

ACLS

The American Council of Learned Societies is an organization that brings together some 70 scholarly societies (as institutional members) which represent the disciplines—and many subdisciplines and interdisciplinary fields—in the humanities and social sciences.



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF LEARNED SOCIETIES
ADVANCING THE HUMANITIES

ACLS

The ACLS advances humanistic research by

- Speaking on behalf of the humanities
- Promoting scholarly communications
- Catalyzing relations among the disciplines and among the scholarly societies
- Offering fellowships for scholars in the humanistic disciplines



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ACLS Fellowship Programs

ACLS Fellowship Programs for faculty members and independent scholars provide salary stipends to allow one year of supported research leave for scholars in the humanities and related social sciences.*

* Criterion: research *must* have a qualitative character; it *might* also have a quantitative character.



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ACLS Fellowship Programs

Postdoctoral Fellowships

- ACLS Fellowships (Central competition)
- Frederick Burkhardt Fellowships
- Charles Ryskamp Fellowships
- Digital Innovation Fellowships



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ACLS Fellowship Programs

Central Fellowship Competition ("ACLS Fellowships")

The Central competition is divided by rank:

- Assistant,
- Associate, and
- Full professors,

with independent scholars judged at equivalent rankings



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ACLS Fellowship Programs

Central Fellowship Competition ("ACLS Fellowships")

65 Awards in total

Assistant Professors - 20 @ \$30k

Associate Professors - 20 @ \$40k

Full Professors - 25 @ \$60k (*starting in 2006-07*)

Awardees may be designated as

** NEH/ACLS/SSRC Fellows in International & Area Studies*

** ACLS/NYPL Fellows (in residence at NYPL Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers)*



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ACLS Fellowship Programs

Mellon-supported “Named” Fellowships

- Burkhardt
 - recently tenured professors
 - residential fellowships
 - \$75k
- Ryskamp
 - advanced assistant professors
 - \$60k+ (\$75k)



Other ACLS Fellowship Programs

Graduate-level awards

- Mellon/ACLS Early Career Fellowships
 - Dissertation Completion Fellowships (started this past competition year)
 - Recent Recipient Fellowships (starting this coming competition year)
- Luce Dissertation Fellowships in American Art History



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Other ACLS Fellowship Programs

International focus awards

- East European Studies Dissertation and Post-PhD Fellowships
- Fellowships for Humanities Research in the People's Republic of China
- Luce Fellowships in Early East Asian Archeology and Art History
- CCK New Perspectives on Chinese Culture and Society



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ACLS Fellowship Programs

Central Fellowship Competition *(“ACLS Fellowships”)*

Review Process

- two stages – approximately 1/3 pass on to second stage
- two audiences
 - first stage reviewers bring expertise in the disciplines
 - second stage reviewers constitute non-specialist audience, bringing broader expertise in humanistic scholarship
- reviewers from range of types of institutions



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ACLS Fellowship Programs

Myths and Misconceptions

- *Winners all from Research I (Doctoral—extensive) institutions*
- *The only reason to apply is to win a fellowship*
- *You apply to get money so you can start your project*
- *If you don't win, it's because your work isn't good enough*



ACLS Fellowship Programs

Application Process

- Start early & prepare
- Familiarize yourself with the different Fellowship programs and what they each support (this varies from program to program)

<http://www.acls.org>



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ACLS Fellowship Programs

Application Process

- Online application – familiarize yourself with process

<http://ofa.acls.org>

- Take time to read & understand directions



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ACLS Fellowship Programs

Preparing Proposals



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Proposal Ingredients

- A *project*, rather than an idea
- Clearly articulated and justified methodology
- Contribution to the field and sub-field
- Significance to the humanities* in general – *now a separate question*

** including the humanistic social sciences*



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ACLS Fellowship Programs

Proposal Ingredients: A Closer Look

- Developed line of argument
- Clearly identified questions to be addressed
- Suitable scope
- Timeframe (length of project in general and in Fellowship tenure)
- Work plan (expected objectives at different moments in timeframe)



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Proposal Ingredients: A Closer Look

Clearly identified capabilities needed for projects involving

- multiple disciplines
- area studies and other cultures
- archives and special collections



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Additional Criteria

- Training and qualification of applicants relative to career stage
- Project gauged relative to scholar's prior work and present career stage
- Clarity & simplicity
- Letters of reference



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Letters of reference

Reference letters are almost always extravagant in praise. How can you make yours stand out?

- From tenured scholars
- Avoid provincialism (preferably not from *your* institution or graduate school)
- Focus on scholarship (rather than teaching) and address your project



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DON'TS

- Avoid focusing on awards ratios
- Do not underestimate worth of your work
- Do not discount your chances because of non-scholarly factors like geography or institution
- Do not read too much into it if you do not win a fellowship—in each competition there are more worthy proposals than can be funded that year



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Good Luck!

Contact our office
with any questions

fellowships@acsls.org



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