

Mellon/ACLS Scholars & Society Fellowships

The online fellowship and grant administration (OFA) system is now open for applications.

Fellowship Details

Amount: \$75,000 stipend for the fellow, plus \$6,000 during the fellowship year for research, travel, and project costs, and \$10,000 in support for the selected partner organization. The award also provides funds for programming at the fellow's home institution and partner site in the year following the fellowship.

Tenure: 2019-2020 academic year

Completed applications must be submitted through the ACLS online fellowship and grant administration system (ofa.acls.org) no later than 9 pm Eastern Daylight Time, October 24, 2018.

Notifications will be sent via email by mid-April 2019.

The information provided here is a summary of the program, and details the objectives, eligibility, residency guidelines, project schedule, application requirements, and evaluation criteria for the program. Please read carefully through the material and accompanying FAQ.

Summary

The Mellon/ACLS Scholars & Society program offers opportunities for tenured humanities faculty in PhD-granting departments or programs in the United States to engage significant societal questions in their research, serve as ambassadors for humanities scholarship beyond the academy, and deepen their support for doctoral curricular innovation on their campuses.

Inspired by the Mellon/ACLS Public Fellows program, which demonstrates the broad value of doctoral education by placing recent humanities PhDs in nonprofit and government organizations, the Scholars & Society program allows faculty who teach and advise doctoral students to pursue research projects while in residence at a US-based cultural, media, government, policy, or community organization of their choice. Fellows and their colleagues at host institutions are expected to create a mutually beneficial partnership in which they collaborate, interact, and learn about each other's work, motivating questions, methods, and practices.

The goal of the fellowship year should be to conduct a major research project in the humanities or humanistic social sciences that treats a significant issue or grand challenge in society—such as democratic governance; technological change; racism and inequality; climate change; economic exclusion; or migration and immigration, to name a few possibilities. The program supports projects at all stages of development, and welcomes applications that propose to deepen or expand existing research projects as well as those that propose new projects. While projects should be informed by present-day issues in the public sphere, they need not be contemporary in focus. Indeed, it is assumed that the insights yielded by humanities research, broadly considered, can inform work on contemporary challenges.

Fellows also are required to participate in two workshops over the course of the fellowship year—the first, in the fall, is designed to help fellows refine their projects and build connections with scholars and institutions engaged in public scholarship and innovation in doctoral education; the second, in the spring, will offer a chance for fellows to reflect on their experiences and plan programming for the year following the fellowship.

In the 2018-19 competition year, ACLS will award up to 12 Scholars & Society Fellowships for a nine-month term during the 2019-20 academic year. Each fellowship carries a stipend of \$75,000, plus funds of up to \$6,000 for research, travel/optional relocation, and related project costs. ACLS also will cover the costs of fellows' attendance at the workshops. Fellows must commit themselves to relocating (if necessary) in order to be in residence for the entire nine-month tenure of the fellowship. The award also carries \$10,000 in support for each fellow's host organization, and provides additional funding to sponsor on-campus and off-campus programming in the year following the fellowship. The programming, which may take a variety of forms, should draw on connections developed during the fellowship year and should be designed to foster greater understanding of the value of humanities scholarship and doctoral education beyond the academy. Stipends, research and project costs, and programming budgets will be paid to fellows directly or through their universities.

Objectives

To support humanities research that is engaged with societal questions and informed by dialogues taking place outside of the academy;

To promote the wide circulation of humanities research and understanding of the questions and methods that animate humanities scholarship;

To valorize publicly engaged scholarship and make it more visible at universities with doctoral programs in the humanities;

To equip humanities faculty with a greater understanding of how doctoral education prepares PhDs for a range of careers in society.

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- be employed in tenured positions in PhD-granting humanities departments or programs at a university in the United States, remaining so for the duration of the fellowship. (See FAQ for details.) US citizenship or permanent residency is not required.
- commit to a nine-month residency off-campus and at the non-academic institution that they have proposed.
- commit to participate in-person in two multi-day workshops (in the early fall and late spring) during the fellowship year.

Residency Guidelines

The goals of the residency are to promote research inflected by work and conversations beyond the academy, and to provide humanities faculty with a greater understanding of the value of humanities perspectives, capacities, and questions to a range of social issues. The fellowships are predicated on thoughtful, mutually beneficial collaborations between fellows and partner sites, and ACLS expects that both fellows and hosts will have much to gain from the exchange. Eligible residential sites include US-based cultural, policy, media, government, service, and community organizations. Fellows need not relocate to take up a residency—indeed, research and residencies that foster local partnerships between universities and organizations in their communities are welcome—but the primary criterion for selecting a host site should be its suitability for advancing an applicant's project.

The program welcomes a range of approaches to collaboration with the host site. As part of the application process, applicants must describe, in the proposal narrative, how the project and residency alike will be beneficial to both fellow and host. Applicants also must secure a separate statement of support from the proposed host organization that outlines their interest in hosting the fellow and confirms that the fellow will be provided with workspace, administrative support and other resources, as well as opportunities to participate in the organization's work during the residency.

ACLS will provide \$10,000 to host institutions to defray the costs of providing the fellow with the resources and opportunities outlined above. Fellows are expected to work fulltime on their projects and to participate in the organizational life of their host sites. ACLS also encourages fellows and host sites to consider how best to build and deepen their partnerships during the fellowship year and beyond, and the research and project funds provided by the fellowship may be used toward these ends.

Project Schedule

Proposals should include a plan of work to be carried out during the fellowship year, and describe any preliminary work already completed. Applicants who are selected for a fellowship will be required to secure assurance from their home institutions before the award is finalized that the institution is prepared to accommodate and support on-campus programming in the year following the fellowship.

Application Requirements

Applications must be submitted online and must include:

- Completed application form, which includes a brief statement of interest describing the motivation for public engagement and the applicant's capacity to carry out such work
- Narrative proposal that includes the following sections: research aims and planned outcomes; a survey of the field that outlines how the proposed project articulates with current approaches to publicly engaged humanities scholarship; necessary skills, training, and logistical support; and a rationale for residency that includes a reflection on how the project and residency alike will be mutually beneficial for the fellow and host organization (no more than seven pages, double spaced, in Times New Roman 11-point font)
- Up to three additional pages of images, musical scores, or other similar supporting non-text materials [optional]
- Bibliography (no more than two pages)
- Publications list (no more than two pages)
- One-page project timeline
- One-page description of efforts by applicant's department or institution to support diverse careers for doctoral students
- Two reference letters
- Statement of support from the applicant's proposed host organization

Evaluation Criteria

Peer reviewers in this program are asked to evaluate all eligible proposals on the following criteria:

The potential of the project to advance the field of study in which it is proposed and to treat effectively issues of public concern.

The quality of the proposal with regard to its methodology, framework, and grounding in the relevant literatures. The feasibility of the project and the preparedness of the applicant to undertake it.

The rationale for residency at the proposed site and likelihood that the collaboration with colleagues at the host institution will increase the applicant's ability to carry the project forward.

The potential of the applicant's work to engage with and make an impact on audiences beyond the academy. Successful applicants who accept a Mellon/ACLS Scholars & Society Fellowship will be withdrawn from other ACLS competitions.