

CIRCULAR I 2009

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PART B: TEACHING ASSISTANTS 2009/2010

I. INTRODUCTION

The Fulbright Teaching Assistants program is jointly sponsored and jointly administered by the Fulbright Commission and the *Pädagogischer Austauschdienst* (PAD). PAD has arranged your placement at a German school as a teaching assistant (PAD refers to your position as *Fremdsprachenassistent*). Your grant is subject to you receiving and taking up the position negotiated through PAD. The exact school location will be announced by the school authorities of each *Bundesland* in the next few weeks. At this point a general placement confirmation has been received from the *Bundesland* in which your school is located (see Item 7 of Grant Authorization).

For the forth time, we have been able to continue the Teaching Assistants Diversity Program. We have created an additional 20 positions for teaching assistants in selected German schools that have a high proportion of students with immigrant backgrounds and that have demonstrated a commitment to and interest in transatlantic issues. For these positions we have selected 20 applicants with pertinent experience, background and motivation. Maintenance and related benefits are identical for all teaching assistants. We will provide teaching assistants participating in the Diversity Program with further information on developments and special opportunities separately. Your grant authorization shows in item 4 "Diversity Program" so that you can identify yourself as a grantee in this specific program.

Please note: Your placement and assignment at your host school are the responsibility of PAD. We will talk more about this during the orientation conference at Altenberg.

II. ARRIVAL AND ORIENTATION MEETING

1) Meeting in Cologne

- a) All teaching assistants will meet in Cologne (*Köln* in German) for the bus transfer to the nearby town Altenberg, where the orientation meeting will be held from **September 7-10, 2009**. Please note the meeting place and time:

**Cologne (Köln)
Hauptbahnhof
Monday, September 7, 2009
3:30 pm**

The exact meeting point will be announced by PAD.

You will have to register for the orientation meeting with the PAD directly, not with the Fulbright Commission. The PAD will send you the necessary registration form.

b) Additional advice:

- If you are delayed on the day the orientation begins, please call the Haus Altenberg (orientation site) at **02174-419-670 or 02174-419-0 or the PAD office 0228-501226**. In case of emergencies, you may also call **0170-2404942** (this is the Fulbright emergency mobile number).
- Don't be late! If you miss our buses, it will cost you approximately Euro 50 for a taxi ride to Altenberg, as there is no frequent public transportation.

- c) **Early Arrivals:** In the past, Fulbright teaching assistants have often arrived early in Germany in order to visit their host school or city before the start of orientation. Also, arriving in Köln before the September 8 might provide you with a brief rest before the orientation meeting starts in Altenberg.

If you decide to arrive before orientation starts, please:

- Remember that the start dates for schools will vary by *Bundesland*, and your school might still be on summer break when you arrive.
- Try to leave your bulky luggage in your host city.
If you come to Köln directly from the U.S., you can bring your luggage along to Altenberg (but remember you will have to handle the luggage yourself!). Do not leave your luggage at an airport or the train station.

- You will be responsible for arranging and paying for your own trip to Köln, as well as for your hotel arrangements in Köln or elsewhere. We will explain in Altenberg if and how much we can reimburse for your actual transportation expenses.
- Most importantly: make sure to arrive at the *Hauptbahnhof* in Köln by the above mentioned date and time.

Below are some contacts that may be useful if you arrive early in Köln:

Tourist Office in Köln

www.koeln.de
Koelntourismus@stadt-koeln.de

Jugendherberge Köln-Deutz

Siegestr. 5a
50679 Köln
Phone: +49-221-814-711
Fax: +49-221-884-425
Email: jh-koeln-deutz@djh-rheinland.de
www.djh.de/jugendherbergen/koeln-deutz

Jugendherberge Köln-Riehl

An der Schanz 14
50735 Köln
Phone: +49-221-767-081
Fax: +49-221-761-555
Email: jh-koeln-riehl@djh-rheinland.de
www.djh.de/jugendherbergen/koeln-riehl

2) Transfer to Altenberg

- From Köln, you will travel to Altenberg by chartered bus. After arriving in Altenberg, you can check into your rooms and will then receive the program schedule for the orientation.
- The orientation meeting will be held at:

Haus Altenberg
Ludwig-Wolker-Straße 12
51519 Odenthal-Altenberg
Phone: +49 (0) 2174 - 419-0
Fax: +49 (0)2174- 419-903

Haus Altenberg is a conference center for young people. It is efficient, but not luxurious. Rooms have 2 - 3 occupants, and bed sheets and towels are provided. There are no telephones in the rooms, but pay/card phones are available. Meals will be provided. There are no costs for you except for your personal expenses.

- The meetings at orientation will cover a number of general and specific pedagogic items. Several experts in the field of education and exchange will help you prepare for your assignment. There will also be time to discuss administrative matters, such as health insurance, and you will meet with the staff of the Fulbright Commission and PAD, as well as with former teaching assistants. The orientation meeting will also include a separate meeting on September 10 (between 9 am and 2 pm) in which Fulbright specific matters will be covered. **Participation in all portions of the orientation meeting is mandatory.**

3) Travel to Your Host City

- The orientation program ends on September 10. PAD will provide transportation from Altenberg to Köln by bus. From there, you will be able to travel to your host schools individually by train. Departure from Altenberg will be around 11: 30 am except for the participants in the Diversity Teaching Assistant Program, who will be able to leave at about 2 pm.
Please note that the trip from Altenberg to Cologne will take at least an hour so that you do not plan your train tickets out of Cologne for too early.

- b) Train ticket to host city:
Purchase a *BahnCard 50* (which will give you a 50% discount on train tickets) and the train ticket from Köln to your host city. The Fulbright Commission will reimburse you for cost of the train ticket. If possible, we suggest taking care of this **before** you meet with us on September 7. You will also receive information and suggestions on travel arrangements at orientation and can also buy the ticket on the day of departure at the train station.
- c) Your school assignment will always begin after the orientation meeting, even if school has already started in your respective *Bundesland*. In *Bundesländer* where school begins later, you will have a few extra free days.

III. GRANT BENEFITS

1) Monthly Allowances

Background information: The *Bundesländer* provide the monthly stipend for most grantees. In order to increase the pool of grantees the Fulbright Commission funds about 20 grantees directly. Further grantees are funded by a special allocation of the Federal Government. These three sources normally all provide the same benefits so that all teaching assistants receive the same amount.

HOWEVER, as of this program year most unfortunately not all *Bundesländer* have decided to increase the monthly allowance from Euro 703 to Euro 800. The result is that several teaching assistants will remain at the Euro 703 level. We ask for your understanding and acceptance, if you are personally affected by this. The alternative would have been to accept fewer applications for the program.

As a teaching assistant, you will receive a monthly allowance of Euro 703 or 800 for the duration of your assignment. This assignment starts on September 7, 2009 will run until June 30, 2010 or the end of your school year, if shorter.

As mentioned above, the Teaching Assistants program is jointly sponsored by Fulbright and the PAD. Therefore some teaching assistants will receive maintenance support from the Fulbright Commission and most from the *Länder* (check your Grant Authorization: Item 8A specifies where your maintenance support will come from).

2) German Health and Accident Insurance

In addition to the Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) insurance provided by the U.S. State Department for all Fulbright grantees, PAD will provide you with a rather comprehensive health insurance coverage through *Deutscher Ring Krankenversicherung*. This will be explained in more detail at the orientation meeting in Altenberg.

Please Note: If you have a pre-existing condition requiring continued medication and/or treatment, or if you have any questions about your health insurance coverage through *Deutscher Ring Krankenversicherung*, please write to PAD and check the ASPE benefits. PAD's health insurance package may also include a *Haftpflichtversicherung* (liability).

3) Accompanying Spouses

If you are married and plan to be accompanied by your spouse, please inform us and PAD immediately. The Fulbright Commission will provide for your spouse's orientation meeting costs, but cannot provide any further financial support of spouses.

IV. OTHER MATTERS

1) HOUSING: ACT IMMEDIATELY!

As mentioned in Part A, it is critical that you start looking for housing as soon as you know your assigned school and city. The following section should help you start your search and establish contacts. In many cities, i.e. Munich or Hamburg, you may find it extremely difficult to secure housing at a reasonable price within the vicinity of your host institution. You must be prepared to spend a few days, or even weeks, looking for a suitable place. Once you have your school assignment information please contact your host school to obtain help in finding suitable housing.

2) Experiment in International Living Program (EIL)

If you are interested in living with a host family, you can also take part in Experiment in International Living Program (EIL), however, at your own expense. It covers the two weeks before your orientation. If you wish to take part in the EIL, you will be responsible for the costs (total participation cost is Euro 250). For more information on this program, visit the website: http://www.experiment-ev.de/de/Programme/Fulbright_DAAD_Programm/index.php or mail to info@experiment-ev.de.

If you are interested in participating, please submit the Experiment e.V. application form as soon as possible.

3) Current Teaching Assistants

Teaching assistants from the 2008/2009 academic year will remain in Germany until late June. We enclose their contact information and encourage you to contact them. They are eager to share their experiences with you, especially if they are in the same *Bundesland* as you will be.

You can contact them with any questions on your role as a teaching assistant, teaching materials to bring along, the school system in your *Bundesland*, and on matters like housing and cost of living. They will be able to provide you with a current and personal assessment.

Joining the e-Group forum on our webpage (www.fulbright.de/togermany/resources/ta_listserv.shtml) will also allow you to contact current grantees.

4) University Admission

If you are interested in attending university classes and your assignment is in or near a university city, the Fulbright Commission may be able to help with the admissions process.

Please contact us immediately if you are interested. Full matriculation for the *Wintersemester* would require that we/you apply by June 15. If you would like to try to enroll for a later start date (e.g., for the *Sommersemester* 2010), please bring your original high school and bachelor's diploma, or notarized copies of both. The Fulbright Commission may be able to supply your transcripts to the German university upon request. You need proof of adequate German health insurance, which you can request from the *Deutscher Ring* insurance provided through your teaching assistantship.

As some German universities now charge tuition, please note that you would have to pay the full tuition fee (Euro 500 per semester) if the requested university charges this to you. To save time and money please check the website of the university and/or ask us.

5) Berlin Fulbright Meeting

The Fulbright Commission invites you to participate in the annual Fulbright Meeting in March of 2010 in Berlin. Dates and details will follow in due time.

6) Your Placement

You are participating in a large program sponsored by the German *Länder*, the German government and the Fulbright program. Unfortunately, it is not possible to place everyone in his or her ideal city or type of school. Regardless of where you are placed, we are sure you will have a great experience – you will be immersed in the German school system and German students are generally very eager to learn from an American teaching assistant.

Along with the professional pedagogic goals of the program, your cultural experience is very important to us. Make the best out of your placement. There will be many opportunities for you to perform in various fields, but you will have to be proactive! The forthcoming elections in the US will make you as an American citizen an attractive and much demanded speaker. Please use these opportunities in a responsible way.

We congratulate you once again on your award and hope that you will enjoy your stay in Germany. We look forward to meeting you and being of assistance to you whenever we can.

V. YOUR NEXT STEPS

Please keep in mind that you will need to take care of the following items immediately:

1) Items to Return to Commission:

- One signed Copy of Grant Authorization (mail)
- Two passport-sized Photos (mail)
- Orientation Registration (e-mail or mail)

2) Further Steps:

- Send two copies of your Grant Authorization to the Institute of International Education
- Check the validity of your passport
- Make a flight reservation
- Investigate the best ways to send luggage
- Contact current grantees regarding general assignment information and materials
- Remember the meeting time and place in Köln: **September 7 at 3:30 pm**, Köln Hauptbahnhof