Graduate School Fellowships for Advanced PhD Students

AY2015-16 (application deadline on March 2, 2015) paragraphs in red are POIR rules

Graduate School fellowships for advanced PhD students include Endowed PhD Fellowships, Research Enhancement Fellowships, Dissertation Completion Fellowships, and Provost’s Mentored Teaching Fellowships. The goal of these fellowships is to increase the amount of support that students have for their work toward the PhD, especially in fields where research assistantships are generally unavailable and teaching is the primary means of support.

The annual stipend for advanced PhD fellowships is $30,000 for one academic year. The fellowships also include tuition, health and dental insurance, university mandatory fees and eligibility for Graduate School travel grants for conferences and research.

Each PhD program may nominate up to three candidates for each type of fellowship for a total of up to 12 nominees per program. A student may be nominated for more than one of the advanced fellowships.

The allocation of advanced fellowships will depend on the quality of the applicant, the program’s ranking of its candidates, and the amount of available Graduate School funding. The advanced fellowship evaluation task forces will not change the rankings provided by the program.

1. Endowed PhD Fellowships are for students who have passed their screening and/or qualifying exams, who are making good progress to the degree in terms of both quality of work and timing, and who can provide a compelling statement about their current or planned research. Rather than nominating students for specific endowed fellowships as in the past, programs will submit a ranked list of applicants, checking off the fellowships for which they believe the student is eligible.

2. Dissertation Completion Fellowships are awarded on a competitive basis, with emphasis in fields where research assistantships are not generally available. The Dissertation Completion Fellowship is intended to facilitate the final completion and submission of dissertations. Upon completion of this fellowship, recipients are no longer eligible for further funding as a graduate student at USC.

3. Research Enhancement Fellowships are designed to provide additional opportunities for outstanding PhD students in any field whose research requires work in particularly complex or distant settings, expertise in languages classified by the federal government as “less commonly taught,” or other unusual expenses for activities that are essential for the student’s research. Selection will be based on the quality and research potential of the graduate student and the likelihood that the additional resources will have a notable effect on the academic career of the student. The fellowship provides one year of fellowship at the Graduate School fellowship rate and up to $5,000 in research, travel, or training funds. Candidates must be doing high-quality work, making timely progress to their degree, have completed at least two years in their USC
PhD program, and must be able to make a compelling statement about their current or planned research and why the planned extra work is essential to the research.

The application for a Graduate School Fellowship for Advanced PhD Students includes the following:

A. Information provided by the student to the program’s designated fellowship nominator:

1. For Endowed and Dissertation Completion Fellowships: a description of the student’s dissertation, which should demonstrate the project’s contribution to the 4 field and its grounding in relevant scholarship and methodology. The proposal should make a compelling statement about the planned work and be accessible to scholars in a broad range of fields. The research area/dissertation description submitted by the candidate to the PhD program should be in 12-point Times New Roman, singlespaced with 1” margins, numbered pages, and a header on every page that includes the student’s name and title of the dissertation (500-1,000 words).

   For Research Enhancement Fellowships: a description of the planned area of research, probable or existing dissertation topic, and a specific statement as to the nature of the additional research, travel, or training and why it is essential for the student’s research program. The statement should be in 12-point Times New Roman, single-spaced with 1” margins, numbered pages, and a header on every page that includes the student’s name and title of the dissertation (750-1,250 words).

2. A curriculum vitae (Please state your career goals, and list publication including these what are under R&R or forthcoming)

3. Plans for degree completion, including dates of screening, qualifying exams and anticipated dissertation defense (100-500 words)

4. USC unofficial transcript or STARs report (scanned documents are acceptable).

5. Signature page signed by the student’s dissertation advisor, department chair, and Dean or Dean’s proxy affirming that the student is making satisfactory progress to the degree. Candidates for the Dissertation Completion fellowship will be asked to acknowledge that they are making satisfactory progress to the degree and that they understand that they will no longer be eligible for funding as a graduate student at USC upon completion of the dissertation completion fellowship.

6. A short recommendation letter from the student’s advisor endorsing the student’s application to a particular fellowship. If the student is applying for the dissertation completion fellowship, the advisor has to certify explicitly that the student will complete his/her dissertation filing by the end of the fellowship term.

7. A list of external funding applications the student has made in the last AY and their status.

Once selected as the POIR nominee, students need

8. One letter of recommendation for each candidate provided by a faculty member in the student’s home program and uploaded as a PDF document by the program’s designated nominator.
POIR Nomination Criteria for the Graduate School Fellowships

Applicants with following records will be ranked higher:

- Students in good standing and making good progress towards one’s dissertation. Even though we will put forward students who are scheduled to defend their dissertation proposals by the end of March/early April, the priority for the fellowships (1) will be given to those who have already defended their dissertation proposal before March 2.

- Students who are publishing actively (with articles published, accepted, or in revision for publication) and have applied at least to two external fundings for the coming year at the time of this application (evidence needed).

- Students who have acquired a strong endorsement from the chair of the dissertation committee.

- Students who are contributing to the POIR intellectual community and active in participating CIS/SIR/POSC lecture series and other professionalization activities

Applicants with following records will be ranked lower or will not qualify:

- Those who are in violation of good standing (i.e. taking the qualifying exam late, not satisfying the GPA requirement, having received academic warning etc.) will not be nominated.

- The students who are beyond 6th year (as of AY2015-16) will be ranked lower.

- Students who have acquired internal one-year fellowships (CIS dissertation fellowship or other graduate school fellowships through USC) before will be ranked lower.
Provost’s Mentored Teaching Fellows (NEW FELLOWSHIP)

The Provost’s Mentored Teaching Fellows program is open to USC PhD students, preferably those entering their third or fourth year of study. Students must be making timely progress to the degree, have an outstanding record in coursework, and have strong student evaluations and faculty recommendations for at least one and preferably two semesters of work as a teaching assistant or assistant lecturer at USC.

The student and the faculty mentor chosen by the student apply jointly to develop a 4-unit undergraduate course akin to one typically taught by a new junior faculty member. The course must be accessible to undergraduate students from a wide array of majors and have a projected enrollment of 15-30 students.

The first semester of the fellowship is devoted to course preparations and participation in the Provost’s Mentored Teaching Fellows Seminar conducted jointly by the Graduate School and the Center for Excellence in Teaching. During the second semester, the fellow teaches the course that she or he has prepared and continues participation in the seminar. In addition to a stipend at the level other USC advanced fellowships ($30,000), the fellow receives a $1,000 research account to be used for research expenses and professional travel. The student’s faculty mentor will receive a $500 contribution to his or her research account.

Programs may nominate up to three students for the Provost’s Mentored Teaching Fellowship. The application includes the following

A. Information provided by the student to the program’s designated fellowship nominator:

1. The draft of a syllabus for the course the student proposes to teach, including a statement of course goals and learning outcomes, a list of readings and any other materials for study, and a sample possible paper topic, exam, or graded project. (The student and mentor will work up the full syllabus together during the fall semester preparatory period.)

2. A curriculum vitae (Please state your career goals including your placement objectives)

3. A statement of teaching philosophy and goals (up to 500 words).

4. A statement describing his/her research, including a timeline for finishing the dissertation, planned career trajectory, and any achievements (up to 500 words).

5. A summary of at two semesters’ teaching evaluations.

6. The student’s teaching mentor submits a recommendation (up to 250 words).

7. Signature page signed by the student’s dissertation advisor, department chair, and Dean or Dean’s proxy affirming that the student is making satisfactory progress to the degree.
POIR Nomination Criteria for Provost Mentored Teaching Fellowships (Spring 2015)
(adopted by the POIR Steering committee and distributed to the POIR students on October 20, 2014)

The Provost Mentored Teaching Fellowship is highly recommended for the POIR students who plan to seek employment, after completion of their degree, with liberal arts and teaching colleges. Those who are primarily interested in research institutions might not be good candidates for this fellowship. Instead, they should consider applying to the endowed and dissertation completion fellowships that the Graduate School will announce shortly.

A competitive applicant should have the following characteristics:

- In their 3rd or 4th year at the time of application (AY2014-15) and in their 4th or 5th year at the time of fellowship (AY2015-16).
- Cannot be in their 6th year or above
- Have served as a TA for at least two semesters at the time of application
- Have to have TA evaluation higher than 4.0 for all the semesters that he/she TAed.

The quality of teaching proposal is considered higher when:

- The student has clearly identified the teaching mentor and has already worked with him/her to draft a well-thought-out syllabus
- The student has a creative but feasible teaching strategy that would be attractive to the University and the students
- The draft syllabus reflect thorough planning and hard work of the student and the mentor

Applicants with following records will be ranked higher:

- Students in good standing and making good progress towards one’s dissertation. Those who have not yet defended his/her dissertation proposal will not qualify.
- Students who have shown particular interests in pedagogy and teaching.
- Students who have acquired a strong endorsement from the chair of the dissertation committee that this fellowship will not obstruct his/her dissertation progress.
- Students who are contributing to the POIR intellectual community and active in participating CIS/SIR/POSC lecture series and other professionalization activities

Applicants with following records will be ranked lower or will not qualify:

- Those who are in violation of good standing (i.e. taking the qualifying exam late, not satisfying the GPA requirement, having received academic warning etc.) will not be nominated.
- Those who are ranked for the Dissertation Completion Fellowship will not be nominated to the Mentored Teaching Fellowship.
Timeline for Graduate School Fellowships

Monday, March 2, 2015

Fellowship application deadline at the POIR program for nomination and ranking (see the criteria for POIR ranking above)

Thursday, March 12, 2015

POIR nomination announced. The students who are nominated have to supply additional materials including (a) an expanded recommendation letter from their respective advisors and (b) a list of funding they received from the University and the Program by March 25.

Monday, March 30, 2015 at 12:00 noon

Online nomination site for advanced fellowships closes

Friday, April 24, 2015

Offers sent by the graduate school to advanced fellowship candidates