

MOUNT HOLYOKE

CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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WRITING A FULBRIGHT SCHOLARSHIP RECOMMENDATION LETTER FOR A MOUNT HOLYOKE STUDENT

Background Information

What is a Fulbright Scholarship?

- A scholarship that provides students with the financial and practical resources to study or conduct research in a foreign country for a year. There are two types:
 - Research projects (Full Grants)
 - English teaching assistantships (ETA)
- Different countries may have different preferences regarding field of study, language skills, and the applicant's level of education.
- Information on the US Student program can be found here: <http://us.fulbrightonline.org/home.html>

How do students apply?

- Graduating seniors must apply through the Mount Holyoke Committee on Fellowships, which
 - Interviews the candidate
 - Endorses her application
 - Submits her application materials in hard copy and on-line
- Alumnae apply "at-large," although the option to seek application assistance and endorsement by Mount Holyoke is available to them.
- Students are asked to submit two essays of about a page each: a proposed plan of study or research, and a personal statement.
- Research applicants must provide a letter of contact from the prospective "host" institution.
- Three letters of recommendation are required. ETA recommendations must follow a specified format. Letters must comment on the student's candidacy and proposed project.
- If knowledge of a foreign language is required, applicants must secure an official language evaluation.
- Official transcripts from all institutions attended are required.
- The MHC campus application deadline is September 22nd.

MHC success with Fulbright:

- Mount Holyoke is generally successful in supporting winning applications; in the past four years, MHC students have won 20 Fulbright grants.
- All our winners and finalists have benefited from exceptional faculty support and mentoring.

Practical Considerations for Providing a Recommendation for a Fulbright Application:

What the student should give to you:

- A draft of her research/study proposal
- Information about the country to which the student is applying
- Reference forms
- Any other relevant information as requested by you

We ask that you:

- Provide the student with constructive criticism of the proposal.
- Offer a mentoring relationship through the application process.

- For study and research applicants, write your letter of recommendation on your letterhead, with the student's name and country to which she is applying prominent on the first page (e.g. RE: Emily Smith, Fulbright applicant to Sweden). Address your letter to the "Fulbright Selection Committee."
- For ETA applicants, write your letter on your letterhead (as above), answering the specific questions on the ETA reference form supplied to you by your student. A non-fillable version of this form can also be found here: <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/documents/Application/form9B.pdf>

Fulbright selection criteria for which you can provide evidence and support in your letter:

- *Validity and Feasibility of the Proposed Project:* the student's project should be feasible given her preparation, access to resources, and time limitations.
- *Academic or Professional Qualifications:* the student's academic preparation, analytical, linguistic, and methodological skills should be sufficient in relation to the proposed project.
- *Potential for Growth:* the student's project should make good sense given her personal and professional goals.
- *Personal Suitability:* the student's maturity, motivation, and adaptability to a different cultural environment should be of the level required for a successful and productive stay in a foreign country. The student should be likely to make a favorable impression as a representative of the United States.

Please be as specific as possible in your letter. Should you have any questions of concerns, please contact us: kparent@mtholyoke.edu, 413-538-2080.

How do you submit your recommendation?

Fulbright requires a two step submission process: hard copy, and on-line.

- You will be asked to provide the MHC campus committee with a signed hard copy by the campus deadline, 9/22. Seal your letter in an envelope and give it to the student, or send it to: Career Development Center, Attention: Kim Parent, Mount Holyoke College, 50 College Street, South Hadley, MA 01075.
- Once the student has been interviewed by the campus committee, and her application has been endorsed, you will be asked to submit your letter electronically. The student will enter your name and contact information into the on-line application system, which will generate an automatic message with instructions. Please follow the instructions, and submit your letter by 10/15. Once a letter has been filed on-line, it is impossible to retrieve. Please proof-read your letter accordingly.

What happens next?

Your letter will be read by three selection committees.

- The first, Mount Holyoke's Committee on Fellowships, interviews the student and rates her application before endorsing it.
- The second committee, assembled by Fulbright, may include U.S. specialists in the student's field of study. That committee chooses finalists who are recommended for consideration to a third committee, in the country to which the student is applying.
- The country committee sends its recommendations back to the U.S., where a final decision is made and winners are announced.

Finalists are announced at the end of January. Winners are announced in the spring.

THANK YOU! We appreciate your patience with this process and your support of a deserving Mount Holyoke student!

For more information about the Fulbright Scholarships, see <http://www.iie.org/fulbright/>. For assistance or questions about letters of recommendation, or the MHC nomination process, please contact Kim Parent, Interim Coordinator and Advisor for Fellowships, Scholarships, Pre-Law and Graduate School Advising (kparent@mtholyoke.edu) or call X2080. Sample recommendation letters may be found in "Writing Recommendation Letters A Faculty Handbook" by Joe Schall. Faculty members may borrow a copy of this publication; please contact Kim Parent if you wish to do so.