EALAC Summer Fellowships Applications

● ● ●

The Social Distancing Edition

Abigail I. MacBain

February 2021

Sections

1. Summer vs. Year-long Fellowships
2. Finding & selecting fellowship; other places to find fellowships
3. Parts to an application
4. Statement of Purpose vs. Project Proposal vs. Personal Statement
5. Budget and Timeline
6. Honing the first/last paragraphs
7. Common pitfalls
8. Questions to ask yourself
9. Common myths

Types of Fellowships for Summer

- Short-term Research (1 week-3 months)
- Language
- Travel
- Library
- Short-term Dissertation/Thesis Research
- Departmental

http://ealac.columbia.edu/fellowship-opportunities/

Summer, short-term, or small grants are more likely to allow you to take multiple fellowships at a time, so be open to applying to several smaller fellowships.

If they don't permit overlapping, see if you can "stack" them, where you assign part of your time to one grant, and part to another.

Other places to find fellowships

- Academic Associations
- Consulates, embassies, cultural centers
- Research centers/institutes on campus
- Professors/senior students
- Other departments with overlapping disciplines
- Blogs dedicated to your country of study
- Government-funded organizations
- Other universities' departmental webpages
- Professors' CVs
- Book Acknowledgements

Parts to an application

- Basic, biographical information
- Abstract
- Project Description
- Statement of Purpose
- Project Proposal
- Personal Statement/Narratives
- Bibliography
- Timetable/Timeline (separate or part of statement/proposal)
- Budget
- Letters of Recommendation (typically 2-3)

- Supplementals
  - Transcripts (often uploaded; may have to send official if selected)
  - Proof of ABD
  - Statement of anticipated completion
  - Letter of acceptance from sponsoring professor(s)
  - Curriculum Vitae (CV)
  - Writing Sample

Items in yellow are less common with summer fellowships

Budget

- Transportation (to/from; locally)
- Housing (and utilities)
- Food
- Insurance (Travel, International/Emergency, Regular)
- University fees/tuition
- Cellphone/Internet
- Research Materials*
- Entertainment*
- Other (technology, special tools)*
- *These might not be covered by fellowship

Tip: Estimate to cover everything, but be reasonable. If your budget is much higher or lower than others', it will stand out as unreasonable.

If you have secured funds or an additional fellowship, divide the period of time or the items each covered (do not share costs unless specifically stated it's OK).

Sample Budget

Expenses		Total Amount Needed ($)	Amount Confirmed ($)	Source of Confirmed Funds	Amount Requested from Sample Fellowship ($)
Tuition		5,000	5,000	FLAS	0
Transportation					
	Airfare	2,000	0		2,000
	Local	800	0		800
	Other	300	300	Family support	
Housing		1,800	1,800	FLAS	
Medical		200	200	FLAS	
Food*		2000	0		2,000
Research tools*		600	500	Personal Savings	100
Books/supplies*		500	500	Personal Savings	100
Other*		100		Personal Savings	
Total:		13,300	8,300		**5000**
		(Full budget for program)	*(amount secured elsewhere)*		*(amount requested from funding agency)*

* *Indicates item that may not necessarily be covered by a fellowship*

*This is a sample budget created for a theoretical 3-month stay in Japan for a language program. This person has a summer Foreign Language & Area Studies (FLAS) fellowship, which will cover $5,000 of tuition and $2,000 personal expenses. They are applying to a different fellowship that will give up to $5,000. The remaining amount they are covering from personal savings and family support. **Note: costs are approximate and intended just to give a sense of how to create a budget.** Costs do not have to be exact, and it's OK to round up a little, as long as it's reasonable. **Note: If getting money from multiple sources, it's better to allot entire categories to each fellowship** (for example, have 1 fellowship cover the entirety of the airfare and another cover housing). Do not split costs for the same item between two separate funding agencies, as this can create accounting problems (especially if you need to submit receipts for reimbursement).*

Timeline

Include a paragraph or outline that lists:

- Where will you be/what will you do over course of grant (research, language, writing, etc…)? *Include general dates and time spans*
- What progress do you see yourself making during this period?
- How will this project fit with your program completion plans/future ambitions?
- What specific events or benchmarks do you see yourself meeting or attending?
  - May 16-June 10: *independent research in Kyoto (National Diet Library, City of Kyoto historical archive)*
  - June 10-July 31: *Japanese language classes at KCJS*
    - June 5-7: *Attend Gion Matsuri*
    - July 7: *Special exhibit and lecture at Enryakuji*
  - August 1-15: *Independent research trip to Kumano kodō*

Statement of Purpose/Project Proposal/Personal Statement

Statement of Purpose - states the objective for the application as well as provides background information and additional context to both the applicant and the proposed project.

Project Proposal - focuses on the tactical elements of the project, namely the who, what, where, when, why, and how of the project. Should include a timeline.

Personal Statement - discusses applicant's personal history with subject or how they relate to requirement/ scope of the funding agency.

Note: these can overlap, and sometimes an application asks for one by name, but the required content better matches one of the others. Read through requirements carefully.

https://www.aimacbain.com/statement-of-purpose

https://www.aimacbain.com/single-post/writing-a-savvy-statement-of-purpose

Honing the first/last paragraphs

The introduction should include: (reiterate the main points in the conclusion)

- The fellowship to which you are applying
- A mention of where you are in the program
- A very basic explanation of or introduction to your project or research (1 sentence)
- Why your proposed project is important, interesting, unique, and a vital contribution to your field (1 sentence)
- How this fellowship fits into the larger picture of your academic or career goals

Make your introduction/conclusions easy reference points; tell them what to expect (or remind them of what they just saw).

View this as a marketing pitch, where you are the product, and your project is what you are capable of doing.

Using the Past, Present, Future to Make Your Case

I. Past
  A. Courses, research, or experiences that have prepared you for the project
  B. *This section supports your argument about the feasibility of your project*

II. Present
  A. Current skills, abilities, connections, plans that show you are primed and ready to carry out the project
  B. *This section shows that you are ready to go; you just need the time and the money to make it happen*

III. Future
  A. How you plan to use this project in your academic or career plans (short or long term)
  B. *This section gives a sense of Return on Investment (ROI); it shows the agency that you are a "sure thing"*

Common Myths to Avoid

- Statements of Purpose should include:
  - my entire personal history with the country
  - the story of how I came to be interested in this topic
  - previous awards and accolades/all related courses taken on topic
  - extremely detailed descriptions and jargon demonstrating my knowledge of subject matter
  - my heartfelt commitment and interest to this field
- I should overstate my case and the dynamic impact of my research
- I should request the max/minimum amount of money possible
- I should include unrequested materials or extra letters of reference

The obvious exception to all of these is if they are explicitly requested in application materials

Remember: This is one application out of many that they will look at. They want exactly what they asked for directly, clearly, and without having to search for it. Don't flex creative writing skills, don't be dramatic, don't include anything they didn't ask for. Focus your attentions on writing clearly, cleanly, and dynamically. **You don't have to be flashy, but you have to be good.**

Questions to get started:

- What is my project?
- Where and when will it take place?
- Who/what do I want to study? Who do I want to work with?
- Why do I need to do this project?
- Why do I need this fellowship?
- How is my project a good fit for this fellowship?
- What is unique and interesting about my project? Why is it compelling?
- What is unique and interesting about my take on this project?
- Why would I want to fund this project if I were making decisions?
- What necessary groundwork have I already done? What more do I need to do?

Questions for review

- Do I answer the question/prompt?
- Does my application match the fellowship's scope?
- Is my project obvious in the first paragraph?
- Do I answer all of the required sections clearly and concisely?
- Do I indicate "return on investment?"
- Do I demonstrate the full arc of my proposed project? Is it vague?
- Do I indicate awareness of my primary sources and major resources?
- Do I make the case for how new/innovative my project is?
- What is my tone? Do I sound professional and confident, or pleading and uncertain?

Annoying things to think of before departure

- Columbia
  - Do I need any paperwork for courses/tuition? Is there any paperwork to register that I'll be off campus?
  - What's my health insurance situation? What's my enrollment status?
  - Do I maintain my university housing? Do I sublet it? Where do I register that?
- Finances
  - What are my tax obligations for this fellowship?
  - What's the banking situation where I'm going? Does my bank have ATMs there? Should I open an online account?
- Health
  - Do I need travel insurance? How will my health insurance work (if reimbursement, do I have the money to cover it)?
  - Are my medications allowed/available where I'm going?
  - Do I need to find a doctor/specialist there?
- Registering
  - Do I need to tell the university/department where I'm going?
  - Do I need to register with an embassy? (US citizens abroad - enroll with STEP)
  - Do I need to tell my banks/credit card companies where I'm going?