

Funding Overview

Why should I apply?

- Successful applications demonstrate that your potential has been validated on an institutional, national, or international level.
- The process itself aids in defining and refining your professional goals.
- It also provides valuable feedback and networking experience.
- *Successful grant and fellowship applications tend to result in other successful applications.*

What opportunities are out there?

- Language study grants
- Short or long term research grants
- Academic fellowships
- Teaching fellowships
- Community development grants

Where should I look?

- Graduate School Research Webpage
- PIVOT.cos.com
- Government agencies, professional organizations, etc.

When should I apply?

- When you are in a position to make a good application and can accept the award.
- Begin the process the semester before (or at least two months in advance of) deadlines.
- October, November, and January are the most common deadline months.

What are the typical components of an application?

- Letters of recommendation, CV, transcripts, GRE scores, TOEFL scores, etc.
- Project proposal (Where? What? Why now?)
- Personal statement

Statements should answer the questions:

What now?

- What is the thesis or central claim of your project?
- What is the greater significance of your project?
- Where does this project fit within your discipline?
- What exact steps will you take to execute this project?

Why now?

- Why is right now the perfect time for you to undertake this project?
- What skills, training, and experience do you have that make you qualified to complete this project?
- How will this help you realize your future career goals?

Statements should *directly address* your audience.

- Understand the granting institution's mission and goals and speak to them.
- Keep in mind the make-up of the review committee.
- Realize readers will likely spend only ten minutes or less on your application. If the application asks for an abstract or short answers, this is the most important part of the application! Make sure page 1 is perfect!

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Basic steps to a complete application:

1. Review the program announcement.
2. Familiarize yourself with the application process.
3. Study the scoring or evaluation criteria.
4. Create a proposal outline and review it with a faculty mentor. Begin with your already successful application to Notre Dame (or your latest successful application for funding).
5. Write a draft of your proposal.
6. Read your proposal and make improvements.
7. Visit the Writing Center and/or English for Academic Purposes program fellows.
8. Give the draft to your faculty advisor for feedback.
9. Revise based on feedback. Repeat as necessary.
10. Give your project proposal and personal statement to your referees.
11. Edit and proofread your drafts.
12. Prepare the final drafts and complete application.

TIP: You should plan to meet with a Notre Dame Grants and Fellowships Consultant at least once during this process! We provide appointments that are primarily: informational (finding opportunities), strategy (steps 1-5, above), and draft review (steps 6-12, above). Email me to schedule any of these.

Letters of reference:

- Ask prospective referees for their support well in advance of the application deadline (ideally 2 months), and provide all the necessary information in good time (at least three weeks in advance).
- Provide your referees with a draft of your project and personal statements and a copy of the guidelines at least three weeks in advance.
- Consider providing an outline to highlight the aspects of your application you would like your referee to emphasize. Tailor the outlines for each reference so that your letters reinforce rather than repeat each other.

Please keep in mind that a recommendation letter should address:

- The student's intellectual merit and strength of character
- The significance of the project within the student's field and beyond
- The student's preparedness to undertake the project
- The feasibility of the project's completion within the grant scope

TIP: If you set your own personal final deadline for 1-3 weeks in advance of the actual deadline, you will be able to give more to (and therefore more fully utilize) your recommenders, and you will never be scrambling at the last minute.