

Frequently Asked Questions

Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (FLAS)

Eligibility

Q: Who is eligible to receive a FLAS fellowship?

Graduate students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents and who are enrolled (or accepted for enrollment) in a program that combines modern foreign language training with international or area studies or with the international aspects of professional or other fields of study.

Q: I am a student from another university, am I eligible to apply for a FLAS fellowship through your program?

Possibly. You are eligible if you are applying to study a language through a program hosted by UNC. Occasionally, we also have leftover funds that we can offer to students from other institutions who enroll in language study outside of UNC. Language programs must meet all FLAS requirements.

Q: I am an in-coming UNC graduate student, can I apply for a FLAS?

Yes. If you are selected for a FLAS fellowship, your award will be contingent on acceptance and enrollment in the program.

Q: I am an undergraduate am I eligible?

If an applicant is an undergraduate at the time of application who is enrolling in a full-time graduate program the Fall semester, then the applicant is eligible. FLAS fellowships cannot be implemented at the undergraduate level.

Q: I am graduate student who will be graduating this Spring. Am I eligible to apply for a FLAS?

Recipients must be an enrolled graduate student to implement their FLAS fellowship. If you are graduating and will not be enrolling then you are not eligible. If you are graduating from a Master's program and enrolling in a PHD program the following Fall semester then you are eligible.

Q: I currently have a FLAS fellowship? Can I re-apply?

Yes.

Q: I am interested in applying for a FLAS for a commonly taught language or a language outside of the NRC target languages list, am I still eligible?

Technically, yes. Please be aware, however, that applications for less-commonly-taught languages or languages in the NRC target list will be prioritized. The purpose of the FLAS program is to ensure continued national competence in foreign

languages and area and international studies expertise. Because the national competence in the more-commonly-taught languages is not immediately threatened, the preference for awarding FLAS fellowships is in the less-commonly-taught languages. For this reason we assign lowest priority to the selection of fellows who already possess language fluency equivalent to educated native speakers.

Q: Are professional school students eligible for a FLAS?

Yes. We seek to make fellowship awards to students in a variety disciplines.

Q: I am an anthropologist, am I eligible for a FLAS? I am a law student, am I eligible? I am a medical student, am I eligible? I am a music student, am I eligible? I am a math student, am I eligible?

Applicants from all academic disciplines and professional schools are eligible to apply. However, every FLAS fellow is required to take one language course and one area studies course each semester. All applicants should highlight how their area studies and language focus fits into their academic research and future employment plans.

Application

Q: Is the FLAS application on the CGI website the only one I need to complete, or do I need to complete a separate application with the U.S. Department of Education?

To apply for FLAS fellowship funding from the Center for Global Initiatives, you must complete our online application form linked on our website. Follow the application instructions on our website and online form.

Q: I am applying for a beginning level language FLAS. I have no knowledge of the language. Do I still need to submit a language evaluation?

No.

Q: To whom should my recommendation letters be addressed?

Letters may be address to "FLAS Review Committee".

Q: Is it possible to apply for two different languages?

Yes. However, the review committee may question the applicants commitment to learning both languages to fluency.

Q: Can I apply for both summer and Academic Year FLAS fellowships?

Yes. In addition, it is possible to receive both a summer and AY award. For example, a student may apply to attend a summer intensive Arabic program in Arabic 1 and 2 followed by an AY FLAS for Arabic 3 and 4.

Q: Is it possible to apply to two different NRC centers for two different languages?

Yes. Please notify the FLAS coordinators of your intent to apply to both centers. Two separate, complete applications submitted to the relevant area studies center are required.

Q: Is there a form for the recommenders to fill out?

No.

Q: How should I submit the letter of recommendation?

Letters of recommendation should be submitted in individually signed, sealed envelopes with your complete application package. We do not recommend that referees mail letters directly to CGI. Applicants should collect these letters and submit as one package to ensure a complete application is received by the posted deadline.

Q: What should recommenders discuss in the letter of recommendation?

Letters of recommendation should attest to the applicants experience/interest in the applicant's world area, the level of commitment to learning the language, relevance of the language and area studies to the applicants academic research and how the language and area studies is relevant for the applicant's future plans.

Q: Can I include additional information to the application? (i.e. addendum, published papers)

No.

Q: Where do I find the application for a FLAS fellowship?

Applications for languages supported by the Center for Global Initiatives (CGI) should apply via their online application linked on their website. Information for applications to other languages can be found here:

<http://www.unc.edu/nrc/flas.htm>

Q: Which languages are prioritized by CGI?

CGI gives priority to applicants studying the following languages: Arabic, Kiswahili and Lingala.

Q: I would like to apply to study French. My area research focus is in Africa. Do I apply through CGI or through the Center for European Studies?

You apply through CGI since your regional focus is in Africa. If your regional focus would have been in Western Europe you would apply through CES.

Q: My references are on file at UNC Career Services and they are not allowed to send the letters directly to me. Can the letter be sent directly to CGI?

We recommend that you request letters of recommendation that speak directly to the specific career objectives, the relevance of language study to your academic pursuits and other strengths that qualify you for a FLAS fellowship.

Q: Do my letters of recommendation need to come from the UNC faculty? And should they be from my professors at present?

We strongly encourage that you submit letters from UNC faculty who are familiar with your current work. In choosing a recommender, you should consider someone (whether at UNC or elsewhere) who is most familiar with your work, degree objectives, and career goals. The recommender should be able to speak about your overall academic qualifications and the relevance of language training to your specific goals. Letters from faculty members or work references outside of UNC will be accepted.

Q: I am an incoming graduate student, do both of my letters of recommendation need to come from UNC faculty?

Not necessarily. See above.

Q: How do I identify a language evaluator?

Contact current faculty at UNC (or near-by universities) that teach your target language. If the language is not currently taught in the area, you may try contacting other local organizations that offer structured language instruction.

Q: Is a graduate teaching assistant an acceptable language evaluator?

Yes, in the event that UNC (or near-by universities) do not employ a qualified faculty in your target language. In this case, your FLAS coordinator may ask for further information on the individual's qualifications to conduct the language evaluation.

Q: Is a native speaker an acceptable language evaluator?

Yes, in the event that UNC (or near-by universities) do not employ a qualified faculty in your target language. In this case, your FLAS coordinator may ask for further information on the individual's qualifications to conduct the language evaluation.

Q: Can my language evaluation be conducted by my previous language instructor even if I took the language outside of UNC?

Yes, in the event that UNC (or near-by universities) do not employ a qualified faculty in your target language. In this case, your FLAS coordinator may ask for further information on the individual's qualifications to conduct the language evaluation.

Q: The language evaluator requested a fee for the evaluation. Can the NRC pay for this service?

Unfortunately, we do not have funds available for this purpose.

Q: Do I need to identify a language program on my summer FLAS application?

Yes. For UNC programs please indicate the course title and number. For programs outside of UNC, please describe the summer program in detail. If awarded, you will need to provide evidence that the language program meets the following requirements:

- a) Beginning or intermediate levels: 140 contact hours of instruction, for a minimum of six (6) weeks.
- b) Advanced level: 120 contact hours of instruction, for a minimum of six (6) weeks.
- c) Tuition costs that do not exceed the tuition allowance (\$4000)

You may list several different language programs in which you are interested.

While it is not required that you show evidence that the programs meet the above requirements at the time of application, you will need to show evidence after an award is made. However, the more the review committee knows about the program the better.

Q: Do I have to list the courses that I plan to take next year on the application? How do I know which courses will be offered next year?

For an academic year FLAS, list the two language and area studies courses you intend to enroll in for each semester. **At the time of application is not necessary to list actual courses for next year. You may list potential courses based on courses offered in the past. The goal is to provide review committees with a sense of your area studies concentration.**

Implementation

Q: Is a FLAS fellow allowed to work during the fellowship award period?

FLAS fellows are allowed to work during the award period but cannot be required to work in exchange for the FLAS fellowship. Regardless of work status, all FLAS fellows are required to be engaged in full-time foreign language and area/international studies course work or dissertation research during the academic year and in intensive language study during the summer award period.

Q: Can I study at the elementary level outside the United States?

Only if the course is not offered in the United States. Awards for elementary study outside of the US are rare.

Q: Can I use my academic year FLAS fellowship outside of the United States?

While some academic year programs may be eligible, at UNC we prioritize academic year applicants who will be completing their full-time program of study on campus. Students are advised to apply instead to the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Program.

Q: How do we find an eligible language program?

We expect you to identify the language of study that best fits your academic needs and FLAS requirements.

Q: Do the programs have to be at UNC?

Not necessarily. If you are applying for an academic year FLAS and the language you are studying is offered at UNC, you are required to enroll in the language program at UNC. If the language is not offered at UNC, you may be able to register at any Inter-institutional Program participating university.

FYI: <http://regweb.unc.edu/students/interinstitutional.php>

If you are applying for a summer FLAS to learn a language at the beginning level and the language is not offered at UNC, you can apply for a FLAS fellowship to attend another college or university in the United States. If the language is not offered anywhere in the United States, you can apply to study at an institution abroad.

If you are applying for a summer FLAS to learn a language at the intermediate or advanced levels, you may apply to study at an institution abroad.

Q: Do we receive credit for the course?

Yes.

Q: I have a quick question about the FLAS competition, and I hoped you could help me. The Carolina Asia Center informed me that they do not provide FLAS funding for East Asian or Southeast Asian languages, and that I should talk to your department. I was wondering if you could give me any information about whether the Center for International Studies funds FLAS awards in Mandarin Chinese or Vietnamese. I feel that I could make a strong case in my application for the need for health professionals in American academia who speak Mandarin, but I know that it is not considered as high a priority as, say, Arabic. Do you have any advice? I do not want to apply if there is no hope at all and waste the time of my recommenders.

CGI prioritizes applicants who study Arabic, Kiswahili or Lingala. While we do accept applications in Chinese, Vietnamese, Indonesian, etc, it is unlikely that CGI will fund an AY award in these languages. Applicants in languages outside of Arabic, Kiswahili or Lingala that are not supported at other UNC National Resource Centers are encouraged to apply for summer FLAS awards. Summer awards for intensive study in these languages have been made in the past.

Q: What makes a summer program FLAS eligible?

Each summer intensive language program needs to be approved on a case by case basis by the FLAS Coordinator. In general, a summer intensive language program may be FLAS eligible if it meets the following criteria:

1) 140-160 contact hours over 2) a period of at least 6 weeks, 3) tuition no greater than \$4,000, and 4) the program must be a structured, credit granting program.

Q: What is a contact hour?

A contact hour is one hour of instruction.

Q: Does it need to be a structured program or can I study with a tutor?

Summer programs must be structured. A private tutor will not be considered a FLAS eligible program. In some cases, for AY fellowships, independent studies with language instructors where credit is received may be considered for advanced language learners.

Q: Is there travel money available for summer FLAS?

In some cases if funds are available, plane fare up to \$1,000 may be awarded if the applicant abides by the Fly America Act. Information on the Fly America Act can be viewed here:

<http://www.ogc.doc.gov/ogc/fl/fald/itl/itlv14.pdf>

Your FLAS Coordinator will discuss the possibility of providing funds to cover plane fare with FLAS Fellows after awardees are notified. Travel support is NOT guaranteed.

Q: Is my FLAS fellowship taxable?

FLAS fellowships are considered taxable income. Recipients should consult the IRS tax code or consult with a tax professional for further information.

Q: How do I know which courses fulfill the FLAS requirements?

Fellowship recipients are required to take one language course and one area studies course each semester (a total of 2 language courses and 2 area studies courses for the academic year). Area studies courses must be approved by the NRC FLAS coordinator each semester. Area studies courses may be taken in the recipient's academic department if the course has an appropriate level of area content in the curriculum.

Q: What are the award amounts for summer FLAS fellowships?

Summer fellows receive a \$2,500 stipend and \$4,000 for tuition and fees. Housing and subsistence costs are not covered from the \$4,000 in tuition and fees. If a recipient's summer program lumps housing costs into the total amount of tuition and fees, recipients will need to contact the program to get a breakdown of costs.

Note: These award amounts may be adjusted by the Department of Education.

Q: What are the award amounts for academic year FLAS fellowships?

AY fellows receive a \$15,000 stipend and full payment of tuition, fees and health insurance. Tuition for out of state students is covered in full, but we do encourage recipients to apply for residency. **Note: These award amounts may be adjusted by the Department of Education.**

Q: Can I take a language or area studies class at Duke, NC State or another nearby university?

Yes.

Reporting

Q: What are the reporting requirements?

At the end of your fellowship (Aug-September for summer fellows and May-June for AY fellows) you will receive a link via email to EELIAS, an online reporting system administered by the Department of Education. This final report is short and asks various questions about your future plans and your level of language attainment. This report is mandatory for all fellows.

Contact Information

Who can I contact if I have additional questions?

Beth-Ann Kutchma, CB# 5145, 843-6842, bkutchma@email.unc.edu

IF you are applying for languages supported by other Area Studies Centers, please contact the appropriate FLAS Coordinator.

Required hard copy materials should be mailed or dropped off at the following address:

Center for Global Initiatives
Fedex Global Education Center
301 Pittsboro Street, Suite 3002
Campus Box 5145
Chapel Hill, NC 27599

Application materials must be received by the posted deadline.