



FLTA Supervisor Toolkit

Introduction

Thank you for serving as a host and supervisor to the FLTAs at your institution. Without your support, this critical U.S. Department of State Exchange Visitor Program would not be possible.

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide you with the resources and information needed to lay the groundwork for a productive and enriching year. It provides information on how to prepare for the FLTA's arrival, on the policies and procedures that the FLTAs must follow, on how to work with the IIE advisor, on FLTA best practices, and on how to navigate common issues that might arise during the year.

Table of Contents

2	Prepare for Your FLTA's Arrival
3	Communicate with Your FLTA During the Summer
4	Pre- and Post-Arrival Checklists
5	FLTA Best Practices
6	FLTA Policies and Procedures
7	Help Your FLTA Navigate Common Issues
8	Working with the IIE Advisor
9	Resources

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Prepare for Your FLTA's Arrival

Planning and communication during the first two to three months before your FLTA's arrival can lay the groundwork for a positive, productive year. Follow these steps to start the year off right:

1. **Communicate regularly with your FLTA** and inform them if you will have limited access to email due to travel plans. If you will be unreachable for an extended period, you should name an available contact to address FLTA inquiries.
2. **Review and understand your FLTA's Terms of Appointment (TOA).** If you have questions or concerns about any details in the TOA, contact the appropriate [IIE Advisor](#).
3. **Request a completed medical form** from your FLTA if you do not already have one. Submit the form to your institution's health services center so they can determine whether the FLTA meets your institution's medical requirements. If the FLTA medical form is not acceptable, remind the FLTA that they must submit your institution's form. FLTAs must be informed if they do not meet your requirements before arriving in the U.S.
4. **Request your FLTA's itinerary** if they have not sent it already. Someone should greet the FLTA at the airport if possible. If this is not possible, provide explicit instructions on transportation from the airport.
5. **Prepare for questions about housing.** Housing concerns FLTAs more than any other issue. The TOA outlines the FLTA's housing arrangements. If FLTAs must locate housing on their own, we recommend arranging temporary lodging for them so they know they will have accommodations while they search for permanent housing. It is critical that the FLTA knows where they will stay their first nights on campus.
 - a. **If a housing application fee is required**, the FLTA will be responsible for paying this. This may be difficult to pay from their country, so we recommend extending fee or deposit deadlines if possible. If this is not possible, IIE may be able to pay the fee and deduct the amount from the FLTA's stipend. Contact the appropriate IIE Advisor for details.
 - b. **If IIE is paying for on-campus housing**, invoices should be sent to GlobalProgramOperations@iie.org.
6. **Help the FLTA register for courses**, and notify the Bursar's Office of the tuition waiver.
7. **Notify the following offices** that FLTA(s) will be on campus.
 - a. The Registrar's office
 - b. The International Student and Scholar Services Office
 - c. The Housing Office
 - d. The Office of Student Life
 - e. The Health Center
 - f. The Campus Police Office
8. **Consider developing your own checklist** to send to the FLTA prior to their arrival. They will appreciate knowing what they must do before and after arriving on campus.

Communicate with Your FLTA During the Summer

Your FLTA has been advised to contact you during the summer regarding the following topics to help ensure that they are prepared for their FLTA Program and that they have realistic expectations about their FLTA experience.

- Travel to their host institution.** Specific topics include the best route and mode of transportation, how they should spend their gap period, airport pickup, housing, and what materials they should bring from their home country.
- Life in their host community.** FLTAs are asked to do thorough research on life in their host community and at their host campus and to contact you with any questions that arise. Topics that they might bring up range from transportation to community engagement.
- Housing.** Housing concerns FLTAs more than any other topic, so please be prepared to answer questions about this topic.
- Access to housing and/or the meal plan during campus closures.** If your FLTA will be living on campus and/ or using the campus meal plan, please be prepared to share the dates that these services will be unavailable.
- FLTA Teaching Assistant responsibilities.** Please be prepared to answer questions about your FLTA's teaching assistant duties. FLTAs are informed that these duties are subject to change based on the needs of the department.
- Financial considerations.** If your institution is providing financial considerations, please be prepared to discuss payment terms, payment schedule, tax withholdings, and any paperwork that the FLTA will need to complete.
- Medical form and immunizations.** Please advise your FLTA on how to submit their medical form and any applicable immunization records to your institution.

Pre- and Post-Arrival Checklists

Pre-Arrival Checklists

To ensure the FLTA's safe and smooth arrival, the FLTA should have the following information before departing their country:

- Address where they will be staying upon arrival**, even if this is only temporary housing.
- The complete contact information for their primary and secondary points of contact**, including email and work, home, and mobile phone numbers.
- The name and description of the person who will greet them at the airport**, or explicit instructions on transportation from the airport.

Prior to the FLTA's arrival, the supervisors should have and understand the following:

- The FLTA's Terms of Appointment**
- The FLTA's dossier**, which includes transcripts
- The FLTA's summer orientation assignment and dates**
- The FLTA's travel itinerary**
- An agreement regarding what materials the FLTA should bring** to teach their language and culture. Host institutions should be willing to provide funds if they are requesting that the FLTA bring or ship many items.

Post-Arrival Checklist

Be prepared to complete the following steps after your FLTA arrives:

- Sign the FLTA's Initial Report** within 15 days of the FLTA's arrival on campus. See the "FLTA Policies and Procedures" section of this document for details. Your FLTA will present the form to you for your signature.
- Arrange to have someone assist the FLTA in applying for a Social Security Number if possible.** The FLTA must wait until they receive an email from their IIE advisor informing them that they may apply. If they apply early, their application will be rejected.
- Consult with your business office regarding local and state tax obligations** and whether the FLTA will need to complete any tax forms.
- Provide suggestions about which banks** offer the most convenient locations or services.
- Identify colleagues who can share the management of the FLTA.** We appreciate your attention to their concerns, but it can be a lot for one person and you may not always be available.
- Arrange coverage for any FLTA responsibilities during the week of December 11-15, 2019**, as the FLTA will be required to attend the Mid-Year Conference in Washington, DC during this time.

FLTA Best Practices

Orienting Your FLTA

Many FLTAs participate in a pre-departure orientation and all participate in a summer orientation. It is also a good idea to orient your FLTA to living and working on campus.

- **Register your FLTA to participate in your institution’s international student orientation.** You should exempt your FLTA from sessions that are not relevant to them, such as F-1 student visa regulations, Optional Practical Training, employment, etc.
- **Register your FLTA to participate in your institution’s graduate student orientation.** If this is not possible, discuss your class attendance policy with your FLTA. For example, is it okay for the FLTA to miss class with your permission to attend conferences or workshops?
- **Register your FLTA to participate in your institution’s new faculty orientation.** If this is not possible, share your department’s culture and policies regarding grading, extra credit, practices such as “dropping the lowest test score,” etc.

Getting Involved in the Community

The mission of the Fulbright Program is to promote mutual understanding between the people of the US and the people of other nations. As teaching and studying responsibilities increase, FLTAs tend to neglect their role as a cultural ambassador. Encourage your FLTA to get involved in the community.

- **Encourage your FLTA to join campus clubs and organizations.** This will connect them with US students with shared hobbies and interests.
- **Encourage your FLTA to volunteer in the community.** The website NationalService.gov/Serve hosts a user-friendly database of opportunities to volunteer around the country. Volunteering allows FLTAs to meet members of their community beyond campus.
- **Connect your FLTA with a host family.** Having a host family is a wonderful way for your FLTA to build deeper connections in your community. Host families often greet FLTAs at the airport, provide temporary housing if needed, and invite FLTAs for celebratory meals and holidays. This mutually-beneficial arrangement often leads to lifelong friendships.
- **Work with your FLTA to find opportunities to speak at local schools.** The FLTA may be the only person from their country or region that many Americans will ever meet. Speaking at a school is a unique opportunity to help shape a child’s view of the world and of people of the FLTA’s region. Many hosts establish relationships with local schools and schedule regular monthly or bi-monthly visits.
- **Assign your FLTA responsibilities for international week.** For example, ask them to set up a booth representing their country, participate in a talent show, cook traditional dishes to share, put on a cooking demonstration, etc.
- **Assign your FLTA to host a language table,** movie night, or other activity to share their language and culture in a fun, casual setting.

FLTA Policies and Procedures

The FLTAs must comply with federal J visa regulations and FLTA Program policies and reporting requirements. This section outlines only those policies and requirements which affect you and your work with the FLTA. This is not an exhaustive list of policies and procedures.

- **FLTAs must engage in teaching responsibilities (including preparation) for no more than 20 hours per week.** They must teach the language for which they received the grant. Violating visa regulations around working hours will put the FLTA's J-1 visa status and FLTA Program at risk.
- **The FLTA must enroll in a full-time course of study** during the academic year. This means at least two courses per semester (or one per quarter or trimester). The courses must last the full academic term and must be in-person.
- **Courses must be academic in nature and must relate to the FLTA's professional development as a language teacher.** FLTAs must also take at least one American Studies course during the academic year. FLTAs may not take courses that are elective in nature, unrelated to their professional development, or do not allow them to engage with U.S. students. Examples of unacceptable courses include, but are not limited to, physical education, studio art, performance, online courses, and practicum courses.
- **The FLTA must submit an Initial Report Form** within 15 days of the start of the academic term and a Mid-Term Report Form within 15 days of each subsequent term. These forms certify that the FLTA is enrolled in the required number of courses.
- **The FLTA must maintain satisfactory academic progress.** In general, this is defined as a GPA of 3.0 or higher, though your institution's requirements may be different. If you learn that your FLTA may be struggling academically, notify the appropriate [IIE advisor](#) and connect them with academic assistance.
- **The FLTA must receive your written approval from their direct supervisor before traveling domestically or abroad.**

Help Your FLTA Navigate Common Issues

Culture Shock and Depression

Being away from family and friends is difficult and culture shock is real. Check in with your FLTA regularly and look out for signs of depression, illness, or other issues that could impact their participation in the FLTA Program. If you notice an issue, don't be afraid to ask how they are feeling or to encourage them to visit the counseling center or other resources. Reassure them that seeking counseling is normal in the US and does not carry the stigma that it might in their home country. Identifying and addressing issues early could be the difference between a successful year and returning home early.

Other Common Issues

- **If you notice academic, medical, psychological, or other issues** that could impact the FLTA's program:
 - **Connect the FLTA to the appropriate resource** such as counseling, tutoring, etc.
 - **Inform the appropriate IIE advisor.**
- **If your FLTA feels lonely or isolated, help them connect to the on- and off-campus community.** Encourage them to join campus clubs, volunteer, connect with the international student organization, and join local community groups.
- **Housing is a frequent concern for FLTAs.**
 - **The source of the concern often stems from roommate issues.** If these arise, encourage the FLTAs to have an open, solutions-oriented conversation about the issues and to draft, sign, and post a "rules of the house" document. If issues persist, contact your institution's ombudsman or residential life office for mediation assistance.
 - **If your FLTA cannot locate housing,** suggest useful websites, safe but economical neighborhoods, known landlords and housing agencies, and that they consider living with roommates.
- **Meal plans are another common concern for FLTAs.** If your FLTA is dissatisfied with the meal plan, try the following:
 - **If your institution permits FLTAs to waive the meal plan,** contact the appropriate IIE advisor for guidance on whether amending the Terms of Appointment to provide the FLTA with funds for groceries is an option.
 - **If your institution does not permit waiving the meal plan,** ask the FLTA to work with the campus dining office to identify solutions that meet the FLTA's dietary needs.
- **FLTAs in rural campuses may have difficulty getting around.** Suggest ride sharing tips, educate them on how to use public and campus transportation, and suggest that they consider cycling.
- **FLTAs may feel that their role is on campus undefined or different than they expected.** It's true: they are not quite faculty and not quite students. If possible, include the FLTA in faculty meetings, introduce them to colleagues in the department, and work with them to identify a scope and type of work that meets both your needs. Do your best to treat them like colleagues, and encourage others to do so as well.

Working with the IIE Advisor

What do the IIE Advisors Do?

The [IIE advisors](#) are responsible for supporting you and the FLTAs during the academic year. They advise FLTAs on immigration regulations and FLTA Program policies, visa and grant benefits, and cultural adjustment issues. They monitor and enforce the FLTAs' compliance with J visa regulations and FLTA Program requirements. And they are here to assist you.

When Should I Contact the IIE Advisor?

You are welcome to reach out to the appropriate IIE advisor at any time if you have questions or concerns, however here is a list of common reasons you may need to contact them:

- The FLTA is repeatedly failing to meet expectations in their role as a teaching assistant.
- The FLTA is failing to meet academic expectations or is not attending courses.
- The FLTA is not meeting expectations in their role as a cultural ambassador.
- The FLTA is experiencing housing issues that could not be resolved.
- The FLTA is experiencing medical, psychological, or other issues that may negatively impact their ability to participate in their program.
- If you have questions about FLTA Program policies or procedures or about J visa regulations.
- If there is a significant change to the scope or type of the FLTA's work that may impact their compliance with J visa regulations or FLTA Program policy.
- If you have any other questions or concerns that you would like to discuss with an IIE advisor – they are here to help!
- Please also share good news and positive stories! IIE shares these stories with the Program Sponsors and we often invite these FLTAs to draft blog posts, present at enrichment events, and share their experiences through other media.

Please note that each IIE advisor advises over 200 FLTAs, so we appreciate your efforts to resolve issues first. However, never hesitate to contact your IIE advisor if they can assist – in our experience, issues that are not addressed early can become intractable.

Resources

In addition to this toolkit, the following resources are available for your reference:

- **[The FLTA Supervisor Guidebook](#) is your primary source for information on the FLTA Program.** This guide is stored in the Host Institutions section of Foreign.FulbrightOnline.org under Resources. If you have not reviewed this guide recently, please take some time to revisit it.
- **The Current Fulbrighters section of Foreign.FulbrightOnline.org** is the FLTAs' primary source of information about the FLTA Program. If you do not have the host institution login credentials, contact the appropriate [IIE advisor](#).
- **[The FLTA Toolkit: Preparing for Your FLTA Program](#) is designed to help FLTAs prepare** for their FLTA program. It provides information on travel to the U.S., life in the host community, housing, staying healthy, finances, culture shock, and networking. It also includes a Communication Checklist of topics that they should discuss with you before they depart for the U.S. You may find it useful to review this resource as well. This toolkit is stored in ForeignFulbrightOnline.org under Current Fulbrighters> Pre-Arrival> Prepare for Your FLTA Program.
- **The [IIE advisors](#) are responsible for supporting you and the FLTAs** during the year. See Working with the IIE Advisor in above for details on their role.