

SEARCHING AND APPLYING FOR ACADEMIC FUNDING

Applying for academic funding will hone your ability to present scholarship to an academic audience, facilitate your research, and make you a more attractive job market candidate. This guide for graduate students focuses on the process of searching and applying for academic funding opportunities.

There are generally two types of academic funding:

Fellowships usually provide stipend support to allow you to complete your research

Grants usually fund costs associated with carrying out a specific research project as outlined in a proposed budget.

Casting a wide net is ideal, but preparing these applications is time-consuming! Prioritize your target funding opportunities based on:

- The timing (your career stage)
- Your need (consider your funding needs one year ahead)
- Your odds of winning (typical success rates and your fit with the funding institution's goals),
- Other personal and/or professional considerations such as how this will affect your access to resources through the funding institution, your total income and the way your income is taxed, and access to benefits like health insurance.

The last page of this guide provides a list of resources for identifying specific funding opportunities suited to you.

Once You've Identified a Target Funding Opportunity

Carefully check your eligibility. This may include factors such as your career stage, your research field, certain demographic information, and your citizenship status. Note that even within the same funding institution, eligibility requirements may differ among fellowships!

International students: In addition to the funding institution's eligibility requirements, be mindful that accepting funding in a way that could be considered "off-campus employment" or from your home country could affect your immigration status in the future, depending on your visa type and other circumstances. Always consult with the Office of International Students & Scholars (OISS) and keep funding information on your visa documents up-to-date.

Read the application instructions from start to finish, more than one time. Make sure you understand all parts of the application before you start.

Create a to-do list, following the application instructions carefully. Identify documents you need to gather, pieces you need to write, and anyone whose help you will need (e.g., reference letter writers, the Office of Sponsored Projects, advisors or peers to give you feedback).

Note deadlines for application components and create a schedule for tackling each of them.

A funding application will likely include some or all of the following components and may include others that are specific to the funding institution. These take time to assemble, so get started on them early!

- Application Form
- Abstract
- Research Proposal
- Personal Statement
- Writing Sample (can be a publication or dissertation chapter)
- Teaching Statement or Portfolio
- Diversity Statement or other addenda
- Recommendation Letters
- Enrollment Verification or Transcript (Yale Registrar's Office)
- CV
- Budget
- Proof of Institutional Affiliation (for international research)
- IRB approval or exemption (for research involving human subjects)

Application Writing Tips

Know your audience! Are the reviewers for this fellowship/grant specialists or non-specialists in your research area? What do they care about?

Aim for clarity and brevity. Remember that reviewers spend little time on each application.

Tailor your essays for each fellowship. Examine the fellowship description for key phrases about the funding institution's goals, and if possible learn more about this from previous awardees, and tailor your application to match those goals.

A **research proposal** should include a clear research question, a description of its significance (that the fellowship reviewers understand), evidence you will obtain to address this question, and methods for obtaining that evidence. Remember to align the importance of your research question with the goals of the funding institution.

A **personal statement** should be a narrative of your development as a scholar, including relevant biographical, academic, and professional information that portray you as someone aligned with the funding institute's mission and well suited to carry out the proposed project. Remember that a personal statement is not a CV, nor is it a dramatic "story of your life." Use the prompt and examples to gauge how personal this statement should be.

A **diversity statement** can take a variety of forms. In general, diversity statements should cover your personal interests and awareness of inclusivity issues, process-oriented discussions of your methods for promoting diversity and inclusion, and interest in future initiatives. Use the prompt to gauge how to balance these elements of your diversity statement.

Get feedback on your application materials! Assemble a team of feedback-givers from within and outside your field, including your advisor(s) and people who have previously received this fellowship or grant. At the Graduate Writing Lab, you can get feedback in writing consultations with our GWL Fellows—experienced fellowship writers trained to support you in all your writing goals.

Jump-Start Your Funding Search!

Learn about funding opportunities that may be applicable to you through your professional networks—what funding opportunities do your advisor and peers know about, and what funding opportunities do major organizations in your field sponsor?

Below is a non-comprehensive list of funding organizations that support research at various levels, from pre-doctoral to post-doctoral, and **resources for finding funding opportunities**. Use this list to orient yourself to the kinds of institutions that award funding, then tailor your funding search to your research area and career stage, among other criteria.

Yale Resources:

[Office of Sponsored Projects](#)

[Yale Fellowships and Funding](#)

[GSAS PhD Student Funding Overview](#)

[GSAS Master's Student Funding Overview](#)

[MacMillan Center for International & Area](#)

Databases:

[Yale Student Grants Database](#)

[Sponsored Programs Information Network \(SPIN\)](#) through Yale's subscription

[ProFellow Professional and Academic Fellowships Database](#)

[Predoctoral Funding Opportunities Database \(Johns Hopkins\)](#)

[Postdoctoral Funding Opportunities Database \(Johns Hopkins\)](#)

[Humanities Fellowships and Grants \(University of Florida\)](#)

Funding Agencies for Advanced Education and Research:

Federal Agencies (e.g., [NSF](#), [NIH](#), [EPA](#), [DoD](#), [NASA](#), [NEA](#), [NEH](#)) [N](#)

[The Marshall Scholarships](#)

[National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine](#)

[Association of American University Women](#)

[The Philanthropic Educational Organization](#)

[The Wellcome Trust](#)

Resources for International Students and New American Students:

Use the “Non-U.S. citizens are eligible” filter in the [Yale Student Grants Database](#)

Use the “citizenship” filter in [SPIN](#)

[Funding for US Study](#) (Institute of International Education)

[Immigrants Rising](#)

Agencies in your home country

[Soros Fellowship for New Americans](#)

Also explore funding opportunities from: Academic Associations (think of the organizations that sponsor meetings in your field), **Libraries or Museums** where you will conduct research or that focus on your research area, **International Agencies** from the country where you will conduct research, **Cultural & Identity-Based Organizations** that support students from specific demographic backgrounds, and **Private Philanthropic Organizations** with an interest in your research area.