About Dissertation Fellowships

Dissertation fellowships provide support to Ph.D. students in the process of completing a doctoral dissertation. Most dissertation fellowship competitions require that a student be advanced to doctoral candidacy (as defined by their academic program) by the start date of the award – though not necessarily at the time of application. Dissertation fellowships fall into four general categories:

- **“Pre-dissertation”** fellowships typically support students who have not yet advanced to candidacy, particularly those who are in the process of developing their dissertation proposal and/or those who are doing preliminary research to “lay the groundwork” for the dissertation topic. There are only a small handful of awards of this type.
- **Dissertation “research”** grants provide support in the research phase after advancement to candidacy but before writing has begun. Dissertation research awards typically aim to fund direct costs of research, such as travel, equipment, laboratory work, compensation of subjects, and so on. They do not typically cover tuition or cost of living expenses.
- **“Dissertation writing”** or **“dissertation completion”** fellowships are intended to see the student through the final months of work on the dissertation, and typically consist of a stipend to allow the student to devote him/herself full time to writing. A subcategory of these awards is “residential” dissertation fellowships, where the fellow spends the academic year in residence at a host institution (usually a college or university) and may be expected to teach a class while completing their dissertation.
- Finally, there are **“hybrid”** awards that may be used for either research or writing – though in general such awards tend to go to students who are more advanced in their program.

Dissertation fellowship competitions may cast a wide net, or be highly targeted toward a specific discipline, field, topic, demographic group, or career aspiration. Students whose dissertation research involves overseas research/study should also consult the list of fellowships for overseas research and language study, available at the web site of the Office of Graduate Fellowships. Most deadlines fall between October-January for the subsequent academic year, and applications may take weeks or even months to complete. Interested students are encouraged to plan ahead and discuss their plans with their dissertation supervisor and the Director of Graduate Fellowships.

The following list is not comprehensive, and students are encouraged to use the search tools available at the Graduate Fellowships web site ([http://gradfellows.gmu.edu/search/](http://gradfellows.gmu.edu/search/)) and to consult with faculty members and professional organizations focused on their field of interest.
AAUW American Fellowships
http://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/educational-funding-and-awards/american-fellowships/
AAUW American Fellowships support women scholars in all fields completing doctoral dissertations. Dissertation fellowships are currently set at $20,000 for the academic year. Postdoctoral fellowships of $30,000 are also available. Candidates are evaluated on the basis of scholarly excellence; quality and originality of project design; and active commitment to helping women and girls through service in their communities, professions, or fields of research. Open to women who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Deadline: November. This competition charges a modest application fee.

AAUW International Fellowships
http://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/educational-funding-and-awards/international-fellowships/
AAUW International Fellowships are awarded for full-time graduate study or research in the United States to women who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Preference is given to women who show prior commitment to the advancement of women and girls through civic, community, or professional work, and who plan to return to their home country to pursue their career. Master’s level award is $18,000; doctoral level is $20,000; and postdoctoral $30,000 for one academic year. Open only to women international students who are not U.S. permanent residents. Deadline: December. This competition charges a modest application fee.

AERA Dissertation Grants in Education Research
http://www.aera.net/ProfessionalOpportunitiesFunding/AERAFundingOpportunities/tabid/10241/Default.aspx
The AERA Grants Program, with support from the National Science Foundation, provides small grants (up to $20,000) for conducting studies of education policy and practice using federally-funded large-scale data sets. No citizenship restrictions. Deadline: September

AERA Minority Dissertation Fellowship Program in Education Research
http://www.aera.net/ProfessionalOpportunitiesFunding/AERAFundingOpportunities/tabid/10241/Default.aspx
AERA offers doctoral fellowships of $20,000 to enhance the competitiveness of outstanding minority scholars for academic appointments at major research universities by supporting their conducting education research and by providing mentoring and guidance toward completion of their doctoral studies. This program is open to U.S. citizens and permanent residents who are members of racial and ethnic groups historically underrepresented in higher education (e.g., African Americans, Alaskan Natives, American Indians, Asian Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders). Deadline: November

AERA-MET Dissertation Fellowship Program
http://www.aera.net/ProfessionalOpportunitiesFunding/AERAFundingOpportunities/tabid/10241/Default.aspx
AERA with funding support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation offers a $20,000 dissertation fellowship program to support graduate students in education research to conduct secondary data analysis using the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Longitudinal Database. The AERA-MET Dissertation Fellowship Program provides funding and professional development to dissertation stage graduate students who use the MET data to address research questions and examine issues that will contribute to knowledge about teaching and learning. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents Deadline: December.

Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships
http://woodrow.org/fellowships/newcombe/
The Newcombe Fellowship is a dissertation completion award designed to support original and significant study of ethical or religious values. It is open to students in all fields of the humanities and social sciences. In addition to topics in religious studies or ethics, topics such as the ethical implications of foreign policy, the values influencing political decisions, the moral codes of other cultures, or religious and ethical issues reflected in history, art, or literature are welcome. Approximately 20 awards of $25,000 (plus remission of tuition/fees) are made per year for twelve months of full-time dissertation writing. No citizenship requirements. Deadline: November.

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Economic Club of Washington DC: Philip M. Dearborn Fellowship Award
http://www.economicclub.org/page.cfm/go/scholarship-program
A $10,000 award offered annually to students in the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area (including George Mason University) to support doctoral-level research dealing with issues of direct and specific relevance to the Greater Washington Metropolitan Area, including issues of economics, public and private finance, education, transportation, law enforcement, social welfare, housing, and regional/community development. It is expected that the research will rely to a significant extent on information and data derived from or relating to the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Application Deadline: Early March

Economic Club of Washington DC: Vernon Jordan Fellowship Award
http://www.economicclub.org/page.cfm/go/scholarship-program
Two $10,000 stipends awarded annually to doctoral-level students from Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area institutions (including George Mason University) to support independent research in areas of interest to the Economic Club of Washington. Areas of concentration could include economics, finance, international trade or business. Application Deadline: Early March

Ford Foundation Fellowship Program
http://sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/fordfellowships/index.htm
Pre-Doctoral, Dissertation, and Post-Doctoral awards for PhD students intending academic careers. This award is open to US citizens in most fields of study (some practice-oriented fields are ineligible; see web site for complete list.) The award aims to promote diversity in higher education by funding candidates: (a) Who belong to an under-represented minority, including Alaska Natives, Black/African Americans, Mexican Americans, Native American Indians, Native Pacific Islanders, and Puerto Ricans AND/OR (b) Whose research and career aims demonstrate a likelihood of using the diversity of human experience as an educational resource in teaching and scholarship. Open to U.S. citizens, permanent residents, and DACA-eligible individuals. Deadline: November

Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad (DDRA) Fellowship
http://www2.ed.gov/programs/iegpsddrap/index.html
Six to twelve months of funding for overseas dissertation research in areas outside western Europe. Open to U.S. citizens and permanent residents who are advanced to doctoral candidacy, in good standing at their university, and who possess the language skills necessary to complete their project. Please note that this program is distinct from the Fulbright U.S. Student Program (http://us.fulbrightonline.org/home.html), which may also be used to support overseas dissertation research (although that program, unlike this one, is not exclusive to dissertation research.) This competition currently runs on an irregular timeline, with deadlines typically falling in the spring for awards beginning October – March. Requires university endorsement; see the Director of Graduate Fellowships to apply. This program is open to U.S. citizens and permanent residents.

Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation Dissertation Fellowships
http://www.hfg.org/df/guidelines.htm
Dissertation completion award of $20,000 for candidates entering the final year of their Ph.D. program. The HFG Foundation supports research pertaining to violence and aggression in in relation to social change, intergroup conflict, war, terrorism, crime, and family relationships, among other subjects. Field / discipline is open, but dissertations with no relevance to understanding human violence and aggression will not be supported. No citizenship restrictions. Deadline: February 1.

Jennings Randolph Peace Scholarship Dissertation Program
http://www.usip.org/fellows/scholars.html
Open to students enrolled in US universities who are researching and/or writing doctoral dissertations on topics related to peace, conflict, conflict resolution, and international security. Proposals from all disciplines are welcomed, with preference given to research that shows clear relevance to policy issues. No citizenship restrictions. The award is currently set at $20,000 for ten months. No citizenship restrictions. Deadline: December.

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Joseph L. Fisher Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships
http://www.rff.org/fellowships/fisher
Supports the final year of doctoral dissertation research/writing for research on issues related to the environment, natural resources, or energy. Proposals in economics and social sciences are the primary target, although proposals from the sciences with obvious relevance for environmental policy matters will also receive consideration. Stipend is $18,000. Open to both U.S. citizens and non-U.S. citizens, provided the latter have proper work/residency documentation. Deadline: February.

Josephine de Karman Dissertation Fellowships
http://www.dekarman.org/
Dissertation completion fellowship for the final year in the Ph.D. program. Open to students in any discipline without citizenship restrictions. Special consideration will be given to applicants in the humanities, though awards are made in a range of disciplines. Approximately eight awards of $22,000 each per year. Deadline: January.

Mellon / ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowships
http://www.acls.org/programs/dcf/
The ACLS/Mellon fellowships support advanced graduate students in the humanities and related social sciences during the final year of Ph.D. dissertation writing. The program encourages timely completion of the Ph.D. Applicants must be prepared to complete their dissertations within the one-year fellowship period. Approximately 65 fellowships of $30,000 (plus other funds to support research and educational costs) are awarded annually. No citizenship restrictions. Applicants must NOT have progressed further than the 6th year or the doctoral program. Deadline: October.

National Academy of Education / Spencer Dissertation Fellowship
http://www.naed.org/naed_080200.htm
Dissertation completion fellowships of $27,500 for research in any discipline relevant to the improvement of education, with emphasis on research that brings fresh and constructive perspectives to the history, theory, or practice of formal or informal education anywhere in the world. Open to all disciplines (not just Education!) with no citizenship restrictions. Up to 35 fellowships are awarded annually. Deadline: Early October.

National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Graduate Fellowship Program
http://nij.gov/funding/fellowships/graduate-research-fellowship/Pages/welcome.aspx
The NIJ Graduate Research Fellowship (GRF) program supports doctoral students engaged in research that NIJ’s mission to increase the pool of scholars engaged in research that addresses the challenges of crime and justice in the United States, particularly at the state and local levels. The program has two tracks: (1) Social/Behavioral Science and (2) STEM. Requirements and deadlines vary for each track. See the web site for details. New solicitations for both programs are typically published in fall or early winter each year. Maximum award is $32,000 is Social Science track, $35,000 in STEM track, and may be used to cover a range of expenses, including both direct research costs and stipendary / salary support. No citizenship restrictions.

National Science Foundation (NSF) Dissertation Research Grants
NSF offers grants to doctoral students for dissertation research in select sub-division of the social and behavioral science disciplines and the biological sciences to support dissertation research. Usually referred to as Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grants (DDRIG) or Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grants (DDIG), these grants typically offer awards under $20,000 to support direct research costs such as travel, equipment, and other direct costs of research. Applicant must be studying at a U.S. institution but need not be a U.S. citizen. Requirements and deadlines vary by field. For a list of fields in which these grants are currently offered (and relevant deadlines) see the web site. Please note that this application must be submitted through OSP. Contact the Office of Graduate Fellowships for more information.
Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Dissertation Fellowships Program in Buddhist Studies (ACLS)
http://www.acls.org/programs/buddhist-studies/#diss
The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Dissertation Fellowship Program in Buddhist Studies will provide one-year stipends of $30,000 for PhD candidates to devote full time to preparing dissertations. The fellowship period may be used for fieldwork, archival research, analysis of findings, or for writing after research is complete. Postdoctoral fellowships are also offered. Deadline: November.

Smith Richardson World Politics and Statecraft Fellowship
https://www.srf.org/programs/world-politics-statecraft-fellowship/
Supports research and writing of policy-relevant dissertations on American foreign policy, international relations, international security, strategic studies, area studies, and diplomatic and military history. Funds can be used toward dissertation research (including fieldwork, archival research, or language training) and writing. Preference will be given to projects that have the potential to directly inform U.S. policy debates and thinking, rather than purely theoretical or scholarly debates. The foundation awards up to 20 grants of $7,500 each year. Deadline: October.

SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program (Southern Regional Education Board)
http://www.sreb.org/page/1074/doctoral_scholars.html
SREB is a regional award open to minority Ph.D. students at eligible universities, including George Mason University. Two types of fellowship are offered: The Doctoral Award supports new Ph.D. students (applying for admission or in their first year of Ph.D. program) for 3-5 years of doctoral program study. The Dissertation Award is a one-year award for students who have been advanced to doctoral candidacy and are working on their dissertation. The award is open to U.S. citizens and permanent residents who are members of a racial or ethnic minority and plan to enter an academic career path. Open to most fields. Please note that to obtain the full benefits associated with this award you must apply with university endorsement. Please contact the Office of Graduate Fellowships for details. Deadline: March 1.

SSRC Dissertation Proposal Development Fellowship (DPDF)
http://www.sscs.org/programs/dpdf/
The DPDF is a program designed to provide mentorship and targeted support for doctoral students in the process of developing their dissertation proposal in a humanities or social science field. Awardees receive funding to attend two dissertation proposal development workshops (spring and fall) along with some monetary support for direct costs related to preliminary dissertation research activities during the summer between workshops. Deadline: October.

SSRC International Dissertation Research Fellowship (IDRF)
http://www.sscs.org/fellowships/idrf-fellowship/
Offers 9-12 months of support to graduate students in the humanities and social sciences who are enrolled in doctoral programs in the US and conducting dissertation research outside the US. Students enrolled in Ph.D. programs in public policy, public health, and education, may be eligible to apply if their research projects engage directly with broader theoretical and analytical issues in the humanities and social sciences. Research topics may address all periods in history, but applicants should call attention to the broader implications of their work as it relates to contemporary issues and debates. Deadline: November.

UNCF / Merck Graduate Science Research Dissertation Fellowships
http://umsi.uncf.org/
Up to two years of support for doctoral level (Ph.D. or M.D.) research and degree completion in the sciences and engineering for African American candidates. Funding level varies according to length of award, up to $53,500 plus mentorship by a Merck scientist or engineer. Candidate must be a citizen or permanent resident of the U.S.
Woodrow Wilson Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship in Women’s Studies

http://woodrow.org/fellowships/womens-studies/

This one-time award of $5,000 is offered to Ph.D. candidates at institutions in the United States who will complete their dissertations on issues related to women, gender, women’s studies or feminist/gender/LGBTQ theory during the fellowship year. It aims to offer comprehensive support in the final year of dissertation writing. This competition is for projects in the humanities and social sciences; interdisciplinary projects are encouraged. However, projects in fields such as management, the clinical and biological sciences, health-related fields, and law are not eligible unless they have a demonstrable academic grounding in the humanities and social sciences. Candidates should be advanced to candidacy at the time of application. No citizenship or gender restrictions.
Residential and Teaching Dissertation Fellowships

Residential fellowships offer advanced doctoral students the opportunity to complete their dissertations in residence at a college, university, or other institution where they are offered a stipend and faculty privileges (office/lab space, library access, parking, etc.). In return, fellows are expected to contribute to the intellectual life of the institution, either by teaching a specialized course (usually a seminar in their area of expertise) or by giving an occasional public lecture or interacting with students, faculty, and colleagues. While many such fellowships specifically target “under-represented minority” candidates (with the goal of increasing faculty diversity), the definition of “under-represented” can be quite broad, and prospective applicants are encouraged to carefully review eligibility requirements and (where publicized) the profiles of past recipients.

This is not an exhaustive list, but rather a collection of examples. If you are interested in a particular college or geographical region you are encouraged to check for similar opportunities at the locations most appropriate for you.

Arnold L. Mitchem Dissertation Fellowships (Marquette University)
http://www.marquette.edu/provost/mitchem-dissertation-program.shtml
One-year fellowship designed to help increase the presence of currently underrepresented racial and cultural groups in the U.S. professoriate by supporting doctoral candidates in completing the final academic requirement, the dissertation. Two awards are offered per year with a stipend of $35,000. Check web site for eligible fields, which may vary from year to year. Fellows are to be in residence at Marquette University for the academic year, during which they teach one course in their area of specialization. See web site for fields invited in a given year/competition cycle. U.S. citizens / permanent residents. Deadline: January.

Chavez/Eastman/Thurgood Marshall Dissertation Fellowships (Dartmouth College)
http://graduate.dartmouth.edu/funding/fellowships/cem.html
- Cesar E. Chavez Fellowship (for scholars of Latino/Latina descent)
- Charles A. Eastman Fellowship (for scholars of Native American descent)
- Thurgood Marshall Fellowship (for scholars of African American descent)
Year-long residency for doctoral student completing dissertation. Fellow will complete the dissertation in residence at Dartmouth College and also participate in selected activities with Dartmouth undergraduates. $25,000 plus other support. Open to US citizens in most fields – check web site for details. Deadline: February 1.

Consortium for Faculty Diversity in Liberal Arts Colleges
http://www.gettysburg.edu/about/offices/provost/cfd/
Dissertation and post-doctoral fellowships in all disciplines of the liberal arts and engineering for scholar-in-residence postings in a nationwide consortium of liberal arts colleges. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents who are also members of under-represented minority groups. Appointments are made by the member institutions according to local needs and local program guidelines.

Gaius Charles Bolin Dissertation Fellowships (Williams College)
http://dean-faculty.williams.edu/graduate-fellowships-2/graduate-fellowships/
Two-year residency at Williams College in Williamstown, MA. The first year is spent primarily on dissertation completion, the second on academic career development while teaching one course. The Bolin Fellowship is awarded to U.S. citizens and permanent residents from under-represented groups, including ethnic minorities, first generation college graduates, women in predominantly male fields, and scholars with disabilities. Annual stipend is $37,000 plus other support. This award is also open to post-MFA candidates.

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Getty Pre-Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Fellowships (Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA)
http://www.getty.edu/foundation/funding/residential/getty_pre_postdoctoral_fellowships.html
Getty Pre-Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Fellowships support emerging scholars in Art History, Cultural / Visual Studies, and closely related fields who are completing work on projects related to the Getty Research Institute's annual theme. Recipients are in residence at the Getty Research Institute, where they pursue research to complete their dissertations or to expand them for publication. Pre-Doctoral fellows are in residence from September to June and receive a stipend of $25,000. (Postdocs receive $30,000.) Scholars of all nationalities are welcome, but certain U.S. residency requirements apply, see web site for details. Deadline: October 1.

Jackie McLean Fellowship (University of Hartford, CT)
Designed to support the development of diversity and intercultural competence on campus by bringing promising scholars or artists to our campus for a year. Successful candidates will demonstrate promise as a teacher and scholar or artist; interest in a career in academia; and a commitment to working with a diverse student body and advancing intercultural competence in all students. Responsibilities include teaching one course per semester, conducting research or scholarship toward the completion of their degree or as a follow-up to their graduate work, and engaging in academic service. For application information please visit the web site.

Marilyn Yarbrough Dissertation/Teaching Fellowship (Kenyon College)
http://www.kenyon.edu/x27112.xml
Year-long residency for doctoral students completing dissertation. This program supports scholars from under-represented groups (including ethnic minorities, women in male dominated fields and men in female dominated fields, and persons who are first-generation college attendees.) Open to U.S. citizens in most fields in the arts and sciences. Fellows will complete the dissertation in residence at Kenyon College and teach one course per semester. $32,500 plus other support.

Penn Predoctoral Fellowships for Excellence Through Diversity (University of Pennsylvania)
http://provost.upenn.edu/diversity-predoc
This program is designed to provide mentorship and access to Penn’s resources for doctoral students in the humanities or social sciences, enrolled at universities other than Penn, as they complete their dissertations. It supports scholars from a wide range of backgrounds who can contribute to the diversity of Penn and the higher education community. The Fellowships support graduate students in the final stages of dissertation research or writing for residency at Penn for an academic year. Stipend is $28,500 with additional support for research / travel.

Ann Plato Fellowship (Trinity College, Hartford, CT)
http://www.trincoll.edu/Academics/dean/positions/pages/Ann.aspx
Year-long pre- or post-doctoral (or post-MFA) residency at Trinity college. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents who will contribute to enhancing diversity at Trinity College by increasing ethnic and racial diversity, maximizing the educational benefits of diversity, and/or increasing the number of professors who can and will use diversity as a resource for enriching the education of students. Stipend is $50,000 ($55,000 for post-doctoral fellows). Dissertation fellows teach 1 course per year (post-docs teach 2 courses.)

Phillips Exeter Academy Dissertation Year Fellowships
https://www.exeter.edu/about_us/171_15053.aspx
Phillips Exeter Academy seeks to support the academic and career development of doctoral students, and promote diversity and lively intellectual exchange on its campus by offering a Dissertation Year Fellowship that will support PhD candidates in the completion stage of their dissertation. The fellowship offers a $14,000 stipend plus room, board, benefits, travel funds, access to facilities and resources, and professional development opportunities. There is no teaching obligation, though fellows are invited to share their work/research with the community during their residency.

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