



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE  
**Humanities**

DIVISION OF RESEARCH PROGRAMS

**FELLOWSHIPS, NEH-  
MELLON FELLOWSHIPS  
FOR DIGITAL  
PUBLICATION, AND  
FELLOWSHIPS FOR  
ADVANCED SOCIAL  
SCIENCE RESEARCH ON  
JAPAN**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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**I. Eligibility and General Application Questions**

**1. I am an independent scholar. What are my chances of receiving a Fellowship?**

Your chances are the same as any other applicant's. The Fellowships program encourages applications from any applicant, regardless of affiliation. All Fellowships applicants must clearly articulate a project's value to humanities scholars, general audiences, or both and present evidence of their qualifications, including publications, presentations, and other relevant experience.

**2. I am a graduate student. Am I eligible to apply for a fellowship?**

No. A student enrolled in a degree program who proposes research, including research for doctoral dissertations or theses, is not eligible. However, if you have satisfied all the requirements for a degree as of April 10, 2019, and are awaiting its conferral, you are eligible to

apply for an NEH Fellowship. (If you are applying for a Fellowship for Advanced Social Science Research on Japan, the relevant date is April 24, 2019.) Include as an attachment to your application a signed letter from your dean or department chair, stating that you have successfully completed all requirements for the Ph.D.

### **3. Can I apply for a period shorter or longer than the award period?**

No. Fellowships cover periods lasting from six to twelve months. Applications requesting an award period shorter than six months or longer than twelve months will be declared ineligible.

### **4. Can I change the period of performance of my fellowship if I receive an award?**

Yes. You will be able to specify the start date of your NEH fellowship on the [NEH Fellowships Acceptance Form](#) (PDF). This date can differ from the date specified in your application. You can delay your starting date up to twenty months from the time the award was made. For example, if you are awarded an NEH Fellowship in December 2019, you can start as early as February 2020, or as late as September 2021. You can also shorten but not lengthen your period of performance.

### **5. How important is the format of the application (including appendices)?**

Applications must follow the format given in the guidelines. The narrative may not exceed three single-spaced pages, and the font should not be smaller than 11 point. Applications that violate the format instructions will be declared ineligible.

In the NEH Fellowships and Fellowships for Advanced Social Science Research on Japan programs, appendices may be added only for applications proposing editions, translations, database projects, projects that include visual materials, or projects from applicants who have satisfied all of the requirements for a degree and are awaiting its conferral. Appendices may not exceed one single-spaced page per item.

In the NEH-Mellon Fellowships for Digital Publication program, appendices are required for applications proposing editions and translations, and for projects from applicants who have satisfied all of the requirements for a degree and are awaiting its conferral. Appendices are optional for all other projects. Appendices may not exceed two single-spaced pages.

### **6. Is it possible to extend the deadline?**

No. Late applications will not be reviewed.

### **7. Does NEH support projects whose results will be written in a language other than English?**

Yes. Applicants must provide a rationale for projects that will be written in a language other than English. The proposal itself must be written in English.

**8. May I apply to translate a work into English if other English translations already exist?**

Yes. In the proposal narrative, provide a rationale for a new translation.

**9. I am involved in a collaborative project. Can collaborators split a fellowship?**

No. The NEH Fellowships program is designed primarily for individual researchers. Awards may not be divided. If you are seeking funding for more than one participant in a collaborative project, each person seeking funding must submit a separate application specifying the individual contribution. Panelists will be asked to evaluate each application on its own merits. Each application should clearly explain how the work will be divided and the extent to which each collaborator's contribution depends on that of the other(s). Applicants who are seeking funding only for themselves but who are working as part of a collaborative team are also eligible. In this case, too, the application should clearly explain how the work will be divided and the extent to which each collaborator's contribution depends on that of the other(s). Applicants proposing to work together may wish to apply instead or in addition for an NEH [Collaborative Research](#) grant.

## **II. Other Fellowship Opportunities**

**1. May I apply both to the NEH Fellowships program and the NEH-Mellon Fellowships for Digital Publication special opportunity?**

No. The NEH-Mellon special opportunity is run as a part of the regular NEH Fellowships program. Applicants are permitted to submit an application to only one of those programs at the April 10, 2019 deadline. Applicants to the Fellowships for Advanced Social Science Research on Japan program may not also apply for either an NEH Fellowship or an NEH-Mellon Fellowship for Digital Publication.

**2. May I apply for both an NEH Fellowship and an Award for Faculty (at Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, or Tribal Colleges and Universities)?**

No. Applicants may apply to only one of these programs.

**3. May I apply for other NEH grants to support the same project that I am submitting to the Fellowships program?**

Yes. NEH encourages applicants to apply to all programs for which they are eligible. Applicants to the Fellowships program may apply to the NEH [Summer Stipends](#) program (whose deadline is September 25, 2019). If you are collaborating with at least one other project participant, you may also apply to the Collaborative Research program or the Scholarly Editions and Translations program at the December 2019 deadline. Note: An individual may not work on a project supported by an NEH institutional award as either a project director or a participant during the period of performance of an NEH individual award that is held full time.

#### **4. What if I am offered more than one award?**

You may accept or hold only one NEH award for individuals in any given fiscal year. (The fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30.)

You may not hold a Fellowship or an NEH-Mellon Fellowship for Digital Publication for a project previously supported by an NEH Fellowship, an NEH-Mellon Fellowship for Digital Publication, a Public Scholar award, or an Award for Faculty, no matter when the previous award was held. You may, however, hold a Fellowship for a project previously supported by a two-month NEH Summer Stipend, and the Stipend may have been held as recently as the fiscal year immediately preceding the fiscal year in which you accept or hold a Fellowship or an NEH-Mellon Fellowship for Digital Publication. When holding awards in close sequence, you may need to delay the start of the second award to comply with the rule that prohibits holding two awards in the same fiscal year. Note also that if you accept a Fellowship in the same fiscal year in which you apply for a Summer Stipend, the Summer Stipends application will be automatically withdrawn after you accept the Fellowship. Please contact program staff for further details.

You may not participate in a project supported by an NEH institutional award while holding a full-time NEH award for individuals. Additional restrictions may apply to directors or co-directors of projects that have received NEH institutional awards. Please contact program staff for further details.

#### **5. What other programs are offered by NEH or through NEH partners to support individual research in the humanities?**

NEH collaborates with several organizations to offer support for research programs:

##### *NEH-Mellon Fellowships for Digital Publication*

Research projects that require solely digital expression and digital publication. This special opportunity is conducted as a part of the regular NEH Fellowships program (see II.1 above). You can find additional information [here](#).

##### *Library of Congress (LOC) – John W. Kluge Center Fellowships*

Projects that draw on the collections of the Library of Congress are eligible for support. Interested applicants should apply directly to [LOC's Kluge Center Fellowships Program](#). These fellowships are available only to applicants who within the past seven years have received a terminal advanced degree in the humanities, the social sciences, or a professional field such as architecture or law.

##### *Japan-United States Friendship Commission (JUSFC) – [Fellowships for Advanced Social Science Research on Japan](#)*

Subjects may include modern Japanese political economy, international relations and society, and United States-Japan relations. Applicants may consult the [JUSFC website](#) for additional information.

*NEH Grants for Fellowship Programs at Independent Research Institutions (FPIRI)*  
Projects eligible for support are undertaken at independent centers for advanced study, libraries, and museums in the United States, and at research centers overseas. Individual scholars must apply directly to the institutions themselves. Available [here](#) is a list of currently funded institutions.

*NEH and National Science Foundation Fellowship Program for Documenting Endangered Languages (DEL)*  
Projects on endangered languages are eligible for support. A full description of the DEL program is located [here](#).

### III. Application and References

#### 1. What help is available for preparing the proposal?

Because of the large number of applications, NEH staff members are not able to comment on draft Fellowships proposals. NEH staff will, however, answer questions about preparing your proposal and about your eligibility. The staff may be reached at (202) 606-8200 and at [fellowships@neh.gov](mailto:fellowships@neh.gov).

Applicants are encouraged to review the samples of previously funded applications, which are available on the [program resource page](#), as well as lists of recent awards: [Fellowships](#), [Fellowships for Advanced Social Science Research on Japan](#), and NEH-Mellon Fellowships for Digital Publication (see the awards list for [2017-2018](#)).

#### 2. How should I title my proposal? Does NEH change project titles?

Your title should be descriptive of the project, substantive, and free of specialized language. It should be easily understood by the general public. The title should not exceed 125 characters (including spaces and punctuation). Your NEH project title should not necessarily be the same as the title of your proposed book.

Avoid using a main title that requires clarification by the subtitle. For example, “A History of Counterfeiting in the U.S., 1776-1900” is clearer than “Fakes and Fakers: A History of Counterfeiting in the U.S., 1776-1990.”

When possible, include places and dates indicating a project’s scope. For example, “Faith and Belief among New York City Catholics, 1945-1970” is clearer than “Faith and Belief in the Catholic Community.”

If a person is mentioned in your title, include dates and a descriptor. For example, “A Biography of German Philosopher Klaus von Guberstopper (1834-1910)” is clearer than “A Biography of Klaus von Guberstopper.”

Use words and phrases that are informative and specific rather than puzzling or intriguing. For example, “A Cultural History of the Telephone and Telecommunications in America, 1950-2015” is clearer than “Ten Digits and a Party Line: A Study of a Number and a Nation.”

Omit technical terms, jargon, and unfamiliar words. For example, “Time, Space, and Clocks in the 19th-Century British Novel” is clearer than “Chronotopes and Horologics in the 19th-Century British Novel.”

You should provide the project title in section 6.a. of the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance – Individual Form. This form is part of the Grants.gov application package. It is explained in the program guidelines (funding opportunity announcement) under Section III, STEP 4.

NEH reserves the right to re-title funded projects that do not follow agency guidelines. Award recipients, however, are permitted to use their preferred title for any award products.

**3. I applied for a grant last year and my proposal was unsuccessful. Will I be at a disadvantage if I reapply?**

No. NEH encourages previous applicants to reapply and does not inform reviewers that a proposal was unsuccessful in a previous competition. Moreover, NEH employs different reviewers from year to year.

**4. My proposal is interdisciplinary. What category should I select from the drop-down menu for “Field of Project” on Form III (the NEH Supplemental Information for Individuals Form)?**

NEH supports proposals that cross disciplinary boundaries (as well as proposals that are rooted in a single discipline). On the NEH Supplemental Information for Individuals Form you may select up to three disciplinary fields that characterize your project. If you select more than one, list the primary field first. In selecting referees, you should choose two who can effectively attest to your ability to work in the disciplines that are relevant to your project.

**5. My proposal is for a translation. Whom should I ask for letters of reference?**

If you are proposing a translation project, one of your letters of reference must be from an expert in the language(s) of your project. It should provide an assessment of the sample translation that you are submitting with your application.

**6. What are the requirements for providing a writing sample?**

Applicants for Fellowships must submit a writing sample that demonstrates the applicant’s ability to express ideas and make an argument with lucidity. (Note that this requirement does not apply to applicants for NEH-Mellon Fellowships or applicants for Fellowships for Advanced Social Science Research on Japan.) The writing sample should be in the style of the proposed

project. Evaluators will use the sample to assess the clarity of your writing as well as your knowledge of the subject area.

The writing sample can be either from the proposed project (preferred) or from a recent publication, but it should not be more than five years old. It must be from a single piece of work and single-authored. For junior scholars, an excerpt from your dissertation is acceptable if you are applying for your first book project.

The writing sample may not be more than ten double-spaced pages, including any footnotes or endnotes, and may not include a table of content, an outline, or an abstract of the proposed work. (Information of this sort belongs in the narrative.)

In preparing the sample, leave one-inch margins and use a font no smaller than eleven-point. You may single-space footnotes or endnotes. If the sample is a PDF of a published work, its length must not exceed the equivalent of ten double-spaced pages in eleven-point typescript. If the sample has been published, you must indicate this and list the publication on your résumé.

#### **7. When will the writers of my letters of recommendation be notified?**

Approximately two to three weeks after the application deadline for Fellowships and NEH-Mellon Fellowships for Digital Publication (or approximately seven to ten days after the application deadline for Fellowships for Advanced Social Science Research on Japan), NEH will e-mail requests to your letter writers, asking them to submit their letters online. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that these requests have been received.

#### **8. When are letters of recommendation due?**

Letters must be submitted online not later than May 10, 2019 for Fellowships and NEH-Mellon Fellowships for Digital Publication, or June 2, 2019 for Fellowships for Advanced Social Science Research on Japan.

NEH strongly encourages you to confirm that your letter writers have received the upload link before the May 10, 2019 (or June 2, 2019) deadline for submitting letters. You are responsible for ensuring that your letters have arrived by the deadline.

#### **9. One of my referees cannot submit a letter online. Is there an alternative?**

NEH strongly encourages referees to submit their letters online. If they are unable to do so, referees may e-mail letters to [fellowships@neh.gov](mailto:fellowships@neh.gov) or fax them to 202-606-8204. It is possible, though, that e-mailed letters will not be added to your application file as quickly as letters that are submitted online.

#### **10. Can I check to see whether my letter writers have submitted their letters?**

Yes. You will be notified by e-mail when each of your letters of reference has been received. After you have received your NEH application number, you may also check the status of your letters of

reference by logging in to [the secure area of NEH's website](#). Enter your NEH application number and your Grants.gov tracking number. You will be able to see the names and e-mail addresses of your letter writers and whether their letters of reference have arrived. If necessary, you may send reminders to your letter writers (including the upload link) from this site.

**11. One or both of my referees did not receive the e-mail from NEH requesting the upload of his or her letter. What should I do?**

Requests for letters are not sent out until two to three weeks after the application deadline for Fellowships and NEH-Mellon Fellowships for Digital Publication (or until seven to ten days after the application deadline for Fellowships for Advanced Social Science Research on Japan). If, even allowing for this, a request has not been received, it is usually because the e-mail was caught by a junk mail filter or because you have supplied an incorrect e-mail address (the NEH system uses the address exactly as you enter it). You may resend the upload link to your referees by logging on to the [secure area of the NEH website](#). If you need to correct an error in an e-mail address, please contact the program staff at [fellowships@neh.gov](mailto:fellowships@neh.gov).

**12. Is it possible to change a referee after the application deadline?**

Yes. To do so, please contact the program staff at [fellowships@neh.gov](mailto:fellowships@neh.gov) or at 202-606-8200. Indicate which referee you would like to replace and provide the contact information, including e-mail address, for the new referee.

**13. Are late letters of reference accepted?**

Yes. All letters will automatically be added to your file as soon as they are uploaded by the referee. But if an external reviewer has already reviewed the file, it is unlikely that he or she will take the late letter into account.

**14. Does a missing letter of reference disqualify my application?**

No. Your application will still be eligible for review and for an award. Evaluators may, however, find your application less persuasive if one or both letters are missing.

**15. How will my application be reviewed?**

All applications receive peer review. Scholars in the humanities (or, in the case of Fellowships for Advanced Social Science Research on Japan, scholars in the social sciences with expertise in the study of Japan) will read and rate your application, using the evaluation criteria listed in Section II of the application guidelines. NEH staff comments on matters of fact or on significant issues that otherwise would be missing from these reviews, then makes recommendations to the National Council on the Humanities. The National Council meets at various times during the year to advise the NEH chairman on grants. The chairman takes into account the advice provided by the review process and, by law, makes all funding decisions. More details about NEH's review process are available [here](#).

## **16. Can I see the evaluators' comments after the competition?**

Yes. The notification you receive about the decision made on your application will contain instructions for requesting the evaluators' comments. If your application is unsuccessful, the comments may help you revise it for resubmission.

## **IV. Using Grants.gov**

### **1. How do I know if I have submitted my application successfully?**

**After you submit your application, Grants.gov will send you up to five e-mail messages confirming receipt of your application. These messages represent different stages in the application acceptance process. You should verify that you have received all of the five confirmation messages. Please note that e-mail filters may send these messages to your spam or junk folder.**

It is your responsibility as an applicant to confirm that Grants.gov and subsequently NEH have accepted your application, by verifying that you have received all five messages.

See section IV of the application guidelines for additional information.

### **3. What is the Application for Federal Assistance - Individual Form, and where do I find it?**

The Application for Federal Assistance - Individual Form is a standard government application form. It is included in the "Mandatory Documents" field of the application package that you access from Grants.gov.

### **4. What is a DUNS number? How do I find out my institution's numbers?**

DUNS stands for "data universal numbering system." DUNS numbers are issued by Dun and Bradstreet (D & B) and consist of nine digits. When you are completing the registration form, the Grants.gov system should automatically fill in the box for the DUNS number with a code such as INDV00000. Do not attempt to change this code (for example, by entering the DUNS number of your institution).

If you are affiliated with a U.S. institution of higher education, you must provide your institution's DUNS number on the NEH Supplementary Information for Individuals Form. You should be able to get this number from your sponsored research office, or at your institution's website. Omit hyphens when entering the number into the electronic application forms.

More information about DUNS numbers is available [here](#).

## **V. Information on NEH-Mellon Fellowships for Digital Publication**

### **1. I am working on a digital publication. Am I required to apply to the NEH-Mellon special opportunity?**

No, but you are strongly encouraged to apply to it. The NEH Fellowships program has long supported projects that culminate in digital publications and will continue to do so. The partnership between NEH and Mellon encourages such scholarship at a moment when university and other presses are experimenting with digital publication solutions.

### **2. How will the review of applications submitted to the NEH-Mellon special opportunity differ from applications submitted to the NEH Fellowships program?**

Because NEH-Mellon Fellowships for Digital Publication is a special opportunity within the larger NEH Fellowships competition, applications will be judged by the same criteria and held to the same standards of scholarly excellence. Applications received for the special opportunity will be evaluated by separate peer review panels of scholars engaged with humanities research and knowledgeable about digital humanities/digital publications.

### **3. How many NEH-Mellon Fellowships for Digital Publication will be awarded?**

There is no set number. The number of awards will depend on the quality of the applications received.

### **4. If I submit an application to the NEH-Mellon Fellowships for Digital Publication special opportunity, may I also submit an application for an Award for Faculty at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (or at Hispanic-Serving Institutions or at Tribal Colleges and Universities)? How about to the NEH-Japan-US Friendship Commission's Fellowships for Advanced Social Science Research on Japan?**

No. Applicants to the NEH-Mellon Fellowships for Digital Publication program at the April 2019 deadline may not also concurrently apply to the Awards for Faculty program, the Advanced Social Science Research on Japan program, or the NEH Fellowships program.

### **5. I am working on developing a website to accompany a book. Am I eligible for support through the NEH-Mellon Fellowships for Digital Publication special opportunity?**

Your project might be technically eligible, but it would not be competitive. NEH-Mellon Fellowships for Digital Publication encourage those scholars who are working on projects that can only be carried out through digital publication. Digital "side projects" such as websites that accompany print publications fall outside the goals of the special opportunity. It is not unusual, however, for such projects to compete in the NEH Fellowships program.

**6. I am working on creating a digital publication from an existing print publication. Am I eligible for support through the NEH-Mellon Fellowships for Digital Publication special opportunity?**

Yes. However, simply “retrofitting” previous scholarship for digital publication would likely be less competitive, UNLESS you could demonstrate that the new digital publication would create new and significant insights that go intellectually beyond the print material.

**7. I am working on a book that I would like to see sold to those with e-readers, such as Kindles or Nooks. Am I eligible to apply?**

No. Printed books and their e-reader equivalents are not supported by this program. NEH-Mellon Fellowships for Digital Publication support projects that can be carried out only through digital publication. Successful projects will likely incorporate visual, audio, and/or other multimedia materials or flexible reading pathways that could not be included in traditionally published books (and their e-reader formats).

**8. I am working as a part of a collaborative effort on a digital publication. Am I eligible to apply?**

Yes. See I.9 above.