



Office of Graduate Fellowships

Finding Funding Opportunities in Graduate School

Ever wondered where to look for funding opportunities for your graduate studies or research? Know of one or two opportunities but wonder what else is out there? Here are some resources to get you started on your search:

Resources at George Mason University

GMU Office of Graduate Fellowships - <http://gradfellows.gmu.edu/>

GMU Office of Research - <http://research.gmu.edu/ResearchDev/fundingsourcedatabase.html>

The following GMU lists are primarily targeted at undergraduate students, but also include some information on opportunities for graduate students:

- GMU Office of Postgraduate Fellowships and Scholarships: <http://honorscollege.gmu.edu/pgfs/>
- GMU Office of Financial Aid – Outside Scholarships: <http://financialaid.gmu.edu/programs/scholarships/outside-scholarships/>

Online Fellowship / Funding Databases

The following is a database service focused on academic research, including grants for graduate research. *Please note that you must access SPIN from a George Mason University network connection:*

- SPIN (Sponsored Programs Info Network) <https://spin.infoedglobal.com/Home/GridResults>

The U.S. federal government maintains a database of federal government grants, including those that fund graduate research and scholarship. Most of these opportunities will be open only to U.S. citizens or (in some cases) permanent residents: <http://grants.gov>

The ProFellow network offers a large fellowship database with emphasis on professional development fellowships, and also features articles, tips, and conversations on how to find and win fellowships. Access is free but user must register: <http://www.profellow.com/>

The following sites are maintained by universities and are publicly accessible:

- U of Illinois Graduate Fellowships Database <https://www.grad.illinois.edu/fellowship/> *This is one of the largest and most user friendly databases for finding graduate fellowships!*
- Duke University's Funding Opportunities Database <https://researchfunding.duke.edu/>
- Cornell University Graduate Fellowships Database <http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/fellowships>
- UC Berkeley Scholarship Connection <http://scholarships.berkeley.edu/search.php?search=searchdeadline>

Other Places to Search

- Professional Organizations: Many professional organizations circulate announcements of funding opportunities to their members, post them in members-only sections on their web sites, or publicize them at professional meetings. In some cases the professional organization itself sponsors awards for graduate student members. Graduate students are usually entitled to significant discounts on membership fees.
- Federal Agencies, NGOs, and Think Tanks: Many federal agencies/offices, NGOs and think tanks offer fellowships and professional development opportunities to graduate students and recent grads working in their areas of interest. This can also be a great stepping-stone to a career!
- Listservs: Almost every academic field / subfield, profession, and interest group has one or more listservs where funding opportunities are announced. For instance, in the humanities and social sciences, the H-Net lists (<http://www.h-net.org/>) are an excellent resource for learning about fellowship and scholarship (and job!) opportunities.
- Libraries, Archives, and Special Collections: Will your research take you to any specialized libraries, museums, or archival collections? Many such collections award fellowships to students and scholars to support and encourage use of their collections. Be sure to check the collection's web site and inquire about support for scholars working in the collection.
- Honor Societies and Service Organizations: Organizations such as Rotary, Zonta, Soroptomist, or PEO offer scholarships based on their mission and service priorities, as do honor societies like Golden Key. Check with local chapters as well as the central organization, since local chapters may sponsor scholarships for area students.
- Community Organizations: Some community organizations (such as social clubs, immigrant or diaspora organizations, congressional caucuses, HOAs, and political or social service organizations) host scholarship competitions for members of their communities.

Helpful Hints

- When considering a fellowship opportunity, always read the eligibility requirements first, and carefully! If you are not sure of your eligibility status, contact the organization to inquire.
- Talk to advisors, mentors, and professors in your field. They will have a sense of the awards that are available in your field and the organizations that sponsor them. They can clue you in to where to look, what kinds of projects get funded, and the politics and pitfalls of various competitions.
- Work with the Office of Graduate Fellowships. We can help you identify the awards that are right for you and provide guidance, coaching, and feedback throughout the application process.
- Beware of scams! Legitimate fellowship competitions almost never charge application or program fees, nor should they require you to provide personal data outside the actual application process. If you aren't sure something is legit, consult with the Director of Graduate Fellowships.
- Be confident, but realistic! Don't tell yourself, "Students like me never get awards like that." It's not true, and the only way to win is to play. That said, never put all your eggs in one basket. Fellowships are competitive, and even stellar candidates are often turned away. Be persistent, listen carefully to feedback, and have a "Plan B." Most of all, realize that just by applying you gain professional skills and contacts that will benefit you throughout your career.