

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Fulbright
U.S. Student
Researcher
Program



FAQ - U.S. STUDENT RESEARCHER PROGRAM

How many Fulbright U.S. Student Researchers does Colombia accept in a given year?

On average, no more than 5 U.S. Student Researcher Grants will be awarded by the Fulbright Commission in Colombia each year, depending on available resources and negotiations with stakeholders.

Can I apply if I am both a U.S. and Colombian citizen?

Yes, U.S. citizens holding dual U.S.-Colombian citizenship are eligible to apply to this program.

Is Spanish language proficiency required?

Spanish language proficiency is required, not only for the development of the proposed grant activities but also for ease of adjustment and daily communication. Generally, an intermediate or higher level of Spanish is recommended to facilitate the grantee's successful academic performance and interaction with Colombian counterparts, the local population, and other relevant stakeholders.

However, language requirements vary depending on the specific grant activity. Candidates with basic or limited Spanish proficiency may also be considered if the research topic and proposed grant activities do not require fluency in Spanish.

How can I secure a letter of invitation?

To secure a letter of invitation signed by the director of the department, academic unit, institute, or research center interested in hosting you, you must try to establish contact with faculty members or researchers in Colombia. See the question below for more information on this.



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How can I contact faculty and researchers in Colombia? When should I start to do so?

It is never too early to start contacting potential host institutions, so we strongly recommend that you start to reach out as soon as possible. To do this, we have prepared a document with a general overview of Colombian higher education institutions and research centers, classified by the most relevant fields of research at each institution. You may access these files by [clicking here](#).

We also suggest that you browse through the web pages of institutions that may be of interest, so that you may be able to identify faculty members or researchers that could potentially host you. If you need help either identifying or contacting faculty in Colombia, please email Ana María Carvajal at consejeria@fulbright.edu.co stating your research interest and field of study.

What if I don't hear back from faculty members and researchers in Colombia?

Don't wait too long for a reply. If after 2 weeks you have not heard back from the faculty members and researchers you have contacted, email our Educational Advisor, Ana María Carvajal, at consejeria@fulbright.edu.co.

Can the affiliation letter be in Spanish, or does it need to be in English? Does it need to explicitly include the approval of the dean?

It will be reviewed during the selection process, which will largely take place in the U.S. This means that you can either ask your contact at the host institution to write the letter in English, or provide a translation into English if it is originally written in Spanish, and then get the official signature on the final version of the document. If you have any eligibility questions or concerns that are not answered here, please contact fbstudent@iie.org.



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The letter does not need to state that your mentor has approval from the dean or director of the department. We only require that the department be aware of the invitation process to ensure that, if you are selected, it does not come as a surprise to the administrators at the potential host university.

How much time will my mentor at the host institution need to dedicate to working with me?

Time commitments on the side of your mentor at the host institution are largely at their discretion. You may discuss this issue with your mentor and make agreements with them, but Fulbright does not establish any specific guidelines on this matter. However, it is important to establish clear goals between you and your mentor, as this will allow you to understand the level of independence required and the amount of work you will need to undertake during your stay.

Can I work with a host institution that is U.S.-based, but that operates in Colombia?

You can definitely work with a U.S.-based institution, but the letter of invitation would need to come directly from people working on the ground in Colombia. We do not have a preference regarding the place where the potential host institution is based, but rather, on their capabilities and resources to support your research project.



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In case my potential host institution asks, what are the requirements and commitments entailed in becoming a host institution?

In logistical and administrative terms, the host institution must provide the necessary resources for the grantee to successfully carry out their research. These resources are determined at the institution's discretion but typically include office space, internet access, access to databases, information, and research materials, among others. The institution is not required to assume any financial obligation. Additionally, the institution is expected to designate a mentor who will serve as the primary point of contact between the host institution and the Fulbright Commission, especially in case of an emergency.

Can the Fulbright Commission help me find a language evaluator?

Foreign language testing is a requirement for the selection process that takes place in the United States, so you must contact the Institute of International Education (IIE), which administers this part of the process. You can write to them at FulbrightStudentAdvisingWHA@iie.org or fbstudent@iie.org, to request information on language evaluators.

Who do I contact if I need help with my application?

For general application inquiries, you may reach out to Bradley Ryktarsyk, Erika Walsh, and Jen Sherdan at FBstudent@iie.org. For specific information regarding the Fulbright U.S. Student Researcher in Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean, you may contact Maya Andelson at FBstudent.WHA@iie.org.

Does the Commission in Colombia interview semi-finalists?

No. The Fulbright Commission does not interview finalists or semi-finalists. The process of application and selection is carried out by the Institute of International Education, IIE. You may contact them for more information.



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Can you give me any feedback about why I was not selected?

Since there is no general application process in Colombia, we are unable to provide feedback on past applications. It is also important to note that Fulbright awards are typically very competitive, so not all applicants will be selected at the end of an application cycle. For feedback on past applications, we suggest that you contact IIE at FBstudent@iie.org.

When are grantees expected to travel? What are the earliest and latest dates that I should travel to Colombia?

The grant period must begin no earlier than October 1st, 2026, and end no later than June 1st, 2027, depending on the proposed length of the grant and subject to available resources and stakeholder negotiations. Changes or deferrals of the grant period are not allowed.

Grant dates must be clearly stated in the application and invitation letter. The grant period in months must be a whole number (6-8 months). Selected candidates must begin their grants in October to facilitate travel to Colombia. The completion date is at the discretion of each U.S. Grantee. In this sense, the dates that must be included in the letters of invitation from the institutions are as follows:

- 6 months: October 1st, 2026 to April 1st, 2027.
- 7 months: October 1st, 2026 to May 1st, 2027.
- 8 months: October 1st, 2026 to June 1st, 2027.

In Colombia, there is usually no academic activity in December and January of each year since they are vacation and holiday months, so it is recommended that these months be used for any fieldwork associated with the research proposal.



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Does the research project need to be mine, or can I collaborate on an existing project at the host institution?

The program only establishes general guidelines for the nature of the research project, which means that, unless it is explicitly stated, you may work on your own independent project, or you may work on an already existing one. The goal of the Fulbright U.S. Student Program, however, is to contribute to your potential host country and institution, by collaborating with other researchers and students at your destination. In this sense, this is an issue that you might want to check with your host institution.

May I apply if I am a recent graduate? Is a master's or doctoral degree required to apply?

The U.S. Study/Research Award allows young professionals, recent graduates, artists, and graduate students to conduct collaborative research projects for up to one academic year at a higher education institution, research center, public institution, or NGO in Colombia. It is not required to have a graduate degree nor to be a graduate student to apply.

Can I apply to the program if I am doing a master's degree outside the U.S. and in a country other than Colombia?

Yes, you can apply to the program while studying in another country, as long as you are a U.S. citizen. In this case, we recommend reaching out to the agency to learn about specific requirements, including travel arrangements. For detailed information regarding the Fulbright U.S. Student Researcher program and the application process, you may contact IIE at: FBstudent@iie.org or FBstudent.WHA@iie.org.



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How is life in Colombia as a Fulbright U.S. Student Researcher?

For more information on life in Colombia and testimonies of other Fulbrighters, we suggest you visit our website by [clicking here](#).

To learn more about Colombia as a travel destination, visit: <http://www.colombia.co/>

Who do I contact if I am worried about safety?

The general recommendation for U.S. citizens is to stay within city limits and avoid areas deemed unsafe by the U.S. Embassy in Colombia. If you have concerns about your location's safety, we recommend contacting your host institution, as they can provide valuable insights into local safety conditions.

Upon arrival, you will be provided with the telephone number to contact the Commission for any questions and the U.S. Citizen Services Office at the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá for emergencies.

Can the Fulbright Commission in Colombia help me find housing?

Fulbright Colombia provides grantees with general information about housing options. While the Commission can assist in providing housing information, it cannot make housing arrangements. It is the grantee's responsibility to secure housing in Colombia during the grant period according to their preferences and needs. You may contact the International Relations Office at your host institution for advice and support in securing housing.



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Do I need a visa for this program? And what do I need to do to apply for it?

Yes, you will need to apply for a Colombian visa, as immigration regulations require that anyone staying in Colombia for more than 3 months must apply for a Colombian visa to regularize their immigration status. If you are selected, the Fulbright Commission in Colombia will guide you through the visa application process, ensuring you meet the requirements and deadlines set by the Colombian government.

Dual Colombian-U.S. citizens do not need to apply for a visa, since according to immigration regulations, they must enter Colombia with a Colombian passport.

Is the Orientation Seminar virtual or in-person?

The grant period begins with an Orientation Seminar organized by the Fulbright Commission in late July, which may be virtual due to the flexibility of the dates chosen by each researcher and their different arrivals in Colombia. Attendance at the Orientation Seminar, whether in-person or virtual, is mandatory for all U.S. Student Researcher grantees.



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