

2013-2014 COTE D'IVOIRE COUNTRY GUIDELINES FOR U.S. FULBRIGHT SCHOLARS AND STUDENTS

The Fulbright Program is sponsored and administered by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the United States Department of State, and awards scholarships to lecture, conduct research, and study abroad. The program is managed in country by the Public Affairs Section (PAS) at U.S. Embassy Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire.

Country guidelines contain **summary** information about the Fulbright award, and logistical and program support provided through ECA, contact information for PAS or the U.S. embassy, and advisory information about Cote d'Ivoire. These guidelines are an important resource, and should be reviewed prior to departing for Cote d'Ivoire. This document may be supplemented by PAS during your arrival orientation. Please note that this information is subject to change.

THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION OF U.S. EMBASSY ABIDJAN, COTE D'IVOIRE

The Public Affairs Section (PAS) is responsible for managing Fulbright in Cote d'Ivoire. PAS offices are located at the U.S. embassy. Embassy hours are 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. The Embassy website is abidjan.usembassy.gov.

Kate Arcieri, Cultural Affairs Officer:	arcierikd@state.gov
Angele Gnako, Cultural Affairs Specialist:	gnakoaa@state.gov
Guy Honore Koffi, Cultural Affairs Assistant:	koffigh@state.gov
PAS via Embassy switchboard:	(011-225) 22 49 40 00 ext. 4267
PAS fax:	(011-225) 22 49 42 19
Embassy after-hours number:	(011-225) 22 49 40 00

Fulbright scholars/students in the U.S. may write to PAS at:

Cultural Affairs Officer
PAS-Abidjan
2010 Abidjan Place
Washington, DC 20521-2010

All Fulbright grantees must register with the embassy in case of emergency. This can be done on this website at any time: <http://www.travel.state.gov/>

YOUR FULBRIGHT GRANT AND THE BINATIONAL NATURE OF THE PROGRAM

The Fulbright Program is administered in accordance with regulations established by the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board (FSB). The Board has ruled that Fulbright grant funds cannot duplicate benefits received under other auspices. Therefore, grantees who receive host government or host institution financial contributions (for example, international travel, per

diem/subsistence/housing allowance) in cash or kind do not receive allowances for these grant benefits. Grantees who receive a concurrent grant to the same country under other auspices may have their Fulbright grants reduced if Fulbright grant benefits are duplicated by the other grant.

Host country governments and institutions support the exchange program through two ways: (a) *monetary contributions*, which result in a sharing of program costs, or (b) *non-monetary assistance* to enhance the exchange experience for the guest scholar.

WHAT THE FULBRIGHT GRANT PROVIDES

For Student Grantees

Fulbright student grants have two components: (1) a base amount, and (2) a monthly maintenance allowance. Additional funds may be included in your grant as allowances and are described separately. Benefits authorized by ECA are paid in U.S. dollars through the Institute of International Education (IIE).

1. The **base amount** is provided to cover initial or one-time start-up expenses such as:
 - a. Unaccompanied and/or excess baggage.
 - b. Miscellaneous costs, such as visa fees, permits, medical exams, immunizations, etc.This is a fixed sum in each grant and may not reimburse all expenses completely.
2. A monthly **maintenance allowance** is provided to cover recurring subsistence needs such as housing, fuel, utilities, and food. The allowance is based upon the estimated standard living costs in the country of assignment.

For Scholar Grantees

Fulbright scholar grants have three components: (1) travel and relocation, (2) a monthly maintenance allowance, and (3) a monthly stipend. Additional funds may be included in your grant as special allowances and are described separately. Benefits are based upon the estimated standard living costs in the country of assignment, and are not intended to duplicate U.S. salary levels or the standard of living of U.S. diplomatic personnel. Benefits authorized by ECA are paid in U.S. dollars through the Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES).

1. Travel and Relocation
 - a. Unaccompanied and/or excess baggage.
 - b. Relocation allowance for expenses such as visa fees, permits, medical exams, immunizations, etc. This is a fixed sum and may not reimburse all expenses completely.
2. A monthly **maintenance allowance** is provided to cover recurring subsistence needs such as housing, fuel, utilities, and food.
3. Monthly **base stipend**

PRIOR TO YOUR ARRIVAL

Travel to Cote d'Ivoire

Grantee air travel is coordinated by the travel agency, HRG Worldwide, which will bill IIE or CIES directly for the costs of your tickets. HRG staff will assist you with your reservation and then send your reservation to IIE or CIES for approval. You must book a round-trip ticket with a return date that corresponds to the grant end date. All air travel and all air shipments paid for with United States Government funds must conform to the Fly America Act, which requires that all such travel and shipments be on "U.S. flag" airlines where such service is available.

Visas and Residence/Work/Research Permits

Grantees should take copies of all identification certificates and documents, including marriage and birth certificates, driver's licenses, etc. Make photocopies of the first two pages of your passport, which should be kept separate from your passport in case of loss or theft. Also bring extra passport photos for obtaining visas and conducting other business.

Visas

The Government of Côte d'Ivoire (GOCI) requires a visa for all U.S. citizens. All Americans coming to Cote d'Ivoire for any reason **MUST** have a valid visa prior to travel. Visas are not available at the airport. Cote d'Ivoire issues single-entry and one-year multiple-entry visas. We recommend that you request a one-year, multiple-entry visa. Lecturers are advised to have a copy of the offer letter from their host institution on hand upon arrival at the airport. Please consult with the Embassy on current requirements for residency permits upon arrival.

Yellow Fever Vaccination

All visitors to Côte d'Ivoire **MUST** provide an immunization record showing an up-to-date yellow fever vaccination at the airport upon arrival. We highly recommend that you carry the World Health Organization International Certificate of Vaccination with your passport.

Research Permits and Research Clearance

The Government of Cote d'Ivoire regulations require ALL researchers to obtain a research clearance from the Ministry of Education and/or Scientific Research as professional courtesy, and from those institutions with which they intend to work, prior to conducting any field work. The letter of application should describe the academic qualifications of the applicant and the objectives, methodology, and location for the proposed research project, preferably in French. Grantees are encouraged to reconnect with affiliate organizations once the grant has been awarded. Research clearance process can take months to complete, and grantees must begin the process as soon as possible. Researchers and students should apply for research clearance at least six weeks before they plan to arrive in Cote d'Ivoire so that they do not have to wait for clearance before they begin their work. Formal clearance will not be provided until they have arrived in Cote d'Ivoire. Fulbrighters may send their applications to PAS Abidjan where the Cultural Affairs Specialist will expedite the clearance through contacts in the appropriate institutions to obtain an official permission. No application fee is required. In the past, researchers and students who arrived in Cote d'Ivoire without having obtained the necessary permit in advance have been seriously delayed or prevented from carrying out their work. Such a situation has resulted in unnecessary waste of USG resources and avoidable delays. It is

imperative that Fulbrighters complete the required procedures before arriving in Cote d'Ivoire.

Scholars who have personal contact with research centers and obtain their own authorization without PAS assistance are requested to send copies of their letters of authorization to the program agency (CIES or IIE) and to PAS Abidjan.

In cases where a research subject overlaps the portfolios of several Ministries, researchers are advised to submit their applications through the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

Further details on the research application process or for specific questions, please contact the Educational Attaché, Embassy of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, 2424 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20008; tel: (202) 797-0300, fax (202) 462-9444. You may also contact the GOCI Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (Research Permits), Department of Research, 01 BP V151 Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, tel: (011-225) 20 21 36 20.

Sending and Receiving Mail

Personal mail

Fulbright grantees have been approved for access to the diplomatic pouch to receive first-class letter mail only (maximum of two pounds). Magazines, newspapers, DVDs, and package mail are not authorized. Electronics containing lithium batteries are not permitted. Take sufficient U.S. postage stamps with you for first-class mail to the U.S. The Department of State accepts no liability for loss or damage. First-class mail via the pouch can take two weeks or more for delivery.

The address format for correspondence is as follows:

Your name (Fulbrighter)
c/o Cultural Affairs Officer - Abidjan
2010 Abidjan Place
Dulles, VA 20189-2010

PAS Abidjan **does not** forward mail within Cote d'Ivoire. The Fulbrighter should come to the office to pick up mail. Once settled, he/she may find it more convenient to have a local address through the university department or a post office box for personal correspondence.

Books and Educational Materials Sent by Diplomatic Pouch

Fulbrighters have access to the diplomatic pouch for sending a maximum of four 8.5"x11" copy paper-size boxes of books and other educational materials. Electronics containing lithium batteries are not permitted. These pouch privileges are provided by the U.S. Embassy on a one-time, one-way basis only; materials cannot be sent back to the U.S. by pouch at any time during your stay. Package mail in excess of the four permitted boxes will be returned to the U.S. at your expense. For additional information on the exact dimensions, address information, and recommendations, consult the *Instructions for Shipment of Books and Educational Materials by Fulbright Scholars* document included in your pre-departure orientation packet.

CAUTIONARY NOTE: In the past, abuse by several Fulbright scholars caused near revocation of privileges for all program participants. Anyone who violates pouch regulations will be barred from use and will have to make other arrangements for handling personal and professional correspondence.

Customs Restrictions on Professional and Personal Affects

Besides the limited pouch shipment and airline excess baggage, grantees may mail materials addressed to themselves via international mail, but are subject to paying customs duty at the local post office before taking possession of the materials. All goods taken into Cote d'Ivoire must be declared. There are no duties levied on equipment, such as computers, that are imported for personal use. Fulbright scholars/students should not bring in firearms.

Pets require special handling and prior clearance with the Ministry of Public Health before they can be imported into Cote d'Ivoire. Please be aware that additional transit stops may also require clearance when traveling with pets. The U.S. Embassy can provide additional information.

Schooling for Dependents

There are several international-standard elementary schools in Abidjan. Yearly tuition runs from \$4,000 to \$10,000. PAS will provide Fulbrighters with the information on prospective schools. There are secondary schools for expatriate children in Abidjan, although placements are limited and grantees will need to make arrangements in advance in order to be certain their children can be enrolled. Grantees should contact the school's principal or admissions officer. It is advisable that arrangements be made for dependents' education several weeks before arrival. Schooling options outside of Abidjan are limited.

PAS AND EMBASSY SUPPORT

In an effort to support U.S. Fulbright scholars/students and their families, the following services are provided by PAS and the Embassy:

Security

All Fulbright grantees will receive a security briefing upon arrival in Cote d'Ivoire. Care should be taken in arranging for a secure apartment, with solid doors and bars on accessible windows. Street crime and residential burglaries are an increasing problem in Africa. Fulbrighters are advised not to walk downtown or in parks after dark, as muggings occur frequently. As in any major U.S. city, people are cautioned to watch valuables at all times. Men should carry wallets in a front trousers pocket; women should carry tightly closed purses held securely to their sides. There are frequent reports of thieves taking jewelry and other objects from open vehicle windows while stopped in heavy traffic. Carjackings do occur, so use caution, particularly when driving at night. As in many post-conflict zones, a glut of weapons is available to criminals. If confronted by an armed individual, it is best to comply with his/her demands to minimize the risk of physical violence. Travelers' checks, passports and other valuables should not be left in a hotel room; check all important documents and valuables in a hotel safety deposit box. Better yet, leave non-essential jewelry and irreplaceable items at home in the U.S.

If you are planning travel to destinations outside of Abidjan, particularly to the northern or western parts of Cote d'Ivoire, you should consult the Embassy for the most recent security assessments of the areas to which you plan to travel. Crimes, such as mugging, robbery, burglary, and carjacking, pose risks for foreign visitors in Abidjan and around the country. You should be careful when stopped in heavy traffic or at road blocks due to the threat of assault and/or robbery, and you should avoid travel outside of the city after dark. Travel to national parks or nature preserves is not advised. Land routes to neighboring countries are open, but be cautious and alert when traveling these routes. Local law enforcement authorities have limited capacity to respond to emergencies.

Arrival and Temporary Lodging

The Embassy expeditor, who assists with customs and immigration procedures, meets Fulbright grantees and their families at the airport. The Cultural Affairs Specialist and/or an American officer (CAO/PAO) and an Embassy driver will meet them after they have completed airport formalities. It is preferable for grantees to arrive on weekdays rather than weekends, and to avoid U.S. and Ivoirian holidays. If the initial travel plans change at the last minute, please advise the Post by email, fax and telephone. Grantees must provide CIES or IIE with their final itineraries **at least 3 weeks in advance**.

The host universities in Cote d'Ivoire **do not** provide furnished housing for lecturers, senior researchers or Fulbright students, and **do not** offer temporary hotel accommodations if permanent housing is not ready when they arrive. Fulbrighters must arrange their own accommodations and should first coordinate with the RSO about residential security concerns.

At the grantee's request, either through CIES or IIE, PAS Abidjan will arrange for temporary accommodations for a few days until the grantee finds permanent lodgings.

U.S. Embassy Access

The Embassy issues Fulbrighters badges for access to Embassy offices once they complete the security briefing. Please arrange to visit the Embassy within one week of your arrival.

Check Cashing and Local Banking Arrangements

Upon completion of the Embassy check-in procedures, Fulbrighters are granted check-cashing privileges with the Embassy cashier. They can cash personal checks on their U.S. bank accounts of up to \$500 per day for local currency (Franc CFA 250,000). For Fulbrighters based outside Abidjan, cashing checks at local banks is feasible but expensive. Grantees should anticipate that it will take several weeks for personal checks to be verified by local banks before any payment can be made. It is possible (but not easy) to cash traveler's checks issued by well-known companies such as Visa and American Express.

We recommend that Fulbrighters arrange overdraft service with their U.S. bank to cover any overdrawn checks that may occur because of slow mail service. We also recommend that scholars carry a major credit card for travel outside Côte d'Ivoire and emergencies. Current guidance discourages the use of credit/debit cards in Cote D'Ivoire due to the high risk for fraud. For everyday expenses, Cote d'Ivoire is almost entirely a cash economy, and virtually all

transactions will require cash rather than a credit card or traveler's checks. ATMs should not be used, except for the one located inside the Embassy.

Local Health Services and Access to Embassy Health Facilities

Fulbright grantees should ensure you have current yellow fever vaccination and tetanus immunizations. Vaccines for hepatitis A, hepatitis B, typhoid, and current booster/vaccines against childhood diseases (tetanus diphtheria, polio, and measles/mumps/rubella) are also strongly recommended for adults, as well as children. For additional information, visit the Centers for Disease Control's website: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/ivory-coast.htm>.

Grantees should carry copies of complete medical records and basic information that will enable quick and efficient medical assistance, if necessary. Seek the guidance of your personal physician prior to departure from the U.S. in selecting basic health information records to bring with you. Grantees should carry a good supply of analgesics such as Tylenol or Motrin, vitamins, first aid supplies, and preferred over the counter medications. Grantees should either bring enough prescription medications to last through their assignment.

Fulbright grantees have health care benefits under the Department of State Group Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE). ASPE is a health benefits program; it is not an all purpose health insurance, and it is subject to limitations. Grantees should review *Accident and Sickness Program for Exchange Participants in Programs Sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs*. Traveler's medical insurance, particularly emergency evacuation coverage, is critical. The Fulbright grant provides limited medical and medical evacuation (medevac) coverage for the grantee only. The cost of medical insurance and medevac insurance for dependents must be paid by the Fulbrighter. Fulbrighters based outside the capital should explore membership in a local medical evacuation service that transports injured or ill members from rural areas to the capital or another city; these may be less expensive than worldwide services. Fulbrighters are strongly encouraged to provide copies of their medical evacuation coverage documents with PAS in the event of an emergency.

Access to the U.S. Embassy's Health Unit is not extended to U.S. Fulbright grantees or their dependents. Health Unit personnel can provide information concerning local health care resources for primary care. Local healthcare can be expensive. Emergency paramedical services are available through Medical Rescue International (MRI).

Malaria is a serious problem throughout Cote d'Ivoire. Take precautions and be familiar with the symptoms so that you seek treatment early. Proper precautions, such as malaria prophylaxis, insect repellent containing 30% DEET or greater, boiling and filtering water, washing and bleaching fruits and vegetables, etc., should be taken. Malaria prophylaxis medication is available on the local market, but post recommends that it, like other medicines, be obtained prior to arrival. There is a substantial counterfeit drug industry in Sub-Saharan Africa. Grantees are advised to check with their physicians to ensure that these medications are compatible with other medications that they might be taking.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Permanent Housing and Household Goods

Host universities **do not** provide furnished housing for Fulbright lecturers and their families. Fulbright lecturers, researchers and students generally find their own housing, but PAS Abidjan is prepared to provide limited assistance (names of reputable real estate agents, information about appropriate neighborhoods). Fulbrighters in Abidjan have generally found their own housing in the Cocody, II Plateaux or Riviera areas, which are safer and not far from the university. **The renting of houses or apartments is the direct responsibility of students and researchers who need to sign personal contracts with the landlords or housing agencies.** Secured, western-type housing in Abidjan is expensive.

Household effects may be purchased in a variety of shops. Food and groceries are also widely available, both at open air, traditional markets and grocery stores. Prices are higher than those in large U.S. cities.

The television system used is PAL. Because the U.S. uses the NTSC system, DVDs brought from the U.S. cannot be played on locally-acquired TV sets, unless they are multi-system. Satellite television service is widely subscribed to and costs about US \$100 per month for a package that includes news, sports and movie channels.

Computers and Other Electronic Equipment

Fulbrighters do not have duty-free privileges, so all computers and electronic equipment brought into the country must be taken out of the country when the grant is completed or duty must be paid. Laptop computers currently pose no entry problem. Certain brands of computer supplies are available on the local market, but are subject to very high customs duties. It is, however, advisable to bring along parts. Please do not send computers as unaccompanied baggage. Internet service providers are available. PAS Abidjan has a computer with internet access available for Fulbrighters. Unlike the U.S., universities in Cote d'Ivoire lag behind in both email and Internet.

Power outages and power fluctuations are common and can destroy a computer. The best solution is to bring a laptop which does not require a transformer and can easily convert from 120 to 220 volts. Another option is to purchase a transformer to convert your computer from 110 to 220 volts, and a heavy-duty surge protector and a voltage regulator. All can be purchased in-country. A previous Fulbrighter also advised that by bringing his own laser printer on his grant, he was able to avoid the tedious process of getting copies made at the university.

Cameras intended for personal use are allowed into the country duty-free.

Academic Calendar

The academic year runs from September through July. There are two semesters: September-February and March-July. Fulbright lecturers should plan to arrive in early or mid-August. While classes may not actually start on dates scheduled, course assignments are often decided during the last semester of the previous academic year. Given this, lecturers must be present before classes are scheduled to start.

Teaching Requirements, Attendance, and Staff Hours

Lecturers may be assigned up to four courses, due to staff shortages in various departments. As stated in the Fulbright grant, PAS expects all lecturers to fulfill their professional responsibilities, including class attendance, faculty meetings, special projects, etc. Lecturers should communicate with their department heads as soon as possible to get an idea of classes to be assigned; however, Fulbright lecturers should also take note of workload assigned to them, and advise PAS if the host department is unbalanced in assignments.

Phoning Home and Mobile Phones

1-800 numbers cannot be accessed from Cote d'Ivoire. Use of international long-distance calling cards is very limited. International calling rates are quite high - approximately US \$2.00 to \$2.50 per minute to the U.S.

There are several mobile phone companies in Cote d'Ivoire, but Orange, MTN and Moov are the most common. U.S. phones, unless compatible with the GSM900 system, will not be compatible with the Ivoirian system. Mobile phones purchased in Europe should work.

Local Transportation and the Used Car Market

Fulbrighters who plan to drive should obtain an international driver's license from AAA before leaving the U.S. Japanese vehicles are common here, and therefore spare parts are available. Excessive speed, unpredictable local driving habits, poor vehicle maintenance, and the lack of basic safety equipment on many vehicles are daily hazards. Vehicle travel outside major cities at night should be avoided due to the poor condition of the roads and the threat of banditry. High clearance or four-wheel drive vehicles are essential for driving outside major cities. During the rainy season, many roads are passable only with four-wheel drive vehicles.

Fulbrighters are not granted duty-free privileges to purchase or import vehicles. For that reason, Fulbrighters are advised not to import vehicles, as import duty is very expensive and delays are common in clearing vehicles through customs. The Embassy and PAS cannot assist with customs clearance.

Scholars who plan to drive are advised to look for a used vehicle upon their arrival in Cote d'Ivoire. Prices are high by U.S. standards (US \$4,500 or more depending on the type of car), but most grantees can sell the vehicle for approximately the same amount upon departure. Car rental is possible but also expensive. PAS cannot provide official vehicles for personal use.

Depending upon where you live, it may be possible to call for a taxi by phone, especially if you can identify a reliable driver. Public transportation is not considered to be safe. Even long distance travel in modern buses can be unsafe, both because of criminal activity aboard the buses and because of hazardous driving conditions.

Roads are generally poorly maintained, with numerous potholes even on major thoroughfares. Travel via passenger train is unsafe, particularly during the rainy seasons, because of the lack of routine maintenance and safety checks.

Other Websites or Resource Material

Consular Information Sheet
Fulbright Association
State Alumni

travel.state.gov
www.fulbright.org
alumni.state.gov

Public Holidays: In addition to observing U.S. holiday, the U.S. Embassy observes Ivorian holidays, according to the following schedule for 2013:

New Year's Day	Tuesday, January 1
Martin Luther King's Birthday	Monday, January 21
President's Day	Monday, February 18
Easter Monday	Monday, April 1
Labor Day, C.I	Wednesday, May 1
Ascension Day	Thursday, May 9
Memorial Day	Monday, May 27
Independence Day, U.S.	Thursday, July 4
Night of Destiny*	August (TBA)
Independence Day, C.I.	Wednesday, August 7
End of Ramadan*	August (TBA)
Assumption Day	Thursday, August 15
Labor Day, U.S.	Monday, September 2
Columbus Day	Monday, October 14
Tabaski*	October (TBA)
All Saints Day	Friday, November 1
Veterans Day	Monday, November 11
National Peace Day	Friday, November 15
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, November 28
Christmas Day	Wednesday, December 25

FULBRIGHT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Fulbright award requires submission of two reports: 1) at the interim or mid-point of the grant, and 2) a final report prior to departing Cote d'Ivoire. Grantees will receive instructions from CIES or IIE, as appropriate, on filing these reports on-line.