

NEH-JUSFC Fellowships for Advanced Social Science Research on Japan
Free Online Information Session (March 16, 2020)

[The slides and contact information referred to in this transcript are visible in the accompanying video.]

0:00

Hello, and welcome to the online information session for our Fellowships for Advanced Social Science Research on Japan. My name is Mark Silver and I'm a program officer in the Division of Research Programs here at the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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This session is scheduled to last about one hour and I'm going to be making a presentation for the first 25 or 30 minutes and then I'll be taking questions from you for the remaining time that we have.

0:48

Let me show you the agenda. Here are the points I'm planning to cover:

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The goals of the program and its scope; the eligibility requirements; the details of our calendar and the award amounts; the review criteria; the required application materials; and then also how to submit an application.

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And as I said, I'm planning to take questions at the end of the session. You should feel free to type in your questions at any time during the presentation.

1:28

Before I go any further, I want to mention that this program--as it says at the bottom of this slide--is funded primarily by the Japan-US Friendship Commission and it is a joint activity of the JUSFC and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The JUSFC provides the bulk of the money for the program. We here at the National Endowment for the Humanities run the selection process and then also administer the grants.

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The goals of the program are to promote Japan studies in the United States, to encourage US-Japan scholarly exchange, and also to support the next generation of Japan scholars in the US. And in light of that last goal, we especially encourage applications to this program from junior scholars.

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The program is intended to support research on modern Japanese society and political economy, Japan's international relations, and US-Japan relations. The appropriate disciplines include anthropology, economics, geography, history, international relations, linguistics, political science, psychology, and sociology.

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The program is designed for individual researchers with advanced Japanese language skills whose work requires Japanese sources, fieldwork, interviews, or other contact in Japanese.

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You could hold one of these awards either while working in Japan or in the United States or both, and you could also spend time under one of these grants in some other country, if that's necessary for comparative purposes in your project.

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You should be aware that there are a number of types of projects that the program does not support, and those include projects focused primarily on pre-modern Japan--

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that is Japan before 1868. Projects focused primarily on the interpretation of literary or artistic works are also not supported in this program as are projects outside the social sciences and projects that promote or advocate a particular program of social action or particular public policies or legislation.

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There are a number of other project types that are also prohibited and you should check the full list of those prohibitions in the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the program, which is posted on the NEH website.

4:41

Getting to the eligibility requirements...

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To be eligible to apply you must either be a US citizen or have been living in the US for the three years preceding the application deadline.

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If you are currently enrolled in a degree program, you're not eligible for this program unless you've met all the requirements for your degree at the application deadline and you're merely awaiting the formal award of your degree. So if you're a graduate student working toward a PhD and you have completed your defense of your dissertation before

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the application deadline and you're able to supply a letter to that effect, then you would be eligible. But otherwise enrolled students are not eligible to apply. So needless to say, these awards cannot be used for dissertation research.

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No institutional affiliation is required to apply. Independent Scholars are entirely welcome. No advanced degree is required either, although most applicants do have a PhD. And as I mentioned before junior scholars are especially encouraged to apply, although applicants at all ranks are entirely welcome.

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Key program details: The program supports 6 to 12 months of continuous full-time work. So if you have a teaching position, you'd likely need to arrange for a leave in order to hold one of these grants.

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The stipend is five thousand dollars per month and the maximum award is sixty thousand dollars, which would be for 12 months of full-time work.

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The application deadline is April 22nd, and you'll be notified of the decision made on your application in the early part of December.

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The earliest possible start date is January 1st, 2021. And the latest possible start date is September 1st, 2022. So we give you actually a pretty generous window in which to start your 6-to-12 month clock ticking.

7:24

There's a tip on this slide: take care to request your start and end dates correctly on the application forms. If you specify a grant period of less than six months in duration or a period of longer than 12 months, you risk having your application disqualified on a technicality. So, please take care there.

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Typical activities and products: what do we generally support? These awards are meant to support the typical research activities of scholars in the social sciences.

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So you can use the funds for field work, for interviews, archival research, writing, and/or revision, or the development of digital materials, or some combination of all of these

things. You can use the funds for travel but there's no requirement that you engage in travel.

8:32

The products you create at the end of your grant may be print products. They could be digital project products as well, or again some combination of those things. You can write a book or articles, and that's what most people who apply to this program are planning to do, but we also allow applications to produce a translation or a scholarly edition,

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or to create other interpretive tools for social scientists.

9:09

Here are three examples of recent books written with the support of our fellowships:

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Rights Make Might by Kiyoteru Tsutsui at the University of Michigan was published by Oxford University Press in 2018. Max Ward's book *Thought Crime: Ideology and State Power in Interwar Japan* was published by Duke University Press in 2019.

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And the third example here is Saori Katada's new book *Japan's New Regional Reality* which is due to be published by Columbia University press in July of this year.

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And by the way, Kiyoteru Tsutsui and Max Ward both competed for and won their fellowships as junior scholars. Next, let's take a look at the review criteria for the program. This is a rather text-heavy slide,

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I realize, but it's an important one. These review criteria are published on our website in the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the program, and when you're writing your application, you want to be very much keeping these review criteria in mind because these are the criteria that we give to our evaluators as we ask them to assess your applications.

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So you want to craft your narrative statement to address these criteria and you should also coach your letter writers to address these criteria in their letters as well.

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The first of the criteria is the intellectual significance of the proposed project, including its value to social science scholars, general audiences, or both. You want to be making a very strong case in your narrative statement for why your project matters and you want to explain why it matters in terms that will be understandable to people who are not in your immediate field.

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Second, the degree to which the proposed project furthers scholarly knowledge or public understanding of contemporary Japanese society or political economy, Japan's contemporary international relations, and or US-Japan relations.

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Don't assume that this will be immediately obvious to your readers. Go ahead and connect the dots for the evaluators on this point, particularly

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if you're an historian. You want to be sure that you're explaining how understanding the particular historical context that you're exploring will help with understanding contemporary Japanese society or these other items listed in the in the review criteria. Third, the quality or promise of quality of the applicant's work as an interpreter of the social sciences. You should devote some space in your application to talking about your previous work. You should ask your letter writers to do the same.

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You should note also in this criterion the phrase "quality or promise of quality."

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This is intended to level the playing field between early-career scholars and later-career scholars. So we tell our evaluators quite explicitly: if they see promise of quality in the applicant's record, even though it may be relatively short, they're welcome to reward that in their evaluation of the project.

13:26

The fourth criterion is the quality of the conception, definition, organization, and description of the project, and the applicant's clarity of expression. Clarity of expression is extremely important. As I said before, you want to be sure to write for a broad audience that includes people outside your field because the project has to be understandable to anyone who might be interested in what you're working on, whether or not they're familiar with the particular terminology that you use in your own specialized field. So you want to avoid jargon in general as much as you possibly can.

14:17

The 5th criterion is the feasibility and appropriateness of the proposed plan of work including, when relevant, the soundness of the dissemination and access plans.

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The plan of work is also very important. It will be looked at closely. You need to explain what you're going to accomplish with the grant and also what your plans for publication are.

14:44

If you're applying at a relatively early stage in your work, your plans for publication may still be uncertain, and that's okay, but I would still indicate if you're planning for example to publish a book with a university press, at least state that that is your goal, and you may even at an early stage be able to give some indication of names of presses that you think might be a good fit for your project.

15:15

And the final review criterion is the likelihood that the applicant will complete the project, not necessarily during the period of performance. So you don't have to finish your project during the grant period--you're welcome to define a particular portion of the work that you're planning to carry out during the 6 to 12 months that you are requesting support for. But if you're not planning to finish the project during the grant period, you should spend a couple of lines in the application explaining how you ultimately are going to finish the project.

16:03

Here are the application materials that we ask you to submit.

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You need to submit a three-page narrative statement (that's a single-spaced narrative statement). The format for organizing it is explained in the Notice of Funding Opportunity available on the same page where you registered for this online information session.

16:32

You also need to submit a 1000-character abstract describing your project in brief. And that's 1,000 characters, not 1000 words. So it is very short.

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You should also prepare a one-page bibliography, a two-page resume or CV, and then any necessary appendices which are described in greater detail in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. But if you have visual materials, for example, we allow one page of visual materials to supplement your narrative statement. And if you're proposing a translation

or a database project, you can provide us with a translation sample or with a screenshot of what you expect the user interface to look like for your database.

17:29

Two letters of reference are also asked for in this competition. Those are actually not due at the application deadline. We give you a little bit more time to get those letters of reference in after the application deadline, so those are actually due on May 29th, 2020.

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Note that the page limits for each part of the application are crucial. So we say a 3-page narrative: do not exceed that three-page limit or any of the other page limits specified here, or we will be forced to disqualify the application in that case, because we have to respect the time of our external evaluators and we're not able to burden them with additional material beyond what we've spelled out in the application instructions.

18:23

No budget is required, you may have noticed among the application materials. That's because the dollar amount of the award is based on the number of months of support that you request, with the understanding that you will work full-time on the project during all of those months that you have specified.

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So if you request six months of funding that means it would be a \$30,000 award, or twelve months of funding would be a \$60,000 award. And you're welcome to specify any number between 6 and 12. You should propose a period for your grant that meets your needs. We don't give preference to cheaper projects. We're not looking for bargains in that way. So if you need a full 12 months to accomplish the work that you're proposing to do,

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then you should request the full 12 months.

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The next slide lists resources that you should be aware of and that you may find useful as you're preparing your application. The first one is the Notice of Funding Opportunity, that is the instructions for applying. This document is available on the web page for the program.

19:53

You have to scroll down a bit to find it, but you will be absolutely hamstrung if you haven't found this and you're trying to put in an application, because this contains all of the instructions that you need, as well as setting forth those criteria for review that I had up on an earlier slide. It's about a twenty-page PDF document. It will probably feel

somewhat daunting to you if you're doing this for the first time, but you should read it carefully and follow the instructions very carefully as well. Probably

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one of the most common mistakes I see in applications is simple failure to follow those instructions. So you will have a leg up on the competition if you have read them and follow them carefully.

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Next: sample application narratives are also available on the program webpage and they're likely to repay study. You can see how other people have met the challenge of squeezing and project description into three single-spaced pages, which can be a challenge--and we understand that--but it is possible.

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We have also a list of previously funded projects available on our web page which you might wish to refer to. Use that list with some caution, though, because there are changes from year to year in the Notice of Funding Opportunity in terms of project types that are eligible, but that list is available to you and you may find it useful. We also have an FAQ document--

21:43

a list of frequently asked questions and their answers--also available on the program web page. The link for that webpage appears on the slide there and all of the resources I've mentioned are available there. We do plan, by the way, to also post this information session (i.e., a recording of it) on the web page together with a transcript. So it'll be available

22:13

there through the application deadline. It'll take us maybe as long as a week to get that recording and transcript into shape for posting. So please be patient, but we do expect to post those things on the website as well. Then the last point on this slide is advice from NEH staff.

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It's part of our job to make sure that you understand the program and also to help you put your best foot forward in the application that you submit. So you should feel welcome to contact us with questions. If there's something that's unclear or a point that you wish to discuss, we are available to help. The email address is Fellowships@neh.gov, and our phone number is 202-606-8200 [NOTE: email is preferred during the COVID-19 outbreak.]

23:08

When it comes time to submit your application,

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you will need to use the website grants.gov. That's a separate website from the NEH website.

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It is the general portal for all federal grant applications. You should go ahead and register for an account now at Grants.gov if you think you'll be submitting an application. When you register, you must create an individual applicant profile in your account.

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This program is only for individual applicants, so if you neglect to do this, the grants.gov system will not let you submit an application to the program. This is probably the biggest technical problem that our applicants run into in submitting applications- they've neglected to set up an individual applicant profile. On the grants.gov page you can see there are

24:21

two large red buttons, one of which says "Apply," and the other of which says "Subscribe." If you haven't created an individual account, that red "Apply" button will be grayed out and you will not be able to submit the application. We have step-by-step instructions in the Notice of Funding Opportunity for submitting your application through grants.gov, including that caveat I just gave you about creating an individual applicant profile.

24:50

So again, I commend the Notice of Funding Opportunity to you as a valuable and, we hope, helpful document.

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Submit several days early to allow time for technical problems. Using the grants.gov website to create and submit your application can be cumbersome and can be a bit confusing if you're a first-time applicant, so allow extra time for that.

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It's also possible that if there's an error with the formatting of your application, you'll submit it and then it will be rejected. So you need to allow time to correct technical problems like that in the application process. So submit several days early. I recommend at least three days before the deadline that you submit the application, so that you won't be trying to scramble at the last minute to correct a problem of some kind and meet the deadline. Once you've submitted your application

26:02

successfully, you should get an email saying that you have been assigned a tracking number by NEH. That's no guarantee that there's no problem with the application actually, because if--for example--you've exceeded the page limits, even though the application has come in, we're not going to send it forward in the review process. But getting a tracking number from NEH is an important milestone in the submission of your

26:32

application and it's a sign that things are going on the right track. You can also call us or send us an email after you've submitted your application if you just want to make sure that everything is okay. We'll check on it for you. Next is the steps of the application review process. And this is the final slide I have. So after you submit your application, what happens to it?

27:02

Your application will be read in July by a panel of four external evaluators and all four of those people will be social scientists whose research focuses on Japan. And after the peer reviewers have evaluated the applications, the NEH staff will make recommendations for

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funding based on the evaluations that we've received.

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Those staff recommendations are then subject to further review by the National Council on the Humanities, which meets three times a year. These applications go to the Council's November meeting, and the recommendations of the National Council then are forwarded to the Chairman of the Endowment. It's the chairman who makes the final decisions

28:09

about funding NEH grants. You'll get the news about the decision on your application shortly after the Chairman's decisions have been made. That will be in the in the first part of December that we expect to make those notifications, and the notifications go out by email to the email address that you have supplied in your application.

28:40

Okay, so that's the end of the slides in the presentation that I've prepared. So if you'd like to submit questions, or perhaps some of you have already submitted questions, feel free to go ahead and do that and I'll try my best to field them. If I don't respond to your question either because there wasn't time or because it didn't seem like a question that would be of interest

29:09

to the entire audience, then feel free to get in touch after the conclusion of the online information session using the contact information on the last screen there, and we'll do our best to get back to you with an answer. All right, let's see what we have. [Silence.]

30:09

I'm just adjusting the screen here so I can see these questions a little more easily. [Silence.]

30:28

Yes, so the first question I'm seeing here is about eligibility requirements and non-US citizens. For non US-citizens who meet the eligibility criteria, do we provide visa support to stay in the US? We don't provide visa support.

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So whatever your situation is, if having a fellowship like this will help you stay, then all to the good, but we're not able to supply letters for visa support beyond the award notices that you would have, which would be proof that you do indeed hold an award.

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Let's see. [Silence.]

31:51

Okay, so just having a little bit of difficulty adjusting the window here so it allows me to see the questions easily here.

32:18

Okay, I have one about creative projects: Are creative projects supported with this grant that still highlight the humanities, for example, a book on food specialties in Japan that connects with the arts and theater, etc.

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So we are not able to support projects in the arts or projects that involve creative writing or putting on performances, because that would be the purview of the National Endowment for the Arts, which is a separate agency. But if you wanted to write a book on the arts or theater that is of significance to social science scholars and also has an analytical edge to it, as opposed to engaging in a creative

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project, then I can imagine such a project qualifying. My suggestion to you, though, is that you get in touch with us to discuss the details. And the questioner here is asking

about highlighting the humanities in the project. What you have to be highlighting is the social sciences,

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keep in mind, for this particular program--harking back to those evaluation criteria. But I think it would probably be good idea, as I said, to get in touch to have a discussion with us about whether your particular project would fall within the purview of the program or not. And that goes for all of you if you have uncertainty about whether your project is a good fit or not. That's certainly a discussion we're willing and able to have with you.

34:11

Okay, let's see. What else we have here.

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Someone asking about COVID-19 and will that impact the competition? We don't expect that this will affect the plans for the competition. We normally hold an in-person peer review panel for this program, but if need be, we could conceivably go to a video-based review panel.

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So at this point we don't envision any impact on the program. Here's a question about the term of the grant, asking what do we mean by the term? "What is the term of the grant and are we able to buy out teaching responsibilities? What if the money is not enough to buy you out of teaching and administrative responsibilities?" So: the term of the grant is 6 to 12 full-time months, and we do expect you to be working full-time

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on your sponsored project during that time. If you need to use the money from the award to buy out your teaching responsibilities, that's an acceptable use of the award. And at the time you're offered an award you would have the choice of either having the money deposited in your personal account or in your institutional account.

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And if your institution wants to have the money deposited into an Institutional account as part of the buyout, that's fine with us. We're able to do that. The one caveat there is that putting the money into an Institutional account does not allow your institution to claim indirect costs and take a cut of the money for that purpose, because this is an award to you as an individual not to the institution.

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The second part of that question was what if the money is not enough to buy out all of your teaching responsibilities? If your institution is able to top up the award or is

interested in doing that, that's perfectly acceptable to us. You're able to combine our awards with other sources of funding.

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We have no quibble with that. If you're not able to buy yourself out with combining all the sources of funding that are available to you, then likely you wouldn't be able to accept the award, because we don't allow you to engage in teaching while you're holding one of these awards. They really do have to be full-time awards.

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And I'm just looking to see another question here.

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Here's a question asking about educational background: what level of educational background is required to apply for these grants? We do not require an advanced degree,

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although as I said, most people do have Phds who apply for this program, and most successful applicants do, but it's not required. You cannot be currently enrolled in a degree granting program at the time that you apply for the grant and obviously you couldn't be taking classes for credit at the same time that you're holding an award since we require a full-time commitment.

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But in theory you could apply as a high school graduate.

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I think your odds would be very long of putting together a successful application if that's your educational background, but I wouldn't want to dismiss that completely out of hand and we've seen applications from people who have only a B.A., applications from people who hold a master's degree and then most of the applications do come from people who have a PhD, so there's no strict requirement in terms of educational background.

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It's a matter of whether you'll be able to convince the evaluators through your narrative statement, the way you present your application, and your previous record that you can actually do an excellent job with the project that you're proposing to do, and that the project is of high significance for social science scholars and/or the general public. Okay, so here's an excellent question. This person says, "As a junior scholar, my most tangible research project is my dissertation. Would you recommend submitting a research project for a book based on the dissertation or to focus instead on a new project that

might not have as much data readily available?" My suggestion would be to make a proposal based on your dissertation.

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We do see a number of such applications each year and we've certainly funded projects for dissertation revisions. So the one caveat here is that you have to make a convincing case that you're going to be able to advance your project beyond what you accomplished in the dissertation phase, so it's usually a good idea to explain additional research plans that you have

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to build on the dissertation or additional chapters that you're planning to add,

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to convince the evaluators that giving you a grant is really going to advance your project beyond what you've already accomplished with the dissertation. So, provided you have a convincing plan of work--in other words you have made it clear and convincing that there is more work to be done with a grant to turn your dissertation into a book--

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that would be a better course than trying to propose a new project. Particularly if you haven't published a book based on your dissertation and you're in an academic position, the evaluators may wonder what's happening with the dissertation project, and how you're going to be able to meet your institutional requirements.

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For example, if you're facing a tenure review while actually trying to juggle two projects--one that was based on your dissertation and the second one that you've been awarded a grant for. So my recommendation would be to focus on bringing the dissertation project to complete fruition. And as I said, we do award grants for dissertation revisions.

42:51

Here's a question about letter writers: do we have a preference regarding letter writers? For example, for junior scholars, should one letter be from a dissertation advisor and one letter from someone in the applicant's current department? This is a good question. I think for junior scholars, it would be entirely natural that one letter would come from the dissertation advisor.

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And that's acceptable. Once you get beyond the point of seven years out from the award of your PhD, I would advise you to think about going to someone other than your dissertation advisor for letters, simply because that helps signal that you're establishing a network in the field and that other people apart from your dissertation committee are

interested in your work and engaged with it. But let me say this: really the single most important requirement for a letter writer is that they engage with the project that you're proposing in detail.

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So you want letter writers who are going to speak convincingly and authoritatively on the intellectual significance of your project, and that means putting a nice paragraph in the letter about why what you're doing matters. So I see a fair number of letters of recommendation that are full of praise for the applicant and full of praise for previous work that the person has done, and then they end up being a little bit of a letdown at the end of the letter because it says something like, "and I'm sure the currently proposed project will come off just as well."

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And what the evaluators are looking for is more engagement with the intellectual significance of your current proposal. So that's really the top requirement. I would say for letter writers, look for people who are going to take the time to engage with your proposal. You should absolutely send them a copy of your narrative statement for your application so that they can write their letter based on that

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and write in detail about the merits of the proposal that you're submitting for this grant competition.

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Should one letter be from someone in your current department? I don't--that wouldn't be as much of a natural for me. It could be, but it's less important to show that you're a good colleague and a successful teacher than it is to

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show that your research project is of high merit. So I would actually lean towards, for the second letter, probably someone not in your institution, but someone who's familiar with your work and who knows the area that you're contributing to well enough to write with some authority in that area. That's not to say that it would be a mistake to ask someone in your current department to write a letter, but it's probably somewhat less likely that such a person

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would be able to write the most effective possible letter, if they're not familiar with your field.

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Here's a person asking about applying for postdoctoral funding. "How can I apply for postdoctoral funding?" You would be following the normal application process that everyone follows--these are in fact postdoctoral awards. There is that caveat I mentioned before though, that you must already have completed all the requirements for your degree at the time of the application deadline,

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which is the April 22nd deadline, and you would need to include as part of your application materials a letter attesting to the fact that you have met all of the requirements for the degree and you are merely awaiting the award of the degree at that time.

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Here's someone who says, "I already hold a PhD and I wish to apply for a second PhD--can I apply for these awards?" The answer is no. These awards are not intended to support work towards a degree. So you would not be able to use one of these awards to help pay for further courses or to support that research for a degree,

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whether that's your first degree or your second PhD. Here's someone who says "I'm in the field of educational psychology, and I've seen funded projects in other social science fields." So I think the question here is, "is educational psychology an appropriate field for for these grants?"

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It could be, because that would certainly fall within the social sciences. The one question there, would be to what extent is your project about improving teaching methods. Does it have a focus on pedagogical strategies as opposed to, say,

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broader historical trends in educational psychology, or something along those lines. We're not able to support projects that are focused particularly on improving teaching methods or doing investigations of pedagogical strategy or of pedagogy in this program.

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And that harks back to the list of prohibited project types that I mentioned at an earlier point in the presentation. The full list appears in the Notice of Funding Opportunity and every applicant should be sure to take a look at that list to make sure that you are falling within the scope of the program.

50:09

Here's a question from someone who applied in the past asking about a particular comment that a reviewer made, and I won't go into the specifics of this, but the question

asks essentially, if a reviewer seems to be deviating from our evaluation criteria, how do we handle that? And the answer is that this is where the staff recommendation comes in.

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In that series of application steps that I had as the second to last slide--the one with the black background--we on the staff are charged with running a fair competition. So if somehow an evaluator is going off track in terms of applying our criteria, we review the rationale for the ratings quite closely before we make our recommendations.

51:09

And so we'll look at that, and if an evaluator seems to have downgraded an application based on something that does not fall within the evaluation criteria, then we can potentially step in and correct for that, and make a recommendation for funding in spite of what an evaluator has told us, if the evaluator has gone off

51:39

track in the evaluation. So that's one reason that we have a multi-step review process with layers and layers of review, with each layer both sort of checking and also confirming what's come out of the previous layer of the review. Ultimately,

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I think that, you know, that works in favor of having a thorough and fair process, and it's one of the strengths of all of NEH's programs, actually.

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Here's someone asking for more detail about the encouragement to junior scholars. "What do we mean by junior scholar--how junior should a person be in general?"

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What we are referring to when we refer to junior scholars is people who are seven years or fewer from the award of the of the PHD, so anywhere in that timeframe. People in that category generally are working on turning their dissertation into a book, working on revision, or perhaps they're at the early stages of a second book, if they really have finished the job of turning their dissertation into a first book that has been published.

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Here's a question about a project focused on writing and revision, and the person is asking, "If I don't have an institutional affiliation, is there an in-residence opportunity, such as office space in Washington, DC?" The answer to this is no. We're not able to offer office space in connection with these awards and it would be up to you to arrange for accommodation

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in whatever place you needed to be to carry out your research. But obviously we hope that the award money itself would help pay for such accommodation and travel. On the flip side,

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I guess the good thing about there not being an in-residence requirement is that these awards are portable. So you can take them to Japan or elsewhere in Asia with you if that's appropriate, or you can stay at home, wherever that is, if that's what you really need at the current phase of your project.

54:43

Here's a question about identifying a host institution in Japan. The person says, if we're planning to spend time in Japan, should we identify a host institution where we intend to conduct our research? I would say if at all possible,

54:56

yes, you should, and in fact the instructions in the Notice of Funding Opportunity do contain mention of this point. If you have a sponsor or a collaborator or another connection in Japan, I would definitely mention that in the application.

55:20

And this would be assessed as part of the feasibility criterion. Remember evaluators are asked to judge the feasibility and appropriateness of your work plan. And if you have already established institutional connections of some kind in Japan, that makes your plan of work that much more feasible, and it instills that much more confidence in the evaluators

55:51

that you will actually have the support that you might need in Japan to carry out the research that you're promising to do. So, yes, the more specific you can be about arrangements that you might have in Japan, the more convincing your application is going to be when it comes to the evaluation of the feasibility and appropriateness of your plan of work.

56:54

Here's someone who's asking about changing institutional affiliation. "My institutional affiliation is changing as of August. Should I use my new affiliation in the application documents?" You should use the affiliation as it stands at the application deadline itself. If you would like to indicate on your CV that you will be beginning a new job in August,

57:22

you can do that. The primary affiliation that you indicate should be your institution as it stands at the time of the application deadline, but the evaluators will get the full story. I

mean they will look at your CV and understand what your situation is, as you've presented it there. Or if you would like to say a word about your new job in your narrative statement somewhere, you could do that as well.

58:00

Here's another question about the amount of the award, and how earlier awardees finance themselves, if their regular pay and benefit exceed five thousand dollars per month. As I said before, if your institution is able to top up an award and to give you a leave of absence--and some institutions are able to do this when

58:29

the dollar amount of the award exceeds a certain threshold--then that's fine. You're welcome to do that.

58:38

You're also welcome to combine our award with other awards from other sources and then as a worst-case, to tighten one's belt--sometimes people end up doing that I think, to try and cut expenses so that they can get by on the amount of the award. That's not the best-case scenario obviously, but I have heard of people managing to do that as well.

59:25

Here's someone asking whether speaking Japanese is a requirement. We don't specify that you're ineligible for these awards

59:34

if you don't speak Japanese, however, they're designed to support advanced research, and in many cases successfully carrying out advanced research will require a knowledge of Japanese. Or at least the evaluators may be skeptical that you'll be able to accomplish the project that you're setting out, if you're not able to understand Japanese yourself. In theory,

60:04

you could try to make a case for using translation in some fashion or other, or to make the case that the design of the project itself simply doesn't require that you actually use Japanese language to successfully carry out the project. I think this might be a case where it would benefit you to get in touch with us and discuss the details of what you have in mind, but the short answer is: you're not disqualified from the competition if you don't speak Japanese.

60:44

But I suspect it's going to be an uphill battle in most cases to convince the evaluators of the feasibility of the project and the significance of the results if you don't speak Japanese.

61:19

Here's a question about whether awards can be split between a period of fieldwork collecting additional data in Japan and a period of writing at a US institution.

61:29

The answer is yes. So you could spend some time collecting additional data for your project and then subsequent time simply writing up your results or working on revision of or preparation of your manuscript--that's perfectly fine.

61:52

You want to, in your narrative statement as you're describing your work plan, make very clear what period of time you're devoting to each of those activities, and where you will be during each part of the project, but that's simply part of any good work plan to address those points. But the answer is yes you can split an award between some time devoted to fieldwork and additional time devoted to writing--that's perfectly acceptable.

62:33

Okay, I see it's just after three o'clock now, and I promised you that this session would last one hour. So I'm going to draw this to an end now. I know there are some additional questions here that I wasn't able to answer. But as I said, feel free to send us an email if your question wasn't answered and we'll do our best to get you the information that you need. Thank you all very much for taking the time to watch this information session.

63:03

And you know how to get in touch if you have additional questions. Thanks again, and goodbye.

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