



**STRATEGIES FOR WRITING A SUCCESSFUL ESSAY
FOR THE
FULBRIGHT IRAQ STUDENT PROGRAM APPLICATION**

► **In general, be sure to:**

- *Read and understand* questions before writing, then make sure your response answers the questions completely;
- *Save your work frequently* when using the on-line application (if you are interrupted while entering information into your application, it will be available when you log back in if saved prior to the interruption);
- *Use the spell and grammar check tools*; and
- *Pay attention to the appearance* of the essays; The physical appearance of your essays is important. Hand-written essays containing misspelled words or using poor grammar should be avoided. Make sure you put your best foot forward.

► **Writing the Study/Research Objectives Essay**

- This essay is a key, required part of your application.
- Write a clear and detailed description of your study/research objectives, and give your reasons for wanting to pursue them.
- Be specific about your major field and your specialized interests within this field.
- Describe the kind of program you expect to undertake, and explain how your study plan fits in with your previous training and your future objectives.
- Do not mention specific U.S. universities at which you would like to study.

► **Writing the Statement of Purpose Essay**

- This essay should be a narrative statement describing your personal and academic goals and how you hope to achieve them. It should not be a mere listing of facts.

- It should include information about your education, practical experience, special interests, and career plans.
- Describe any significant factors that have influenced your educational or professional development.
- Comment on the number of years of practical experience already completed in the field in which academic work will be done in the U.S.
- Do not mention specific U.S. universities at which you would like to study.
- Be objective, yet self-confident and tell about your experiences.
- Make sure your statement forms conclusions that explain the value and meaning of your experiences (i.e. what you have learned about your interests as they relate to your desired field of study, goals, and career plans).
- Limit the statement to two (2) pages.
- Remember the statement of purpose provides important information about the applicant as a person as well as serving other functions, such as:
 - Helping the faculty to determine if the candidate's academic interests can be accommodated with their program
 - Ensuring that the program has a suitable faculty member to advise the student
 - Allowing the reviewer to assess the applicant's motivation, ability, preparation and accomplishments and compare them to others applying to the same field or sub field
 - Provide evidence of English language proficiency.
- The primary purpose of the statement from the applicant's point of view is to convince or persuade the admissions committee to accept the applicant. Applicants should not limit the statement to a recitation of achievements and should remember that the statement is not a resume or curriculum vitae.
- Remember that the statement of purpose will be read by highly trained academics who are professionals in their fields; the statement should not bore them by stating the obvious, but must demonstrate the applicant's knowledge of the field.
- Be specific about your experiences and goals.
- Use the statement to your advantage. The statement should answer the question, "Why should the school/program admit you? What makes you special, an asset to the academic program and a more diverse student body?"

- Make sure your statement is to the point and explains why you want to continue studying, what you have done in the past, and what are you looking for in an international experience? Remember to stay focused.
- Write the essay yourself. The essay should also indicate your personality. Without an interview, the essay may be the only way to do this. Also, make sure the essay is succinct and addresses only the questions asked; do not repeat information contained elsewhere on the application, and attach unrelated information in addendum.
- Do not quote or paraphrase university publications; use your own words to write how you expect the graduate school experience to change, improve and/or enhance your career and life.
- Make sure to include your goals and any special preparation or achievements that may make you more qualified than others. Remember, you are competing for admission with your academic peers from around the world.
- Address honestly any problems or special conditions that led to problems that are not revealed elsewhere on the application (i.e. if you had a family emergency and your grades were unusually low for a semester because of it, explain that).

► **Writing about your Future Plans Essay**

- Describe the career you plan to pursue after completion of study or research in the U.S., for example teaching, government, business, industry or any plans you might have for continued study or research in your home country.
- Indicate if you will be returning to former employment, or if you have been promised a position in your home country after completing your U.S. training.
- Describe where you envision yourself after you have studies in the U.S.? What are your career plans once you have obtained a graduate degree in the U.S.? What role do you intend to play upon your return to Iraq?