Writing Recommendations for the Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship

Thank you for agreeing to complete a recommendation form for an English Teaching Assistantship (ETA) Fulbright applicant. Please provide your assessment via the Fulbright website. You will receive an automated message from Fulbright using their “Embark” system with instructions on how to do so when the applicant enters your contact information. Recommendations are only submitted online, with no hardcopy needed.

Overview:
Fulbright ETAs serve under supervision at assigned placements and are expected to develop and carry out a variety of learning activities, make presentations on U.S. culture and society, and generally assist faculty in an English language department. ETAs are not responsible for designing curricula or teaching full courses. As a secondary component of the grant, many countries request applicants to describe another project or activity that they would pursue concurrent with the ETA assignment.

Campus Process:
Students and recommenders are encouraged, but not required, to submit materials by the July 1, 2016 priority deadline. Ad-hoc campus scholarship committees informally will review priority Fulbright applications over the summer and provide feedback to applicants. In addition, the committee may ask referees to clarify or to correct typographical errors. Student applications (including any revised online references) are officially due to the National and International Scholarships Program on September 1, 2016. A campus committee will then officially review the submission, interview the candidate, and rate the application. The official campus rating committee may also ask you to consider making adjustments to your reference. In that case, you will be provided direction on how to retrieve and resubmit your final comments prior to October 6, 2016, when the student must submit her/his final application to the Fulbright national screening committee.

Recommendation Form:
Fulbright requires references to fill out a specific form for English Teaching Assistantship grants, rather than a general letter of recommendation. Here is a summary of the questions and approximation of comment space:

1. In what context and for how long you have known the candidate? (120 words)
2. How proficient is the candidate in speaking and writing clearly in English? (120 words)
3. Does the applicant exhibit a penchant for teaching or mentoring? (70 words)
4. Please comment on the candidate’s abilities to succeed in an unstructured situation. (70 words)
5. How might the applicant manage living in a different cultural environment? Would the applicant make a strong cultural ambassador for the US? (70 words)
6. Why else might the candidate be a strong contender for an overseas Fulbright Teaching Assistantship? Consider discussing the applicant’s interest in the host country and the age group they will be teaching. (90 words)

Guidance for Recommendation Writers:
• Personal suitability is at least as important as academic abilities – please keep this focus in your reference.
• Use specific examples to support your assessments.
• Comment on the applicant’s facility with English usage, grammar, spelling, and writing based on tests or papers prepared for a course, or from formal presentations, classroom discussion or individual interviews or exchanges with the applicant.
• Preview your work before officially submitting—the system cuts off text that exceeds the character count!