

Grant and Fellowship Applications

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Why and When to Apply for Grants and Fellowships

Ideally, grants and fellowships help your research, save you time, and build your CV. They may defray direct costs of conducting research; provide a stipend so that you can concentrate on your own research rather than teaching or working for others; and provide an item on your CV that signals quality, competitiveness, and the drive to apply for resources.

However, applying can take a lot of time and effort—on your part and that of your advisors and letter writers— and the odds of success are usually small. You need to thus balance the potential payoffs against the cost in time of applying. Therefore only apply for grants where you (a) have some realistic chance of success, in that your application is a likely fit for the funder's criteria (b) where the grant will provide genuine help with advancing your work. Applying for grants solely to build your CV is not a good use of your time.

That said, there's more grant money available than many graduate students realize. It's worth looking around and applying if it seems likely to help you.

Which Ones?

NSF Graduate Research Fellowship

Provides three years of financial support including tuition and a generous stipend, currently \$32,000. Applicants must be citizens or permanent residents and can not have completed more than 12 months of full-time graduate study by August 1 of the year they apply. First- and second-year graduate students (without a prior Masters) can apply.

Applications are due in early November. Extensive information is available on the NSF website; google "NSF graduate research fellowship."

NSF Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant

Up to \$7,500 for "expenses associated with conducting the dissertation research (e.g., data collection, field work, payment to subjects, survey expenses, software, microfilm, data transcription, file creation and data merging, courses on specialized skills such as those offered at ICPSR,

travel, and expenses incurred at sites away from the student's home institution)." Two application deadlines: mid-October and mid-February.

Fulbright IIE and Fulbright Hayes

Both types of Fulbrights provide fellowships for international work. However the funding source, application criteria and processes are quite different. Fulbright IIE is a much larger funding pool, and both undergraduate and graduate students are eligible to apply. Fulbright Hayes is designed specifically for doctoral research, and fewer awards are available. In both cases, the university nominates applicants, so you must first succeed in an internal competition among potential UA applicants. The graduate college periodically organizes information sessions about these awards.

UA Confluencer Graduate Fellowships

The U of A offers \$5,000 fellowship for graduate students to cover the cost of research. The Confluencer is a relatively new interdisciplinary initiative on campus. So far our faculty and graduate students have been very successful in their competitions.

SBSRI

The Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Institute (SBSRI) here at U of A offers two types of small grants for graduate students: (1) "Pre-Doc" Graduate Research Grants of up to \$500. (2) Dissertation research grants of up to \$1500.

Information on Other Grants

SBSRI is a fantastic resource for both finding out about other types of grants, and for getting advice and feedback on applications. SBSRI maintains a searchable funding database, runs information sessions and workshops on grant-writing. The graduate college also organizes such sessions on specific external grants for graduate students, such as NSF and Fulbright.

Another way to find out about the types of grants our students are competitive for is to peruse the listing of recent grant and fellowship awards to graduate students on our website. In recent years our students have won fellowships and grants from NSF, Fulbright, the American Sociological Association, the Ford Foundation, the Long Taylor foundation, the Louisville Institute, the National Academy of Sciences, the Social Science Research Council, and the Department of State.

How?

The best advice about applying for specific grants will usually come from two sources: faculty, other graduate students, and SBSRI.

Check faculty CVs to get a feel for which ones have successful grant experience.

For large grant applications, such as to NSF, it tends to help to see applications that others have written. Sometimes funding sources make available prior successful applications, or abstracts of them, for viewing. Also, don't hesitate to ask around in the department.

For general advice on effective proposal writing, SBSRI maintains a list of links to useful guides on its page on proposal development (<http://sbsri.sbs.arizona.edu/node/207>).