Guidelines for Applying for the 2016-2017 Boren Scholarships and Fellowships

Boren Scholarships and Fellowships provide unique funding opportunities for U.S. undergraduate and graduate students to add an important international and language component to their educations. We focus on geographic areas, languages, and fields of study that are critical to U.S. national security, broadly defined, and underrepresented in study abroad.

- Scholarships allow U.S. undergraduate students to study less commonly taught languages in world regions critical to U.S. interests.
  - **Who**: US citizen. Any year. Any major. Applying to engage in a study abroad experience outside of Western Europe, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand.
  - **Duration**: Full academic year or semester. Summer support is possible for engineering and science majors if program is eight weeks or longer.
  - **Number and Amount**: Amount depends upon program costs and need. Generally $10,000 for semester or $20,000 for year.
  - **Special Initiative for Science and Technology Students**:
    - **Campus Deadline #1**: December 4, 2015 (Online application, including essays)
    - **Campus Deadline #2**: January 8, 2016 (Supplementary materials, including references, foreign language evaluation, self-language evaluation). **Note**: official transcripts should be uploaded only after your spring semester courses are listed on your transcript.

Dear Boren Award Candidates,

The Boren Website provides a lot of information about the application process. Please read through the website carefully, follow all directions, and think deeply about the criteria and mission of the Boren Awards. On the next few pages, I provide some tips for preparing your application. Most of these tips you can also find on the Boren website. In fact, many are copied directly from the website. I will also briefly discuss the campus evaluation process and what is required for the two deadlines.

To Be a Boren Awardee You Need To...
- Show an understanding of national security as it relates to your major, your career goals, and to the language you propose to study (including the country you will be residing).

The Campus and National Committees Will Evaluate You On...
- The country and language you choose for your study abroad program or research program. For example, did you choose a country and language that meet the Boren preferences?
- The length of your program. A full academic year (Summer/Fall, Fall/Spring, or Spring/Summer) is given priority. An exception is made for STEM majors (Summer only); however, combining a Summer with the Fall will carry greater weight.
- Your explanation of the relevance of your proposed program of study to U.S. national security and your commitment to government service.
- Your academic preparation. Is it sufficient to allow great benefit from the proposed program?
- Your commitment to develop and/or advance foreign language competency before, during and after the program, both informally and formally.
- The study abroad program you have chosen. Is it a quality program? What kind of learning support structures are in place?
- Your maturity, flexibility, and cultural adaptability required to succeed abroad.
The Boren “National Security” Statement (i.e., Rationale for Proposed Program)…Tips

- You should explain the significance of your proposed study abroad experience to U.S. national security and how participating in the program will help you achieve your academic and career goals.
- Show that you have really thought about Boren’s message and you have applied it to contemporary or current situations. This is an evaluation of your ability to critically analyze national security and its place in your study abroad program, academic and professional career plans.
- You SHOULD provide a fresh or different or unique perspective with national security interests, broadly defined. Your statement should be COMPELLING. It should not be generic, that is, one that anyone could write.
- Your chosen language/country should be appropriate to and well integrated with your career goals and interests.
- It should be well written.
- You should show a sophisticated understanding of U.S. national security interest.
- Keep in mind that weak statements are often glorified personal statements, that is, they are not deep, are poorly written, and/or do not connect the theme to a career goal.

The Boren “Study Plan Description” Statement

- You should go more in-depth about the study abroad program’s course of study, support services (housing, facilities, resident director, etc.), and related cultural activities.
- You should also describe the language component of the program (e.g., number of classroom hours) AND explain how you will maximize your language training both formally AND informally (e.g., activities you will pursue where speaking the language is necessary).
- You should describe your past experience with the language (if applicable) AND how you will continue to study the language when you return to the U.S.

Transcripts

- Provide an assurance that you will perform well in your intended graduate program or career
- Should show an ambitious curriculum
- Should show one or more courses related to your proposed career field
- Should show strong grades or upward trend in grades

The Online Application

- Your personal details as well as your statements must be submitted online by the Campus Deadline of December 4, 2015. Following your interview, I can unsubmit your application so that you can make any necessary revisions to your statements or any other part of the application.

Offline…

- In addition to the online application, you must submit the following online by the Campus Deadline of January 8, 2016.
  - References/Letters of Recommendation (2, no more than 3)
  - Official transcripts from all universities or colleges attended. Freshman must also include high school transcripts. However, please wait until your spring courses are listed before you upload your transcript. If you have to wait until after the deadline, that is fine.
Choose one of the following (scholarship applicants only):

- One page study abroad program description with cost information. (This may be a page from the program’s website or a photocopy of part of the program brochure.)
- If you set up a direct enrollment or individually arranged study abroad program, please provide two letters of support. The first letter should be from your home institution and the second letter should be from your overseas host institution.

- Language assessment form (if you have studied the language at all).
- Language proficiency form (if you have studied the language at all).

For more details see:

http://www.borenawards.org/boren_scholarship/how_apply.html

Letters of Recommendation

- Reference letters should go beyond discussing your academic ability to describe your commitment to learning the proposed language, your chance of success abroad and in your proposed discipline and career, and your maturity.
- They should be addressed to the Boren Awards Committee and not me.
- My contact details are below:

  Dr. Tiffany L. Kershner
  Coordinator for Distinguished Scholarships and Fellowships
  University Honors Program
  Campus Box 8610
  NC State University
  Raleigh, NC 27695-8610

  direct line: 919.515.2237
  main line: 919.513.4078
  fax: 919.513.4392

  e-mail: tiffany_kershner@ncsu.edu

Campus Interview and Evaluation

- Once you have submitted your application and all supporting documents by the campus deadline of January 8, 2016, you will be scheduled for an interview with the Boren Campus Committee. You are to take this interview very seriously and prepare for it in advance. Research the country and the language in your proposal and read over your statements. Be prepared to explain further any aspect of your application. An interview is required. Please dress appropriately.
- Following your interview, you will meet with the fellowship adviser (me!) to go over any suggested changes to your application.
- Boren requires NC STATE to complete evaluation forms for each candidate. With this in mind, you MUST submit you final edits, that is, complete application before the national deadline. Evaluation forms are only available online after a student has submitted their final application.
• Failure to submit your application before the national deadline and/or to upload all required supplementary documents by that deadline will result in a rejection of your application for the Boren!

**Important Note #1.** The study abroad programs (1st and 2nd choices) you list on your application ARE BINDING and you will not be able to make changes once your application is submitted. Please think carefully about the programs you are selecting and work closely with the study abroad office to select the appropriate program for your academic interests.

**Important Note #2: Reasons for Not Receiving a Boren Award**

- Sloppy application
- Lack of interest in the language and/or commitment to studying the language in the country AND when you return from studying abroad
- Lack of SUBSTANTIAL and SUSTAINED commitment to government service

Finally, you will need to write several drafts of this application. Your first draft is never as good as you think it is! I strongly encourage you to share your drafts with me AND your mentors. If you have any questions on your journey to completing and submitting your application, please do not hesitate to contact me (tiffany_kershner@ncsu.edu) or make an appointment to meet with me (513-4078).

Good luck!

Dr. K

**Campus Deadline: December 4th, 2015**

**Boren Scholarship National Deadline: February 9, 2016**

**Boren Fellowship National Deadline: January 28, 2016**