



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE  
**Humanities**

DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

**SUMMER SEMINARS AND  
INSTITUTES**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

---

**What is the most important element of an application to direct an NEH Summer Seminar or Institute?**

The most important element is the specific humanities content of the project. Thus the application should address the significance of the subject; the topics, questions, and readings that form the core of the intellectual conversation; and the qualifications of the humanities faculty who lead the project.

**Does my institution need a grant writer to prepare an application?**

No.

**Are program officers available to answer questions via phone or e-mail?**

Yes. Program officers can offer advice on a full range of issues, such as content, scheduling, and logistics. We strongly encourage you to contact a program officer and to follow up with a draft proposal (which should be submitted to [sem-inst@neh.gov](mailto:sem-inst@neh.gov) by January 31, 2017). Call 202-606-8471 or send an e-mail message to [sem-inst@neh.gov](mailto:sem-inst@neh.gov) before you submit a draft proposal.

**Are there projects or activities that NEH does not support?**

Yes. Please review the bulleted list of examples found in Section I of the program guidelines.

**What are the review criteria?**

In brief, the review criteria are 1) intellectual quality and significance; 2) program design and feasibility; and 3) impact. Please see Section II of the grant guidelines for additional details.

**May I propose an NEH Summer Seminar or Institute to instruct humanities faculty in the use of Internet technology in teaching their subject?**

The NEH Summer Seminars and Institutes program encourages the use of technology in teaching; seminars and institutes often include the use of such resources. However, the program does not support projects that concentrate primarily on educational or instructional methods. For programs that emphasize digital humanities methodology, consult the NEH [Office of Digital Humanities](#).

**How long should a seminar or institute be?**

Seminars and institutes may be one to four weeks in length. (One-week programs may be offered twice in a summer.) Program length should be appropriate for the scope of the material to be covered.

**My institution would not be an appropriate site for a seminar but the college across town would be. Would I be permitted to hold my seminar there, and if so, how would that work administratively?**

Yes, you may hold your seminar at a different institution. You may apply through your home institution and subcontract with the other institution. Alternatively, you could have the other institution serve as the applicant. Contact a program officer for further details.

**May I include visiting faculty as instructors in my seminar?**

Since NEH seminars should focus on sustained interaction among the director(s) and the sixteen NEH Summer Scholars, they should have few, if any, visiting faculty. A visiting faculty member whose specialty is particularly germane to the seminar topic may be invited to contribute, but such visitors should not exceed an average of one per week. By contrast, projects that aim to make use of the expertise of multiple faculty should be proposed as institutes—not seminars.

**I am an independent scholar. May I direct an NEH Summer Seminar or Institute?**

Yes. An independent scholar can direct a seminar or institute if an eligible institutional applicant agrees to sponsor the project and submit an application to NEH. Only U.S. nonprofit organizations with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, state and local governments, and federally recognized Indian tribal governments are eligible applicants. Individuals are not eligible to apply to this program.

**Would it be permissible to co-direct an institute with a colleague who is not on the faculty of my university, which will serve as the host institution?**

Yes. In this situation, both you and the co-director would share the directorial responsibilities for the full period of the project. Your salary would be entered under Item 1a of the budget, and your co-director's would be entered under Item 3.

**May NEH Summer Seminars and Institutes be held outside the United States?**

No. The NEH Summer Seminars and Institutes program supports only projects that are held in the United States and its territories.

**May a non-U.S. citizen serve as a project director or a visiting lecturer in an NEH Summer Seminar or Institute?**

Yes. Such individuals may be included on the staff of a seminar or institute if they bring unique and important expertise to the endeavor.

**May non-U.S. citizens participate as NEH Summer Scholars in a seminar or institute?**

Only foreign nationals who have been living in the United States or its jurisdictions for at least the three years prior to the application deadline are eligible to apply. Foreign nationals teaching abroad are not eligible to apply.

**Are home-schooling educators eligible to participate in an NEH Summer Seminar or Institute for School Teachers?**

Yes.

**When should NEH Summer Seminars and Institutes be held?**

NEH Summer Seminars and Institutes should begin no earlier than the third week in June and end before the second week of August.

**I'd like to hold a welcoming reception for the participants in my NEH seminar. May I pay for this out of grant funds?**

No. A project director may seek funds for such events from his or her department, the dean's office, or another source, but NEH grant funds may not be used for social events, entertainment, or the purchase of alcoholic beverages. However, you may include in the project budget water or light refreshments for site visits and other project-related activities.

**If I hold an institute away from where I live, may I include in the project budget my travel expenses to and from the institute site and my living expenses at the site?**

Yes.

**May I include an external evaluator in my project budget?**

No.

**Should I include an on-site coordinator in my project budget?**

Yes, in order to have sufficient logistical support during the summer program.

**I just found out that my institution is planning to submit two applications to the NEH Summer Seminars and Institutes program this year. Will only one be funded?**

Each application is evaluated on its own merits. NEH might fund both applications, only one, or neither.

**How long must I wait to learn the outcome of my application?**

Applicants will be notified of the outcome in August 2017.

**My institution applied for a grant last year and was unsuccessful. Will this be held against us if we apply again this year?**

No.

**I was unsuccessful with my last application. Is there anything I can do to increase my chances for success next time?**

You may receive a copy of the comments provided to NEH by outside evaluators at the initial stage of review. You must request this material by sending an e-mail message to [sem-inst@neh.gov](mailto:sem-inst@neh.gov). After reading these comments, you may follow up with a telephone call to a program officer.