

Dear Fulbright Austria Program participants,

I would like to express my appreciation for your continued dedication to the Fulbright Program. This message has been coordinated in response to the issues raised in the letter “Fulbright Austria funding and petition for increase” which was delivered to our office in hard copy on June 21, 2022.

Allow me to begin by shedding light on several terms used in your letter which will help clarify several issues raised.

The purpose of a stipend is to support Fulbright students with their study and research costs in other countries, including in Austria. The purpose, however, is not to pay the costs of all expenses incurred while living abroad. It should be noted that Austrian US Fulbright student grant payments are made at the start of the individual’s grant activity in Austria. A student grant is not considered income.

Fulbright grants for US Fulbright students consist of two parts, including a monthly grant payment. US Fulbright students in Austria also receive additional benefits, including a travel and relocation allowance of EUR 2000, a tuition waiver, Austrian health insurance, enrollment in the US State Department’s Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE), and reimbursement for residence permit costs and German language courses.

Poverty can be defined and measured in different ways. The “at-risk-of-poverty threshold” measures a low household income relative to the median income of the population. It is an indicator for measuring relative poverty or income inequality. However, a stipend is not considered household income in the sense of the statistic used to establish the “at-risk-of-poverty threshold,” as its defined purpose is to finance or support a university education.

In closing, I assure you that Fulbright Austria takes feedback very seriously in developing and improving the US Fulbright Student Program. Your concerns raised about financial support have been carefully reviewed in the context of the budget and the requirements of the Fulbright Program in Austria to assist students during their programs abroad. At the moment no further changes to stipends for US Fulbright student can be offered.

Best regards,

[Executive Director of Fulbright Austria]