

5 Tips for Applying for The Freeman-Asia Scholarship

The Freeman-Asia Scholarship encourages students with financial need to study abroad in East or Southeast Asia. Because of the generosity of this scholarship I was able to study abroad in Chiang Mai, Thailand! It was the best school semester of my life. I have learned so much about Thai culture, cuisine and Thai language.

The scholarship process has two main essays. One will be describing why you want to study abroad in Asia and how it will impact you, and the other being a service project upon return promoting study abroad in Asia.

I want to share my top 5 tips that I believe made me stand out and can help you as well!

1. Prepare Ahead, Start Early

It is super duper important to plan ahead when applying for scholarships. I started my scholarship applications when they opened and turned them in only a couple of days before the application closed, about two months! As students it can be hard to find time to write extra essays which makes it really important to start early. I tried to give myself about 2 to 5 hours a week to work on my essays. Some days if I had a 30-minute break that would be all I did and other times on a weekend I would give myself a full hour each day to write and edit my essays.

2. Tell Your Story

We all come from different walks of life and have unique stories that come with them. It is important to tell your story. Remember that the scholarship committee has to read a lot of essays, think about ways that you stand out from your peers. Be genuine. Make sure you are also highlighting **why** you want to study abroad in Asia and **how** it can **impact your education and/or future career**. Talk about classes that you will be taking abroad and why you are excited about them.

3. Be Specific and Creative When Choosing a Service Project.

When thinking about your follow-on service project, reflect on ways that you can give back to the community and encourage other students to study abroad in Asia. Think about how you would have liked to learn about the Scholarship. What hits home for you? Make sure you write about specifics, such as how the project can be achieved/carried out, which groups of people you would like to target, what steps are you currently taking?

4. Use Your Resources and Friends

I honestly do not believe I am a strong writer, yet I received a lot of scholarships for study abroad... how? By having A LOT of people read over my essays and helping me edit them. As Western students we have access to the Hacherl Research and Writing Studio, it is on the second floor of Haggard Hall. There are studio assistances who are willing to help give suggestions to improve your essays. If you do not have time to go in person to chat with them, they have an online option where they give you feedback through videos! So helpful! <https://library.wvu.edu/rws>

We all have at least one friend or a friend of a friend who loves writing or is really good at it. Ask that friend to look over your essays and give you suggestions on how you can make it better. Maybe you can do a trade off and bake them some cookies or feed them in exchange! It doesn't have to be limited to

just one friend you can use all of them or as many as are willing to look at your essays and provide feedback.

5. Edit, proofread and take deep breaths

It is helpful to read your essay out loud to yourself and see if what you are saying is making sense. Make sure you are editing from feedback you receive, whether it is adding information, clearing things up or taking away unneeded information. Take deep breaths. Do your best not to get stressed out and remember it is all worth it.

<https://www.iie.org/freeman-ASIA>

I believe if you follow these tips you can make your Freeman-Asia scholarship essays stronger. I have benefited so much from studying abroad in Chiang Mai and I wouldn't have been able to do it without the help of the Freeman-Asia scholarship. I hope my tips are helpful for you as well! If you have any questions, want to chat about study abroad in Asia or any extra advice please feel free to reach out to me at aliciapro@gmail.com I would love to help in any way possible!

P.S. If you are a student that receives the Pell Grant you should also apply to the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship as well. <https://gilmanapplication.iie.org/>