



The University of North Carolina at Charlotte

UNCC^HARLOTTE

Graduate Student Fellowships

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Types of Funding for Graduate School

- Fellowships
- Assistantships
- Grants
- Loans



Fellowships

- Can be internal (awarded by the university or department) or external (awarded by a federal agency or foundation directly to the student).
- Internal fellowships are usually awarded when you first apply to a program, except for dissertation fellowships, which are awarded after you pass qualifying exams.



Assistantships

- The most common source of support for graduate students is from the major department in the form of assistantships.
- If you don't receive a departmental assistantship in the first year, check with the graduate school to see if there are university-wide assistantships you can apply for.



Assistantships (cont.)

- Usually awarded for teaching or research, although some universities have staff or administrative assistantships.
- Many universities limit the number of years you can receive an assistantship.
- Some universities limit the number of students admitted to a graduate program to the number of assistantships available.



Assistantships (cont.)

- If you don't receive an assistantship your first year, position yourself to receive one in your second year:
 - Make yourself known to the faculty in your department.
 - Attend all colloquia, symposiums, etc.
 - Show your commitment and professionalism.
 - Excel in your coursework.



Teaching Assistantships

- Requires delivering lectures, leading discussion groups, grading papers or supervising laboratory sections. Experienced teaching assistants may have responsibility for an entire class.
- Typical work loads are 1-2 classes per semester or 14-20 hours per week.
- Usually pay a stipend plus a full or partial waiver of tuition and fees.



Research Assistantships

- Research assistantships require the student to help a faculty member with her research. The typical work load is 20 hours per week.
- Students on research assistantships typically are hired by an individual faculty member, usually with grant funds.



Research Assistantships (cont.)

- Usually pay a stipend plus full or partial waiver of tuition and fees. In general, research assistantships pay more than teaching assistantships.



Grants

- Grants are financial aid awards that do not need to be repaid.
- Ask in your department and graduate school to see if your school offers grant competitions for graduate students.



Education Loans

- 3 major categories
 - Student loans.
 - Parent loans.
 - Private student loans.
- Federal loans are made through the Direct Loan Program.
- FinAid.org provides an excellent overview of the various types of education loans.



Why Apply for a Fellowship?

- Funding allows faster completion of program.
- Writing the application builds skills you will use throughout your career.
- Helps focus dissertation research.
- Great way to build up CV/ resume.
- Brings prestige for you, your advisor, your university.



National (External) Fellowships

- Start early.
- You typically need to apply nine months to one year in advance.
- Many fellowship programs have deadlines in the fall for the following academic year.
- It may take several submissions to get funded.



International Students

- Most federal fellowships require that you be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
- Some industry fellowships are available to international students.
- The GRAPES database at UCLA allows you to search by citizenship status.
- <http://www.gdnet.ucla.edu/grpinst.htm#search>



Sources of Information

- Your department.
- The graduate school.
- Library research.
- Networking with faculty and students.
- Online databases.



Sources of Information

- UNC Charlotte Graduate School Website:
 - Links to many sources of information.
 - <http://www.graduateschool.uncc.edu/funding/external-funding>



Sources of Information

- Hall Center for the Humanities at the University of Kansas
- <http://www.hallcenter.ku.edu/funding-resources>



Sources of Information

- University of California at Riverside
- http://graduate.ucr.edu/list_finaid.html



Sources of Information

- COS/Pivot
- Anyone can search Pivot from a UNCC computer.
- Contact Susan Robinson for help:
ssrobins@uncc.edu or 704-687-1869.



Gather Application Materials

- Once you have identified potential funding sources, gather the application materials.
- Most national fellowship programs have application materials online.
- Use the most current program announcement.



Program Solicitations/Guidelines

- Each national fellowship program is announced by a solicitation.
- Names vary depending on the sponsor.
- Program Announcements (PA), Requests for Proposals (RFP), Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOA), Broad Agency Announcement (BAA).



Program Solicitations/Guidelines

- Read all application materials carefully.
- If you have a question about whether you fit the eligibility criteria, call the agency and talk to a program officer.
- Read and follow **all** directions. Pay special attention to the deadline.
- Re-read directions as you are writing and again before you submit.



Before You Write

- Try to find samples of successful proposals.
- Talk to faculty advisors, department chair, graduate coordinator.
- Talk to students who have received fellowships.
- Use the internet: many samples available online.
- Discuss your research ideas and get direct feedback.



Graduate Fellowship Proposals

- Most graduate fellowship proposals will require at least three elements:
 - Personal statement.
 - Research statement.
 - Letters of recommendation.



Personal Statement

- What is your motivation for pursuing an advanced degree?
- What is your potential as a team leader?
- What is your potential as a team member?
- What have you done to advance your skills beyond classroom work?



Personal Statement

- What are your long-range academic goals?
- How do your academic goals relate to your career goals?
- Have you made personal contributions to society (community-based learning, volunteer service, public outreach, etc.)?



Research Statement

- State your research question or hypothesis succinctly.
- State the significance of the research in the first few paragraphs.
- Describe the gap in knowledge you will fill or the debates in your field to which you will contribute.



Research Statement

- You can contribute to new knowledge by:
 - Filling a gap in the research literature.
 - Uncovering new material.
 - Reassessing a topic.
 - Looking at well-known material in a new way.
 - Researching a topic that hasn't been studied before.



Research Statement

- Demonstrate knowledge of previous work in the field.
- Be innovative.
- Emphasize your qualifications.
- Offer evidence that you are likely to complete the project.



Research Statement

- Be specific about your work plan, objectives, methodology, and procedures.
- Prove you have the necessary skills to conduct the research.



Letters of Recommendation

- Choose your recommenders carefully.
- Must be someone who knows your work as a student.
- Make sure they can write you a strong letter.



Letters of Recommendation

- Give them information about your project or a copy of your proposal so they can address your planned research.
- Give them plenty of time.
- Remind them of your deadline.



Keys to Success

- Hot research topic or important issue in your discipline.
- Realistic timeframe for research project.
- Applicants have some prior experience with research.
- Strong, highly specific letters of recommendation.

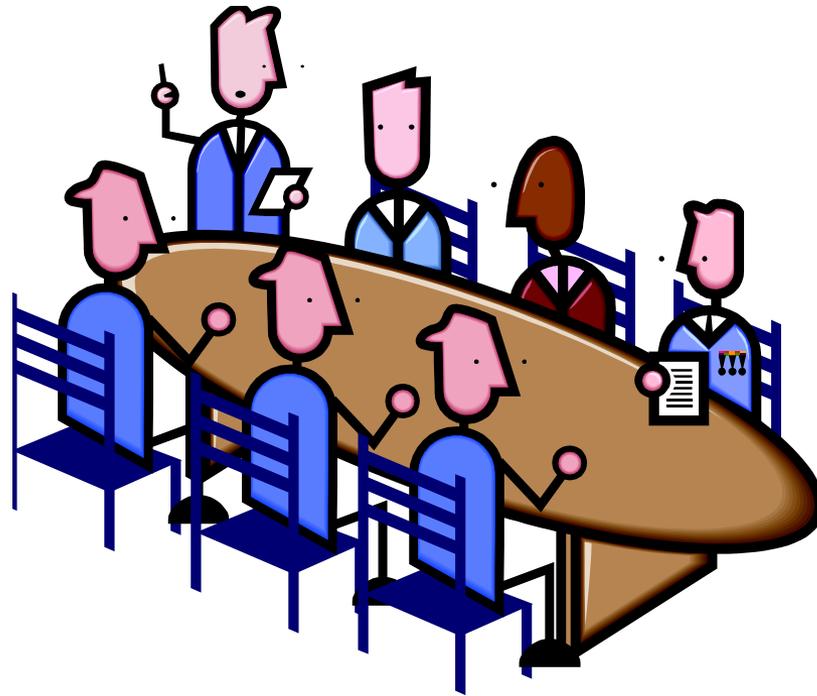


Reasons Proposals Are Declined

- Applicant didn't follow the guidelines.
- Applicant didn't explain *why* the project is important.
- Research methodology or work plan was vague.



Writing for Review Committees



Writing for Review Committees

- Find out how your proposal will be reviewed.
- Most foundation proposals are read by the board of directors.
- Most federal agencies use peer review.
- Graduate fellowship proposals will most likely be read by an interdisciplinary committee.

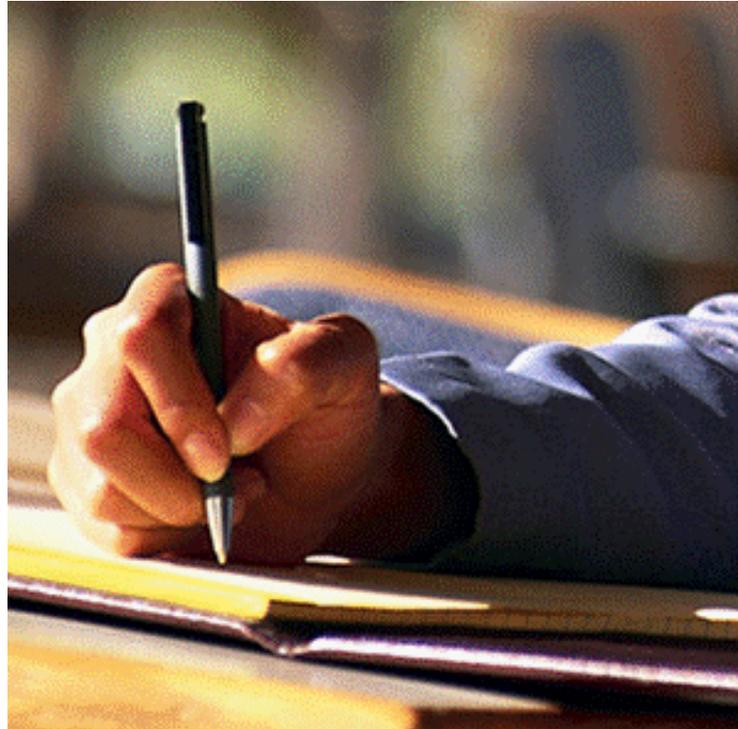


Writing for Review Committees

- Knowing who will review your proposal helps you know how to write it.
- If you are writing for non-experts, you will need to carefully explain all key concepts, avoid jargon and define all discipline-specific terminology.



Understanding Proposal Writing Conventions



Writing Conventions

- Writing conventions are the generally accepted standards for written English.
- Examples include spelling, punctuation, verb tense, grammar, capitalization, sentence structure.



Proposal Writing Conventions

- Grant proposals have their own set of writing conventions.
- Most of these conventions are intended to make the reviewer's job easier.



Proposal Writing Conventions

- Reviewers are busy people who have volunteered for a difficult task.
- They will be asked to read many proposals.
- It's your job to write in a way that makes it easy for the reviewer to find and remember your most important ideas.



Proposal Writing Conventions

- Use short, direct sentences.
- Use action verbs.
- Avoid jargon.
- Write to the review criteria.



Proposal Writing Conventions

- Use section headings to help reviewers find important ideas.
- Use bolding and italics to emphasize important ideas.
- Use white space to break up text.



Does Spelling Count?





Does Spelling Count?

- Yes! Careless editing can sink an otherwise good proposal.
- You don't want to leave the reviewers with the impression that you do careless work.



The Importance of Editing

- Leave time carefully proofread and edit your proposal.
- Use formatting to make your proposal easy for reviewers to read.
- Use headings, bolding, underlining to emphasize important points and to distinguish the different sections of the proposal.



Other Readers/Internal Review

- At a minimum, your advisor should review your proposal before you submit.
- The more readers, the more input, the better.



QUESTIONS?

