



National Science Foundation
DIRECTORATE FOR SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL & ECONOMIC SCIENCES
Social, Behavioral & Economic Sciences (SBE)

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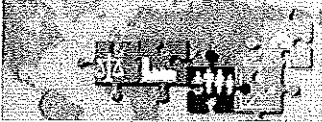
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SBE Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grants

up to 10k, no self-pay

Sociology

Division of Social and Economic Sciences

Pat White, Program Director

Jan Stets, Program Director

Sociology Dissertation Due Dates: February 15th and October 15th

Proposals for Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grants submitted to the Sociology Program must comply with and have the following information:

- **Due Dates - February 15 and October 15:** Projects should be received in the Sociology Program by these dates. Requested start date for projects recommended for support may begin July 1 (for February 15 submissions) and on March 1 (for October 15 submissions).
- **Project Duration:** 12 months
- **Project Budget:** Dissertation grants are for \$10,000 or less. Funds are for expenses associated with conducting the dissertation research (e.g., data collection, field work, payment to subjects, survey expenses, software, microfilm, data transcription, file creation and data merging, courses on specialized skills such as those offered at ICPSR, travel, and expenses incurred at sites away from the student's home institution). The grant does not support stipend, salary and tuition reimbursement.
- **Proposal Title** should begin with, "Doctoral Dissertation Research..."
- **P.I.:** The dissertation advisor should be listed as the Principal Investigator. The dissertation student is being listed as the Co-Principal Investigator.
- **Project Summary:** Students must clearly address, in separate, labeled, sections within the one-page limitation, both of the NSF merit review criteria in the Project Summary. The intellectual merit portion should include, minimally, background information on the research (theory, prior research), research hypotheses and/or questions, and a description of methods and expected findings. The broader impacts portion might address such questions as: How well does the activity advance discovery and understanding while promoting teaching, training or learning? What may be the benefits of the proposed activity to society? (see the [Grant Proposal Guide](#) for more detail).
- **Project Description** must not exceed **10** single pages. Do not send transcripts and letters of recommendation but include any questionnaire or survey guide for original data collection, up to five pages. Include after the 10 page project description.
- **Font and Spacing:** Proposals must have 2.5 cm margins at the top, bottom and on each side. The type size must be clear and readily legible, and conform to the following three requirements: 1) the height of the letters must not be smaller than 10 point; 2) type density must be no more than 15 characters per 2.5 cm; (for proportional spacing, the average for any representative section of text must not exceed 15 characters per 2.5 cm); and, 3) no more than 6 lines must be within a vertical space of 2.5 cm. The type size used throughout the proposal must conform to all three requirements. While line spacing (single-spaced, double-spaced, etc.) is at the discretion of the student, established page limits must be followed. The guidelines specified above establish the **minimum** type size requirements, PIs, however, are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the proposal.
- **IRB:** For proposals involving human subjects, please be sure to email or fax (703-292-9195) the Human Subjects Certification form from the submitting institution. If the certification is pending, please include information to that effect on the cover sheet. The institutional form certifying that the project has

Policy Office

been approved should be scanned and incorporated in a file in the supplementary documents section of the proposal. **PLEASE DO NOT WAIT UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED OF FUNDING TO START THE APPROVAL PROCESS.**

- Proposals that violate these regulations in an attempt to squeeze in more information antagonize reviewers and may be returned without consideration.
- All proposals must be submitted electronically via [Fastlane](#) or [Grants.gov](#).
- Co-Review: The Sociology Program does not co-review dissertation proposals with other programs. Also, only one dissertation proposal may be under consideration at NSF at any given time.

If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact the Program Directors: Pat White or Jan Stets.

Dissertation Advice to Students

The Sociology Program dissertation improvement grants are awarded to support high quality doctoral dissertation research in sociology. The suitability of a research idea is based on the extent to which the research contributes to sociological theory and knowledge, not on specific topics. Grants are for direct research costs associated with either original data collection or the analysis of existing datasets. Direct research costs may include such things as dataset acquisition, additional statistical or methodological training through ICPSR (Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research) meeting with scholars associated with the original data set, and fieldwork away from the student's home campus. More information about the nature of dissertation grants, applicant eligibility, and proposal and grant processing is given in the announcement, [Grants for Improving Doctoral Dissertation Research](#).

As a general rule, proposals that review well are those that clearly state a central research question, make an argument that engages and/or debates relevant literatures, specifies the data the student will gather and the analytic procedures the student will apply to those data. Additionally, strong proposals state what the researcher expects to find or show through the research. Projects designed primarily to "expand," "explore," or "develop" our understanding of a phenomenon tend to be too preliminary for NSF support. Likewise, the Sociology Program does not fund evaluation projects or those with a primarily applied focus. NSF-funded sociology proposals tend to be theoretically framed and make clear contributions to sociological theory, and the strongest proposals have a research design that permits falsifiability so that the PI can be wrong as well as right.

When preparing the proposal, write clearly and concisely. Reviewers will include sociologists from a variety of specialty areas. It is possible that no specialist from your particular area of research will be on the panel. Defining key terms and keeping your proposal free of jargon will ensure that all reviewers will be able to understand your proposal and evaluate it fairly.

The proposal should not include any appendix unless the student PI has received permission from the NSF program director. Students are, however, allowed to include copies of their survey instruments and interview guides if they are completing original data collection. Please limit these materials to five pages and insert at the end of the project description. Proposals without explicit permission for appendices may be held up or returned without review. Remember that reviewers are not obligated to read appendices, so critically important information should be in the body of the proposal. Letters testifying to local institutional sponsorship need not be appended but definitely should be cited in the proposal.

Students should use their judgment to determine how much space to allot to various portions of the discussion of the research. For example, students analyzing existing datasets will probably need to devote more space to the theoretical discussion and engagement with extant literature. In contrast, those designing their own study, whether quantitative or qualitative, will need to apportion more of their space to explication of the measurement instrument, fieldwork, or data-gathering efforts. Likewise, different analytic techniques require more or less discussion. Regardless of how much space the student devotes to discussion of theory and method, it is crucial that these be tightly connected.

Descriptions of data, regardless of type, should address how the specific data are appropriate to the theoretically motivated question(s) asked. Issues such as sampling, generalizability, reliability and validity are crucial components of this discussion regardless of data type (quantitative or qualitative). Thus, proposals should specify how the student will use the data to generalize to a relevant population or theory. In addition to consideration of the quality, type and appropriateness of data, students should be similarly informative about their plan for data analysis.

Reviewers recognize that plans change in the process of research; nonetheless, they will look for a clear description of how the student will use the data to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. Listing software programs or methods (participant observation) does not provide sufficient information to reviewers nor demonstrate that the student has seriously considered all phases of the research process in designing the proposal. Reviewers should be able to look back to the specific



FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS > DISSERTATION PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT
FELLOWSHIP (DPDF) PROGRAM

DPDF Student Fellowship Competition

Open for applications, next deadline is January 29th 2010. [Apply Now](#)

The Dissertation Proposal Development Fellowship (DPDF) is organized to help early-stage graduate students in the humanities and social sciences formulate effective doctoral dissertation proposals.

Each year, the program offers training within different interdisciplinary fields of study under the leadership of pairs of tenured senior faculty, who define the fields and serve as research directors for groups of 12 graduate students. The students participate in two workshops: one in the spring, to prepare students to undertake summer research that will inform the design of their dissertation research; the other in the fall, to help students apply their summer research experiences to writing dissertation and funding proposals. Students may apply for up to \$5,000 to cover summer research costs. Working together, research directors and graduate students design research that will help to shape evolving fields in the humanities and social science.

DPDF Eligibility Criteria for Students

The DPDF program is open to doctoral students in social science or humanities disciplines who have completed their major course requirements and are beginning to design research proposals. Students who have completed their comprehensive, general, or qualifying exams are eligible to apply as long as their dissertation proposals will be formally approved by their department after the fall DPDF workshop. Typically such students will be second and third year graduate students, but first and fourth year student may, under exceptional circumstances, be eligible.

Applicants must be enrolled full-time in a Ph.D. program within an accredited university in the United States, unless indicated otherwise for a particular field. In the current application cycle French students and foreign students enrolled in a French institution are also invited to apply to participate in the field of "Multiculturalism, Immigration, and Identity in Western Europe and the United States."

Students may apply to participate in only one research field and, if selected, they are required to attend both spring and fall workshops and undertake summer research, the dates for which are listed in the in the DPDF Application & Award Timeline. Under exceptional circumstances, a student may be excused from part of one workshop, but potential applicants should contact DPDF staff and obtain approval before applying.

Applicants must propose to undertake summer research that will enable them to experiment with methods of investigation appropriate to their research topics and questions. To do so, applicants are expected to apply to the program for funding to cover summer research costs, but they must also seek financial support from their home institutions or extramural sources whenever available. Selected fellows will be

Competitions

[by year:](#)

Announcements

**2010 Research Fields
Research field descriptions
and field director
biographies for the 2010
DPDF cycle can be found
by clicking on the
Competitions drop-down
list and selecting 2010.**

Student Application

The student application is open. The application deadline is Friday, January 29, 2010 at 6:00 PM, EST.



SSRC

FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS >

SSRC-Mellon Mays Predoctoral Research Grant

Not currently accepting applications.

Eligibility

Fellows must be currently enrolled in a doctoral program and have completed their first year. First-year graduate fellows are not eligible.

Fellows may receive a **total of \$5,000** in PRD or GSE grants during these years.

Fellows who have received installments of the grant under the previous structure are eligible for the remainder of the monies totaling \$5,000. For example, third-year fellows who have received two \$1,000 grants may apply for a maximum of \$3,000 under this structure.

The SSRC-Mellon Mays Graduate Initiatives Program offers three grants designed to meet specific needs during the doctoral degree process. Fellows may apply for one grant during each grant cycle. The total of the GSE and PRD grants may not exceed \$5,000 during the years of eligibility.

The **Pre-doctoral Research Development (PRD)** grant is available to second through fifth year students. It may be used for small scale, preliminary research and other activities that support the early investigation of data sources, field sites, data sets and archival materials. The PRD is subject to a \$3,000 maximum and may be received one time.

The **Graduate Studies Enhancement (GSE)** grant is available to second through fifth year students. It may be used to defer the cost of conference travel, equipment, books, journal subscriptions, software and other necessary supplies. The GSE is subject to a \$1,500 annual maximum and may be received four times.

We recommend that fellows carefully plan how they will use the new grant opportunities. They have been redesigned to allow greater flexibility. Fellows should consider how to allocate the available \$5,000 during these years. For example, students may want to apply for the GSE in the second year; the PRD in the third when they are beginning preliminary research and apply for another GSE in the fourth year to defray costs such as books and journals.

Available Only for 2008-2009 Grant Cycle

The **Dissertation Completion Grant (DCG)** is available to fellows beyond the fifth year of graduate study. It may be used to defer the cost of conference travel, equipment, books, journal subscriptions, software, and other activities that support the investigation of data sources, field sites, data sets and archival materials. The DCG is subject to a \$2,500 maximum and may be received one time.

Mellon Fields of Study

In order to be eligible for the grant, fellows must be pursuing a doctorate in one of Mellon-designated fields listed below:

Anthropology
Area Studies
Art History
Classics
Computer Science
Demography
Earth Sciences
Ecology
English
Ethnomusicology
Foreign Languages
Geology
History
Literature
Mathematics
Musicology
Philosophy
Physics
Political Theory
Religion
Sociology

Fellows who enter Ph.D. programs in a field not listed above must formally petition for recognition of the graduate program before applying for the Predoctoral Grant. For more information on petitioning for Mellon Mays benefits, please contact:
mellonmays@ssrc.org

NETWORK

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ABOUT THE SSRC

The Social Science Research Council is an independent, nonprofit international organization founded in 1923. It nurtures new generations of social scientists, fosters innovative research, and mobilizes necessary knowledge on important public issues.



The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is pleased to announce that it is seeking applications for funding under the Ph.D. Graduate Research Fellowship (GRF) program, which provides awards for research on crime, violence, and other criminal justice-related topics to accredited academic universities that support graduate study leading to research-based doctoral degrees in disciplines relevant to the Institute's mission. This program furthers the Department's mission by sponsoring research to provide objective, independent, evidence-based knowledge and tools to meet the challenges of crime and justice, particularly at the State and local levels.

Solicitation: NIJ Ph.D. Graduate Research Fellowship Program FY 2010

Eligibility

For this program, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is authorized to make grants to degree-granting educational institutions in the United States. The institution of record must be fully accredited by one of the regional institutional accreditation agencies recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education.

Deadline

Registration with OJP's Grants Management System is required prior to application submission.
(See "How to Apply," page 7.)

All applications are due by **11:45 p.m. eastern time on April 2, 2010.**
(See "Deadlines: Registration and Application," page 3.)

Contact Information

For technical assistance with submitting the application, contact the Grants Management System Support Hotline at 1-888-549-9901, option 3 or via e-mail to GMSHelpDesk@usdoj.gov.

Note: The GMS Support Hotline hours of operation are Monday-Friday from 6:00 a.m. to midnight eastern time, except for Federal holidays.

For assistance with any other requirement of this solicitation, contact Christine Crossland at 202-616-5166 or by e-mail to Christine.Crossland@usdoj.gov or Marie Garcia at 202-514-7128 or by e-mail to Marie.Garcia@usdoj.gov.

SL# 000918

NIA Dissertation Research Grant

For "doctoral students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups; with disabilities; or from socially, culturally, economically, or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds"

Aging Dissertation Research Grant to Increase Diversity (R36)

PAR-08-250

Expiration Date: January 8, 2012

- **Purpose.** The National Institute on Aging (NIA) announces the reissuance of a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) that provides dissertation awards (R36) in all areas of research within NIAs mandate to increase diversity of the research workforce on research on aging and aging-related health conditions. These awards are available to qualified Predoctoral students in accredited research doctoral programs in the United States (including Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories or possessions).
- **Mechanism of Support.** This funding opportunity will use the Dissertation Award R36 grant mechanism
- **Funds Available and Anticipated Number of Awards.** Awards issued under this FOA are contingent upon the availability of funds and the submission of a sufficient number of meritorious applications. The NIA expects to award \$250,000 to \$300,000 annually beginning in Fiscal Year 2009 to support up to 5 dissertation awards.
- **Budget and Project Period:** Support is provided for up to two years. Total allowable costs per year are the current fiscal year National Research Service Award (NRSA) Predoctoral stipend level (<http://grants.nih.gov/training/nrsa.htm#policy>) and up to \$15,000 for additional expenses. No funds may be used to pay tuition or fees associated with completion of doctoral studies.
- **Eligible Institutions/Organizations.** You may submit an application if your organization has the following characteristics:
 - Public or private institutions, such as universities, colleges, hospitals, and laboratories, that offer accredited research doctoral programs.
 - Domestic Institutions only.
 - In addition, the applicant institution must be the institution at which you are pursuing your doctoral studies and the doctoral program in which you are participating must be accredited by the appropriate professional organization.
- **Eligible Project Director/Principal Investigators (PD/PI).** Eligible PD/PIs include Predoctoral students at the dissertation stage of training who will contribute to diversity as defined in this announcement and whose dissertation topic focuses on research on aging.
- **Application Materials.** See [Section IV.1.](#) for application materials. The SF424 (R&R) Application Guide for this FOA is located at these Web sites:
 - http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/SF424_RR_Guide_General_Ver2.doc (MS Word)
 - http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/SF424_RR_Guide_General_Ver2.pdf (PDF).
- **General Information.** For general information on SF424 (R&R) Application and Electronic Submission, see these Web sites:
 - SF424 (R&R) Application and Electronic Submission Information: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/index.htm>
 - General information on Electronic Submission of Grant Applications: <http://era.nih.gov/ElectronicReceipt/>

AHRQ Dissertation Research Grant

“for doctoral research to improve the quality, safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of health care for all Americans.”

AHRQ Grants for Health Services Research Dissertation Program (R36)

PAR-09-212

- **Purpose:** The overall goal of the AHRQ grants for Health Services Research Dissertation Program is to help ensure that a diverse pool of highly trained health services researchers is available in adequate numbers and appropriate research areas to address the research mission and priorities of AHRQ. This announcement represents the continuation of an AHRQ program that provides support to individuals who are conducting research undertaken as part of an academic program to qualify for a research doctorate degree.
- **Mechanism of Support:** This Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) utilizes the dissertation research grant mechanism (R36).
- **Funds Available and Anticipated Number of Awards:** The total amount to be awarded and the number of awards will depend upon the quality and merit of applications received and the availability of funds.
- **Budget and Project Period:** The total direct costs awarded under this FOA for dissertation grants must not exceed \$40,000 for the entire project period, which must be a minimum of nine months and not to exceed 17 months in duration. Individuals supported under Ruth Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) mechanisms, including T32, F31 and F32 research training awards, are eligible to apply for a dissertation award. However, such individuals may only request up to \$20,000 direct costs for additional, non-salary expenses. In such instances, the application must include a statement describing the expenses requested under the dissertation grant application which are not supported through the active training grant or fellowship. The proposed start date for the dissertation grant must be a minimum of four months after the application submission deadline.
- **Application Research Strategy Length:** The R36 Research Strategy section may not exceed 10 pages, including tables, graphs, figures, diagrams, and charts.
- **Eligible Project Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI).** individuals with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research and career development activities are invited to work with their mentor and sponsoring institution to develop an application for support. Applicants must be U.S. citizens, non-citizen nationals, or permanent residents by the time of the award. Applicants must be full-time students in good standing, who are enrolled in an accredited research doctoral program in such fields as the social or behavioral sciences, health services research, social sciences, epidemiology, biostatistics, health policy, and health informatics. Students will have completed all non-dissertation requirements for their doctoral degree by the time of submission of the application (except a clinical internship where that is required to follow the dissertation phase). Approval of the dissertation proposal by the doctoral committee is required by the time of the grant award. See Section III for details.
- **General Information:** For general information on SF424 (R&R) Application and Electronic Submission, see:
 - SF424 (R&R) Application and Electronic Submission Information:
<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/index.htm>
 - General information on Electronic Submission of Grant Applications: <http://era.nih.gov/ElectronicReceipt/>

NIMH Dissertation Research Grant

For “doctoral students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups; with disabilities; or from socially, culturally, economically, or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds”

Mental Health Dissertation Research Grant to Increase Diversity (R36)

PAR-09-132

Expiration Date: January 8, 2012

- **Purpose.** The purpose of this funding opportunity is to increase the diversity of the mental health research workforce. It will enable qualified doctoral candidates to pursue research careers in any area relevant to the research mission of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). These awards are available to US citizens or permanent residents who are predoctoral students advanced to candidacy in accredited research doctoral programs in the United States (including Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories or possessions).
- **Mechanism of Support.** This FOA will utilize the NIH Dissertation Research Grant (R36) award mechanism.
- **Funds Available and Anticipated Number of Awards.** Awards issued under this FOA are contingent upon the availability of funds and the submission of a sufficient number of meritorious applications.
- **Budget and Project Period.** The total project period may not exceed two years. Total allowable costs per year are the current fiscal year National Research Service Award (NRSA) predoctoral stipend level (<http://grants.nih.gov/training/nrsa.htm#policy>) and up to \$15,000 for additional expenses.
- **Application Research Strategy Length.** The R36 application Research Strategy component of the PHS398 (Item 3) may not exceed 6 pages, including tables, graphs, figures, diagrams, and charts.
See http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/funding/funding_program.htm
- **Eligible Project Directors/Principal Investigators (PDs/Pis).** Eligible PD/Pis include predoctoral students at the dissertation stage of training with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research and who are from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups who have been determined by the grantee institution to be underrepresented in biomedical or behavioral science; (b) individuals with disabilities; or (c) individuals from socially, culturally, economically, or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds that have inhibited their ability to pursue a career in health-related research.
- **Special Date(s).** This FOA uses non-standard due dates. See [Receipt, Review and Anticipated Start Dates](#)
- **Application Materials.** See [Section IV.1](#) for application materials.
- **General Information.** For general information on SF424 (R&R) Application and Electronic Submission, see these Web sites:
 - SF424 (R&R) Application and Electronic Submission Information: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/index.htm>
 - General information on Electronic Submission of Grant Applications: <http://era.nih.gov/ElectronicReceipt/>

NIDA Dissertation Research Grant

“for support of drug abuse doctoral dissertation research in epidemiology, prevention, treatment, services, and/or women and sex/gender differences”

Drug Abuse Dissertation Research: Epidemiology, Prevention, Treatment, Services, and/or Women and Sex/Gender Differences (R36)

PAR-10-020

- **Purpose.** The purpose of this Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) is to invite applications for support of drug abuse doctoral dissertation research in epidemiology, prevention, treatment, services, and/or women and sex/gender differences.
- **Mechanism of Support.** This FOA will utilize the NIH Dissertation Award (R36) grant mechanism. For information on training opportunities, please visit NIDA's Research Training Opportunities Website (<http://www.nida.nih.gov/ResearchTraining/Traininghome.html>).
- **Funds Available and Anticipated Number of Awards.** Awards issued under this FOA are contingent upon the availability of funds and the submission of a sufficient number of meritorious applications.
- **Budget and Project Period.** Grants to support dissertation research will provide no more than \$50,000 in direct costs per year, and are awarded for up to two years, with the possibility of extension without additional funds for up to 12 months.
- **Application Research Strategy Length:** The R36 application Research Strategy section of the PHS398 may not exceed 6 pages, including tables, graphs, figures, diagrams, and charts. See [Table of Page Limits](#).
- **Eligible Institutions/Organizations.** Any domestic public or private university or college is eligible to apply, given that it has the staff and facilities available to provide a suitable environment for the candidate to perform high-quality research.
- **Eligible Project Directors/Principal Investigators (PDs/PIs).** The applicant for a dissertation research grant must be enrolled in an accredited doctoral degree program in the behavioral, biomedical, or social sciences and must propose to conduct research in one of the areas specified in this FOA. (These awards do not support study leading to the M.D., D.O., or D.D.S., or similar professional degrees unless they are part of a combined degree program.) The doctoral student must be a citizen or a non-citizen national of the United States or an individual who has been lawfully admitted for permanent residence (i.e., in possession of an Alien Registration Receipt Card) at the time of application. Individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups as well as individuals with disabilities are always encouraged to apply for NIH support. A doctoral student who receives support for dissertation research under a grant from NIDA may not hold concurrently another federally sponsored fellowship or similar Federal award.
- **Application Materials.** See [Section IV.1](#) for application materials. All applications, including resubmission, revision and renewal, submitted for due dates January 25, 2010 and beyond, must utilize the current forms and instructions.
- **General Information.** For general information on SF424 (R&R) Application and Electronic Submission, see these Web sites:
 - SF424 (R&R) Application and Electronic Submission Information: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/index.htm>
 - General information on Electronic Submission of Grant Applications: <http://era.nih.gov/ElectronicReceipt/>



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

NIJ's Graduate Research Fellowship Program ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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The National Institute of Justice's Graduate Research Fellowship Program provides dissertation research support to outstanding doctoral students undertaking independent research on issues in crime and justice. It awards these fellowships to expand the pool of research talent by attracting doctoral students who can contribute critical and innovative thinking to pressing justice problems.

Listed below are answers to a number of frequently asked questions about this fellowship program.

Can I apply for a Graduate Research Fellowship if I am trained in a discipline other than Criminal Justice?

The National Institute of Justice encourages diversity in approaches and perspectives in its research program; students from any relevant academic discipline are encouraged to apply. In the past, students trained in sociology, economics, history, psychology, and criminal justice, to name a few, have been awarded fellowships. Applicants are encouraged to consult literatures from a variety of disciplines to avoid making statements like "no research on this topic exists", when in fact the existing research may be in a field other than that in which you have been trained.

If I am attending school in a foreign based college or university, am I eligible for a Graduate Research Fellowship?

Graduate Research Fellowships can only be granted to a U.S.-based sponsoring academic institution.

If I am a student whose citizenship is not with the United States, but I am attending a U.S.-based college or university, am I eligible for a Graduate Research Fellowship?

The official applicant for a Graduate Research Fellowship is the U.S.-based sponsoring academic institution, so any student of the academic institution, irrespective of their citizenship, is eligible.

If I am working for a private organization, in addition to attending school, am I eligible for a Graduate Research Fellowship?

The Art of Writing Proposals

By Adam Przeworski and Frank Salomon

Writing proposals for research funding is a peculiar facet of North American academic culture, and as with all things cultural, its attributes rise only partly into public consciousness. A proposal's overt function is to persuade a committee of scholars that the project shines with the three kinds of merit all disciplines value, namely, conceptual innovation, methodological rigor, and rich, substantive content. But to make these points stick, a proposal writer needs a feel for the unspoken customs, norms, and needs that govern the selection process itself. These are not really as arcane or ritualistic as one might suspect. For the most part, these customs arise from the committee's efforts to deal in good faith with its own problems: incomprehension among disciplines, work overload, and the problem of equitably judging proposals that reflect unlike social and academic circumstances.

Writing for committee competition is an art quite different from research work itself. After long deliberation, a committee usually has to choose among proposals that all possess the three virtues mentioned above. Other things being equal, the proposal that is awarded funding is the one that gets its merits across more forcefully because it addresses these unspoken needs and norms as well as the overt rules. The purpose of these pages is to give competitors for Council fellowships and funding a more even start by making explicit some of those normally unspoken customs and needs.

Capture the Reviewer's Attention?

While the form and the organization of a proposal are matters of taste, you should choose your form bearing in mind that every proposal reader constantly scans for clear answers to three questions:

- What are we going to learn as the result of the proposed project that we do not know now?
- Why is it worth knowing?
- How will we know that the conclusions are valid?

Working through a tall stack of proposals on voluntarily-donated time, a committee member rarely has time to comb proposals for hidden answers. So, say what you have to say immediately, crisply, and forcefully. The opening paragraph, or the first page at most, is your chance to grab the reviewer's attention. Use it. This is the moment to overstate, rather than understate, your point or question. You can add the conditions and caveats later.

Questions that are clearly posed are an excellent way to begin a proposal: Are strong party systems conducive to democratic stability? Was the decline of population growth in Brazil the result of government policies? These should not be rhetorical questions; they have effect precisely because the answer is far from obvious. Stating your central point, hypothesis, or interpretation is also a good way to begin: Workers do not organize unions; unions organize workers. The success, and failure, of Corazon Aquino's revolution stems from its middle-class origins. Population growth coupled with loss of arable land poses a threat to North African food security in the next decade.

Obviously some projects are too complex and some conceptualizations too subtle for such telegraphic messages to capture. Sometimes only step-by-step argumentation can define the central problem. But even if you adopt this strategy, do not fail to leave the reviewer with something to remember: some message that will remain after reading many other proposals and discussing them for hours and hours. She's the one who claims that Argentina never had a liberal democratic tradition is how you want to be referred to during the committee's discussion, not Oh yes, she's the one from Chicago.

Aim for Clarity

Remember that most proposals are reviewed by multidisciplinary committees. A reviewer studying a proposal from another field expects the proposer to meet her halfway. After all, the reader probably accepted the committee appointment because of the excitement of surveying other people's ideas. Her only reward is the chance that proposals will provide a lucidly-guided tour of various disciplines' research frontiers. Don't cheat the reviewer of this by inflicting a tiresome trek through the duller idiosyncrasies of your discipline. Many disciplines have parochial traditions of writing in pretentious jargon. You should avoid jargon as much as you can, and when technical language is really needed, restrict yourself to those new words and technical terms that truly lack equivalents in common language. Also, keep the spotlight on ideas. An archeologist should argue the concepts latent in the ceramic typology more than the typology itself, a historian the tendency latent in the mass of events, and so forth. When additional technical material is needed, or when the argument refers to complex ancillary material, putting it into appendices decongests the main text.

Establish the Context

Your proposal should tell the committee not only what will be learned as a result of your project, but what will be learned that somebody else does not already know. It is essential that the proposal summarize the current state of knowledge and provide an up-to-date, comprehensive bibliography. Both should be precise and succinct. They need not constitute a review of the literature but a sharply focused view of the specific body or bodies of knowledge to which you will add. Committees often treat bibliographies as a sign of seriousness on the part of the applicant, and some members will put considerable effort into evaluating them. A good bibliography testifies that the author did enough preparatory work to make sure the project will complement and not duplicate other people's efforts. Many proposals fail because the references are incomplete or outdated. Missing even a single reference can be very costly if it shows failure to connect with research directly relevant to one's own. Proposal writers with limited library resources are urged to correspond with

colleagues and libraries elsewhere in the early stages of research planning. Resource guides such as Dissertation Abstracts International and Social Science Periodical Index are highly recommended. For many disciplines, annual reviews (e.g., Annual Review of Anthropology) offer state-of-the-art discussions and rich bibliographies. Some disciplines have bibliographically-oriented journals, for example Review of Economic Literature and Contemporary Sociology. There are also valuable area studies-oriented guides: Handbook of Latin American Studies, International African Bibliography, etc. Familiarizing yourself with them can save days of research. Powerful bibliographic searches can be run on CD-ROM databases such as the Social Science Citations Index, Social Sciences Index, and Modern Language Association International Index. Also, on-line databases such as CARL and ERIC, available by library or network access, greatly increase your bibliographic reach.

What's the Payoff?

Disciplinary norms and personal tastes in justifying research activities differ greatly. Some scholars are swayed by the statement that it has not been studied (e.g., an historian may argue that no book has been written about a particular event, and therefore one is needed), while other scholars sometimes reflect that there may be a good reason why not. Nevertheless, the fact that less is known about one's own chosen case, period, or country than about similar ones may work in the proposer's favor. Between two identical projects, save that one concerns Egypt and the other the Sudan, reviewers are likely to prefer the latter. Citing the importance of the events that provide the subject matter is another and perhaps less dubious appeal. Turning points, crucial breakthroughs, central personages, fundamental institutions, and similar appeals to the significance of the object of research are sometimes effective if argued rather than merely asserted. Appealing to current importance may also work: e.g., democratic consolidation in South America, the aging population in industrialized countries, the relative decline of the hegemony of the United States. It's crucial to convince readers that such topics are not merely timely, but that their current urgency provides a window into some more abiding problem. Among many

social scientists, explicit theoretical interest counts heavily as a point of merit. Theoretical exposition need not go back to the axiomatic bases of the discipline, proposal readers will have a reasonable interdisciplinary breadth, but it should situate the local problem in terms of its relevance to live, sometimes controversial, theoretical currents. Help your reader understand where the problem intersects the main theoretical debates in your field and show how this inquiry puts established ideas to the test or offers new ones. Good proposals demonstrate awareness of alternative viewpoints and argue the author's position in such a way as to address the field broadly, rather than developing a single sectarian tendency indifferent to alternatives.

Use a Fresh Approach

Surprises, puzzles, and apparent contradictions can powerfully persuade the reviewer whose disciplinary superego enforces a commitment to systematic model building or formal theorizing: Given its long-standing democratic traditions, Chile was expected to return to democracy before other countries in the Southern Cone, and yet . . . Is it because these traditions were already extinct by 1973 or because the assumption on which this prediction was based is false? Everyone expected that One Big Union--the slogan of the movement--would strike and win wage increases for workers. Yet statistical evidence shows just the contrary: strong unions do not strike but instead restrain workers' wage demands.

It is often worthwhile to help readers understand how the research task grows from the intellectual history or current intellectual life of the country or region that generated it. Council committees strive to build linkages among an immense diversity of national and international intellectual traditions, and members come from various countries and schools of thought. Many committee members are interested in the interplay of diverse traditions. In fact, the chance to see intellectual history in the making is another reason people accept committee membership. It is a motive to which proposals can legitimately appeal.

It pays to remember that topics of current salience, both theoretical and in the so-called real world, are likely to be a crowded field. The competitors will be more numerous and the competition less interesting than in truly unfamiliar terrain. Unless you have something original to say about them, you may be well advised to avoid topics typically styled of central interest to the discipline. Usually these are topics about which everyone is writing, and the reason is that somebody else has already made the decisive and exciting contribution. By the time you write your proposal, obtain funding, do the research, and write it up, you might wish you were working on something else. So if your instinct leads you to a problem far from the course that the pack is running, follow it, not the pack: nothing is more valuable than a really fresh beginning.

Describe Your Methodology

Methodological canons are largely discipline-specific and vary widely even within some disciplines. But two things can safely be said about methodological appeal. First, the proposal must specify the research operations you will undertake and the way you will interpret the results of these operations in terms of your central problem. Do not just tell what you mean to achieve, tell how you will spend your time while doing it. Second, a methodology is not just a list of research tasks but an argument as to why these tasks add up to the best attack on the problem. An agenda by itself will normally not suffice because the mere listing of tasks to perform does not prove that they add up to the best feasible approach.

Some popularly-used phrases fall short of identifying recognizable research operations. For example, I will look at the relation between x and y is not informative. We know what is meant when an ornithologist proposes to look at a bird, but looking at a relation between variables is something one only does indirectly, by operations like digging through dusty archive boxes, interviewing, observing and taking standardized notes, collecting and testing statistical patterns, etc. How will you tease the relationship of underlying forces from the mass of

experience? The process of gathering data and moving from data to interpretation tends to follow disciplinary customs, more standard in some fields than in others; help readers from other fields recognize what parts of your methodology are standard, which are innovative. Be as specific as you possibly can be about the activities you plan to undertake to collect information, about the techniques you will use to analyze it, and about the tests of validity to which you commit yourself. Most proposals fail because they leave reviewers wondering what the applicant will actually do. Tell them! Specify the archives, the sources, the respondents, and the proposed techniques of analysis.

A research design proposing comparison between cases often has special appeal. In a certain sense all research is comparative because it must use, implicitly or explicitly, some point of reference. Making the comparison explicit raises its value as scientific inquiry. In evaluating a comparative proposal, readers ask whether the cases are chosen in such a way that their similarities and differences illuminate the central question. And is the proposer in a position to execute both legs of the comparison? When both answers are positive, the proposal may fare particularly well.

The proposal should prove that the researcher either possesses, or cooperates with people who possess, mastery of all the technical matters the project entails. For example, if a predominantly literary project includes an inquiry into the influence of the Tupian language on rural Brazilian Portuguese, the proposal will be checked for the author's background in linguistics and/or Indian languages, or the author's arrangements to collaborate with appropriate experts.

Specify Your Objectives

A well-composed proposal, like a sonata, usually ends by alluding to the original theme. How will research procedures and their products finally connect with the central question? How will you know if your idea was wrong or right? In some disciplines this imperative traditionally means holding to the strict canon of the

falsifiable hypothesis. While respecting this canon, committee members are also open to less formal approaches. What matters is to convince readers that something is genuinely at stake in the inquiry, that it is not tendentiously moving toward a preconceived end, and that this leaven of the unknown will yield interesting, orderly propositions.

Proposals should normally describe the final product of the project: an article, book, chapter, dissertation, etc. If you have specific plans, it often helps to spell them out, because specifying the kind of journal in which you hope to publish, or the kind of people you hope to address, will help readers understand what might otherwise look like merely odd features of the proposal. While planning and drafting your proposal, you should keep in mind the program guidelines and application procedures outlined in the brochure specific to the Council program to which you are applying. If you have specific questions about the program, you may wish to consult with a staff member. Your final proposal should include all requested enclosures and appendices.

Final Note

To write a good proposal takes a long time. Start early. Begin thinking about your topic well in advance and make it a habit to collect references while you work on other tasks. Write a first draft at least three months in advance, revise it, show it to colleagues. Let it gather a little dust, collect colleagues' comments, revise it again. If you have a chance, share it with a seminar or similar group; the debate should help you anticipate what reviewers will eventually think. Revise the text again for substance. Go over the language, style, and form. Resharpen your opening paragraph or first page so that it drives home exactly what you mean as effectively as possible.

Good luck.



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