

# Competition for Fulbright U.S. Student Program

English Teaching Assistant  
(ETA)



STATISTICAL AND NARRATIVE REPORT  
**OFFICER IN CHARGE** DORA ARENGA  
**DATE OF REPORT** SEPTEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup> 2026



**FULBRIGHT**  
Portugal

## Description of the Program

The Fulbright Commission in Portugal offers the English Teaching Assistant Award each academic year with the objective of strengthening English language instruction and knowledge of the United States in Portugal through the presence of highly motivated, native English speakers.

Eligible applicants must meet the following requirements:

- Degree: candidates at all degree levels, who have completed a Bachelor's degree before the start of the grant;
- Affiliation: at the university level; ETAs are placed by the Commission at Portuguese Higher Education Institutions, with whom the Commission has established agreements to host the ETA and that cost-share the grants awarded;
- Language proficiency: Intermediate level is required; knowledge of Portuguese language and culture is particularly relevant to promote a deeper engagement outside the classroom and with the local community.

While the assistantship is open to all fields of study, preference is given to candidates with demonstrated interest in international education or with previous teaching or tutoring experience.

Grant activity is diverse and may include:

- assisting faculty in planning, preparing and teaching classes in English language;
- giving talks and seminars, both in the academic and local host communities, on U.S. culture and other topics of current interest;
- proofreading and editing English versions of documents and media content;
- providing informal educational advising to local students interested in studying in the United States;

We should note that a Fulbright ETA is not a teacher of English and must work under supervision by a Mentor – typically a Professor - assigned by the host institution. This mentor will manage the grantee's activities but also serve as their primary point of contact at the institution.

All grants include the following benefits:

- A total grant stipend of EUR 15 200 (for 9 months);
- A travel allowance of EUR 1 000;
- Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) coverage during the grant period;
- Fulbright sponsorship of the National Temporary Stay Visa and waiver of visa fees;

- A Pre-Departure Meeting (online);
- An Orientation Meeting (in-country);
- Ongoing support from the Fulbright Commission before, during and after their stay;
- Opportunities to present lectures and/or participate in seminars and other cultural or scientific events organized by the Portuguese and other European Fulbright Commissions;
- Integration in the global network of Fulbright grantees and alumni.

## Promotion, Competition and the Selection Process

(planning, outreach & media, competition calendar, pool of evaluators, selection)

Competition was open from March 1 to October 7, 2025.

### Planning

The Fulbright Commission in Portugal defines the selection calendar, in coordination with the Institute of International Education (IIE), drafts and edits the content of all awards to Portugal in the [Fulbright US Student Program catalog of Awards](#), and on the [Fulbright Commission website](#), and plans and defines grant benefits. The Commission also makes available online resources for candidates such as country description, visa requirements and country priorities, if applicable.

The Commission announces and promotes the awards and responds to questions from candidates.

### Promotion

#### Media Promotion

During the application cycle, the information about the English Teaching Assistant Awards offered in Portugal was highlighted on the Commission's website, weekly Newsletter, and shared on Fulbright social media: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

Fulbright Program's partner institution in the United States, the Institute of International Education (IIE), assists the Commission in its recruitment efforts by sharing information about awards to Portugal to Fulbright campus advisors at universities in the United States and by holding office hours with potential candidates.

Our partner institutions in the grant administration program are also valued allies in promoting the awards with their network of contacts – universities, research centers, lectorates and Portuguese language centers – in the United States.

### **In-person Promotion**

Flyers and other promotional materials were produced to be poster-presented and handed out to visitors of the Portuguese pavilion shared at international education events such as the **2025 Annual NAFSA Conference & Expo**, in San Diego, CA.

Fulbright promotional materials were handed out by staff of the Portuguese Embassy in Washington, D.C. during the **EU Open House**, an event that took place on May, 2025, when Embassies of European Union member countries in Washington, D.C. open their doors to the public for free.

### **Online Promotion**

The Commission hosted an online information session to PALCUS – Portuguese-American Leadership Council of America's **NextGen Leadership Academy**, *"a year-long program for the advancement of Young Portuguese-Americans (18-35 years of age) who have demonstrated outstanding promise, leadership potential, and passion for celebrating and preserving Portuguese culture in the United States"*. This session, attended by over 50 participants from the East and West coasts of the United States, provided an excellent opportunity to present Fulbright award opportunities in Portugal and discuss candidates' possibilities, expectations and opportunities for engagement with their heritage.

Online information sessions with potential candidates and campus advisors, hosted by the Institute of International Education (IIE), including office hours dedicated to award opportunities to Portugal, with the presence of around 30 participants.

The Commission hosted a webinar about "Fulbright award opportunities in Portugal" aimed at potential candidates. This webinar was recorded and shared on the Commission's weekly newsletter and social media platforms.

Targeted email campaigns to Fulbright alumni with information about the opportunities and request for referencing colleagues and students who might be interested in applying. More than 800 emails were sent, with an open rate of 43%.

Around 10 prospective ETA candidates contacted the Commission via email for information about the selection process, award-specific questions and general country-specific questions. Some **individual online meetings** with candidates were also held during the application cycle.

## Evaluation

U.S. Fulbright student programs' applications are reviewed by National Screening Committees (NSC), divided by award category and area of study, and composed of Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program alumni and U.S. faculty, who review the paper applications and recommend several application finalists for selection.

NSC-recommended applications are, then, evaluated by the Commission-appointed selection committee which reviews the paper applications, interviews candidates and recommends finalists for selection by the Board of Directors of the Fulbright Commission.

Candidates' evaluation is based on their personal motivations, cultural adaptability, interest in pursuing a project in Portugal and Portuguese language proficiency.

### Selection Committee

The Selection Committees, composed of Fulbright alumni, Board Members and Partner institutions' representatives, review all recommended applications and interview semi-finalists for the English Teaching Assistant Award.

The Selection Committee was composed of the following members:

#### **Fulbright / English Teaching Assistant Award**

Composition of the Selection Committee:

- **Adriana Nogueira**, Universidade do Algarve; Fulbright alumna;
- **Brooke Barrera Sheldon**, ISCTE – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa; Fulbright alumna;
- **Cláudia Costa**, Universidade de Lisboa, Fulbright alumna.

## Selection

### National Screening Committee Review

After the application cycle has ended, the Institute of International Education (IIE) conducts a preliminary review to eliminate ineligible and incomplete applications. After this review, IIE forwarded applications to the National Screening Committee (NSC) – composed of U.S. academics, including Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program alumni – for further review of their "cultural ambassador" qualities and cultural preparation.

Each application is evaluated based on how well the candidate meets the following criteria:

- Statement of Grant Purpose (what a candidate is able to bring to the classroom in the host country and how they expect to engage with students from a different pedagogical tradition);
- Flexibility & Adaptability (how they will adapt to working and living in a new environment in the host country);
- Community Engagement (how they expect to integrate within and engage with their host community);
- Impact of Fulbright Award (what plans they have for sharing their experiences and knowledge with others and achieving the multiplier effect).

### **Portuguese Selection Committee Review**

The Commission received the applications recommended by the NSC and, again, these applications were reviewed by the Portuguese Selection Committee and the 10 top-ranked candidates were interviewed via Zoom after the review process. After the interviews, the Committee nominated the candidates for selection. The Selection Committee evaluated mainly aspects related to the candidates' ability to represent the principles of the Fulbright Program in aspects such as:

- the potential to reflect the multiplicity of American society and to serve as cultural ambassadors for the United States and the Fulbright Program by living up to its principles;
- their justification for choosing Portugal and the Fulbright ETA Program;
- even though Fulbright grants are merit-based, the Committee also considered aspects for merit such as overcoming hardship and adversity, access to resources, and the applicant's journey leading up to applying for a Fulbright grant.

# Statistics

The **Fulbright U.S. Student Program to Portugal** for the 2026/2027 cycle received **55 applications, of which 35 were recommended** for further review by the National Screening Committee: 17 applications for the Fulbright Study/Research Awards (covered in a separate report) and **18 applications for the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Award**.

In 2026 we could see a **decrease of 36%** in the number of recommended applications from the 2025 cycle, when we received 28 recommended applications.

Five candidates were selected from a total of 18 recommended candidates, which indicates a **success rate of 28%**.

The vast majority of candidates are **female** (89%) and all grantees are female. Most candidates were at the Bachelor's level (89%), coming from a wide range of institutions across the United States, with a slight preponderance of the State of **California (17%)**, with three candidates.

## Statistics Tables

### Overall Numbers

| 2026                   | Number |
|------------------------|--------|
| Recommended Applicants | 18     |
| Grantees               | 5      |
| Success Rate           | 28%    |

### Gender

| Applicants | Number | %    | Grantees | Number | %    |
|------------|--------|------|----------|--------|------|
| Female     | 16     | 89%  | Female   | 5      | 100% |
| Male       | 2      | 11%  | Male     | 0      | 0%   |
| Total      | 18     | 100% | Total    | 5      | 100% |

### Degree Level

| Applicants | Number | %    | Grantees   | Number | %    |
|------------|--------|------|------------|--------|------|
| Bachelor's | 16     | 89%  | Bachelor's | 5      | 100% |
| Master's   | 2      | 11%  | Master's   | 0      | 11%  |
| Total      | 18     | 100% | Total      | 5      | 100% |

## Statistics (cont.)

### Home Institution

| Applicants                                  | Number    | %           |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| At Large                                    | 2         | 11%         |
| Claremont McKenna College                   | 1         | 6%          |
| Clemson University                          | 1         | 6%          |
| College of the Holy Cross                   | 1         | 6%          |
| Colorado College                            | 1         | 6%          |
| Cornell University                          | 1         | 6%          |
| Dartmouth College                           | 1         | 6%          |
| Ohio University                             | 1         | 6%          |
| Pitzer College                              | 2         | 11%         |
| University of Florida                       | 1         | 6%          |
| University of Georgia                       | 1         | 6%          |
| University of Iowa                          | 1         | 6%          |
| University of New Hampshire                 | 1         | 6%          |
| University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill | 1         | 6%          |
| Villanova University                        | 1         | 6%          |
| Washington University in St Louis           | 1         | 6%          |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>18</b> | <b>100%</b> |

| Grantees                                    | Number   | %           |
|---------------------------------------------|----------|-------------|
| College of the Holy Cross                   | 1        | 20%         |
| Cornell University                          | 1        | 20%         |
| University of Florida                       | 1        | 20%         |
| University of Iowa                          | 1        | 20%         |
| University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill | 1        | 20%         |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>5</b> | <b>100%</b> |

### State of Home Institution

| Applicants          | Number    | %           |
|---------------------|-----------|-------------|
| At Large            | 2         | 11%         |
| California (CA)     | 3         | 17%         |
| Colorado (CO)       | 1         | 6%          |
| Florida (FL)        | 1         | 6%          |
| Georgia (GA)        | 1         | 6%          |
| Iowa (IA)           | 1         | 6%          |
| Massachusetts (MA)  | 1         | 6%          |
| Missouri (MO)       | 1         | 6%          |
| New Hampshire (NH)  | 2         | 11%         |
| New York (NY)       | 1         | 6%          |
| North Carolina (NC) | 1         | 6%          |
| Ohio (OH)           | 1         | 6%          |
| Pennsylvania (PA)   | 1         | 6%          |
| South Carolina (SC) | 1         | 6%          |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>18</b> | <b>100%</b> |

| Grantees            | Number   | %           |
|---------------------|----------|-------------|
| Florida (FL)        | 1        | 20%         |
| Iowa (IA)           | 1        | 20%         |
| Massachusetts (MA)  | 1        | 20%         |
| New York (NY)       | 1        | 20%         |
| North Carolina (NC) | 1        | 20%         |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>5</b> | <b>100%</b> |

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**September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026**