

On the Way to Greatness

Applying for a Graduate Fellowship

Places to Look for Fellowship Opportunities

- In our Library: Under “Search databases by subject” click [Grants and Fundraising](#)
 - Foundation Directory Online or Foundation Grants to Individuals Online (this particular database can only be accessed if you are physically in the library)
 - Community of Scholars (CSA)
 - WorldCAT
- On the UTEP Grad School Webpage: See links to databases and to external funding opportunities
- Other University websites: Iowa Grant Bulletin

General Advice

- Start Early, i.e. 2-3 months are ideal
- Follow Instructions
- Apply to ALL you can--it's okay!
- Application process will vary depending on the granting agency and on the discipline
- Communicate with your advisor and colleagues about your topic
- When possible, contact the fellowship program officer

Eligibility

- Explore the granting organization's website
- Make sure you meet eligibility requirements of G.P.A., citizenship, program or field, etc.

Commonly Requested Materials

- GRE or other test scores
- Letters of recommendation
- Transcripts
- Essays

Create a Writing Timeline

- Begin thinking about essay questions early (2-3 months)
- Give yourself **a month or two** to refine your research project/proposal and to request feedback from colleagues/mentors
- Request letters of recommendation **a month in advance**
- Give your recommenders time to look at your finalized essays/research proposal **a few weeks before their letters are due**

About Letters of Recommendation

- Give referees time
- Critical to your winning a fellowship
- References usually must include academics
- A neutral letter is a negative letter
- Best is someone you did work with in addition to coursework

Proposal Writing

- Keep it simple, **interesting**, focused
- Know your **PURPOSE**. Be able to demonstrate you know your research subject, its relevance to you, to your field of study, and beyond your field of study—be able to articulate this in conversation
- Analyze your **AUDIENCE** and create visible/explicit links between your research and their interests

How do you keep it interesting?

- It is clear that you enjoy what you do or propose to do, but how do you convey that to an unfamiliar reader?
- Tell a story—your story, a story about a student, a mentor
- Converse about your topic with a friend and reflect on what you said to make your project relevant and exciting to them

The Statement of Purpose

BRIDGE your interests and values with those of the program or organization.



Writing a Statement of Purpose

- Tell the story of your inspiration to do research or creative work
- Discuss research or mentoring experiences
- Show that you can see multiple levels of abstraction in your field
- Describe personal background if relevant
- Make **an explicit connection** between your research interests and the organization's mission or key researchers/faculty/programs

How Proposals Are Reviewed

- Committee of reviewers
- Large numbers of proposals per reviewer
- “Triage”
- Tendency to scan
- If it’s too long, it’s hard to read
- Use bullets to highlight (white space)
- Don’t use elaborate prose--science/engineering

Proposal Writing Resources

- Adam Przeworski and Frank Salomon, “*The Art of Writing Proposals*,” at http://fellowships.ssrc.org/art_of_writing_proposals/
- Michael Kiparsky, “How to Win a Graduate Fellowship,” at <http://chronicle.com/jobs/news/2006/05/2006051101c.htm>

Need Writing Assistance?

Contact Lucia Dura at the Graduate School.

She can help with your statements of purpose, letters of intent, writing samples, and any other areas of the application that require writing.

Lucia is also available to help you with the research process, i.e. helping you find the best opportunities for your interests and needs.

E-mail or call: ldura@miners.utep.edu 915.747.5950