

Competition for Fulbright U.S. Student Program

Research Students



STATISTICAL AND NARRATIVE REPORT
OFFICER IN CHARGE DORA ARENGA
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FULBRIGHT
Portugal

Description of the Program

The Fulbright Commission in Portugal offers three awards to support study and/or research projects to be conducted at institutions - university, research centers, museums, art schools or other cultural or educational institutions – in Portugal.

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;
- Invitation / affiliation letter: mandatory;
- Affiliation: agreement with the candidate's study or research project from an appropriate host institution - can be any accredited higher education institution, research center, cultural institution or museum, governmental or non-governmental organization with educational or scientific purposes.

All grants include the following benefits:

- A monthly stipend of EUR 1 600 (which totals EUR 12 800 for 8 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.

U.S. Study / Research Awards in Portugal:

Fulbright / FLAD Open Study / Research Award

All Fields of Study are considered.

There are two to three grants to award each academic year, with an 8-month duration.

Fulbright / Camões, I.P. Open Study / Research Award

Projects are accepted in one of the following fields of study:

- Culture
- Translation and Interpretation
- Learning Evaluation and Certification
- Portuguese Language Teaching Pedagogy and Didactics
- Distance Learning
- Linguistics
- Literature

These fields are limited to subjects related to Portuguese language and culture and preference will be given to projects that are especially relevant to Portuguese-U.S. cultural relations.

There is one grant to award each academic year, with an 8-month duration.

Fulbright / Azores Regional Government Open Study / Research Award

All fields of study are considered.

These fields are limited to subjects related to the Azores and study or research projects to be carried out at institutions located in the Autonomous Region of the Azores.

There are two grants to award each academic year, with an 8-month duration.

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 U.S. Study/Research 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%;

Over 30 prospective 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 by 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 choice of host institution.

Selection Committees

The Selection Committees, composed of Fulbright alumni, Board Members and Partner institutions' representatives, review all recommended applications and interview semi-finalists for the three Awards that accept applications for graduate study or pre-doctoral research projects.

The Selection Committees were composed of the following members:

Fulbright / FLAD Open Study/Research Award AND Fulbright / Camões, IP Open Study/Research Award

Composition of the Selection Committee:

- **Flávia Sousa**, Groningen Research Institute of Pharmacy; Fulbright alumna;
- **João Paulo Pereira**, representative of Camões, Instituto da Cooperação e da Língua, I.P.;
- **Michael Baum**, representative of Fundação Luso-Americana para o Desenvolvimento; Fulbright alumnus.

Fulbright / Azores Regional Government Open Study/Research Award

Composition of the Selection Committee:

- **Gisela Nascimento**, representative of Governo Regional dos Açores;
- **Rita Rico**, U.S. Consulate Ponta Delgada;
- **Samuel Bither**, NY Green Bank; Fulbright alumnus.

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 academic review.

Project's evaluation is based on how well each application met the following review criteria:

- Project Proposal and Grant Purpose (timeline, methodology, affiliation and feasibility);
- Qualifications & Background (academic background, training and/or experience, accomplishments and/or extracurricular activities);
- Contribution to Fulbright Mission & Personal Attributes (adaptability and flexibility, future plans, community engagement).

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 all 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;
- the candidates' choice of research subject and affiliation in Portugal, and in the Azores, for applicants to this award;
- 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** and 18 applications for the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Award (covered in a separate report).

In 2026 we could see an evolution in the number of recommended applications for the Study/Research Awards, an **increase of 31% from 2025**, when we received 13 applications.

Six candidates were selected from a total of 17 recommended candidates, which indicates a **success rate of 35%**.

The vast majority of candidates are **female (88%)**,

The majority of candidates come from the State of **Massachusetts (29%)** and mostly looking to conduct their projects in institutions in **Lisbon (47%)**, followed by the Autonomous Region of the Azores (24%), largely driven by applications to the Fulbright/Azores Regional Government Award, which received 4 applications this cycle.

Statistics Tables

Overall Numbers

2026	Number
Recommended Applicants	17
Grantees	6
Success Rate	35%

Gender

Applicants	Number	%
Female	15	88%
Male	2	12%
Total	17	100%

Grantees	Number	%
Female	5	83%
Male	1	17%
Total	6	100%

Degree Level

Applicants	Number	%
Bachelor's	9	53%
Master's	6	35%
Doctorate	2	12%
Total	17	100%

Grantees	Number	%
Bachelor's	3	50%
Master's	1	17%
Doctorate	2	33%
Total	6	100%

Statistics (cont.)

Field of Studies

Applicants	Number	%
Biomedical Engineering	2	12%
Creative Writing	1	6%
Design	2	12%
Development Studies	1	6%
History	1	6%
International Relations	1	6%
Linguistics	1	6%
Literature	1	6%
Mechanical Engineering	1	6%
Neuroscience	2	12%
Oceanography	1	6%
Political Science	1	6%
Toxicology	1	6%
Translation	1	6%
Total	17	100%

Grantees	Number	%
Biomedical Engineering	2	33%
History	1	17%
Literature	1	17%
Oceanography	1	17%
Political Science	1	17%
Total	6	100%

Home Institution

Applicants	Number	%
At Large	3	18%
Brown University	1	6%
Emory University	1	6%
Franklin W Olin College of Engineering	1	6%
Mount Holyoke College	1	6%
Ohio State University	1	6%
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	1	6%
Northeastern University	1	6%
Rhode Island School of Design	2	12%
Rutgers University	1	6%
Syracuse University	1	6%
Tufts University	1	6%
University of Maine	1	6%
Yale University	1	6%
Total	17	100%

Grantee	Number	%
Brown University	1	17%
Ohio State University	1	17%
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	1	17%
Rutgers University	1	17%
Syracuse University	1	17%
Yale University	1	17%
Total	6	100%

Statistics (cont.)

State of Home Institution

Applicants	Number	%
At Large	3	18%
Connecticut (CT)	1	6%
Georgia (GA)	1	6%
Maine (ME)	1	6%
Massachusetts (MA)	5	29%
New Jersey (NJ)	1	6%
New York (NY)	1	6%
Ohio (OH)	1	6%
Rhode Island (RI)	3	18%
Total	17	100%

Grantees	Number	%
Connecticut (CT)	1	17%
Massachusetts (MA)	1	17%
New Jersey (NJ)	1	17%
New York (NY)	1	17%
Ohio (OH)	1	17%
Rhode Island (RI)	1	17%
Total	6	100%

Host Institution

Applicants	Number	%
Centro Nacional de Cultura	1	6%
Escola Somatic	1	6%
Universidade dos Açores	4	24%
Universidade Católica Portuguesa	1	6%
Universidade Europeia	1	6%
Universidade de Lisboa	3	18%
Universidade do Minho	3	18%
Universidade NOVA de Lisboa	1	6%
Universidade do Porto	2	12%
Total	17	100%

Grantees	Number	%
Universidade dos Açores	2	33%
Universidade de Lisboa	1	17%
Universidade do Minho	2	33%
Universidade NOVA de Lisboa	1	17%
Total	6	100%

City of Host Institution

Applicants	Number	%
Guimarães	3	18%
Horta	1	6%
Lisboa	8	47%
Ponta Delgada	3	18%
Porto	2	12%
Total	17	100%

Grantees	Number	%
Guimarães	2	33%
Horta	1	17%
Lisboa	2	33%
Ponta Delgada	1	17%
Total	6	100%

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September 1st, 2026