

2012-2013 MALI 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 Mali.

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 MALI

The Public Affairs Section (PAS) is responsible for managing Fulbright in Bamako. 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.-11:30 p.m. on Friday. The Embassy website is: <http://mali.usembassy.gov>.

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

Leanne Cannon:	cannonlr@state.gov
Gaoussou Mariko:	marikog@state.gov
Aboubacar Cisse:	cissea@state.gov

PAS via Embassy switchboard:	(011-223) 20702300
PAS direct line:	(011-223) 20702422
PAS fax line:	(011-223) 20702479
Embassy after-hours number:	(011-223) 20702300

Fulbright scholars/students in the U.S. may write to PAS at: Public Affairs Officer, 2050 Bamako Place, Dulles, VA 20189-2050 or email to PASBamako@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

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 Mali

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 Mali (GOM) requires an entry visa for U.S. citizens. Though airport visa is available at cfa 15,000 for regular passports; and free for diplomatic and official ones, it is always advised that you get your entry visa in the originating country at the Malian consulate or embassy prior to departure. Some airlines will not accept you aboard their plane without an entry visa. Regular entry visa obtained upon arrival at the airport must be extended to one month at the Immigration Service free of charge within 5 working days. Any other extension is charged cfa 5,000/month, and failing to do so the penalty is cfa 18, 000/month.

Research Permits and Research Clearance

The Government of Mali 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. Grantees must begin the process as soon as possible.

The GOM encourages researchers/students to consult with a relevant Ministry/Department, research institution or another relevant body before submitting finalized funding proposals

To obtain a research permit, a researcher or student must provide the following documents:

- a) A research request letter sent to the Director of Centre National de Recherche Scientifique et Technologique (CNRST),
- b) Three recent color passport-size photos,
- c) A copy of your research project,
- d) Fee (cfa 10,000 plus cfa 200 stamp fee), and
- 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.

You may also contact the National Center of Scientific and Technological Research, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (Research Permits), Street 268 Door 238 N'Golonina-Bozola; PO box 3052 Bamako, Mali; Tel: 011-223-2021 9085, fax (011-223) 2021 8446 or 2021 6698, or e-mail cnrst_mali@yahoo.fr. Further details on the research application process may be obtained at <http://www.cnrst.edu.ml>.

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 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)
c/o Public Affairs Officer
2050 Bamako Place
Dulles, VA 20189-2050

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.

Mail can be picked up at the Public Affairs Section (PAS) offices at the Chancery. Generally, two to four weeks are required for mail coming from the U.S., whether by diplomatic pouch or by international mail.

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 them 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 Animal Health 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

American International School of Bamako (AISB) is the only accredited school in Mali that offers an American curriculum. Yearly tuition runs from \$17,050 (K-5) and \$18,150 (grades 6-12). PAS can provide Fulbrighters with school information. There is also a very good French school, using a French government curriculum, which also charges tuition. Grantees should contact the school principal or admissions officer. Grantees are encouraged to make arrangements in advance in order to be certain their children can be enrolled.

PAS AND EMBASSY SUPPORT

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

Security

In early 2012, separatist in the north launched an armed rebellion against the Malian state. By March, dissatisfaction with how the government was equipping and supplying Malian soldiers fighting in the north led to civil unrest and a military coup d'état. With the confusion in the Malian government and military hierarchy, separatist rebels, joined by radical Islamist groups, took over the three key northern cities of Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu, essentially giving them control over the northern two-thirds of Mali. Reports of armed conflict and human rights violations abound. Travel to these areas is strictly prohibited for all U.S. Embassy direct-hires. Bamako itself has remained stable despite political uncertainty, but caution is still urged as the situation continues to unfold.

All Fulbright grantees will receive a security briefing upon arrival in the host country. Care should be taken in arranging for secure lodging, 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 closed and zipped purses held securely to their sides. There are frequent reports of thieves snatching jewelry and other objects from passengers in open vehicle windows while they are 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. 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 universities provide no housing or temporary hotel accommodations for researchers/lecturers. Fulbright researchers and students must arrange their own accommodations. If needed, PAS will arrange for temporary hotel accommodations, at the grantee's expense, for a few days until the grantee finds permanent lodgings.

U.S. Embassy Access

The Embassy issues badges to Fulbrighters 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

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

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. Credit cards are only accepted in a few hotels and stores; most businesses operate on a cash only basis.

Local Health Services and Access to Embassy Health Facilities

Fulbright grantees should ensure that they 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 bring 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. Prescription medications, over-the-counter drugs, first aid supplies, and sundry items can be found at some local pharmacies and several of the European style department stores such as Azar and La Fourmi.

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. Proper precautions, such as malaria prophylaxis, boiling and filtering water, washing fruits and vegetables, etc., should be taken. Familiarize yourself with malaria symptoms and seek treatment early if they appear. Malaria prophylaxis medication is readily available on the local market but all prophylaxes should be started *before* travel so travelers must come with at least a starter supply of medication. 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

Fulbright researchers and students are responsible for finding their own housing. Suitable housing in Mali 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, but electronics and appliances are. Bamako and other major cities have stores that offer a wide variety of consumer goods. There are several shopping center and convenience stores in the capital city. Local foods are not expensive by U.S. standards while imported goods can be very expensive. Grocery stores are plentiful. Although it is said that water can generally be safely drunk from the tap in Bamako, this can depend on neighborhoods and the time of year. We suggest everyone use bottled or filtered water. In other towns in Mali this can vary—follow local guidelines.

The television system used is PAL/SECAM. 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. Many people subscribe to the satellite television service and costs about US \$100 per

month for a package that includes news, sports and movie channels.

Computers and Other Electronic Equipment

There is no duty on computers brought into Mali and PAS will provide customs clearance assistance, as long as a detailed packing list, with the value of the equipment, is sent well in advance of arrival.

Power outages and power fluctuations are common and can destroy computer equipment, so it is important to have a heavy-duty surge protector. The electric current here is 220 volts. The best solution is to bring a laptop which does not require a transformer and can easily convert from 110 to 220 volts. Another option is to purchase a transformer to convert your computer from 110 to 220 volts. 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 few different Internet service providers at somewhat reasonable rates. Direct Internet access is available, and is becoming more widely used, particularly in the NGO and business communities. Unlike in the U.S., the universities in Mali lag behind in technological advancement, both e-mail and Internet access.

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

Academic Life

In 2011, the University of Bamako, with an enrollment of more than 80,000 students at the undergraduate and graduate levels, was split into four separate universities, with a fifth opened in Segou. The establishment of smoothly functioning infrastructure and processes within each of the new institutions is ongoing. University life has historically been plagued by student and teacher strikes that disrupt the school calendar, and grantees should expect the unexpected with regards to the functioning of the university. The Bamako-based universities are:

- Université des sciences juridiques et politiques (USJP)
- Université des sciences, Techniques et technologiques (USTT)
- Université des sciences sociales et de gestion (USSG)
- Université des lettres et des sciences humaines (ULSH)

The university system's website address is <http://www.ml.refer.org/u-bamako/>.

Academic Calendar

Usually, the academic year runs from October through June. There are two semesters: October-February and March-June. Fulbright lecturers should plan to arrive in mid-September. 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.

Phone Service

PAS can provide more detailed information on phone services upon your arrival. Most Fulbrighters find it impossible to live without a mobile phone. There are two companies – Malitel and Orange/Mali and mobile networks are expanding. 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 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, goats and cattle that pasture near the roads, and the threat of banditry. High clearance or four-wheel drive vehicles are essential for driving outside major. 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 for vehicles.

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, 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 rail maintenance and safety checks.

Other Websites or Resource Material

Consular Information Sheet: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_962.html

Fulbright Association: <http://www.fulbright.org>

Fulbright Community on State Alumni: <http://alumni.state.gov/fulbright>

Major Newspapers or Country-Specific Resources

- L'Essor - <http://www.essor.ml/actualite/>
- Info Matin
- Le Republicain
- Nouvel Horizon
- L'Independant

Other than l'Essor, newspapers in Mali do not have independently maintained websites. A variety of news stories are published on <http://www.maliweb.net/>.

Public Holidays

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

<u>HOLIDAY</u>		<u>DATE</u>	<u>COUNTRY</u>
New Year's Day		December 31	US/M
M.L.King's Birthday		January 16	US
Armed Forces Day		January 20	M
Washington's Birthday		February 20	US
Mawloud		February	M
Prophet's Baptism		February	M
Day Of Democracy		March 26	M
Easter Monday		April 9	M
International Labor Day		May 1	M
Day Of Africa		May 25	M
Memorial Day	Monday	May 28	US
Independence Day	Monday	July 4	US
Ramadan	TBA	August	M
Labor Day	Monday	September 3	US
National Day	Thursday	September 22	M
Columbus Day	Monday	October 8	US
Veterans Day	Friday	November 12	US
Tabaski	TBA	November	M
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday	November 22	US
Christmas	Monday	December 25	US/M

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.