

# UCI Scholarship Opportunities Program

## *Big 7: Letters of Affiliation*

### *Overview*

**Letters of Affiliation (LOAs)** are brief, informal invitations from a faculty member or official at your overseas institution of choice to study in a particular department, lab, nonprofit organization, etc. *should you receive the scholarship.* They show funding agencies that someone overseas vouches for your proposed study/research, underscoring its feasibility. They are required for **Churchill and Fulbright** candidates (research, study or arts) and are strongly recommended for other Big 7 scholarships.

Letters must be scholarship-specific. If you're applying for multiple awards, obtain multiple LOAs. LOAs written in another language must be translated into English.

### *Churchill Affiliation Requirements*

Churchill applicants should look up faculty at their desired department and isolate a faculty member they would most like to work with at Cambridge based off of expertise, research focus, etc. Please note that multiple faculty may have to be contacted before you secure a positive response.

### *Fulbright Affiliation Requirements*

Fulbright applicants must carefully read the criteria for host affiliation requirements in the [Fulbright country summary](#), as countries differ in the kinds of host affiliations that are acceptable. Depending on the country, the host affiliation can be an academic institution, a research institute, a nonprofit organization and/or other relevant agency. In some cases, particularly in the Arts, the affiliation may be a person such as a writer, musician, artist or an arts organization or foundation. **Applicants should pay special attention to the requirement in some countries to attend/affiliate with a university.** Some countries will obtain affiliation on behalf of Fulbrighters, but most leave the responsibility for securing affiliation entirely up to the applicant. Make sure you know what is expected of you.

### *Gates, Marshall, Mitchell, Rhodes Affiliation (Recommended)*

Applicants to the Gates, Marshall, Mitchell, and Rhodes are not required to secure affiliation letters. However, due to the competitiveness of these awards, successful applicants to these awards secured at least one letter of affiliation. Our most recent Marshall winner secured 3 affiliation letters to his 2 top choice universities and 1 letter from his alternate choice university.

### *LOA Content*

There are no specific requirements for the LOA content, since every affiliation relationship will be different depending upon the candidate's project. In general, letters should state specifically how the affiliate/host institution will help you to facilitate the project, including details such as:

- The affiliate's research or creative expertise and intention to supervise, mentor, or advise you.
- Resources and facilities available for access (could be archives, data, equipment, etc. – depends on the needs of the project).
- For research or creative projects, comments on the feasibility of your project
- For study, the LOA confirms that the admitting institution provides courses in the applicant's emphasis or concentration. **DEGREE-SEEKING STUDENTS MAY ALSO BE REQUIRED TO APPLY SEPARATELY FOR**

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ADMISSION TO THE HOST UNIVERSITY BY THEIR GRADUATE ADMISSIONS DEADLINE (FOR GATES CAMBRIDGE, CHURCHILL, AND SOME FULBRIGHT COUNTRIES ONLY).

- Examples are available to view in the SOP office by appointment, or you may find the sample shown in [this blog post](#) helpful.

## *LOA Format*

- **ALL LOAs MUST BE SIGNED AND ON OFFICIAL LETTERHEAD. SCAN/PDF VERSIONS ARE ACCEPTABLE.**
- Letters of affiliation may be written in the affiliate's native language, but you must provide a translation into English (you may translate yourself or hire a professional translator).

## *How to Acquire LOAs*

Ask UCI faculty whom they know at your selected institution. Building on existing professional relationships helps expedite the process. If your UCI faculty do not know anyone there, you can ask international students or [visiting Fulbright Scholars](#) on our campus if they are willing to establish a chain of introduction. You may also google and email faculty or organizations whose research interests match yours directly without waiting for an introduction. Committed research and perseverance will aid you in finding an affiliation.

Email this person (or people), identify your mutual acquaintance (if any), state the scholarship(s) to which you are applying, and formally convey your interests, skills, and goals. Explain why you are a good fit for performing specific research/study in his/her lab or department and why you are a good match for the scholarship. **ATTACH YOUR UPDATED CV AND YOUR DRAFT RESEARCH/PROJECT PROPOSAL TO YOUR EMAIL.**

Keep in mind that many overseas schools are closed during the summer months and that many professors may not have reliable connectivity and easy access to the internet. **Begin your search early and send follow-ups** if you do not receive a response within 2-3 weeks of your initial message.

**PRO TIP:** If your affiliate has confirmed intention to write you a letter, but delays providing the actual letter beyond the date you expected to receive it, he or she may be having trouble finding time to write or unsure what content to include. Consider sending **a brief outline, bullet points, or even a few paragraphs for the affiliate to modify** and return to you to ease his/her burden. Remind him or her that the final draft should be on letterhead with signature.