

Magellan Scholar and Research Abroad

Hints and Tips for Developing a Strong Proposal

YES, you can be a Magellan Scholar doing your own research while studying (or interning, volunteering, etc.) abroad and some of the funds can be used to off-set your travel expenses. However, you must have a well thought-out and planned research project (with details). You need to convince the reviewers that we aren't abandoning you in a foreign country without guidance or resources and that we aren't funding you to study, work, volunteer, sight-see, or party abroad.

People to Visit:

- **Office of Undergraduate Research Staff** - *Legare College 126 & 223 – our@sc.edu*
 - To discuss your research interests and begin to identify a faculty mentor and project
 - To help guide you through the Magellan Scholar proposal process
- **Study Abroad Office Staff** - *Legare College Suite 321 – saabroad@mailbox.sc.edu*
 - To discuss potential locations for your research and obtain pre-departure information
- **Your Faculty Research Mentor**
 - To further define your project and develop your research question and methodology
- **Your Academic Advisor**
 - To explore how credits abroad can transfer and if you can obtain credit for your research

Things to Ask Yourself (& include in your proposal):

- **Why are you applying for the Magellan Scholar grant?**
 - If you are doing this just to get money to off-set your travel expenses, STOP now. You need to have a well thought-out and designed project before you can apply and you need to be committed to doing the work involved in a research project. You will also need time while you are abroad, support/help from people while you are researching, and a plan for the work you will do before you leave, while you are there, and once you return. If this sounds like something you want to do, excellent!
- **Why do you need to conduct your research in this specific country?**
 - Your proposal will be stronger if you can show the necessity of your travel to a specific location. If there is an artifact, aspect of culture, or person in your country of choice that is specifically interesting, explain why you must travel for your research as opposed to staying in the U.S.
- **Will you have sufficient time outside of your classes or other commitments to conduct this research without over-committing?**
 - Talk with the Study Abroad Staff to discuss the academic commitments of your program. If you are traveling with another university, discuss these same questions with the faculty member directing your program from that university.
- **Do you have contacts/mentors in your country of study? If so, who are they? Who will you need to talk with, interview, etc? If you don't know who yet, how will you find them?**
 - If you have names, list them. Start making contacts now – having this in your proposal shows your commitment to the project and emphasizes that you have thought through the process and needs of the project. If you can, include emails or letters of agreement from contacts.

- **Have you traveled to this country before?**
 - Define what you already know about the country and your topic of study, including what makes you interested in returning to the country for research.

- **Do you speak the language necessary to conduct your research? How well? Well enough to conduct the interviews, discussions, etc? If not, how will you handle this?**
 - If you will be taking language classes abroad, include this. If you need to hire interpreters or translators, how will they be paid (they can't be paid directly from Magellan Scholar grant funds).
 - If English is commonly used in your destination country and this isn't immediately obvious, state this in the proposal so that the reviewers know that language will not be a barrier.

- **Are you traveling on your own or will your faculty mentor be there?**
 - It is important to discuss your relationship and have contact with your USC faculty mentor. If they will not be traveling with you, define in your proposal your plans to keep in contact with them. Also include how they will be able to help you through any concerns, questions, or problems with your research that may arise while you are abroad.

- **What are your travel logistics**
 - Where will you be staying, will you need to travel within the country, etc. These details emphasize that you have thought through the process. Don't dwell on these details, but do mention them.

- **Emphasize the research**
 - Remember that this proposal is for your RESEARCH not the classes, volunteering, internship, etc. Everything in your proposal needs to focus on the research and show how you plan to answer your research question - NOT on the details of the other activities. However, if there are aspects of the activities that will enhance or support your research (such as contacts, access to participants, language immersion, etc.) then absolutely include this information.

- **Your project plan: before, during, and after travel**
 - It is extremely unlikely that a good project could be started AND finished while abroad. Most projects require some background/pre-trip work and post-trip wrap-up, reflection, synthesis, and/or analysis. Be sure to include the time and work that you will do before and after your trip.