Gilman Application: Writing Strong Essays
Reminder: Who Can Apply

- U.S. Citizen
- Federal Pell Grant recipient
- Must have application on file for study away (but do not need to have received admissions notification yet)
- Must receive academic credit for study away program
- Program cannot be in location currently under a U.S. Department of State Travel Warning (currently this includes Tel Aviv)
- Program must be a minimum of three weeks (21 days) in one country -- note that some summer study away programs may not be long enough

To refresh your knowledge of the application, see Gilman Overview: Understanding the Application
Required Essays

In addition to the online application, students must submit 2 essays:

• **Statement of Purpose**
  – A chance to discuss your academic, professional and personal goals, and how you meet the selection criteria

• **Proposal for Follow-On Service Project**
  – Projects promote the Gilman Scholarship Program and international education on campus and/or in your community
  – Proposals should be clear, able to be completed within six months of your return from your study abroad program, and have concrete goals

Essays should be no more than 7,000 characters (including spaces), or approximately 1-1.5 pages single-spaced.
Essay 1: Statement of Purpose

Describe your study abroad program and why you have chosen this country of study and this semester.

- Specific coursework that will count towards your major or minor, and how this furthers your academic goals

- Your country knowledge and language acquisition
  - Have you already studied the local language or will you start language study in your study abroad location?
  - Have your studies focused on this country or region?

- Do you plan to do an academic internship during study abroad?
  - If so, include details in your essay!
Sample Section

“NYU BA is awesome. I can take lots of literature courses that count towards my major, plus GPH and CORE courses.”

WAIT!

1. What is NYU BA? You must spell everything out- not everyone understands the world of NYU acronyms
2. Which literature courses? Why study literature in Buenos Aires?
3. What’s your major?
4. What’s GPH and CORE?
Describe how the study abroad program will impact your professional and personal development and goals.

– What excites you about study abroad?

– Is there something specific that inspires you to go abroad?
Sample Section

“I’m so excited to travel because I’ve never been to Europe. Florence is a great location because its centrally located and makes travel easy. I’m going to take Stern courses in Florence because I want to work in Finance.”

WAIT!

1. Traveling is fun, but this is NOT what Gilman wants to read about. What else do you hope to experience?
2. What’s Stern?
3. How does taking business courses in another country contribute to your understanding of the field you want to work in?
Discuss challenges you may face to study abroad and how the selection criteria may apply to you:

*Keep in mind Gilman’s mission: to diversify the population studying abroad by encouraging underrepresented students to participate.*

**Underrepresented students include (but are not limited to):**

- students from diverse ethnic background
- first-generation college students
- veterans
- students with disabilities
- student athletes whose extracurricular commitments make it difficult to study away
- students with high financial need
- students in fields of study underrepresented in study abroad, specifically science, technology, engineering and mathematics
- students who have transferred to NYU from community colleges, HBCUs, Tribal Colleges, Hispanic-serving Institutions, or other Minority-Serving Institutions
- students going to non-traditional study abroad destinations, especially those outside of Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada
Sample Section

“I don’t have enough money for study abroad and my family doesn’t understand why I want to go abroad. I generally find that as an underrepresented student it is hard for me to go abroad.”

WAIT!

1. Most students applying for Gilman have significant financial need. Are there specific circumstances that make it financially difficult for you to go?
2. Could you provide more information about the support you are receiving from your family (financial, emotional, etc.) to study abroad?
3. Are you the first in your family to go to college? To study abroad?
4. Will you lose income during study abroad because you have to put your job on hold?
5. Do you have a disability that makes it more difficult for you to go?
6. Do you identify as a student of color, and does this play into your decision to study abroad?
Writing Tips

• Be precise
• Use clear, concise language
• Choose compelling words that paint a picture of who you are as a person
• Give concrete examples
• Mention the Gilman Scholarship by name
• Avoid jargon: don’t assume reader knows about NYU, your major or your planned field
• Proofread: Spellcheck does not catch everything! Consider asking someone with strong writing and editing skills to proofread the essay before you submit it.
• Make sure your grammar and spelling are impeccable!

Pro Tip! Remember, the selection committee is just as human as you are, with the difficult task of deciding who to award a scholarship to. Just like you, they have hopes, goals, dreams, and passions, and they can recognize these qualities in other people too. As you write your essay, appeal to these sensibilities and try to give them an idea of who you are.
Essay 2: Follow-On Project

How will you help promote the Gilman Scholarship when you return from study abroad?

Projects should highlight your individual background, experiences abroad, talents and skills.

- Be realistic about your project. The goal is simply to raise more awareness about Gilman and study abroad in your community.
- Remember this must be completed within 6 months of your return.
Points to Address

- What is your target population and how will your project speak to this particular group?

- How will this project impact your home university or home community? What are your project goals?

- How will you integrate the impact of your experiences abroad into your project?

- What, if any, campus departments, student organizations, and/or community organizations will you collaborate with in promoting the Gilman Scholarship and international education? Have you already made contact with these groups? Will they provide co-sponsorship and/or funding? (Funding not always necessary)

- What methods of publicity will you use to promote the project?

- What is the timeline to complete your project?

- What practical and logistical considerations are there for your project?
Sample Essay

For my follow up service project, I am planning to hold my own info session. I plan to speak on how the Gilman scholarship makes studying abroad possible as well as the benefits of going abroad. I understand that people aren’t sure that going abroad is really worth it because they are worried about missing out on opportunities or internships in New York. However, having gone through this thought process myself, I have come to realize the importance of learning about a new culture and I want to help people understand that.

WAIT!

1. You want to do an Info Session. Great. Now we need SPECIFICS!
2. Where and when will the info session be? How will you publicize? Who is your target audience and why?
3. You don’t need to write about the importance of Gilman or of studying abroad – the selection committee knows that already.
4. How will you use your individual background, experiences abroad, talents and skills, etc. in this project?
Sample Projects

**Study Abroad Outreach:** This is the most common type of Follow-on Service Project students propose. Examples of these projects include:

- Volunteering or working in the study abroad office as a Peer Mentor/Advisor to potential study abroad students
- Representing the study abroad office at presentations/information sessions on study abroad
- Maintaining a blog and/or submitting an article on their experiences abroad to campus newspapers either while they are still abroad or upon their return
- Developing an informational flyer/brochure on university-specific financial aid procedures for study abroad and available scholarships which is then housed in the study abroad office
- Serving as a resource person for a specific country/program/field of study that would advise/assist potential study abroad students
- Speaking to local K-12 students about the value of study away
Optional Essay: Critical Need Language Award

Applicants studying a critical need language while abroad can submit an additional essay to be considered for a supplemental award of $3000 (for maximum award of $8000 total).

Languages include Arabic, Azerbaijani, Bangla, Chinese, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Punjabi, Russian, Swahili, Turkish and Urdu.

**Essay Prompt:** Explain the level of intensity of your critical need language study while abroad and how the pursuit of this language relates to your academic and career goals.

**Tips:**

- *The critical need language must be predominantly spoken in country.*
- *Make sure to demonstrate a strong motivation to achieve proficiency in the language that extends beyond your study abroad experience and into your future academic and career goals.*
FAQs

- I had to list 3 study abroad programs when I applied through NYU. Which one should I discuss in my Gilman essay?

  *Just discuss your first choice location. If you are selected by Gilman for your first choice program you can then inform them that your study program has changed.*

- How much do I need to plan in advance for the Follow-On Project Proposal?

  *While you don’t need to have a room reserved, you want to be as specific as possible about your arrangements. For example, if you’ve contacted a student organization or department, write that in your essay. If you already have a sense of how you will market the event, write about it in your essay.*

- What happens if I want to change my Follow-On Project when I get back from study abroad?

  *You are expected to carry out the project you proposed in your application as this is the information evaluated for scholarship selection. That said, if your plans must change, you can contact Gilman and have your updated project re-approved.*
Spring 2018 Deadlines

• **October 3, 2017**: Student Deadline for submission of Financial Aid Authorization Form and online application, including transcript(s). Must submit application by 11:59pm CDT → NO LATE APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED!

• **October 10, 2017**: Advisor Deadline for submission of online Study Abroad Advisor and Financial Aid Advisor section.

• **October/November 2017**: Complete Applications are processed and distributed to selection panels for review.

• **Late November**: Applicants are notified of the status of their application via email. Study Abroad and Financial Aid Advisors will be notified of scholarship recipients via email. A list of the recipients will be available on the Gilman website.

• **December 2017**: Scholarship recipients must accept/decline their award and submit required documentation.

• For future semester dates please refer to the [Gilman website](http://gilman.nyu.edu).
Thank You!