

be expected to provide documentation of the improved language proficiency of fellows through the Department's Evaluation of Exchange, Language, International and Area Studies (EELIAS) electronic reporting system for the purposes of assessing the effectiveness of individual projects and the program overall.

Application Procedures: The Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA) of 1998 (Pub. L. 105-277) and the Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999 (Pub. L. 106-107) encourage us to undertake initiatives to improve our grant processes. Enhancing the ability of individuals and entities to conduct business with us electronically is a major part of our response to these Acts. Therefore, we are taking steps to adopt the Internet as our chief means of conducting transactions in order to improve services to our customers and to simplify and expedite our business processes.

Note: Some of the procedures in these instructions for transmitting applications differ from those in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) (34 CFR 75.102). Under the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553) the Department generally offers interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed regulations. However, these amendments make procedural changes only and do not establish new substantive policy. Therefore, under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(A), the Secretary has determined that proposed rulemaking is not required.

We are requiring that applications for grants for FY 2004 under the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship Program be submitted electronically using e-Application available through the Department's e-GRANTS system. The e-GRANTS system is accessible through its portal page at: <http://e-grants.ed.gov>.

An applicant who is unable to submit an application through the e-GRANTS system may submit a written request for a waiver of the electronic submission requirement. In the request, the applicant should explain the reason or reasons that prevent the applicant from using the Internet to submit the application. The request should be addressed to: Karla Ver Bryck Block or Sara Starke, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K St., NW., Suite 6000, Washington, DC 20006-8521. Please submit your request no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.

If, within two weeks of the application deadline date, an applicant is unable to submit an application electronically, the applicant must

submit a paper application by the application deadline date in accordance with the transmittal instructions in the application package. The paper application must include a written request for a waiver documenting the reasons that prevented the applicant from using the Internet to submit the application.

Pilot Project for Electronic Submission of Applications

In FY 2004, the Department is continuing to expand its pilot project for electronic submission of applications to include additional formula grant programs and additional discretionary grant competitions. The Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship Program—CFDA 84.022A is one of the programs included in the pilot project. If you are an applicant under the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship Program, you must submit your application to us in electronic format or receive a waiver.

The pilot project involves the use of the Electronic Grant Application System (e-Application). Users of e-Application will be entering data on-line while completing their applications. You may not e-mail a soft copy of a grant application to us. The data you enter on-line will be saved into a database. We shall continue to evaluate the success of e-Application and solicit suggestions for its improvement.

Note: In order for institutions to apply electronically, potential project directors must email the following information to ddra@ed.gov: first and last name of potential project director, university, and email address. This information must be submitted no later than September 8, 2003.

If you participate in e-Application, please note the following:

- When you enter the e-Application system, you will find information about its hours of operation. We strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to initiate an e-Application package.

- You will not receive additional point value because you submit a grant application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you submit an application in paper format.

- You must submit all documents electronically, except transcripts, including the Application for Federal Education Assistance (ED 424), and all necessary assurances and certifications. Transcripts must be mailed separately.

- Your e-Application must comply with any page limit requirements described in this notice.

- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive an

automatic acknowledgement, which will include a PR/Award number (an identifying number unique to your application).

- Within three working days after submitting your electronic application, fax a signed copy of the Application for Federal Education Assistance (ED 424) to the Application Control Center after following these steps:

1. Print ED 424 from e-Application.
2. The institution's Authorizing Representative must sign this form.
3. Place the PR/Award number in the upper right hand corner of the hard copy signature page of the ED 424.
4. Fax the signed ED 424 to the Application Control Center at (202) 260-1349.

- We may request that you give us original signatures on other forms at a later date.

Application Deadline Date Extension in Case of System Unavailability:

If you are prevented from submitting your application on the application deadline date because the e-Application system is unavailable, we will grant you an extension of one business day in order to transmit your application electronically, by mail, or by hand delivery. For us to grant this extension—

1. You must be a registered user of e-Application and have initiated an e-Application for this competition; and
2. (a) The e-Application system must be unavailable for 60 minutes or more between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date; or

(b) The e-Application system must be unavailable for any period of time during the last hour of operation (that is, for any period of time between 3:30 and 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time) on the application deadline date.

The Department must acknowledge and confirm these periods of unavailability before granting you an extension. To request this extension or to confirm the Department's acknowledgement of any system unavailability, you may contact either (1) the person listed elsewhere in this notice under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** or (2) the e-GRANTS help desk at 1-888-336-8930.

You may access the electronic grant application for the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship Program at: <http://e-grants.ed.gov>.

Note: An applicant institution of higher education must submit all individual applications in electronic format unless the institution receives a waiver of this requirement. Individuals interested in funding under this program must check with