

# Ford Foundation Fellowship Programs

Administered by the Fellowships Office of the National Academies

## Predocctoral Fellowships

### Suggestions from Reviewers

Most awardees have carefully prepared their applications, have consulted with advisers and mentors, and have adhered to regulations regarding deadlines, requirements for completeness, and page lengths for essays. Typically, applications are internally consistent with regard to content and appearance, and stated goals are in alignment with program objectives. Below are recommendations made by past evaluators.

**Audience:** College professors and researchers in your broad field of study. Reviewers may have to read applications outside their area of specialization. Please avoid technical jargon.

**Format of application:** Your application should look and read like a professional document. You should strictly follow guidelines in terms of appearance (double-spaced, minimum 12-point font size), page limits, and content. Lists of presentations and publications should be single-spaced.

**Statement of Previous Research Experience:** Review panelists find this essay useful. If you have not carried out formal research, you may describe any activities that have prepared you for the work you plan to undertake.

- Describe any research in which you have participated. You may have undertaken research as part of your coursework or outside of class in an internship or summer research program.
- If you are currently engaged in research, explain the methods used and the expected results of your work.

**Proposed Plan of Graduate Study and Research:** In general, the more academic experience an applicant has, the more this should be reflected in the proposal.

- Describe clearly your chosen area of study and the research issue that interests you.
- Explain why your chosen institution is especially suited to your field of study and to the type of work you plan to undertake.
- Explain the relevancy of the courses you plan to take and how they relate to your plan of study.
- If possible, describe the research methods and theoretical framework you plan to use.
- Relate your proposed research to a larger academic community and society as a whole. Explain why your study will be useful.

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Applicants may wish to ask their adviser or a professor in their field to review the proposed plan (especially for substance, clarity, and organization) prior to submission.

**Letters of Recommendation:** You should select supportive reference writers who are able to comment on your academic performance and potential. Your file should contain four letters of reference. *Files must contain a minimum of three letters of reference in order to be evaluated. This requirement will be strictly enforced.*

- If you have attended more than one educational institution, be sure to get at least one reference letter from each institution.
- Letters of reference from undergraduate or summer research programs can be particularly valuable.
- References from personal friends, clergy, medical doctors, and family are not appropriate. Generally, the most useful letters of reference are from faculty members who know the applicant well.
- You should provide each reference writer with a copy of your *Proposed Plan of Graduate Study and Research*. Discuss your plans with reference writers so that they can comment on your ability to carry out your proposed research and study and to reach your professional long-range goals.
- You may wish to provide your reference writers with a Curriculum Vitae so that they can comment in greater detail on your past and current endeavors.