chairing the House Foreign Relations Committee.

“Study abroad is a special experience for every student who participates. Living and learning in a vastly different environment of another nation not only exposes our students to alternate views, but also adds an enriching social and cultural experience. It also provides our students with the opportunity to return home with a deeper understanding of their place in the world, encouraging them to be a contributor, rather than a spectator in the international community.”

-Benjamin A. Gilman

Over 2,900 scholarships of up to \$5,000 will be awarded this academic year for U.S. citizen undergraduates to study or intern abroad.

Award amounts will vary depending on the length of study and student need. Applicants who are studying a critical need language while abroad in a country in which the language is predominantly spoken can apply for a supplemental award of up to \$3,000, for a combined total of \$8,000. This award is competitive and offered to a limited number of Gilman scholars each year. Not all students who are studying these languages will receive \$8,000. In addition to receiving additional funds for language study, students who are awarded the Critical Need Language Award and complete their Gilman Scholarship requirements will be offered the opportunity to take the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). This test and the results will serve as both an evaluation measure of the award and as a credential for the award recipient.

Critical Need Languages include:

- Arabic
- Azerbaijani
- Bangla
- Chinese
- Hindi
- Indonesian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Persian
- Punjabi
- Russian
- Swahili
- Turkish
- Urdu

Under [Executive Order 13750](#), Gilman scholars are also eligible for 12 months of noncompetitive eligibility (NCE) hiring status within the federal government, with the possibility of extensions if certain criteria are met. NCE allows U.S. federal government agencies to hire eligible exchange program alumni outside of the formal competitive job announcement process and to compete for certain federal employment jobs that are only open to federal employees. Additional information is available on the U.S. Department of State's [Exchange Alumni website](#).

Award Recipients

Award recipients are chosen by a competitive selection process and must use the award to defray eligible study or intern abroad costs. These costs include program tuition, room and board, books, local transportation, insurance, international airfare, passport and visa fees.

U.S. Department of State

For more than 50 years the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) has sought to cultivate mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries to promote friendly, and peaceful relations, as mandated by the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961.

ECA accomplishes its mission through a variety of exchange programs and other initiatives that support mutual understanding by protecting cultural heritage across the globe, and providing educational resources for people interested in learning about American culture and the English language. ECA programs engage participants from a variety of backgrounds and specialties.

- [Learn more about ECA](#)

Eligibility

The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program is a program of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

To be eligible for a Gilman Scholarship, an applicant must:

- Be a citizen of the United States;
- Be an undergraduate student in good standing at an accredited institution of higher education in the United States (including both two-year and four-year institutions);
- Be receiving a Federal Pell Grant or provide proof that he/she will be receiving a Pell Grant during the term of his/her study abroad program or internship;
- Be in the process of applying to, or accepted for, a study abroad or internship program of at least two weeks for community college students and three weeks for students from four-year institutions, in a single country and eligible for credit from the student's home institution. Proof of program acceptance is required prior to award disbursement;
- Students are eligible to apply for credit-bearing study abroad programs in a country with an overall Travel Advisory Level 1 or 2, according to the [U.S. Department of State's Travel Advisory System](#). Certain areas within these countries may be designated within the Travel Advisory as either "Do not travel to" (Level 4) or "Reconsider travel to" (Level 3) locations, as such; students will not be allowed to travel to these areas.

Students are not eligible to apply for programs in a country with an overall Level 3 or 4 Travel Advisory.

The Gilman Program, under the direction of the U.S. Department of State, aims to work with students to make scholarship experiences a success. Should a Travel Advisory change to a Level 3 or 4 after the student has been granted the award, the program will coordinate with participants to select a different destination study site that falls within the guidelines provided by the U.S. State Department Travel Advisory system.

Eligibility Note:

Gilman Scholarship recipients can only receive the scholarship once. If a student previously declined the Gilman Scholarship, they are welcome to re-apply, as long as they still meet all eligibility requirements as listed above.

If you are unsure about your eligibility status, please consult our [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Deadlines:

Fall and Academic Year (Programs between July 15th-October 15th)

Mid January	Online Application Opens
March 6 th	Student Deadline for submission
March 13 th	Advisor Deadline
March/May	Complete Applications are processed and distributed to selection panels for review.
July	Applicants are notified of the status of their application via email.
July	Scholarship recipients must accept/decline their award and submit required documentation.

Spring, J-term (Programs between December 15th- April 15th)

Mid August	Online Application Opens
October 3 rd	Student Deadline for submission
October 10 th	Advisor Deadline
October/November	Complete Applications are processed and distributed to selection panels for review.
Late November	Applicants are notified of the status of their application via email.
December	Scholarship recipients must accept/decline their award and submit required documentation.

Summer Early Application (Programs between May 1st and August 1st)

Mid August	Online Application Opens
October 3 rd	Student Deadline for submission
October 10 th	Advisor Deadline
December/January	Complete Applications are processed and distributed to selection panels for review.
February	Applicants are notified of the status of their application via email.
February	Scholarship recipients must accept/decline their award and submit required documentation.

Summer (Programs between May 1st and August 1st)

Mid-January	Online Application Opens
March 6 th	Student Deadline for submission
March 13 th	Advisor Deadline
March/April	Complete Applications are processed and distributed to selection panels for review.
April	Applicants are notified of the status of their application via email.
May	Scholarship recipients must accept/decline their award and submit required documentation.

Selection Criteria:

The U.S. Department of State's goal for the Gilman Program is to broaden the student population that studies and interns abroad by supporting American undergraduate students who might otherwise not participate due to financial constraints. The international experiences gained through participation in the program enable tomorrow's leaders to thrive in the global economy, and contribute to our nation's prosperity.

Applications are reviewed holistically, with consideration of the following:

Academic Preparedness and Impact on Student's Academic and Career Trajectory

Academic performance, particularly in the applicant's major is important, though there is no minimum grade point average for this scholarship. Study abroad advisors at applicants' home institutions deem students eligible to participate on a study abroad program based on their academic standing at their home institutions. Applicants must demonstrate the maturity needed to benefit from their experience abroad, and they should be able to describe the expected outcome of their program participation towards their future academic and career objectives. Students' transcripts are reviewed to certify the academic information provided in their applications. Students should disclose academic challenges and choices for consideration of their application evaluation.

Diversity of Background and Experience

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. By supporting students who have high financial need, the program has been successful in supporting students who have been historically underrepresented in education abroad, including but not limited to, first-generation college students, students in STEM fields, racial and ethnic minority students, students with disabilities, students attending minority-serving institutions and community colleges, and students from U.S. states with less study abroad participation. This information is considered in the context of the overall impact the proposed study abroad experience will have on the student and the student's ability to be a strong representative of the Gilman Program during his/her study abroad. Candidates who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States will be given preference, provided their qualifications are approximately equivalent to those of other candidates.

Choice of Program & Destination

A successful applicant should show a coherent link between his/her proposed program abroad activities and his/her future academic and/or career plans, as well as personal development goals. Students should detail their program components and articulate how their participation and receipt of the Gilman Scholarship would support the achievement of their goals. The program encourages students to study and intern in a diverse array of countries and world regions, including studying languages, especially critical need languages (those deemed important to national security).

Impact to Community

The mission of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange. Through the Gilman Program's required Follow-on Service Project, both cultural and international exchange awareness is promoted by successful and diverse spokespersons. The goal of the Follow-on Service Project is for Gilman Scholars to increase awareness of study abroad and the Gilman Scholarship among their peers on their campuses and/or in their home communities. The proposed Follow-on Service Project should be feasible, utilize the student's experience abroad, and incorporate ties to student populations that are representative of the United States.

Critical Need Language award

ADDITIONAL REVIEW CRITERIA FOR STUDENTS APPLYING FOR THE CRITICAL NEED LANGUAGE AWARD: The supplemental essay completed by students applying for the Critical Need Language Award will be considered using the following additional criteria:

The U.S. Department of State is dedicated to supporting students who are studying a critical need language (those deemed important to national security). Applicants are considered for this category if while abroad they are taking a course taught in a critical need language, studying a critical need language, or both, in a country that predominantly speaks the language. A successful applicant should demonstrate a strong motivation to achieve proficiency in the language that extends beyond their study abroad experience, and into their future academic and career goals.