

McCulloch Center for Global Initiatives
Mount Holyoke College
108 Dwight Hall
mtholyoke.edu/global
global@mtholyoke.edu
Tel: 413-538-2072

BENJAMIN A. GILMAN SCHOLARSHIPS

The [Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship](#) program offers awards of up to \$5000 for study abroad (year, semester, or summer) to US citizens or nationals who are receiving federal Pell Grant funding. Students studying "critical need" languages (including Arabic, Chinese, Korean, and Russian, among others) may be eligible for an additional award of \$3,000. See the Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship website for details about application procedures, requirements, and deadlines. Mount Holyoke students have an excellent track record in competing for Gilman Scholarships: in the past few years, more than 20 MHC students have received awards for study in 15 different countries.

WHY SHOULD YOU APPLY? HERE'S WHAT SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS SAY:

I would definitely encourage students to apply! Had it not been for the Gilman, going abroad would not have been as great an experience as it was. What I didn't realize until very recently is that the Gilman Scholarship has great opportunities for their alumni; it enables you to network, and allows you to register for special seminars, meet government figures, and build a skill set which can be an asset in the job market after graduation.

Fiza Hussain '15, MHC/Alliance Program in Shanghai, Spring 2014

I am very grateful that Mount Holyoke encouraged me to apply: now look at me, I am in China! The application process is relatively easy, you just have to be mindful of the time and dates for what is due.

Jadah Quick '17, MHC Intensive Chinese Language Program in Beijing, Summer 2014

APPLICATION AND ENDORSEMENT LOGISTICS

In the on-line Gilman Scholarship application, you must select Joanne Picard, Dean of International Studies, as your study abroad advisor, and Kate Rajbhandari, Associate Director of Student Financial Services, as your Financial Aid Advisor. After you submit your application, they will each receive an e-mail alerting them to the need to certify your application on-line. Typically they have a deadline about one week later than your deadline to certify (or correct) the information you provided about your program and financial aid eligibility.

TO FACILITATE YOUR MHC ENDORSEMENT, YOU MUST:

- ⇒ **3 weeks before your deadline:** Notify Joanne Picard (jpicard@mtholyoke.edu) and Kate Rajbhandari (krajbhan@mtholyoke.edu) that you are planning to apply, and for what program and period of time.
- ⇒ **2 weeks before your deadline:** Submit drafts of your essays to Joanne Picard, if you would like feedback from her. We encourage you to seek feedback from other sources as well (faculty, staff, SAW). Proofread carefully! Contact Kate Rajbhandari if you need help estimating your financial aid eligibility.
- ⇒ **By the student application deadline:** Submit a copy of the program budget to Joanne and Kate, along with your source for this information (e.g., print-out from program website). Include only the items allowed by Gilman: tuition and fees, room and board, books, local transportation, health insurance, and international airfare.

NOTE TO LAUREL FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS

All students approved for Laurel Fellowships are expected to apply for Gilman Scholarships if they qualify. Outside scholarships like the Gilman will first reduce your need-based loans; if the scholarship exceeds the loan amount, the remainder reduces the College grant dollar for dollar. Do not underestimate the value of receiving an outside award even if it will not necessarily increase your resources toward the program abroad; an outside award will reduce your loan, enhance your resume, and, in the case of the Gilman, provide access to networks open only to individuals who have participated in U.S. State Department activities.

ADDITIONAL TIPS ON PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION

- ◆ Read the [Gilman Scholarship website](#) carefully so that you can tailor your application to the criteria described.
- ◆ Your application should convey clearly who you are, what you propose to do abroad, and why you are deserving of a scholarship. Focus on how study abroad is important to your academic, professional, and personal goals, not on your desire to travel, explore your cultural heritage, etc.
- ◆ Be specific about why you have chosen this country and how study there relates to your academic goals.
- ◆ Take care to provide accurate information about your academic record and your program (GPA, program sponsor, dates, credits, etc.).
- ◆ The program aims to increase diversity in study abroad by supporting underrepresented students. If you fall into that category (e.g., are a STEM major, student of color, non-traditional age student, first-generation college student, single parent, or have a disability), state that in your application, and describe any related challenges you have had to overcome.
- ◆ The program also aims to encourage students to choose non-traditional locations, so consider a program outside of Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand if that is appropriate for your academic program. If you are applying for Western Europe, Australia, or New Zealand, be specific about why: is it because the language or subject you are studying is best explored there, are there requirements for your major that cannot readily be met elsewhere, etc.? Many MHC students have received awards for study in these locations, so it is still worthwhile to apply.
- ◆ If you are applying to study a Critical Needs Language (see Gilman website for list), make that clear; it will help your application stand out, and you may qualify for an additional award.
- ◆ Preference is for students studying abroad for longer periods of time. If you are applying for a year, make that clear; if you are applying for a semester or summer program, indicate why.
- ◆ Your essays are critical to your application. They should be clear, well-written, with correct grammar and spelling. Proofread carefully!
- ◆ The Follow-on project should have a clearly described target audience (it can be MHC students or students in the community here or at home), and should be feasible and realistic for the time allowed. Creativity is encouraged, but be careful not to take on more than you can reasonably expect to do. If your project involves working with an MHC department or another organization, have your project reviewed and approved in advance.

GOOD LUCK!