

# Caltech | Funding Memo

**Title:** Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Innovation Fellowship

**Funding Agency:** American Council of Learned Studies/Mellon Foundation

**External Deadline(s):**

10/25/2023 06:00 PM PDT (Full Proposal)

**Cognizant Office:** Office of Foundation Relations

**Description:**

ACLS invites applications for Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Innovation Fellowships, which provide a year of support for doctoral students preparing to embark on innovative dissertation research projects. This program is made possible by a grant from the Mellon Foundation.

Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Innovation Fellowships support graduate students in the humanities and social sciences who show promise of leading their fields in important new directions. The fellowships are designed to intervene at the formative stage of dissertation development, before research and writing are advanced. The program seeks to expand the range of research methodologies, formats, and areas of inquiry traditionally considered suitable for the dissertation, with a particular focus on supporting scholars who can build a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable academy. The fellowship may be carried out in residence at the fellow's home institution or at any other appropriate site for the research.

**Frequency:** Typically annual

**Total Award:** \$50,000

- The total award includes a \$40,000 stipend for the fellowship year, as well as up to \$3,000 for research and travel, and up to \$5,000 in professional development funds to support skills acquisition or additional research to support innovative/expansive directions.
- An additional \$2,000 is available as a stipend for the external mentor.

**Indirect Costs:**

- The award requires that the host institution will allow the fellow to remain enrolled during the fellowship year and will waive tuition and fees.
- A Tuition Remission Exemption must be requested from the Graduate Dean.

**Duration:** 1 year

- Tenure: one year beginning between July 1 and September 1, 2024.

**Discipline(s):** Humanities and Social Sciences

**Eligibility:** Grad Student

- Given the variation in graduate student trajectories, and the variation of curricular requirements across departments and schools, this program gives only broad parameters for the eligible period of tenure of the fellowship. Some applicants may be applying in the year immediately before candidacy to support the first year of work as a PhD candidate; others may seek to expand their field/methodological horizons at an earlier stage of their graduate studies.
- Applicants must:
  - Be a PhD student in a humanities or social science department in the United States.
    - The Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Innovation Fellowship program does not accept applications from students receiving professional or applied PhDs, terminal degrees that are not a PhD (such as an EdD or MFA), or PhDs outside of humanities and social science departments.
  - Be able to take up a full year (9-12 months) of sustained specialized research and training, released from normal coursework, assistantships, and teaching responsibilities.
  - Have completed at least two years and all required coursework in the PhD programs in which they are currently enrolled by the start of the fellowship term.
  - Have not advanced to PhD candidacy/ABD status prior to January 1, 2023.
  - Have not previously applied for this fellowship more than once.
- ACLS requires all applicants to have an ORCID iD.

### **Research Areas of Interest:**

- Humanities and social sciences.
- The program supports projects that push the traditional approaches to dissertation research in new directions. The strongest applications will show evidence of thoughtful plans for engaging the sources, resources, scholars, and communities – on campus and/or off – necessary to advance their projects. Fellows might design a fellowship year that includes:
  - Directed interdisciplinary research and methodological training that pushes beyond the scope of their field's norms with faculty within and/or outside their home institutions;
  - exploration of new modes of scholarly communication and dissertation design;
  - intensive digital methods training and research;
  - collaboration with community partners;
  - a short-term practicum with a non-academic organization (such as a think-tank or social justice organization) to develop experience with applied methods, site-based research involving community-engaged or collaborative approaches.
- The list above is by no means exhaustive. ACLS seeks to support a range of innovation in doctoral research — practical, trans- or interdisciplinary, digital, collaborative, critical, or methodological — as well as innovative forms and modes of publication.

### **Research Exclusions:**

- Business, clinical or counseling psychology, creative or performing arts, education, engineering, filmmaking, law, library and information sciences, life/physical sciences, public administration, public health or medicine, public policy, social work, or social welfare.

### **Post-Award Obligations:**

- TBD

**Recent Caltech Recipients:**

- None

**Guidelines & Other Information:**

Guidelines: <https://www.acls.org/competitions/mellon-acls-dissertation-innovation-fellowship/>

FAQ: <https://www.acls.org/faqs/faq-mellon-acls-dissertation-innovation-fellowship/>

Prior Awardees: <https://www.acls.org/recent-fellows/>

Please note that the application requires the following: A statement from the applicant's institution (preferably from the applicant's department chair, director of graduate studies, or dean). The provided form will ask the institutional representative to attest that (1) if the applicant holds a multi-year financial award from the institution and a fellowship is awarded, this support would be paused for the duration of the fellowship and the applicant would be allowed to retain and resume the remainder of that support in subsequent years; (2) the institution will allow the fellow to remain enrolled during the fellowship year and will waive tuition and fees; and (3) the intention of the fellowship is to promote non-traditional direction setting for the sake of valuing innovations in scholarly methods and subject, and the institution believes that its graduate curriculum and progress-charting for students can respect and accommodate this exploration of non-traditional approaches to scholarship.

Please notify the Foundation Relations team if you anticipate making a submission or if you have any questions regarding this opportunity. We are here to help ensure that Caltech's proposals are competitive. We can assist with proposal development and advise you on the routing of your paperwork. Interested researchers should work with their division grant manager to prepare the budget, the MORA form, and the Division Approval Form (DAF). Submissions and awards for this grant program will be processed through the Office of Foundation Relations.

Opportunity ID: 1664