

## Fellowship Application Timeline

Applying for a fellowship and scholarship can be a time-consuming and sometimes overwhelming process. To help you prepare and have as much time as possible, refer to this document as you plan, draft, and submit your application.

### ANYTIME (as early as possible!)

#### Start Planning

- Meet with your advisor or DGS to let them know you plan to apply for internal or external funding.
  - Seek their advice on when and what opportunities to apply for.
  - Ask if there are current or former graduate student recipients that they can connect you to.
  - Confirm if the opportunity requires an internal, department or school-level review by a sponsored programs administrator or department representative. *Note: this may require you to share your near-final materials with a UVA representative up to 2 weeks before the external deadline.*
- Start to contact other potential mentors who can write letters of recommendation, and share the deadline.
- [Schedule an appointment](#) with Kelly or Sam to discuss your goals, options, and timeline.
- Reach out to students who have previously won the fellowship(s) you are applying to. Ask for their advice on: 1) when to apply, 2) how they approached their application, 3) recommendations they have for you, etc.

#### Find Funding

- Make a spreadsheet to keep track of opportunities, which year(s) you plan to apply, website, deadlines, application components, the corresponding page and word count limits, etc.
- Watch for PhD Plus emails about upcoming opportunities, info sessions, and other workshops.
- Set up an account and notifications for new opportunities in [Pivot](#) and [GrantForward](#).
- Visit the [Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs](#) and [Graduate & Postdoctoral Diversity Program](#) websites for ideas. Many universities keep lists of popular graduate fellowships in various fields, so try Googling “Graduate Fellowships,” etc., to find even more.

### 3-4 MONTHS BEFORE DEADLINE (depending on how extensive the application process is)

#### Plan and Start Drafting Your Application

- Research the funding agencies/organizations and the fellows they have supported in the past. Do they have a mission statement or research priorities? Do they state the goal of the fellowship program?
- Brainstorm your experiences and/or aspects of your research you can emphasize to demonstrate your fit.
- Log into the application portal and create a profile—get familiar with the system/process early.

#### Make a Schedule

- Make internal deadlines for yourself. Consider your other obligations and be realistic.

#### Stay on Schedule

- Commit to getting feedback from someone by a certain date. [Schedule an appointment](#) with Sam or Kelly!
- Join or start a writing group.
  - Contact Sam/Kelly to learn about Mini-Writing Retreats or Writing Accountability Groups (WAGs).
  - Attend a [Grad Café at the UVA Library](#). These events provide dedicated quiet time for graduate students to work on any project. Librarians are on hand for research support, and writing center tutors are available to provide writing support.
  - Find a writing accountability partner(s). Set up regular check-ins to update each other on your progress or schedule a time to meet up and write together.

## Meet with Each Letter Writer

- Provide letter writers with your current CV/resume.
- Let them know the deadline. Highlight the goals of the fellowship and why you believe you are a good fit.
- Say you will send drafts of your application materials by a certain date, and meet that deadline.
- Give them suggestions of what to include—things that complement but do not duplicate your materials.
- Ask them to submit their letter a few days before the deadline and notify you when they do.

## 2-3 MONTHS BEFORE DEADLINE (this process is long and continuous!)

### Get Feedback

- Share your materials with a variety of readers
  - Your advisor, another faculty member, lab mates, postdocs, etc. (*best for discipline-specific feedback*)
  - Peer fellowship mentors—contact PhD Plus for more info (*best for fellowship-/ discipline-specific feedback*)
  - Kelly or Sam (*best for alignment with fellowship, feedback on structure, discussing criteria, language usage, etc.*)
  - The UVA writing center (*best for feedback on structure and sentence-level editing*)

*Note: do not seek out feedback from all these people at once.* Start with one or two people, then revise based on their feedback. Then, repeat with the next person, etc.

### Revise Your Application Materials

- Aim to complete your drafts early enough to share them with your letter writers to help them compose a letter that syncs with the rest of your materials.
- Revisit the evaluation criteria and funder's goals—confirm your materials address **all** the criteria and goals.
- Remember that revision is a long process—the longest part of putting together an application—so budget plenty of time to work through many drafts. Your final materials may not look anything like what you started with—that's a good thing!
- Finalize your statements (edits and revisions) and then step away for a few days.

## 1-2 WEEKS BEFORE DEADLINE

### Final Readthrough of All Application Materials

- Make sure your materials follow the instructions *exactly*.
- Have someone carefully check your final versions for typos!

### Submit Your Application

- Submit early in case something goes wrong with the application portal.

## AFTER THE DEADLINE

### Thank Your Letter Writers

- Don't just send an email—give them a handwritten thank you card!

### Celebrate! But then start looking for the next opportunity.

- It's awesome if you get the fellowship you applied for, but these opportunities are very competitive, and rejection can be hard and set you back if taken personally. Continually look ahead at what else is out there to 1) distract you from news you're waiting for, 2) help you get the most out of the hard work you've put into your materials (and continue strengthening them), and 3) put yourself in the running for more opportunities.

### Keep everyone who helped you updated on the results, good or bad!

## CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions about applying to fellowships or PhD Plus support, please do not hesitate to contact us!

### Samuel J. Lake, Ph.D.

Assistant Director of Research Communication  
[sjlake@virginia.edu](mailto:sjlake@virginia.edu)

### Kelly Oman, Ph.D.

Assistant Director of Research Communication  
[dkk8cp@virginia.edu](mailto:dkk8cp@virginia.edu)

