

2012-2013 MALAWI 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 Lilongwe.

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 your host country. These guidelines are an important resource, and should be reviewed prior to departing for your host country. This document may be supplemented by PAS during your arrival orientation at post. Please note that this information is subject to change.

THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION OF U.S. EMBASSY LILONGWE

The Public Affairs Section (PAS) is responsible for managing Fulbright in Malawi. PAS offices are located at the U.S. embassy. Embassy hours are 7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday, and 7:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. on Friday. The Embassy website is: <http://lilongwe.usembassy.gov/>

Below is contact information for PAS staff who are your points of contact while in country.

Public Affairs Officer, Benjamin Canavan: CanavanBC@state.gov
Cultural Affairs Assistant, Lydia Sichali: SichaliLA@state.gov

PAS via Embassy switchboard: (011-265) 1 773 166 ext 5201
PAS direct line: (011-265) 1 772 222
PAS fax line: (011-265) 1 771 142
Embassy after-hours number: (011-265) 1 773 166

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

Public Affairs Officer
2280 Lilongwe Pl.
Washington, D.C. 20521-2280

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

Fulbright Students

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.

Fulbright Scholars

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 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.
3. Monthly **base stipend**

PRIOR TO YOUR ARRIVAL

Travel to Malawi

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., to your assignment country. 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 Malawi (GOM) does not require a visa for U.S. citizens for stays up to 30 days. After your arrival, Public Affairs Section will facilitate your application for a resident permit for the entire period of your grant. For this application, you will need to provide passport photographs and a copy of a marriage certificate, if accompanied by a spouse; and a letter from the host institution supporting the grant.

Research Permits and Research Clearance

The Government of Malawi regulations require ALL researchers to obtain a research clearance prior to conducting any field work. Grantees are encouraged to reconnect with affiliate organizations once the grant has been awarded. Research clearance and permit process can take months to complete, and grantees must begin the process as soon as possible. Researchers and students who do not have research permits risk being denied entry. Obtaining a permit after arrival in country is a long and tedious process and may result in the grantee spending time that cannot be used on research, or in being denied a permit. It is also against government regulations for an individual to change visa status from that of a visitor to that of a researcher.

The GOM encourages researchers/students to consult with a relevant Ministry/Department, research institution or another relevant body before submitting finalized funding proposals. A copy of the first correspondence outlining the research theme should be sent to the subject Ministry or the National Commission for Science and Technology.

To obtain a residence permit, a researcher or student must meet the following requirements:

- a) Two completed application forms,
- b) Two recent color passport-sized photos,
- c) Passport valid for at least six months, with at least one blank page,
- e) Letter of invitation or evidence of affiliation from the host institution. If the applicant is not affiliated to any institution, the endorsement should come from a person of professional standing in the field of the applicant's discipline, supporting the application and providing assurance that the research will conform to research guidelines.

Two copies of a completed research permit application form must be submitted to the relevant ministry at least four months before commencement of the study. Application forms may be obtained from any Government Ministry, the Malawi Embassies and High Commission abroad, and the University of Malawi, Centre for Social Research or National Commission for Science and Technology

In cases where a research subject overlaps the portfolios of several Ministries, researchers are advised to submit their applications through the Ministry of Home Affairs.

You may also contact The Chairman, National Commission for Science and Technology, P O Box 30377, Lilongwe. Attention Mr. R. Majamanda. The application fee is \$ 150.00

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. 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 up to two weeks or more for delivery.

The address format for correspondence is as follows:

Your Name (Fulbrighter)
2280 Lilongwe Pl.
Dulles, VA 20189-2280

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. 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 airmail 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 the host country must be declared. There are no duties levied on equipment, such as computers, that are imported for personal use. Firearms may not be brought in without prior arrangements with the Department of Customs and the host country police department. Pets require special handling and prior clearance with the Department of Veterinary before they can be imported into the host country. Please be aware that additional transit stops may also require clearance when traveling with pets. The Community Liaison Office at the U.S. Embassy can provide additional information.

Schooling for Dependents

There are English language primary schools in Lilongwe, Zomba, and Blantyre; English language secondary schools in Lilongwe and Blantyre. These schools are predominantly attended by the children of expatriates working in Malawi, as well as some from neighboring countries. Kamuzu Academy in Kasungu is a boarding secondary school predominantly attended by Malawians, expatriates from other parts of Africa, and a few from abroad. The British system of education prevails throughout.

Advance registration is necessary. Fulbrighters should contact the Public Affairs Section in Lilongwe, which will arrange to send them the necessary forms for registration and supply any necessary information.

Lilongwe - Bishop Mackenzie International Schools

P.O. Box 102
Lilongwe, Malawi

Tel: 265-1-756-364/756-984
Fax: 265 -751-374

The Bishop Mackenzie International Schools (BMIS) are international, coeducational day schools, which offer an educational program from kindergarten through grade 13 for pupils of all nationalities. Founded in 1949 as a primary only school, BMIS now encompasses both a primary and a secondary school on the same site and sharing a number of the same facilities and faculty. The school year comprises 3 trimesters extending from late August to early December, from January through March, and mid-April to mid-July.

Blantyre - St. Andrews International High School (Trimester System)

Grades 6-12

Mailing Address:

Saint Andrews International High School

Private Bag 211

Blantyre, Malawi, C. Africa

Tel: 265-634432, E-Mail: Info@Saints.Merula.Co.Uk

Website: <http://www.saints.merula.co.uk/html/home.htm>

Blantyre/Limbe - St. Andrews International Primary and Hillview Primary Schools

Zomba - Sir Harry Johnston Primary School

Yearly tuition runs from \$ 3000 to \$ 7000. PAS will provide Fulbrighters with the information on prospective schools.

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 the host country. 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 snatching jewelry and other objects from open vehicle windows while stopped in heavy traffic. Carjackings are not uncommon but seem to come in spurts, so use caution, particularly when driving at night. 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.

Use caution when traveling to national parks or nature preserves. Travelers should only use the services of reputable travel firms or knowledgeable guides when traveling on safaris or to nature preserves. Safaris are best undertaken with a minimum of two vehicles so that there is a back-up in case of mechanical failure.

Arrival and Temporary Lodging

All grantees will be met and assisted upon arrival. A representative from the host university, often the department chair, generally meets Fulbright lecturers, and the PAO or another PAS representative will also meet and assist incoming Fulbrighters at the airport. It is preferable for grantees to arrive on weekdays rather than weekends. Grantees must provide CIES or IIE with their final itineraries at least 3 weeks in advance.

The host university may provide furnished housing for lecturers and offers them temporary hotel accommodations if permanent housing is not ready when they arrive. University housing is not provided for senior researchers or Fulbright students. Fulbright researchers and students must arrange their own accommodations. If needed, PAS will arrange for temporary accommodations, at the grantee's expense, 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 brief. Please arrange to visit the Embassy within one week of your arrival.

Check Cashing and Local Banking Arrangements

Fulbright grantees have been approved for check cashing facilities at the Embassy. Fulbright grantees may also open bank accounts at local commercial banks if they have resident permits. ATMs are readily available.

Prior to their departure from the U.S., Fulbrighters should consult their U.S. banks concerning overdraft privileges. When mail is delayed, scholars and students may not have current information about account balances. Additional U.S. dollar travelers' checks and a major U.S. credit card (Visa, MasterCard, Diner's Club, etc.) are valuable for travel and emergencies. Most retail facilities such as hotels, restaurants, grocery and clothing stores, pharmacies, and gas stations accept credit cards.

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, consult the Centers for Disease Control's website: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.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 aspirin, vitamins, band-aids, and preferred over the counter medications. Grantees should either bring enough prescription medications to last through their assignment or find out the international name of each prescription, since drug names often differ from those used in the U.S.

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 strongly recommended, especially for grantees based outside the capital city. 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 in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially for grantees traveling outside urban areas. Take precautions and be familiar with the symptoms so that you seek treatment early. Proper precautions, such as malaria prophylaxis, boiling and filtering water, washing fruits and vegetables, etc., should be taken. Malaria prophylaxis medication is readily available

on the local market. 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

The host university provides furnished housing for Fulbright lecturers and their families. Fulbright lecturers should communicate with their department heads regarding housing and other facilities.

Fulbright researchers and students are responsible for finding their own housing. Housing can be very expensive. There are private bed-and-breakfast accommodations and furnished service apartments available on a month-to-month arrangement or short-term basis. PAS can provide contact information for these upon request.

Household effects are readily available and inexpensive. Lilongwe and Blantyre have stores similar to K-Mart and Wal-Mart that offer a wide variety of consumer goods. There are several shopping malls and convenience stores in the capital city. Food is not expensive by U.S. standards, and grocery stores are plentiful. Water can be safely drunk from the tap.

The television system used is PAL. Because the U.S. uses the NTSC system, DVDs brought from the U.S. will not be viewable 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. Previous Fulbrighters have donated computer equipment to host universities at the end of their stay in exchange for the university's obtaining duty-free entry. Do not send computers as unaccompanied baggage.

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.

Larger cities offer a variety of e-mail and Internet service providers at reasonable rates. Direct Internet access is available, though a bit more expensive, and is becoming more widely used, particularly in the NGO and business communities. Unlike the U.S. where the universities were in the forefront of providing Internet service, universities in Malawi lag behind in both e-mail and Internet.

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

Academic Life

The University of Malawi (UNIMA) is the country's national institution of higher learning with an enrollment of more than 6000 students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The university's website address is www.unima.mw.

Academic Calendar

The academic year runs from September through June. There are two semesters: September-December and January-June. Fulbright lecturers should plan to arrive in late August or early January. 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 & Mobile Phones

1-800 numbers cannot be accessed from Malawi. 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. Many Americans subscribe to various call-back services to obtain cheaper rates - approximately US \$1.09 per minute. PAS can provide information on these services.

Most Fulbrighters find it impossible to live without a mobile phone. There are several companies - Airtel and TNM are the two mobile phone providers. American phones, unless compatible with the GSM900 system, will not be compatible with the host country 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 the American Automobile Association (AAA) before leaving the U.S. Japanese vehicles especially Toyota are common here, and therefore spare parts are easily 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 and to game parks. 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 the host country. Prices are high by American standards, 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

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| Consular Information Sheet | http://travel.state.gov/xxxx.html |
| Fulbright Association | http://www.fulbright.org |
| Fulbright Community on State Alumni | http://alumni.state.gov/fulbright |

Public Holidays

In addition to observing U.S. holiday, the U.S. Embassy also observes XXX holidays, according to the following holiday schedule for 2012:

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| January 1 | New Year's Day |
| January 15 | John Chilembwe Day |
| Variable | Eid el Fitr |
| March 3 | Martyrs' Day |
| Variable | Good Friday |
| Variable | Easter Monday |
| May 1 | Labor Day |
| May 14 | Kamuzu Day |
| May 26 | Memorial Day |
| July 6 | Republic Day |
| Second Monday in October | Mothers Day |
| December 25 | Christmas Day |

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 the host country. Grantees will receive instructions from CIES or IIE, as appropriate, on filing these reports on-line.