

Steps and Tips for Applying to the Boren Undergraduate Scholarship

The steps below are separated into two phases and are listed in suggested order of completion. These instructions are designed to be supplemental to the full, detailed instructions listed on the [Boren website](#).

CU Campus Deadline = Friday January 29, 2021

Funding for the 2021 application cycle can only be used for programs starting as early as June 1, 2021 or as late as March 1, 2022. (i.e Summer 2021, Fall/AY 2021 and Spring 2022)

Phase I: Considering the Boren Scholarship and preparing to apply (spring, summer and early fall prior to the application deadline)

1. **Verify your eligibility for the Boren** in terms of your proposed location and language. You can view the preferred locations and languages on the [Boren website](#), under Eligibility. Also ensure that you are within the preferred GPA range: 3.0-4.0 (a GPA of 3.50 or higher will *greatly* increase your chances of an award). If you are planning to study abroad for one semester, consider going for an entire year, as full-year students have a MUCH higher chance of receiving an award.

It is important that you meet all of the Boren preferred criteria (location, duration of study, language and GPA). The awards are highly competitive, and the application process is time-consuming so consider your eligibility before beginning the process.

2. **Visit the Boren website and read through the application process.** *Starting an online application is NOT the first priority – that comes later.*
3. **Know the CU campus deadline – see above!** All application pieces (including transfer transcripts) must be submitted on or before that date.
4. **Identify your first-choice study abroad program, as well as a back-up choice (required by Boren).** Ensure that you meet the eligibility requirements for the program and be sure that you apply to the program by the deadline. For assistance with identifying a study abroad program complete [Abroad 101](#) and then connect with an advisor in the Education Abroad office to start your program application.
5. Meet with the CU Campus Representative for the Boren: Sarah Westmoreland, sarah.westmoreland@colorado.edu. Email her to set up an appointment.

Phase II: Starting your Boren application (October/November prior to application deadline):

1. **Begin working on a first draft of Essay One.** Don't strive for perfection with your first draft – just start jotting down your rough answers to the essay questions. As you begin to write the essay, you will probably be prompted to conduct more research on your program, country, goals, etc. Writing a *good* statement of purpose typically takes weeks or months, so start NOW! Some additional tips for the statements of purpose:

Part I: Rationale

- Focus specifically on the two bullet points noted on the [Boren Essay Guidelines](#) website. Make sure that you have addressed these items in your statement.
- You must clearly establish the relationship between what you want to study (or where you want to study) and U.S. national security. You must prove that you have a good grasp on the history, culture and current events of your host country, city and region. It helps to try to demonstrate this complex knowledge with references to specific customs, facts or events. You are encouraged to consult books and articles (be sure to cite your sources), and you may need to conduct some research. You may also wish to ask a professor or TA who specializes in your country or region to read this section of your essay and provide feedback.
- You must prove that your career goals are congruent with government service. Get specific. Include references to particular jobs or organizations that you plan to work for. Visit Career Services and search online resources such as [USAJOBS](#) to find specific positions that interest you. “You should also demonstrate that you have an understanding of the actual selection process and the skills that are required for the position” (Boren website).
- See the General Tips section at the end of this document for some additional ideas to make yourself stand out through extra research, volunteer, internship or other extra-curricular activities.
- Using quotes can boost your essay, but don't over-use them. Be sure to cite sources for any quotes or facts you include.

Part II: Program description

- Again, focus specifically on the three bullet points noted on the [Boren Essay Guidelines](#) website. Address each item and make sure that you have responded to them at least once in your statement.
 - For your second essay, be sure to clearly demonstrate a complex knowledge of the program and why you selected it. Also be sure that you have realistic expectations of the program. For example, don't say that you expect to become fluent in a language if you don't already have a significant background in the language.
 - General tip: once you begin to polish your essays, comb through your statements to take out fluff! **Everything in your essays must prove a point or be specific.**
2. **Email a draft of your essay to the CU Boulder Boren campus representative - prior to winter break:** Sarah.Westmoreland@colorado.edu. She can provide feedback about the content of your essays. You may also wish to ask the [Writing Center](#) to review your essay.

Your final essays must be carefully crafted, well-edited and must demonstrate that you have very **specific** reasons for choosing your location, language and program.



3. **Request your recommendation letters prior to winter break (at least 2 letters must be from professors).**
 - a. Have an initial conversation with them about the Boren process and ask if they are willing to write you a recommendation letter and set up appointments with them to discuss things in more detail.
 - b. Make sure your recommenders know your professional and career goals, as well as the specific reasons why you've chosen your study abroad program and why you are applying for the Boren Scholarship. Ideally, give them a draft of your Boren essay and a copy of an updated resume, as these will be really helpful for them. They will be writing at least one page (usually a little more) all about you, so make sure you give them a clear picture of your goals and statement of purpose.
 - c. Ask them to craft the recommendation with the Boren Scholarship in mind; boilerplate recommendation letters are less helpful than ones that comment specifically on your skills and interest vis-a-vis the Boren Scholarship.
 - d. Try to give your recommenders at least a few weeks to write the letter. Professors are busy people, and if they are rushed to write your letter it will probably show.
 - e. Your recommenders submit their letters via the Boren online application portal.
4. **Obtain official transcripts** from any college or university that you have attended. If you have transfer credit on your CU transcript, you must order official transcripts from each of those institutions. You can order CU-Boulder transcripts online through [BuffPortal](#) and you will upload your transcripts into the Boren application portal. **Be sure your fall grades have posted when you order the transcripts.** For transcripts from other institutions, you will need to order the transcripts directly from the institution.
5. **Register on the Boren website and fill in the application *except for the essays*** (unless you have worked with the Campus Rep. and know that your essay is ready). Do not yet submit the application on-line if your essay is still being polished. That is the very last step.
6. When filling out the online application, it is highly recommended that you **select "Federal Government"** from the list of options for your career goals.
7. **Gather the additional items required by BOREN** (program and cost description, language self-assessment, optional language proficiency form).
8. On or before the CU Boren campus deadline, **upload the final, polished version of your essay** to the Boren website to complete your online application. **Submit your online Boren application.**



General tips and ways to make your application stand out

As a prospective study abroad student, you are joining a small percentage of college students who chose to study abroad. The number of students studying abroad during college continues to increase, but the overall percentage is still relatively small. In addition, you are likely applying to study abroad in a country that is less frequently chosen by students, and perhaps study a language that is less-commonly studied. All of these factors make you quite special. *However*, keep in mind that **as a Boren scholarship applicant, you are competing with students who have also decided to study abroad, have also chosen non-traditional locations and languages, and are also very highly accomplished students.** It is not enough to just meet the Boren requirements for the scholarship – *you must make yourself stand out!*

- Your career goals need to emphasize government service. If you don't plan to spend your entire career in government service, you should at least plan to start your career in the government and stay for several years. You will be competing with students who DO plan to spend their entire career in the government, and this is a government-funded scholarship.
- It also helps to include ways that you will be doing more abroad than just what the program provides. What will you do outside of the classroom abroad that will enhance your linguistic skills and cultural understanding? For example, are you pursuing an independent study? Are there student groups or service projects you have explored and intend to participate in? Are you doing an internship or practicum? What organization do you plan to volunteer/intern with, and have you already contacted them about potential projects?
- Successful applications often present a specific research topic above and beyond what students do in class. This strengthens applications and set you apart from other applicants. It is also important that you have already given serious thought to your research topic and can provide details about what you will research and what resources you can already identify to help you with your research. You may even want to contact professors or other individuals abroad that you may plan to work with, and mention these individuals in your essay.