

INDIVIDUAL FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Overview

BGS students have guaranteed funding through the program, derived from a variety of sources, particularly training grants, institutional funds, and research grants of thesis mentors. However, there are a number of reasons you may want to consider applying for an individual fellowship. These include:

- Experience: the process of applying for a fellowship is valuable, and gives you a taste of what it will be like to apply for other fellowships and research grants later in your career.
- Kudos: competing against a national pool of candidates and receiving an individual fellowship from NIH or another funding agency looks great on your CV.
- Money/opportunity: For most students, receiving an individual fellowship will not change your stipend level, but these awards often come with additional funds for travel to conferences or other educational expenses (computers, books, etc).
- Benefit to mentor: If you receive an individual fellowship to help support your own training costs, this frees up funds for your mentor to use for other research/personnel costs.

Information about specific fellowship opportunities

Many fellowship opportunities are tied to particular research areas. There are also fellowships that are broad in terms of area of research, but have other eligibility criteria, e.g., awards for students with underrepresented backgrounds. A comprehensive database of fellowship opportunities is available in GrantsNet: <http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/funding>

Some of the fellowships current BGS students hold or have applied for include:

NIH individual predoctoral F awards, http://grants.nih.gov/training/F_files_nrsa.htm, targeted to trainees with certain backgrounds and interests, including MD-PhDs, trainees from underrepresented backgrounds, and trainees conducting dissertation research in certain fields.

National Science Foundation

http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=6201

[American Heart Association](#) (see Great Rivers Affiliate link)

Department of Defense

<https://ndseg.asee.org/>

Department of Energy

<http://www.krellinst.org/csgf/>

UNCF-Merck (Diversity)

http://www.uncf.org/portal/seimerck/ScholarshipsInternshipsFellowships/tabid/93/Default.aspx#Graduate_Fellowships

UNCF-NASA Jenkins (Diversity)

<http://www.uncfsp.org/spknowledge/default.aspx?page=program.view&areaid=1&contentid=177&typeid=jfpf>

Ford Foundation (Diversity)

http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/FordFellowships/PGA_047958

Soros Fellowship for New Americans (permanent residents; naturalized citizens; children of two parents who are naturalized citizens) <http://www.pdsoros.org/>

HHMI International Student Research Fellowships (must be in 2nd or 3rd year of PhD training to apply, and must be nominated by the Vice Provost for Education). Announcements are made each fall to solicit nominations among eligible students.
http://www.hhmi.org/grants/individuals/intl_fellows.html

Process and tips for applying

- *Carefully* read through all of the requirements for the application from start to finish, and make sure you're aware of everything you and others will need to provide. Also be sure that you meet the eligibility requirements for the particular fellowship you're considering.
- If you are planning to apply for an individual NIH fellowship, contact Marianne Altland Williams, Grants Manager, in the Finance Office, as far in advance as possible (at least 6 weeks before the deadline). She will provide essential information and guidance about the budget aspect of the application, and the process for getting required approvals from the Office of Research Services. Awards need to be submitted electronically, and it is vital that you work with Marianne to be sure everything is coordinated such that you meet Penn's requirements and the funding agency's specifications.
- If you are applying for a non-NIH fellowship, contact your thesis mentor's Business Administrator, as far in advance as possible, for assistance.
- Many fellowship applications require letters of reference. Contact the people you would like to ask for letters from as far in advance as possible, and make sure to provide any necessary forms and information about the deadline. Offer to meet with them if they would like to discuss your application, and provide background information such as your CV and, if available, a draft of your research proposal.
- Many fellowship applications also require official transcripts or other documentation. Put in requests for those materials early so you're able to meet the deadline.
- Some fellowships require background information about Penn, the PhD program, or specific aspects of training (e.g. responsible conduct of research). If you have questions, be sure to ask someone (Marianne; grad group chair, thesis advisor etc).

Relevant policies for fellowship recipients

- Students are expected to abide by the conditions specified in their individual fellowship award, along with all relevant graduate group, School and University policies.
- If the stipend amount provided by the fellowship is equal to or less than the current BGS stipend level, then the student will continue to receive the current BGS stipend level going forward. If the stipend amount provided by the fellowship is greater than the current BGS stipend level, the student will receive the full amount of the fellowship stipend for the duration of the award.
- If the fellowship comes with funds for research expenses, cost of education allowance, and/or travel, Marianne Altland Williams or the relevant business administrator, can provide information about what the funds may be used for and how to process payment.