

Ford Foundation Fellowships: A Workshop
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Sources for this presentation

- I have included excerpts from the official guidelines for the pre-doctoral and dissertation fellowships. These guidelines are available on the Ford Foundation Fellowship website.
- When you see “Note:” this is my comment on a particular criteria or aspect of the application.
- I also use blue to indicate important points, and to highlight my “Notes.”

Very Important

- Please read the instructions on the Ford Foundation Fellowships website carefully and give yourself time to put your application together:
- <https://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/FordFellowships/index.htm>
- Online application deadline: Dec. 16, 2021
- Announcement of Awards: March 2022 (once the Review Panels have met)
- There are announcements on this Home Page for each of the following:
 - Pre-doctoral Fellowships
 - Dissertation Fellowships
 - Post-doctoral Fellowships

Pre-doctoral Fellowships

- Positive Factors for Selection:
 - Evidence of **superior** academic achievement
 - Degree of promise of continuing achievement as scholars and teachers
 - Capacity to respond in pedagogically productive ways to the learning needs of students from diverse backgrounds
- Note:
 - This particular point can be emphasized in the Personal Statement
 - How have you, or do you address diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom—as a TA, or AI, in your graduate program, or in your experience teaching at any level outside the university?
 - How does your pedagogy work to engage students in the understanding of diversity at a deeper level than merely “multi-culturalism”?
- Sustained personal engagement with communities that are underrepresented in the academy and an ability to bring this asset to learning, teaching, and scholarship at the college and university level.
 - Note: Often applicants have experience working with communities from diverse backgrounds outside of academia.

Pre-doctoral Fellowships

- Positive Factors for Selection (continued)
- • Likelihood of using the diversity of human experience as an educational resource in teaching and scholarship
- Note: The “diversity of human experience” can be interpreted as knowing the contributions to humanity by all peoples, but in particular those peoples who have been considered marginalized, and therefore insignificant. In teaching and scholarship, how do you manifest an understanding of and respect for the multiple facets of difference?
- • Membership in one or more of the following groups whose underrepresentation in the American professoriate has been severe and longstanding:
 - o Alaska Natives (Aleut, Eskimo, or other Indigenous People of Alaska)
 - o Black/African Americans
 - o Mexican Americans/Chicanas/Chicanos
 - o Native American Indians
 - o Native Pacific Islanders (Hawaiian/Polynesian/Micronesian)
- o Puerto Ricans

Application Components

- **Profile Information**
- Contact information, demographic information, education history (name, location, enrolled dates, degree received or currently pursuing, and research field for all undergraduate and graduate institutions attended or currently attending as of Fall 2021), employment history, honors, and awards

Education history (including current Ph.D. or Sc.D. institution, if applicable) must be entered here correctly. Entering incomplete or incorrect information may result in missing documents (transcripts and a verification form, if applicable).

Applicants are encouraged to enter any employment starting from the time period of their undergraduate studies. **This may include unpaid work, internships, outreach efforts, or volunteer activities.** **Note: the above can work to verify what you say in your personal statement.**

- *Note: Contact and demographic information is required for submission of the application but will not be shared with application reviewers.*

Application Components

- **Application Main:**
- **Proposed Plan of Study: Dissertation Title or Proposed Title for Research Project, Proposed Institution, Department, Adviser/Mentor**

For Predoctoral applicants who do not yet have a dissertation title, please enter a tentative title or more general topic of study. This should be a brief phrase describing an area of proposed research; it does not need to be exact or comprehensive of the full plan of the Ph.D. or Sc.D. program.

- **Note: In other words, what is it that compels you to do the work you're doing? What are the areas of focus that you will be seeking to weave in your work?**

If you are applying to multiple Ph.D. or Sc.D. programs, enter your first choice of Ph.D. or Sc.D. institution. It is not required to list an Adviser/Mentor if you do not have one at the time of application.

Field of Study:

Primary Field of Study, Secondary Field(s) of Study. [This information is used to match applications to appropriate review panels.](#)

Keywords: Enter 3-5 keywords, one at a time. Click Assign new keyword and type the desired keyword in the search field. If your keyword appears, click on it from the list to update your keywords. If your keyword does not appear, click Add to update your keywords.

Personal Statements: You are introducing yourself to the Review Panelists. This essay is usually the first one the reviewers read.

- Personal statement describing the applicant's background, experience, and commitment to the goals of the Ford Foundation Fellowship Programs by addressing all of the following that apply:
 - the applicant's capacity to respond in pedagogically productive ways to the learning needs of students from diverse backgrounds
 - the applicant's sustained personal engagement with communities that are underrepresented in the academy and ability to bring this asset to learning, teaching, and scholarship at the college or university level
 - the applicant's likelihood of using the diversity of human experience as an educational resource in teaching and scholarship
 - the applicant's membership in one or more of the following groups whose underrepresentation in the American professoriate has been severe and longstanding:
 - Alaska Natives (Aleut, Eskimo, or other Indigenous People of Alaska)
 - Black/African Americans
 - Mexican Americans/Chicanas/Chicanos
 - Native American Indians
 - Native Pacific Islanders (Hawaiian/Polynesian/Micronesian)
 - Puerto Ricans

Personal Statements, continued

- Applicants should describe their past and ongoing community service efforts such as:
 - Tutoring and mentoring students in challenging environments
 - Participation in housing or public service projects
 - Note: For example, some applicant have devoted time to working in prisons with under-served communities—some have done immigrants' rights work and/or other forms of activism—some have created community reading groups)
 - Leadership and organizational skills that benefit a larger community
 - Campus-based student activities
 - Language teaching
 - Involvement in professional organizations that serve the community
- Applicants should note anything in their background that speaks to their unique perspective:
 - Membership of a group designated by the Ford Foundation Fellowship Programs as currently underrepresented in the American professoriate
 - Membership of another underserved group
 - First person or generation in family to achieve college degree or seek advanced degree

Personal Statements, continued

- Applicants may also cite the following:
 - Teaching methods and academic interests that are inclusive and sensitive to diversity
 - Any successes that can be attributed to using new techniques to create an inclusive and respectful teaching and learning environment
 - Personal goals, both long-standing and future-focused, that involve increasing understanding in the college or university setting and are in the broader context
 - Employment that demonstrates a long-standing commitment to diversity and depth of understanding of a multicultural society
 - Efforts to improve access and opportunity for all, particularly in one's local community (neighborhood, place of worship, geographic region)
- Remember, maximum two pages, 12 font, double-spaced.

How applications are evaluated

- Applications will be evaluated by panels of distinguished scholars selected by the National Academies. The panels will use
 - academic records
 - essays
 - **letters of recommendation**
- the application itself, and other appropriate materials as the basis for determining the extent to which candidates meet the eligibility requirements and the positive factors for selection.
- **the suitability of the proposed institution for the applicant's plan of graduate study** and the likelihood that they will require a minimum of three years to complete their Ph.D. or Sc.D. study as of the 2022 fall semester.

Essays

- For the pre-doctoral fellowships:
- Prepare and upload essay documents. Essays must be the applicant's original work.
- Get feedback from advisers, mentors, and colleagues.
- Carefully proofread all documents.
- Avoid technical jargon.
- Also, stay within the page/font/spacing criteria.

Essays, continued

- **Statement of Previous Research and Scholarly Productivity (one document, maximum three pages total, 12-point font), including a summary of previous research (double-spaced) and a list of publications and presentations (single-spaced)**
- Applicants should outline any previous research undertaken. If formal research has not been carried out, applicants should describe any activities they believe have prepared them to begin research.
 - Description of research as part of coursework or outside of class in an internship or summer research program
 - Explanation of methods used and expected results of current research
 - **Note:** Sometimes in undergraduate programs, students have the opportunity to take research methodologies courses, or they've done independent study to work on graduate school writing samples, or they've participated in research clusters on their campus.
 - At UC Davis, we have mentoring programs for undergraduates—these should be mentioned.
- List of publications and presentations for the last five years. Items should be listed in the following order:
 - Publications in reverse chronological order
 - Presentations in reverse chronological order
 - **Note:** Sometimes an applicant is a creative writer—a poet, fiction writer—in this case literary readings can be listed.

Essays, continued

- **Proposed Plan of Graduate Study and Research and the applicant's long-range career goals (maximum two pages, 12-point font, double-spaced)**
- Applicants should prepare a document describing the proposed plan of graduate study. In general, the more academic experience the applicant has, the more sophisticated the proposal should be.
 - Description of the chosen area of study and the research issue of interest
 - Explanation of why the chosen institution is especially suited to the field of study and the type of study to be undertaken
 - Explanation of the relevancy of courses to be taken and how they relate to the proposed plan of study and research
 - Description of the research to be conducted including general methods and a timeline
 - Explanation of long-range career goals and how this fellowship will advance the applicant's career
 - Explanation of how proposed research relates to a larger community and society as a whole and why study will be useful
- Applicants may wish to ask their adviser or a professor in their discipline to review the proposed plan (especially for substance, clarity, and organization) prior to submission.
- **Note: It is important to show that you know the institution you have chosen, the program you are in, or are applying to, the faculty with whom you want to work, and the strengths of your chosen mentor, or Major Professor. Be precise about this part—keep in mind that your entire essay's maximum length is two pages.**

Supplementary Materials: Letters

- **References: Names and contact information of a minimum of three (maximum of five) individuals who will upload a letter of recommendation on the applicant's behalf.**
 - While it is at the discretion of the applicant to select individuals to write letters on their behalf, **it is recommended (not required) that the following letter writers be included in the application if applicable:**
 - At least one letter writer should be a faculty member whom the applicant has worked with in their present (or most recent) department.
 - If the applicant has entered a new graduate program in Fall 2021, at least one letter writer should be the applicant's faculty adviser or other faculty member in the applicant's current department.
 - If the applicant has participated in an undergraduate or summer research program, a letter from the adviser or mentor could be particularly valuable.
 - Letters of recommendation from faculty members who know the applicant well are the most useful.
 - **Letters of recommendation from personal friends, clergy, medical doctors, and family members are not appropriate.**
 - Requesting four or five letters is recommended to ensure the minimum number of three letters is received.
 - **Applicants should provide each letter writer a copy of their essays and any other relevant information which will enable the writer to submit a strong letter on their behalf.**

Letters of Recommendation

- **Note:**
- Be wise in selecting your letter writers.
- Give your letter writers plenty of time to write for you.
- Ask each letter writer if they are comfortable writing a strong letter for you, and if they have time. If they say no, thank them anyway.
- Provide them with all they need to write a strong letter of support.
- Ideally, provide them with drafts of your essays for the application—this will help them be precise.
- Sometimes a letter writer might ask you what you would like for them to emphasize. Be prepared to offer some suggestions.
- Letters from agencies you've worked for, or community organizations you've supported, could be "additional letters" (perhaps one), but your main letters should speak to the strength of your proposal, and the promise of your scholarship and teaching.
- Sometimes letter writers say more about your proposal than you do, or they say it more clearly and precisely. (Here is a reminder to vet your proposal with individuals who are adept at reading these kinds of applications.)
- Ask your letter writer if they would like you to send them a friendly reminder when the due date is approaching. (Some faculty appreciate this.)

Letters of Recommendation, continued

- Letters of recommendation (three minimum; five maximum)

Applications with fewer than three letters of recommendation submitted by January 6, 2022, at 5 PM EST will not be reviewed.

- If the applicant is currently in graduate school, at least one letter should be submitted by a faculty adviser or other faculty member in the applicant's current department.
- If the applicant is not currently in graduate school, then the letters should be from faculty who know the applicant's work well, from coursework taken, or, perhaps the applicant worked as a research assistant to a faculty member, or perhaps the applicant wrote a senior thesis, or honor's thesis under the guidance of the faculty member. Letters from campus or community organizations might be ok if they are letters #4 or #5. Letters #1, #2, #3 should be from faculty.

Reviewers
(for all of the
fellowships, pre-
doctoral,
dissertation, and
post-doctoral).
This is from my
own experience
as a reviewer.

- There are two levels of review:
- Off-site: Panelists are asked to review approximately 10-15 applications off-site, in advance of the meeting. This begins the ranking of applications.
- On-site: Panelists meet in person, in their corresponding panels, to conduct the final reviews. The reviews are done electronically, with a Ford Foundation Fellowship staff member assisting each panel. The staff member keeps track of the overall scoring while the panelists continue working. This meeting is usually in March.
- The Review Panels meet for two days, often in Washington, D.C., at the National Academies site. Usually, pre-doctoral applications are done on the first day, and the dissertation and post-doctoral applications are done on the second day.
- Once all the scoring is in, then the panelists engage in discussions of the top scorers, and determine who the awardees will be, as well as the alternates, and Honorable Mentions.

Fields of Study
(for both pre-
doctoral
fellowship and
dissertation
fellowship
applications)

- <http://nrc58.nas.edu/FordApplicants20/ExtRpts/FieldCodeList.aspx>
x
- Please choose carefully when you list your primary and secondary fields of study. This will guide the Ford Foundation Fellowship staff in assigning your application for off-site and on-site reviews.

Dissertation Fellowships

- Much of the Dissertation Fellowship application materials are similar to those for the pre-doctoral and post-doctoral fellowships.
- The Eligibility Checklist and the Profile Information are similar.
- In terms of the Essays, the Personal Statement is also very much the same.

Dissertation Fellowships, continued

- **Application Main**

Proposed Plan of Study: Dissertation Title or Proposed Title for Research Project, Proposed Institution, Department, Adviser/Mentor

Field of Study:

Primary Field of Study, Secondary Field(s) of Study. [This information is used to match applications to appropriate review panels.](#)

Keywords: Enter 3-5 keywords, one at a time. Click Assign new keyword and type the desired keyword in the search field. If your keyword appears, click on it from the list to update your keywords. If your keyword does not appear, click Add to update your keywords.

Dissertation Fellowships, continued

- **Statement of Previous Research and Scholarly Productivity (one document, maximum three pages total, 12-point font), including a summary of previous research (double-spaced) and a list of publications and presentations (single-spaced)**
- Applicants should outline any previous research including:
- Undergraduate research including any summer research programs or summer, part-time, or full-time employment
- Research conducted to date during graduate study including research progress on the dissertation
- For graduate level research, include goals, general methodology, major results, and impacts of the research
- Note: At UC Davis, graduate students have the opportunity to pursue a Designated Emphasis (DE) with another graduate program. This would be important to mention, because it shows you as an applicant, and your willingness to seek what you need outside of your program if necessary.
- List of publications and presentations for the last five years. Items should be listed in the following order:
 - Publications in reverse chronological order
 - Presentations in reverse chronological order
- **Abstract of Dissertation (maximum one page, 12-point font, double-spaced)**

Dissertation Fellowships, continued

- **Proposed Plan for Completion of Dissertation and timeline describing the applicant's long-range career goals (maximum three pages total, 12-point font, double-spaced)**
- Applicants should describe the work they expect to undertake if awarded a fellowship.
- Description of the overall framework of the dissertation
- Summary of research remaining to be completed for the dissertation, including a description of technical methods, data sources and collection, sampling methods, analytical methods, etc.
- A timeline for writing the dissertation including a discussion of possible barriers to completing writing during the period of the fellowship
- Expected timing of defense of the dissertation
- Description of how the dissertation work will facilitate and enhance the applicant's career plans and contribute to the field of study
- Applicants may wish to ask their dissertation adviser or a professor in their discipline to review the proposed plan (especially for substance, clarity, and organization) prior to submission.
- **Note: Often, reviewers will determine whether the dissertation can be completed in the fellowship year, and this could be a factor.**

Dissertation Fellowships, continued

- **Annotated Bibliography (no maximum page limit beyond the limit of the ten key sources, 12-point font, entries may be single-spaced)**

Applicants should prepare a document which includes two to four sentences each for no more than ten key sources, including primary and secondary sources, which are the most important in shaping the current status of the problem which the applicant will be studying. This listing of the important work in the field is intended to provide context to reviewers.

- **Note: The reviewers will be familiar with the works listed in the annotated bibliography, so keep in mind both classic, indispensable sources, as well as more recent sources.**

Letters of Recommendation

- **References: Names and contact information of a minimum of three (maximum of five) individuals who will upload a letter of recommendation on the applicant's behalf.**
- While it is at the discretion of the applicant to select individuals to write letters on their behalf, it is recommended (not required) that the following letter writers be included in the application:
 - One of the letter writers should be the applicant's dissertation adviser.
 - Other letter writers should be able to comment on the applicant's proposed plan for the completion of the dissertation.
 - Letter writers should be faculty members in the applicant's field who are acquainted with the applicant's intellectual ability and long-range goals.
 - Letters of recommendation from personal friends, clergy, medical doctors, and family members are not appropriate.
- **Requesting four or five letters is recommended to ensure the minimum number of three letters is received.**
- Applicants should provide each letter writer a copy of their essays and any other relevant information which will enable the writer to submit a strong letter on their behalf.
- Letters must be saved in .docx or .pdf format and must not exceed 4MB.
- It is the responsibility of the applicant to notify their letter writers through the online application system. Once applicants take this action, letter writers will receive an e-mail notification from FordApplications@nas.edu with a link to [instructions](#) on the content of their letters. **Letter writers must upload their letters via the online application module.** The Fellowships Office will not accept hard copy letters or letters sent as e-mail attachments.
- It is the practice of the Ford Foundation Fellowships Program that letters of recommendation are not made available to applicants.

Monitoring the application

- Applicants should regularly monitor application completeness using the tools provided in the fellowship application to ensure that all required supplementary materials have been received before the January 6, 2022, 5 PM EST deadline. No extensions or exceptions will be made, and incomplete applications will not be included in the competition.
- The benefit of monitoring is that you will know when letters have arrived, and if you see they have not been uploaded, you can send a reminder to the letter writer(s). You can also make sure that the supplementary materials, such as transcripts, etc. have been uploaded successfully.
- **Monitoring submissions:** You and your reference will receive an e-mail confirmation once a letter has been successfully submitted. You can also monitor these submissions on the **References** and **Data Review** pages.

What to do if you are not successful this time around

- Please note that this fellowship competition is exhaustingly competitive. Each Review Panel must choose from a myriad of excellent applications to select only a handful of awardees in each field.
- Applicants are encouraged to re-apply, and since the Review Panels remain fairly constant, reviewers will remember an applicant, and will note whether the applicant has taken into consideration the comments that were shared with them, or not.
- It is not uncommon for someone to get a fellowship on the second or third try.
- Reviewers are supposed to provide helpful comments for each application. You may request the comments, and the ratings.

But if you are
successful

- Hooray! And a huge congratulations to you!

Contact info for the Ford Fellowship Program

- Visit www.nas.edu/ford for more information.

Contact Information:

E-mail: FordApplications@nas.edu

Phone: 202-334-2872