

Fund for Education Abroad Scholarship Essay Guidelines

In many ways, the essays are the most important part of your application. They are where the evaluators get to know you. They give you the opportunity to emphasize your strengths, justify any apparent weaknesses, and highlight important points. For this reason, we'd like to offer some tips and guidelines to consider when writing your essays.

- **Answer the question.** You would think this would go without saying, but read the question carefully. Read it again. Make sure your essay answers the entire question.
- **Use an outline.** This will help you logically develop your essay as well as maintain its focus and cohesiveness.
- **Work with a Writing Center or advisor.** Having someone read over your essays, offer constructive criticism, and work with you through multiple drafts is critical.
- **Address important scholarship criteria and preferences.** This is especially true if you are from a diverse background, have never been abroad, are studying in an underrepresented field, have demonstrated academic improvement, etc.
- **Emphasize the location.** If you're studying in a non-traditional location (outside Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand), point that out in the essay. Explain why this particular program or location is critical for you, especially if you're studying in a more traditional location.
- **Know your program.** Emphasize immersive qualities and unique components such as home-stays and language pledges that will impact your experience abroad. If you don't know specific details, then contact the program administrators to find out.
- **Make connections.** Make a clear connection between your program choice/location and your future goals. Will coursework abroad count towards major or minor requirements? Will you take electives or pursue language training unavailable on your home campus? What internship or volunteer opportunities will you participate in to support your professional goals? Will you learn skills or conduct research that will be necessary in your future career?
- **Make it personal.** Use the first person. Rather than saying "Students on this program can...", try "While on this program, I will..."
- **Highlight skills, goals, and achievements.** Resumes are not submitted, so highlight your skills, goals, and achievements in your essays. Show how outstanding you are!
- **Be original.** Imagine what the other scholarship applicants will say and make your essay something no one else could write.
- **BE SPECIFIC!!!** Avoid general statements. Rather than saying, "I want to experience a new culture," it will be more effective to say, "I want to live with a host family in Argentina so I can experience first-hand the family as the center of Latin American culture." Don't just write that upon your return you will "do a presentation with photos and food from the country." Indicate when you will present, where, with and to whom, using what medium, how you will advertise, what types of photos you will use, and which food items.