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
- Program must be a minimum of three weeks (21 days) -- note that some summer and j-term study away programs may not be long enough
- To refresh your knowledge of the application, see Gilman Overview: Understanding the Application on our website
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

- **Community Impact**
  - How will you contribute to the mission of building mutual understanding between the people of your home community and the people of your host community
  - How will your Follow-on-Service Project increase awareness of study abroad and the Gilman Scholarship among your peers in your home communities and campuses
  - 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 for Statement of Purpose and 6,000 character limit for the Community Impact Essay (including spaces), or approximately 1-1.5 pages single-spaced.
Essay 1: Statement of Purpose

Describe how the study abroad program or interning abroad will impact your professional and personal development and goals.

- How will studying or interning abroad help you achieve your future academic or professional goals?
  - Specific coursework that will count towards your major or minor, and how this furthers your academic goals
  - If you plan to do an academic internship, include details in your essay!

- Why did you select your specific program and host country?

- What aspects of studying or interning abroad do you expect to be the most challenging for you?

- What knowledge, skills, and experiences will you draw on to meet these challenges
  - Have you already studied the local language or will you start language study in your study abroad
  - Have your studies focused on this country or region?
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?
Sample Section

“I’m so excited to travel because I’ve never been to Europe. Florence is a great location because it's 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?
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?
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
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!
- Be creative

**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: Community Impact

Part A: Make a case for how you will serve as an effective citizen diplomat abroad

Part B: Through a Follow-On-Service Project proposal, how will you increase awareness of study abroad and the Gilman Scholarship among your peers in your home communities and campuses.

• Utilize your individual background, experiences abroad, talents and skills
• Be realistic about your project!
• Remember this must be completed within 6 months of your return. You will be required to submit a final report summarizing and assessing its impact
Points to Address

• When you are overseas, how will you contribute to the mission of building mutual understanding between the people of your home community and the people of your host community?

• What are your project goals?

• Who is your target population/audience and why did you select them?

• 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 bringing awareness to study abroad and the Gilman Scholarship? Have you already made contact with these groups? Will they provide co-sponsorship and/or funding? (Funding not always necessary)
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
- 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
- Presentation on study abroad and the Gilman Scholarship at on campus clubs and organization meetings
Optional Essay: Critical Need Language Award

Applicants studying a critical need language while abroad can submit an additional essay, no more than 2,000 characters including spaces, to be considered for a supplemental award of $3000 (for maximum award of $8000 total).

Languages include - Arabic (all dialects), Azerbaijani, Bahasa Indonesian, Bangla, Chinese (Mandarin), Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Swahili, Turkish, Urdu

Essay Prompt:
• What are your motivations for improving your language proficiency academically, professionally, and personally?
• How do you intend to improve your language skills while studying abroad? How will you increase your proficiency in the language inside and outside of the classroom setting?
• How do you intend to use the language after you study abroad, and how will the Critical Need Language Award prepare you for this?
• If you plan to study in a country where the language does not appear in the list above, what are the benefits of and resources for studying abroad in your proposed country?

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 goals and 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 integrate your experiences abroad, 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 at gilman@iie.org and have your updated project re-approved.*
Cycle 1 Deadlines
(Program Start December 2019-October 2020)

- **October 1, 2019**: Student Deadline for submission of online authorization form and online application, including transcript(s). Must submit application by 11:59pm CDT → NO LATE APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED!

- **October 8, 2019**: Advisor Deadline for submission of online Study Abroad Advisor and Financial Aid Advisor section.

- **October/November 2019**: Complete Applications are processed and distributed to selection panels for review.

- **Late-November 2019**: 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 2019**: Scholarship recipients must accept/decline their award and submit required documentation.

- **Terms Accommodated**: Winter/J-term 2020, Spring 2020, Summer 2020, Fall 2020, Academic Year 2020-2021

- For future semester dates please refer to the [Gilman website](#).
Cycle 2 Deadlines
(Programs Start May 2020-April 2021)

- **March 3, 2020:** Student Deadline for submission of online authorization form and online application, including transcript(s). Must submit application by 11:59pm CDT → NO LATE APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED!

- **March 10, 2020:** Advisor Deadline for submission of online Study Abroad Advisor and Financial Aid Advisor section.

- **March/April 2020:** Complete Applications are processed and distributed to selection panels for review.

- **Late-April 2020:** 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.

- **May 2020:** Scholarship recipients must accept/decline their award and submit required documentation.

- **Terms Accommodated:** Summer 2020, Fall 2020, Academic Year 2020-2021, Winter/J-term 2021, and Spring 2021

- For future semester dates please refer to the [Gilman website](http://gilmanwebsite.com).
Thank You!