The Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad (DDRA) fellowship program provides grants to advanced doctoral students to conduct dissertation research abroad. The program supports area studies research with an emphasis on cultivating expertise in less commonly studied languages, regions, and cultures. Projects focused on Western Europe, the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are NOT supported.

Funding for this program comes from the U.S. Department of Education. In 2020, the program expects to make approximately 100 awards, with an average award of $35,000 for 6-12 months of overseas research. The exact amount of the award varies according to the length of overseas research and the cost of living in the host country.

This program is announced each year in the winter. Typically, the window between announcement of the competition and the deadline for application submission is very short. In 2020, the application opened on December 17 with an institutional deadline of February 18. IN ORDER TO ALLOW TIME FOR PROCESSING OF THE INSTITUTIONAL SUBMISSION, ALL GMU APPLICANTS MUST SUBMIT THEIR COMPLETE APPLICATION (INCLUDING LETTERS OF REFERENCE AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS) IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION’S G5 APPLICATION SYSTEM BY 11:59 PM ON FEBRUARY 12, 2019. APPLICANTS WHO DO NOT MEET THIS DEADLINE CANNOT GO FORWARD IN THE COMPETITION.

Award offers are typically announced in August/September, with October 1 as the earliest possible start date for the grant. The grant will fund 6-12 months of research, based on what the student requested in their application. For applications submitted in February, 2019, the period of research must be scheduled in the 18-month window between October 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021.

Eligibility: U.S. Citizens and Permanent Residents who:
- Are graduate students in good standing at an institution of higher education in the United States.
- Will be advanced to candidacy in a Ph.D. program by the start date of the award.
- Intend a teaching / academic career in the U.S. after completion of the Ph.D.
- Possess adequate foreign language skills to carry out the proposed project, and will use the project to further develop language skill and specialized area studies expertise.

Structure and Administration of the Fulbright-Hays DDRA Program
The program is administered by the U.S. Department of Education in cooperation with participating U.S. institutions of higher education. Although awards are made to individual graduate students for independent research, the application is submitted via GMU’s Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) on behalf of all candidates, and technically the sole “applicant” is George Mason University. Individual students cannot apply independently of the university, and individual student applications can only go forward if their application is deemed eligible, complete and viable by the Office of Sponsored Programs and the Office of Graduate Fellowships.

One individual at the institution is designated as Project Director for the Fulbright-Hays DDRA competition, and serves as the institutional point of contact for the program. The Project Director at George Mason University is Dr. Kay Ágoston, Director of Graduate Fellowships, who guides students through the process and coordinates with OSP and the Department of Education to submit our applications to this program. If an award is made to any Mason student, funds are disbursed through the university. Funds are dedicated entirely to support the cost of travel, living, and overseas research-related expenses for the fellow. Research in the United States is not eligible for funding, and no institutional overhead is permitted. Dr. Ágoston works with the awardee and OSP to set up a schedule and a system for disbursement.