

# #1: Create a Fellowship Application Plan

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Applying to a fellowship can be a long, tedious process, much like applying to graduate school. Once you get over the first hurdle of finding fellowships you are eligible for, you should create a timeline of activities to keep you on track. Most fellowships have application deadlines between October – January, so the time to start finding fellowships (<http://www.pro fellow.com/beta-sign-up/>) and preparing your fellowship application plan is now (yes, now!).

If you have 6 months until your application is due, don't wait 3 months to begin. A big advantage over some of your competitors is having this extra time to thoughtfully prepare your project proposal. Often applicants find out about the fellowship at the last minute or underestimate the amount of time it will take to prepare a strong application. No need to be that person if you've got a plan.

Fellowship applications normally require:

- an application form
- a personal statement on your goals
- a project/research proposal outlining what you will do and how you will do it
- a letter of support from an institution that will host you during the fellowship
- 2-3 recommendation letters
- a resume
- and documents such as academic transcripts, a copy of your passport, etc.

Below is a guide for creating a fellowship application plan. This week, I will be blogging on each of these activities in more detail.

6 months ahead:

- Read the application carefully and determine what documents you'll need to provide like transcripts, a copy of your birth certificate, a copy of your passport, etc. Then go ahead and get the grunt work out of the way.
- Carefully check application deadlines and put them on your personal calendar with reminders a few weeks ahead. Give yourself a final deadline of one week before the official deadline and stick to it to be safe. Fellowships that require a nomination by your university means you need to contact the university's fellowship advisor about your interest and identify the university's internal deadlines for nominations and applications. These internal deadline are often weeks in advance of the official deadline for submissions.
- Write a list (<http://www.pro fellow.com/tips/2-fellowship-project-proposal-ideas/>) of some general, overarching ideas for your fellowship project proposal. Start thinking creatively about how you can tie those ideas to something in the news, and something time-specific (more details

on this in #2: Project Proposal Ideas (<http://www.profellow.com/tips/2-fellowship-project-proposal-ideas/>)).

- Reach out to former fellows (<http://www.profellow.com/tips/3-reach-out-to-former-fellows/>) that have done similar projects or have a similar background to yours. They can give you project ideas, tips on the application process and can often introduce you directly to potential host institutions.
- Update your resume. (<http://www.profellow.com/tips/4-prepare-an-effective-resume/>)

5 months ahead:

- Reach out to potential host institutions (<http://www.profellow.com/tips/5-finding-a-host-institution/>) and share your updated resume.
- Begin writing some rough drafts of your personal statement (<http://www.profellow.com/tips/prepare-a-compelling-personal-statement/>) and your project proposal (<http://www.profellow.com/tips/7-prepare-a-strong-project-proposal/>), and continue to edit them. Speaking to potential host institutions should give you fresh ideas.

4 months ahead:

- Secure a host institution and ask the host to provide you a sponsorship letter, if required.
- Share your personal essay and project proposal drafts with people who can provide good feedback.

3 months ahead:

- Prepare a final draft of your project proposal.
- Request reference letters and prepare templates (<http://www.profellow.com/tips/8-get-a-great-recommendation-letter-part-1/>) for each of them. Also provide them your draft project proposal.
- Update your resume again, if necessary.

2 months ahead:

- Fill out the application form.
- Remind your referees to return or submit their letters.
- Ask at least two people to read each item – your application, essay(s), project proposal and resume. It's hard to see typos and grammatical mistakes when you've read them a million times.

1 month in advance

- Relax, you're well ahead of the game.
- Submit the application on time – ideally no later than one week in advance. Many fellowship organizations have rules against taking applications after the deadline. Don't think you'll be the exception to this rule.
- Ask the organization to confirm they've received your application and reference letters, ideally before the deadline has passed.

Once that's done, you just have sit back and wait for the notification of whether you've been selected for the finalist interview (<http://www.profellow.com/tips/9-nailing-the-individual-and-group-interviews/>).

Now if you are that person who found out about a fellowship just weeks or, heaven forbid, days before the application is due, don't despair. If you are highly organized, it's possible to cram these tasks into a small window of time. With organizational skills and optimism, anything is possible!

Next up: #2: Fellowship Project Proposal Ideas (<http://www.profellow.com/tips/2-fellowship-project-proposal-ideas/>)

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