Fellowships are grants, stipends, or other funds given to support graduate research and study. While commonly granted for Ph.D. candidates, master’s program and professional school fellowships also exist. Fellowship money is an out-right grant and does not need to be repaid. They range in amounts from a few hundred dollars to enough to fully cover tuition/fees, cost of living, books and other expenses and may vary in length, lasting from a few months to several years. Fellowships vary in design as well, supporting a wide range of activities including academic study, research on a particular topic, development of an initiative or implemented program, training and reflection, and/or work experience. Usually awarded on the basis of merit, competition for fellowships is very keen.

Two general types of fellowships exist: institutional fellowships and portable fellowships. Institutional fellowships are offered by specific universities, departments or programs for use at that particular school. Check with the financial aid office at the schools you apply to for information on any available institutional fellowships and common portable fellowships for your program. Portable fellowships are offered by private organizations, government agencies or other donors and can be used for graduate study at any school.

APPLICATION PROCESS
Each graduate fellowship has its own application form, some complicated and some straightforward, which can be downloaded from their web site. Application deadlines occur throughout the fall quarter, and some are in October or early November, so apply early! It is important to read the application carefully and to understand what information is requested. Well-prepared applications with well-thought-out answers make the best impression.

Identify Appropriate Fellowships – You’ll want to find fellowships which match your field of study, interests, personal background (some consider race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic level, etc.), and/or future plans. A list of the major national, portable fellowships, typically awarded to fund doctoral study and research, and websites listing additional fellowship opportunities can be found at the end of this handout. Links to fellowship databases can be found on the Career Services Center’s website at [http://career.ucsd.edu/undergraduates/thinking-about-grad-school/financial-aid-and-fellowships.html](http://career.ucsd.edu/undergraduates/thinking-about-grad-school/financial-aid-and-fellowships.html). Google searches, and inquiries to faculty, professionals, organizations and foundations in your field of interest can also lead you to additional opportunities.

Application Essays – Most fellowship competitions require statements of purpose or intent. These essays allow you to convey your past and current academic and research experiences, as well as future goals. Explicitly or implicitly, this essay should give the impression that the tenure of the fellowship would be the next logical step in your education. These statements should express your thoughts logically, clearly, concisely and with elegance. Essays should be typed and are typically one to two pages in length, but carefully read and follow instructions regarding length.

Decisions to interview academically qualified fellowship applicants (when interviews are a required part of the process) are often based on the reading of this essay. These narratives may also be considered by selection committees as samples of your writing ability. So carefully write and have your essay(s) critiqued by people you trust, such as faculty, writing tutors, and advisors. The Professional and Graduate School advisors in the Career Services Center are also available to critique your typed, double-spaced, final essay draft. The handout “Statement of Intent: Academic Master’s and Ph.D. Programs” ([http://career.ucsd.edu/files/statementofintent.pdf](http://career.ucsd.edu/files/statementofintent.pdf)) may also be helpful.

In addition to the statement of purpose, some fellowship applications require a narrative autobiography or detailed curriculum vitae (C.V.) intended to provide a supplementary portrait of accomplishments and distinctions. Academic and extracurricular achievements may be viewed with varying degrees of importance, depending on the purpose and goals of the fellowship. Consider carefully which experiences should be included in this additional essay or C.V. You can find examples and resources on writing a C.V. at [http://career.ucsd.edu/undergraduates/prepar-resume-cvlet/resumes-coverletter-cv.html](http://career.ucsd.edu/undergraduates/prepar-resume-cvlet/resumes-coverletter-cv.html).

Letters of Reference – Letters are considered a critical segment of an application to present a complete picture of your qualifications. Authors should be chosen carefully and should be people who know you, your research, work and abilities well. Letters should address the particular qualifications sought by each fellowship and your ability to carry out a specific academic or research program. Don’t wait until the last minute to request recommendations. Instead, schedule a meeting with each letter writer to discuss future study plans and at that time provide a written description of the fellowship, college transcripts and an autobiography/resume/C.V. that highlights activities relating to your future research or study, as well as a copy or summary of any research proposal required by the fellowship-granting agency. See [http://career.ucsd.edu/files/guidlfr.pdf](http://career.ucsd.edu/files/guidlfr.pdf) for more about obtaining letters.

Academic Record – Most fellowship applications will require you to submit transcripts from all colleges and universities you’ve attended. They’ll be looking at your level of academic achievement, the courses you’ve taken and how well your academic history has prepared you for the graduate study you plan to pursue.

The Research Proposal – The proposed course of graduate study and research is the heart of many fellowship applications. Some applications expect applicants to include this information in statements of purpose or intent; others
require a separate research statement or proposal. Proposals should describe in detail the specific area within a discipline which will become the graduate research focus, or describe the particular project tasks or activities.

Proposals often include:

- A detailed discussion of the academic or research topic and methodology of study or research.
- An indication that the study or research is consistent with your qualifications, academic preparation, and long-range educational or career goals. If you propose a novel topic or field of study or research, some explanation must be provided.
- An indication that the proposed study or research is feasible. This includes: knowing that the faculty members you’re interested in working with will be available; that libraries, computers, laboratories, archive and field opportunities are or will be accessible; that any languages needed for study and research are sufficiently mastered; and that the research will have the support of the faculty members involved.
- An indication of the relevance of the study or research to the country or to the educational institution where it will be undertaken. Applications are substantially strengthened by compelling reasons for conducting the study or research at the proposed institution or in the chosen country (e.g., access to key research institutes or distinguished researchers).
- An indication of the benefit you hope to derive from the fellowship (e.g., preparation for academic and/or research careers).

The writing style and logical presentation of ideas in the research proposal should favorably reflect your character, qualifications and plans. Careful attention to details of grammar, spelling, and sentence structure are important. Critique by your research sponsors or by professors is strongly recommended.

MAJOR FELLOWSHIPS AND SEARCHABLE DATABASES

Students applying to academic Master’s or Ph.D. programs may want to explore the following competitive graduate fellowship opportunities and resources. Contact the Financial Aid Office to find faculty advisors for many of the major national scholarships (http://fao.ucsd.edu/Scholarships_National_01.htm). See each fellowship’s website for details on requirements and deadlines.

1. **National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship** – For research-based master’s or Ph.D. degrees in the mathematical, physical, biological, behavioral and social sciences; engineering; the history of science and the philosophy of science; and for research-based Ph.D. degrees in science education. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or nationals, or permanent resident aliens of the United States. (www.nsfgrfp.org)

2. **Fannie and John Hertz Foundation Fellowship** – For pursuit of Ph.D. study in the application of physical science to the solution of real-world problems: applied physics, applied chemistry, applied mathematics, applied modern biology and all areas of engineering. (www.hertzfoundation.org)

3. **Ford Foundation Diversity Fellowships** – For academic Ph.D. study in any field (except the arts and professional areas) for African American, Hispanic, Native Pacific Islander and Native American U.S. citizens, committed to a career in teaching and research at the college or university level. (http://www7.nationalacademies.org/fellowships/)

4. **National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate Fellowship** – Awards for doctoral study in the natural, physical, computer and mathematical sciences and engineering for U.S. citizens only. (www.asee.org/ndseg)

5. **National Physical Sciences Consortium Fellowship** – For doctoral study in the physical sciences for U.S. citizens, with emphasis on underrepresented minorities and women. (www.npsc.org)

6. **Rhodes Scholarship** – For graduate study in a variety of fields at Oxford University in England. Applicants must be U.S. citizens, 18-24 years old. (www.rhodesscholar.org)

7. **Marshall Scholarship** – For graduate degree study in a variety of fields at a British university for U.S. citizens with at least 3.7 GPA. (www.marshallscholarship.org)

8. **Department of Energy Computational Science Graduate Fellowship** – For Ph.D. study in the U.S. in computer science, mathematics, and scientific or engineering disciplines. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents. (http://www.krellinst.org/csgf/)

9. **Cornell University Graduate School Fellowship Database** – A searchable database of fellowships in many fields from around the world. (www.gradschool.cornell.edu/?p=132)


Many other graduate program reference materials are available in the Career Services Center. Information about other sources of financial support may be obtained on our website at http://career.ucsd.edu. In addition, advisors are available by appointment at (858) 534-4939 to assist you with the fellowship and graduate school application process.