Mellon Fellowships in Humanistic Studies

www.woodrow.org/mellon

Deadline: November to request application; final deadline: December 1

Fields of Study

Open to all fields in the humanities. Study in the U.S. or Canada.

Description

The Andrew W. Mellon Fellowships in Humanistic Studies are designed to support exceptionally promising students as they pursue advanced study in the disciplines of the humanities. The Mellon Fellowship is a competitive award for first-year doctoral students only and cannot be deferred. Mellon Fellows are expected to carry a full course load during the nine-month academic year of the fellowship. Summer study is not included. Fellows may not accept supplementary awards or employment, including teaching assistantships. Fellows may take their awards to any accredited graduate program in the United States or Canada. Each year, approximately 85 fellowships are available. The fellowship covers full graduate tuition and required fees for the first year of graduate study and includes a one-year stipend of $17,500.

The Andrew W. Mellon Fellowships in Humanistic Studies are funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and administered by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation. There have been over 2,000 fellowships awarded since the competition began in 1982. Former Mellon Fellows are now teachers and scholars at some of the nation’s top colleges and universities. Members of underrepresented minority groups are particularly encouraged to apply.

Criteria for Selection

U.S. citizens or permanent residents applying in the following disciplines are eligible: American studies, art history, classics, comparative literature, critical theory, cultural studies, anthropology, English literature, English/creative writing, ethnic studies, ethnomusicology, film theory, foreign language and literature, history, history and philosophy of mathematics, history and philosophy of science, humanities, interdisciplinary studies of an eligible field, music history and theory, philosophy, political history/philosophy/theory, and religion/religious studies, rhetoric, women’s studies. Holders of a master's degree are not eligible unless the master’s was a terminal degree.
The review process for the Mellon Fellowship takes place in three rounds. In the first, applications are evaluated by regional panels. After this initial screening, some candidates are invited to interview in various locations. After the interviews, finalists’ dossiers are sent to a national committee for one last round of reading and discussion before Fellows are named.

The review panels are instructed as follows: “Based on the interview and the dossier, take into consideration the following ideal characteristics: superior intellect; high degree of imagination and creativity; broad reading and interests, with considerable depth; based on oral style or recommendations, likely to teach well; strong sense of graduate schools and their requirements; demonstrated ability in languages required; shows sophistication in field; likely to complete dissertation.”

The regional and final selection panels tend to focus on potential for research and for graduate education, on what the candidate may contribute to the professorate, and how will they might be as a colleague.

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**Application Procedure**

Requests for an application must be placed through the Mellon website, since a brief prescreening is involved. [http://www.woodrow.org/mellon/](http://www.woodrow.org/mellon/) The deadline to request applications is in mid-November, and no exceptions are granted. Mellon Competition Staff will review each request to determine eligibility before the URL address for the secure online application will be sent. If you have any difficulties with the form, please contact Mellon Competition Staff at mellon@woodrow.org or at 1-800-899-9963 x127 or x301. GRE general test must be taken before the beginning of November.

The process of selection for Mellon Fellowships emphasizes both intellectual distinction and breadth of interest. Candidates must submit a 1,000-word statement describing intellectual interests, an official college transcript, and results of the GRE general test. In addition, three letters of recommendation must be submitted with your application. Students must submit the applications to the Mellon Foundation’s by the December 1 deadline.

Regions are assigned according to the location of an applicant’s undergraduate institution. Completed applications will be reviewed by the appropriate Regional Committee. On the basis of submitted materials, the Regional Committees will select semi-finalists to participate in personal interviews. Each semi-finalist will be scheduled for a half-hour interview in February. Winners are announced in the first week of April. Each year approximately 800 candidates compete for 85 Fellowships.

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**Additional Information**
“Send us your bookworms,” says a representative of the Mellon Foundation, in contrast to the adage that fellowship winners in some other competitions should not be “mere bookworms.” This advice confirms that the Mellon selection process is focused on the academic record of a candidate. Community service and leadership are nice for showing that someone is well-rounded, but the selectors are mainly looking at potential for future distinction in academic research and teaching in the humanities.