



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following question and answer section is provided as a source of information. Please keep this sheet for future reference. If you have any specific questions not addressed here or would like more information, please contact your IIE representative at [FLTA@iie.org](mailto:FLTA@iie.org).

**Q. I have just arrived at my academic institution in the United States. What should I do first?**

**A.** You should make sure to pick up your Welcome Packet. Your Welcome Packet will be sent to you in care of your FLTA supervisor. It will be sent prior to your arrival so that it is waiting for you when you arrive. In this Welcome Packet you will find helpful information and forms that need to be completed and returned to IIE to inform us of your arrival at your academic institution and your study plans.

Read through the information provided in the Welcome Packet carefully. Please complete and return all required reporting forms to your program officer at IIE. Along with the required reporting forms, it is especially important that you send us a copy of your DS-2019 form, J-1 visa stamp and a copy of your I-94 card (Arrival-Departure Record), so that we may confirm that you are in the correct visa status.

You should also visit the International Students Office at your institution to register your arrival on campus. The International Students Office and your FLTA Supervisor can assist you with many of the primary things you will need to take care of after you arrive on campus such as obtaining a social security number (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN); setting up a bank account in the United States; problems or issues with housing; and any other concerns that you may have.

**Q. Who is my Program Officer at IIE? How can I reach him/her?**

**A.** Your Program Officer at IIE is Ms. Eleanor Wendell. You can reach her by phone at (212) 984-5410, by email at [ewendell@iie.org](mailto:ewendell@iie.org), or by fax at (212) 984-5578. You can also reach all FLTA Program Staff at [FLTA@iie.org](mailto:FLTA@iie.org).

**Q. What are my reporting requirements to IIE?**

**A.** You should immediately report your arrival to your Program Officer and return the Welcome Packet documents, with copies of your immigration documents, to IIE. At the end of each academic semester or quarter, you are required to submit to IIE a Student Report. At various points throughout the academic year we will also contact you with additional reporting requirements and information.

**Q. I do not understand the health insurance requirements. How do I obtain health insurance and how do I prove my compliance with the J-1 requirements?**

**A.** As a J-1 exchange visitor, you are required to hold health insurance that meets the minimum requirements for J-1 visa holders. The minimum requirements are outlined on the “Information on Mandatory Insurance Coverage In the United States” that is outlined in your Terms of Award.

As a Fulbright FLTA you are automatically covered and the coverage meets the minimum requirements for your J-1 visa. Some Fulbright FLTAs elect to obtain additional coverage at their own expense. Some schools where Fulbright FLTAs undertake their program provide additional coverage. You can check with your supervisor at your host institution to determine if they require you to have additional insurance and what, if any, that cost would be.

**Q. I do not understand my Fulbright health insurance coverage. How do I learn about my coverage?**

**A.** Learning about your insurance coverage requires effort and reading. There is no quick way to summarize all aspects of insurance coverage. You can reference the one-page summary included in your Welcome Packet as a starting point, but to truly understand your insurance you should read your insurance booklet. You can also visit [www.sevencorners.com](http://www.sevencorners.com).

**Q. How do I obtain a Social Security number (SSN) or Individual Taxpayers Identification Number (ITIN)?**

**A.** To apply for a Social Security number, you must appear in person at the office of the Social Security Administration nearest to your academic institution. Consult with your supervisor or the International Students Office, who can advise you on local procedures, provide you with the required application materials and direct you to the local Social Security Administration office. It is not always necessary to present a work authorization letter – however, we will provide a work authorization letter in your Welcome Pack.

You will need to take the following documents with you to the Social Security Administration office:

- Social Security application form (available online at [http://www.ssa.gov/replace\\_sscard.html](http://www.ssa.gov/replace_sscard.html))
- Your Passport (or other official document giving the date of your birth);
- Your DS-2019 form
- I-94 Arrival/Departure Record

When completing the application, **NOTE that it is extremely important that your name on your Social Security card be exactly the same as your passport and DS-2019 document.**

If your local Social Security Administration Office will not accept your application for a Social Security number, you should first try another office. If you are still unable to obtain a Social Security number, request a letter of rejection from them. You will then need to obtain an ITIN from the Internal Revenue Service.

Applying for your Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN)

To apply for an ITIN, you should go to your local IRS office and complete Form W-7, Application for IRS Individual Taxpayer Identification Number. You will need to take with you the same documentation that is required to obtain a Social Security number plus your letter of rejection for a Social Security number. Once you have received your ITIN, you must send a copy of it to IIE.

**IF YOU HAVE BEEN ISSUED A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER, YOU DO NOT NEED TO APPLY FOR AN ITIN.**

**Q. I would like to travel outside the U.S. during vacation periods, what do I need to do?**

**A.** In order to re-enter the United States after traveling to another country you will need your DS-2019 form validated PRIOR to your departure. You must send your DS-2019 to your IIE Program Officer at least two weeks prior to your trip. You should include a note in the mailing explaining your destination and dates of departure and return. You are advised to post their DS-2019 through a mail service such as Priority Mail or Express Mail service. The regular USPS postal system should not be utilized for mailing a document as important as the DS-2019. IIE Program Officer will sign the DS-2019 and post it back to you as soon as possible.

You should also review the form INFORMATION ON J-1 EXCHANGE VISITOR TRAVEL OUTSIDE AND RE-ENTRY TO THE UNITED STATES that is included in your Welcome Pack.

Note: Grantees that have a single-entry visa will need to obtain a new visa to re-enter the U.S.

**Q. Can I arrive late to the program?**

**A.** No, all teaching assistants must arrive at the designated time established by the faculty adviser. Please note that if you arrive late to campus you may miss out on orientation activities which are crucial for your introduction to campus life and your new duties. Late arrival could result in the cancellation of your grant.

**Q. Do I have to enroll in courses if I already have a degree?**

**A.** Yes, all teaching assistants are required to enroll in at least two academic courses during each semester. Please review your terms of award and you will be able to see how many courses your host institution allows you to take.

**Q. May I take courses on an audit basis (not for credit)?**

**A.** Yes, teaching assistants may audit courses since you are considered a non-degree candidate, in order to fulfill the requirement. Since host institutions cover the cost of your coursework, they have the ultimate say on whether you can take courses on an audit or credit basis. ***However, you must attend your courses even if you are auditing. As Fulbright grant recipients and scholars we expect you to attend your courses on a regular basis and to do the work necessary to learn about the particular subject you have selected to take. Failure to attend classes may result in a termination of your grant.***

**Q. Do I have to take any courses in particular?**

**A.** Yes, you must take at least one American Studies course during the academic year. All other coursework should contribute to your professional development. To meet the two-course per semester requirement all courses must be academic. Pottery, swimming, choir, etc. do not count. If you wish to take such courses for your own benefit and your host institution agrees to cover the cost or you can cover the expense yourself you are welcomed.

**Q. What if my host institution is on a quarter system?**

**A.** In some instances, FLTAs attend schools that offer three or four sessions rather than the more common two sessions (fall and spring). If you are an FLTA attending a quarter system host institution you will take one course in each of the fall, winter and spring sessions.

**Q. Do I have to submit grades from the courses I take?**

**A.** No, grades are not reviewed by FLTA program staff. However, consistent attendance and class participation is a basic expectation of the program. You will not receive a Certificate of Completion and may be terminated from the program if your academic performance is not acceptable.

**Q. Can I bring my spouse or dependents with me?**

**A.** No, the program is not intended for you to bring any dependents. At no time will the university site permit a spouse or dependent to participate in the program.

**Q. What if I wish to travel a few days after the program ends?**

**A.** You may remain in the U.S. for 30 days after the end date listed on your DS-2019. However, if you remain in the U.S. beyond this 30-day “grace period” you will be violating immigration regulations and may jeopardize future entrance into the U.S.

**Q. What if I must leave my assistantship prematurely?**

**A.** If it should become necessary to return home before the end of your assistantship you must consult your faculty adviser and IIE to obtain approval of your departure. Upon your departure from the program your visa sponsorship will be immediately terminated and notification will be sent to the U.S government that you are no longer in the program.

**Q. What if I want to stay past my assistantship to engage in further study?**

**A.** All FLTAs must exit the U.S. at the end of their program. If you are accepted into a degree program to commence after your assistantship, IIE is not responsible for securing your continued visa sponsorship. The university offering entrance is responsible for aiding you in securing a new visa. **In all cases it is necessary to inform IIE of any intentions to remain in the United States beyond the originally approved period. There are no exceptions to this rule.**

**Q. What if I wish to remain at my host institution as a FLTA again for the following year?**

**A.** No teaching assistant will be renewed under IIE's Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program past the original grant dates. Should your host institution wish to keep you on you must consult your foreign student adviser on campus for further information.

***Am I eligible for academic training past my teaching assistantship?*** No, your teaching assistantship is defined as academic training and therefore you are ineligible to apply for academic training upon completion of your assistantship.

***What should I do if I am having problems during my assistantship?*** Contact your supervisor and our office immediately if you are experiencing any problems during your assistantship.

***Q. I am a Less Commonly Taught Language Fulbright FLTA, does my e-funds account function like a regular bank account?***

**A.** Your e-funds account does not function like a regular bank account. You are issued an e-funds card to withdraw the deposit of your Fulbright stipend only. We recommend all FLTAs open their own bank account if they want features such as receiving deposits from other sources and check writing

***Q. Can IIE deposit my e-funds into my personal bank account?***

**A.** We cannot deposit your monthly stipend into your private account. You can withdraw a large amount from your e-funds account by going to a bank teller (reference your e-funds instruction sheet). If you do this, you can make a large deposit into your personal account.

***Q. My Fulbright stipend is not great enough for me to cover my personal necessities, plan recreation and send/bring funds home?***

**A.** Your Fulbright stipend is provided to cover the cost of your necessities only. Many FLTAs find, with budgeting, they are able to save some funds for occasional recreation. However, attempting to plan vacations and regular recreation, or planning to send/bring funds home is not the purpose of your Fulbright funds.

***Q. I have been offered the opportunity to take on work and will receive payment, is this permitted?***

**A.** You can take on duties/activities not originally mentioned in your Terms of Award for payment if:

- 1) Your supervisor is in agreement to the activity and corroborates that it is relevant to the your sharing your language and culture
- 2) The additional “work” does not cause you to exceed the 20-hour per week maximum stipulated by J-1 visa regulations
- 3) The funds earned are nominal and do not exceed \$200 per month. FLTAs that exceed this amount are subject to a decrease in their Fulbright stipends.